

Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association

Volume 4, Issue 1

PAPHA Newsletter

January 2010

2nd Annual Dinner/Auction Scheduled

PAPHA is sponsoring its 2nd Annual Dinner and Auction benefitting the Port Aransas Museum on Saturday, March 6, 2010, beginning at 7 pm in the Community Center. This year's theme is "Hooked on the Port Aransas Museum – Well then come and make a trophy sized contribution!"

You are cordially invited to join us for an evening filled with candlelight, gourmet food, fine wine and treasures sure to please from our live auction

Salty and His Little Dog

J. Guthrie Ford

Port Aransas has its share of "characters." And were there a list of them, you would surely find the name Salty Johns. I came to know Salty circa 1958. He was a fixture on the deck of a Port A house where I spent as much of the summer as I possibly could; in other



wonderful travel opportunities, local "get- a ways", and unique sporting experiences. The evening promises something for everyone.

Individual tickets are \$50 and sponsored tables range from \$600 to \$1500.

Contact the museum at 361-749-3800 or portamuseum@centurytel.net to purchase tickets or donate to the auction.

words, whenever my Dad let me off work at his sporting goods store in San Antonio, I, by hook or crook, would find my way to the coast.

This image of Salty is striking because it captures so much of what Salty

See 'Salty' on Page 5

Thanks for everything, Betty Bundy!

Betty Bundy is about to embark on a new journey as she prepares to relocate to San Antonio in late February. Those of you who know Betty know that she has been a driving

force behind the establishment of our Museum. PAPHA and the Museum will be honoring Betty for all her contributions at an Open House



at the Museum on Sunday, February 21, from 3 pm to 5 pm. We would love to have you join us as part of our thank you and farewell.

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Lectures Continue Next up: Fort Semmes; Cattle Industry

The 2010 Winter Lecture Series began with an overwhelming success as Mary O'Rear drew 111 people for her lecture. Thanks to

a Humanities Texas Grant, the series by HumanitiesTexas the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association continues



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Aransas Pass Will be the Harbor, and Shipping Port of Texas

NO PLACE IN THE ENTIRE SOUTH HAS MORE BRILLIANT PROSPECTS

With Unrivalled Facilities for Handling Ocean Traffic Its Harbor Promises To Make It One Of The Great Ports Of The Southern Coast.

San Antonio Light
Sunday August 6, 1911

Along with the upgrowth of any truly great country there is always one question paramount in the minds of the citizens of the commonwealth; where and what shall be our port of entry and our great shipping center for the marketing of our product. It is requisite if a country make material progress that it have transportation rates to and from the greater centers of manufacturing. In some instances great cities have provided these low rates for a country lying beyond, through the combined pressure of its citizens and commercial clubs upon railroads, and in some instances rivers have been at hand to connect the district with the outside world and in still others nature again has looked to the welfare of a great community by locating a natural harbor upon the most wonderful highway of the world, the ocean.

Texas, the greatest state in the greatest union of commonwealths in the world, has been wonderfully favored in that within her boundaries three harbors have been located, three outlets have been given for connection with the outside world, Sabine Pass, Galveston harbor and Aransas Pass and harbor, the largest of all.

Three Harbors in Texas

Sabine Pass is located on the extreme eastern line of Texas and between Texas and Louisiana. Galveston is sixty-eight miles west of Sabine Pass and Aransas Pass is 200 miles in an air line southwest of Galveston. Four hundred miles south of Aransas Pass is found the next harbor, Tampico, where through simple dredging methods the Mexican government has deepened the Paucos river sufficiently for the greatest ocean-going liners to enter for a distance of ten miles.

Aransas Pass, the only land-locked harbor on the Texas coast, is bounded

on the south by Mustang Island, on the west by Harbor Island, on the North by the Lydia Ann Islands and on the east by St. Joseph's Island, which lies directly between it and the Gulf of Mexico and gives the harbor protection from all dangerous winds, ocean storms and tidal waves that might come from that direction. The harbor is about one mile wide and four miles long. From Lydia Ann Islands the water increases in depth from about twenty feet until it reaches an average of thirty to forty feet, which depth continues down the harbor and out through Aransas Pass and the jetties to the Gulf.

Taken Over By the Government

The Aransas Pass Harbor Company, a private corporation, in 1896, following the advice of an eminent engineer and undertook to secure deep water across the bar which then obstructed the entrance to the harbor, by the construction of a single reaction breakwater.

After expending about \$300,000. it was found that while the depth of the water increased considerably in the proximity of the breakwater, the channel connecting the Gulf and the inner harbor was too narrow and tortuous to be of practical use. The parties who placed their money in this work, rather than delay the opening of the harbor, donated the entire improvement to the United States government in 1899 on condition that the government would take charge of the improvement of the harbor, make an appropriation at that session of congress and continue the appropriations until the harbor be opened to commerce.

Since 1899 the federal government has expended on the improvement of this port over \$1,000,000, has completed two jetties extending nearly a mile into the Gulf of Mexico, has deepened the channel connecting the Gulf with the inland harbor and is now deepening

and enlarging the harbor proper, getting ready for the building of the docks and shipping wharves. Besides this, it has purchased land on Mustang and St. Joseph's Islands, upon which to erect forts and barracks.

Two Channels Have Been Built

Two channels have been constructed, one connecting the harbor with Corpus Christi Bay, this channel twelve feet deep by 100 feet wide and five miles long, and the other six miles in length which connects the city of Aransas Pass on the mainland with the harbor. This allows for the inter-bay commerce and gives waterways of sufficient depth for large vessels to ply between the towns of Corpus Christi, Aransas Pass and Port

Aransas, the city located at the harbor entrance, and Rockport, which lies twelve miles to the north of the harbor entrance.

The town of Aransas Pass has one of the finest locations on the Texas coast for a great city. There are three great tiers of islands between this location and the Gulf of Mexico, giving it perfect protection from all Gulf storms and ocean waves. The land fronts on what is known as Redfish Bay and rises gradually from the water's edge to a height of twenty-five feet, giving sufficient fall to ensure perfect drainage. The town is beautifully laid off with broad streets and avenues. There are many live oak and sweet bay trees on the town site which are evergreen and which make beautiful shade when properly cared for. An abundance of splendid water can be obtained at a depth of twenty-five feet. There are no fresh water streams in this location therefore there is no malaria. The thermometer rarely ever registers 90 degrees in the shade, the heat being tempered by a cool breeze which blows across from the

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Salty ————— Cont. from Page 1

projected: a unique person with a great verve for life. There was never a doubt about who was under the pith helmet coming down Alister in the jaunty jeep with the little dog riding shotgun—the hound was named Junior.

Maybe this little article will stimulate someone giving archivist Mark Creighton the details about Mr. Johns (just e-mail Pam Greene). I remember that Salty once worked in Hollywood, and that in Port A he was somehow involved with birds. What I remember best is Salty being a fellow interested in what a 15 year-old kid had to say, and I, in turn, was fascinated by his stories, told on a wide and welcoming deck where the giant cooler of Lone Stars and Big Reds was always full.

Here's to you, Salty...and your little dog.

MUSEUM DOCENTS BUSY Bake Sale Scheduled; Gourmet Dinner Party Tickets For Sale, Docents Rewarded for Service

by Docent Coordinator Mary Hammond-McKnight

A gourmet dinner party for six for only \$2? It could happen!

Bake sale set with tasty delights of all kinds to benefit the Museum.

Port Aransas Museum docents will sell tickets for a drawing for a dinner for six along with delicious baked goods at the Family Center IGA, 418 S. Alister St., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 23.

The dinner will be prepared either for immediate serving or for freezing to enjoy at a later date. The meal will be delivered, not served.

The tickets will cost \$2 each, three for \$5, seven for \$10 or 15 for \$20.

A mystery Port Aransas personality will prepare the dinner of spinach, fennel and mushroom-stuffed beef tenderloin (with Stilton sauce and horseradish mustard sauce), rosemary roasted new potatoes, grilled-n-chilled asparagus (subject to availability) and goat cheese cheesecake with red grape compote.

The winner also will receive a basket

with a tablecloth, candles and bottle of wine to accompany the meal.

Sales will continue through Feb. 6, when the drawing will be held.

Money raised will go to the operating costs fund for the museum.

For info or tickets, contact docent drawing co-chairs Pepper Pendzinski, (361) 332-1394, or Karen Larsen at 749-6283, or any museum docent.

Docents Hit the Skies

In appreciation for the hours the Port Aransas Museum Docents put in, the ones with the most hours logged were treated to plane rides by Mark Creighton.

Winners were:

Bill Behrens - 68.5 volunteer hours
Pepper Pendzinski - 66.75 hours
Karen Larsen - 61.75 hours
Jack Dreessen - 48.75 hours
Linda Zahn - 43.75 hours
Pam Greene - more hours than I could count for all she does

Words We Live By®

by J. Guthrie Ford

There is a change this month from my usual history format. It occurred to me that readers who do not live on Mustang Island might be interested in regional words and terms (both archaic and contemporary). The 58-item glossary I compiled for my A Texas Island book is too large to share here, and so I will serve a sampler now and then include items at the end of future history articles.

These terms are—were—used conversationally. CROSS THE BAR, bar is the water area in front of a pass; to cross it denotes coming through the pass: *We will cross the bar before dark.* DRIFT, materials on beach: *Get the cart and we'll see what drift the storm blew in.* MAKE

THE CIRCLE, 1930s recreational drive from Corpus to Padre to Port A to Aransas Pass to Corpus: *Want to make the circle this weekend?* PIGGYBACK (the), 1927 flatcar railroad carrying tourists in their autos from mainland to Harbor Island landing: *We'll pack the beach stuff in the car on and then piggyback to the ferry.* DITCH (the), CC ship channel as per Island arrival/departure: I won't be crossing the ditch for another hour. TIGHT LINES, fishing lines pulled taut by fish: *Tight lines to ya!* I.G.A. (the), Port Aransas Family Center IGA (independent grocers association): *Want anything from the IGA?* JETTY (the), South Jetty newspaper: *I saw your ad in the jetty.* LYDIA ANN (the), channel running in front of the lighthouse: *The Lydia Ann was completely socked in this morning.* RANCH HOUSE (the), the big house on San José Island: *I could see the ranch house from where I anchored.*

Places, things, events. RAGTOWN, poor area of which Port A had two during the 1930's. WHITE MARLIN, corporation active in the Port A tourist industry during the 1960's. A.R.K., animal rehabilitation keep; facility (at the Marine Science Institute) for the care of injured marine creatures. FINA DOCKS, rusty docks on Harbor Island; hotspot for bottom fishing. FISH PASS, small jetties area close to Mustang Island State Park; popular with surfers (pass is now closed). TROUT GREEN, when inland waters are this translucent jade color it can mean the presence of speckled trout. RED TIDE, reddish seaborne algae (RT water looks like ice tea) that can infect shellfish with a toxin dangerous to humans. RIPTIDE & UNDERTOW, strong currents flowing away from the beach; riptide is surface current, undertow is submerged current—both warrant the utmost respect.

[John Guthrie Ford, Ph.D., is a recognized local history scholar and an award winning writer of heritage literature. His book on Mustang history, A Texas Island, is offered at the Port Aransas Museum.]

Port _____ Cont. from Page 2

Gulf during the warmer season.

Railroads approaching this little city from the north, northwest and west will not be compelled to cross salt water bays, but can build air lines on the fine level rich country that will give them good local business as soon as constructed.

It Is the Coming Harbor City

Aransas Pass is then the coming harbor city. Just what the location of this great harbor means to the city and to the country adjacent for 400 miles, south, west and north may be summed up as follows. At the present time all of the products of this country are shipped to foreign countries and since cotton is the one great crop of all of Texas, the greater portion of the crops are sent out of the country, these crops must then

be sent via the nearest Gulf port or via Galveston. A line may be drawn from 100 miles east of Aransas Pass through to Dallas and it can be seen what a great country will naturally ship through the city of Aransas Pass. More than 1,000,000 bales of cotton are sent out of this country annually, to say nothing of the hundreds of car loads of other farm products, corn, beets, Bermuda onions, etc. When this great commerce does start, as it is bound to within the next two, or at the outside, three years, this little city of Aransas Pass will, as all other great seaport cities have in the past leap to the front and take its place well in the midst of the greater shipping ports of the United States. The territory immediately tributary to this city and harbor known better as "the Brownsville country." is being rapidly settled by a

most worthy, industrious, enterprising people, and it will soon be one of the most populous and productive portions of this great republic. The greater part of the products raised in this country will naturally seek and outlet through Aransas pass.

All railroad buildings, with main lines and terminals can be located on the mainland at the city of Aransas Pass, where they will be absolutely free from winds and storms. The harbor will not only give protection to vessels in all kinds of weather, but its area of deep water is sufficiently large to accommodate almost any number of vessels of the largest sizes, while Aransas Bay and Corpus Christi Bay which lies in close proximity to the harbor, may be used as a rendezvous and as anchorage grounds for any number of light draught vessels.

Will Draw an Immense Trade

This harbor will draw an immense amount of trade from Old Mexico on account of the completion of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico railroad instead of allowing that trade to go to Tampico and thence to Europe.

It will give the stockmen, cotton growers, the grain producers and the mine owners of the southwest, west and northwest another first class competing harbor, through which they may ship their product to any market in the world.

Aransas Pass harbor is the farthest south of any available port in the United States, and when the Panama canal is completed and the products of the Pacific and the Orient seek American markets the first port they will reach in their northern course will be this harbor where they will meet the railroads laden with the breadstuffs of north and northwest, the cotton and beef of the south and southwest and the manufactured goods from many sections of the country, to be exchanged for the teas, spices and other eastern merchandise and products. Location, when aided by other favorable conditions, almost secures the building of cities. Aransas Pass is the logical location for the great deep water city of Aransas Pass harbor.



Brinkburn. First Ocean Boat to land at Aransas Pass, Texas.

San Antonio Light and Gazette Wednesday August 17, 1910 Special Dispatch Aransas Pass, Texas, August 17

A channel eight feet deep was completed between Tarpon Island and Aransas Pass Today when the two big dredges met out in the bay at 12 o'clock. At 7 o'clock this morning the dredges were fifty feet apart and at noon the intervening space was cleared out.

In commemoration of the finishing of this channel to allow boats to run in a

straight line between Tarpon and Aransas Pass, a big celebration will be held here tonight. The citizens have raised a purse of \$1500. to be used in making the festival a success.

Before the channel was completed, the boats had to go around several other small islands to get to Tarpon, making a distance of 14 miles. Now a straight cut can be made, the distance between being only six miles. The passenger boat running to Tarpon will now make five or six trips daily, whereas it made only one before. It is now only a forty minute ride to the island.

Lecture ————— Cont. from Page 1

twice a month through March.

Each lecture starts with a Wine and Cheese Social in the Port Aransas Museum at 7 p.m. At 8 p.m., attendees will move across the deck to the Community Center to tell you things you never knew about Port Aransas History.

Those getting their socializing over early will be serenaded by Marion Fersing playing lovely piano music beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center.



The Museum is located at 101 E. Brundrett St. on the corner of 408 N. Alister St. (the Community Center address).

Monday, Jan 25: The Ninety Nine Unlucky Confederates: The Fort Semmes Garrison on Mustang Island 1863 - Dr. Norman Delaney, Ph.D. in History (Duke University), will enlighten us as to where, when, why Fort Semmes disappeared from the Mustang Island skyline.

Monday, Feb. 8: The Texas Cattle Industry and the Rise of the Packeries in the Coastal Bend - Anita Eisenhauer, Chairperson of the Nueces County Historical Commission, will be telling us of one of the economic developments that sustained the growth of Port Aransas in the early days. She has held the Chairperson position for the past 10 years. A graduate of Texas A & I University, she lives in Corpus Christi and has had a long time interest in the roots of the Coastal Bend communities.

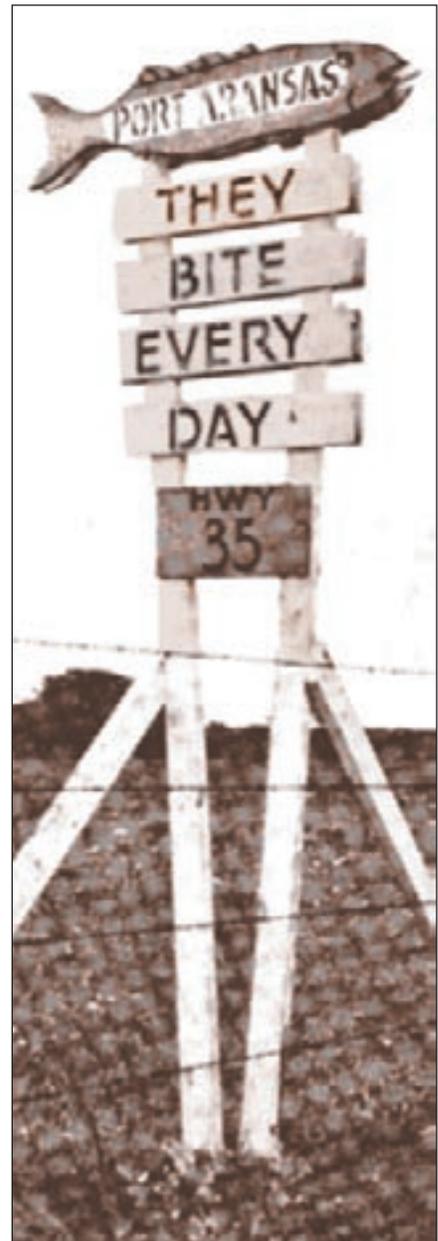
Monday, Feb. 22: The Building of the Jetties - Dr. Guthrie Ford, Ph.D., author of three books that continue to spike interest with our large tourist and Winter Texan resident population, will be expanding on the current Museum exhibit, "Taming the Channel". With the help of Mark Creighton and his ever growing collection of historical pictures, he will be bringing additional stories and facts about our local history that even the "old timers" have forgotten. You may even be inspired to go back to the Museum in order to Ring

the Bell which authorizes you to make a donation and wear an "I Rang The Bell T-Shirt" available in the Gift Shop.

Monday, March 8: Mary Armario, The Last of the Karankawa Where did they all go? Do you know? - Dr. C. Herndon Williams, Ph.D. in Chemistry from Brown University, RI, a retired geologist and engineer but active historian and Chair of the Refugio Historical Society, has a story of which little is known.

Monday, March 22: World War II Project - Dr. William McWhorter, Staff Historian in charge of the WWII Project for the Texas Historical

Commission. "Willy" is no stranger to Port A since he led an Oral History Workshop for PAPHA in August which was well attended by people throughout the area. He will let us in on the inside of the project and how it connects with the National Effort to preserve the memories and stories of that era and why it is important that we remember and preserve for future generations the personal history that does not make it into the textbooks but is so important to the understanding of coming generations. It is from these stories that young people understand who they are and why. The Port Aransas Museum has the equipment to record your oral history as part of this nation wide program. This presentation will impress you and leave you understanding how and why The Texas Historical Commission should be important to all of us.



Buy a brick or block paver that line the walkways to the Port Aransas Museum and the Community Center to honor or remember someone. Make your mark on Port Aransas for posterity and be a part of Port Aransas indefinitely. Either way, you help support the museum and keep it operating. Bricks are 4" x 8" and can be engraved with 3 rows of 14 characters and cost \$50. Blocks are 16" x 16" and hold 12 rows of 30 characters and cost \$300. Call 361-749-3800.

January Board Meeting Notes by John Fucik

The meeting was held Monday, Jan. 4 in the Port Aransas Museum. Ten Board members were present along with member J. Guthrie Ford. Sharon Stricker presided in absence of President Nancy Phillips who was ill. Minutes of last meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: \$1000 gift for PAPHA's exhibit in the remodeled foyer of the Civic Center; Total income for Dec. was \$2,069.28, expenses; Total liabilities and equity \$478,398.16.

Board Nominees: John Fucik presented names of Nancy Phillips, Rick Pratt, Nancy Donley and Garrett Smith to be approved for election at the Jan. 11, general meeting. Kristi Goldston moved approval of the nominees. Second, Bruce Reynolds. Carried.

Museum: Rick Pratt said the next exhibit on sport hunting and fishing was coming along well, but no target date was set for its opening. He requested a 2-3 month leave of absence to tend to family matters and said Guthrie Ford and Mark Creighton would direct museum operations in his absence. Kristi Goldston would administer the lecture series and associated grant funds.

A party honoring the Museum docents is planned for Jan. 18 at La Playa restaurant. Grant to Tocker Foundation for equipment to copy papers and other documents will be coordinated through the library. Grant to History Channel on historical tours coordinated with schools will be resubmitted. Awards Policy submitted by Awards Committee was approved. Big event for Port Aransas' Centennial will be in October together with the Art About event. Kits on Centennial plans/ events/ participation are being prepared by Chamber of Commerce for distribution to city clubs and organizations to encourage their participation.

Due to conflicts with other band events the February Benefit Band Concert had to be canceled.

Mark Creighton has been give permission to copy post cards from Jim Maloney's extensive collection with hope local viewers could provide info and background on those relating to Port A and environs.

HOOKED
ON THE
PORT ARANSAS MUSEUM?
WELL ... COME & MAKE A
TROPHY-SIZED CONTRIBUTION!
SATURDAY, MARCH 6 -- 7 PM
DINNER/AUCTION
PORT ARANSAS MUSEUM & COMMUNITY CENTER

Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association

The Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association is dedicated to preserving and encouraging the preservation, restoration and reproduction of historic buildings, structures, sites, places, objects, culture, ecology and customs of Port Aransas as a means of positively contributing to enhancing the community's natural beauty, well-being and distinctive character.

2010 Membership in PAPHA [tax deductible]

Category	Contribution	Category	Contribution
Individual.....	\$20 per year	Family.....	\$30 per year
Business.....	\$50 per year	Student (individual)	\$2 per year
Student (w/class or group).....	per year	Lifetime	\$1000
Clubs/Organizations.....	\$1 per member per year-----		\$25 max.

Supporting Memberships:

Decade	\$26 - \$50/year	Century	\$51 - \$100/year
Epoch.....	\$101 - \$500/year	Millennium	\$501 - \$1000/year

Membership Application

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail _____ Membership Category _____

(Family membership **only**) - # in Family _____

(Club/Organization **only**) - # of members _____

(Student with class **only**) - # of students _____