



# PAPHA to Receive Prestigious Award

**J. Guthrie Ford**

When the members of the newly founded Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association laid out their mission statements in 2002, they emphasized preservation planning in a two fold way: planning to achieve current—and obtainable—history and preservation goals, and visionary planning for future goals like archival collections, a newsletter, museum, and a research arm. The Texas Historical Commission liked what it saw in this young, upstart group; so much so, that in 2003 the THC awarded Port Aransas the coveted distinction as a Visionary in Preservation Community.

Since then, the PAPHA has demonstrated, time and time again, that recognition was well founded. Pursuant with the Association’s preservation visions, the town now has a grant-supported lecture series, a widely circulated electronic newsletter and informative website, an educational outreach program, a museum—the structure of which is itself historic, an archive whose originator has been recognized by an upper echelon historical organization, a productive multi-person research and writing enterprise, land and sea historical tours, and new Texas state historical markers. A pretty fair tally.

Well, the THC has recently recognized the PAPHA by distinguishing it with the Texas Historical Commission

Award of Excellence in Preserving History. (There were seven other candidates for this award.)

The AEPH recognizes “achievements in preservation planning, historic site identification, preservation of significant archival or artifact collections, or research that leads to a greater understanding of state or local history.” As a THC spokesman put it, the nomination of the PAPHA for the AEPH included “a variety of accomplishments and... the grass roots efforts of many.”

A community distinguished for being visionary about the preservation of history, and now a prestigious award for excellence in preserving history—an impressive record of goal setting and follow through. Congratulations to the Port A townsfolk and visitors who support the local history effort, and to the Membership, Board of Directors, and PAPHA Board of Trustees.

The award will be presented at the April meeting of the Texas Historical Commission.

## Hooked on the Museum

### Dinner/Auction set for March 6

PAPHA is sponsoring its 2nd Annual Dinner and Auction benefiting the Port Aransas Museum on Saturday, March 6, 2010, beginning at 7 pm in the Community Center, 408 N. Alister St.

This year’s theme is "Hooked on the Port Aransas Museum", so come and make a trophy sized contribution!

Join us for an evening filled with gourmet food, fine wine and wonderful treasures in a live auction: wonderful travel opportunities, local “get-aways”, and unique sporting experiences.

The buffet dinner, catered by Miss K’s, will include appetizers of Shrimp Mousse Cups and Blue Cheese Wrapped Grapes. Entrées include Mixed Greens with Candied Pecans & Mandarin Oranges, Whole Beef Tenderloin, Mahi-Mahi topped with lump crab dressing, Baked Cherry Italian Tomato, Potato & Sweet Onion Casserole, rolls & butter.

For dessert, you will have a choice of Key Lime Pie, Chocolate Silk Pie and Tres Leche Cake.

Tickets are \$50 per person and corporate tables seating eight are available for \$600 (Bronze), \$800 (Silver), \$1,000 (Gold) and \$1,500 (Platinum).

Purchase tickets or tables at <http://portaransasmuseum.org/dinner-auction.html> or by calling 361-749-3800 or emailing [portmuseum@centurytel.net](mailto:portmuseum@centurytel.net).

Sponsors include A Mano, Cinnamon Shore, Horseshoe Bay Resort, Mustang Island Art Center, Coastal Texas Properties, Susan Castor Collection, The Pamilla at Port Aransas, Oliver-Pierre Ressel Grape Wine Co., Cheesy Janes, Lancaster Home Collections, The Moorings at Mustang Island, Port A Gallery, BBVA Compass, Mark Grosse Real Estate, Pat Magee and Coastal Closet Port Aransas.

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# Bye Bye Betty!

One of the great “movers and shakers” in the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association is changing her zip code.

Betty Bundy, former PAPHA board member, grant chairman, brick chairman, and more is moving to San Antonio to the retirement village.

To celebrate her contribution to the organization, a party will be held Sunday, February, 21, from 3 to 5 p.m., in the Port Aransas Museum.



The community is invited to come and share your “Betty” stories, toast her accomplishments and wish her well in her next adventure.

Bundy was responsible for many tasks during her time her and doggedly brought all her “projects” to fruition, not taking no for an answer.

Among many jobs she took on, she convinced the Carter family to allow the Port Aransas Museum to give monthly tours of the Little Chapel on the Hill, a

private chapel built in Port Aransas in the 1930s.

She will continue to contribute to PAPHA through the internet, just will be slowing down a little and doing more of her own personal projects.

Members of the organization all agree her talents and determination were instrumental in its forward progress and the creation and opening of the museum. She will be greatly missed.



# A Sneak Preview of “Mustang Island”

**Anita Eisenhower**

**Chair, Nueces County Historical Commission**

*A new historical marker for Port Aransas has arrived from the foundry in San Antonio. Entitled, “Mustang Island,” the marker tells the story of the island from the days of the Karankawa to the arrival of the RVs.*

*Dr. J. Guthrie Ford, a Port Aransas with a hankering for coastal history, is the person who researched and submitted the “Mustang Island” proposal for peer review at the Texas Historical Commission, and obviously his submission was accepted.*

*I asked Guthrie, who is also the N.C.H.C. Marker Chair, when he anticipated installing the new marker. He is begging off, saying he wants to coordinate that with other events to celebrate the town Centennial—by the way, congratulations Port A!*

*Because it may be a while before “Mustang Island” is in the ground, I thought the good readers of this newsletter deserved a sneak preview of your new historical marker. Its text, as true for all State markers, was written by the THC.*

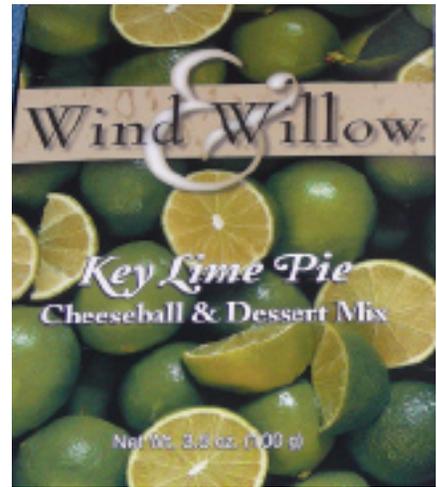
## **MUSTANG ISLAND®**

Port Aransas is located on Mustang Island, one of the seven Texas barrier islands. It is named for the wild horses that came here from shipwrecks and Spanish expeditions, and which once populated the island. The earliest humans here were members of nomadic groups collectively known as the Karankawas; they stayed on or about the island in winter and fall, before moving

inland during spring and summer.

Robert Ainsworth Mercer (1799-1875) was Mustang Island’s first settler; he came here in 1855 with his wife Agnes and children Mary Agnes, John and Edward. The Mercers built a house and a complex they named *El Mar Rancho* (Sea Ranch). Other settlers soon joined them, forming a small community; however the new settlement was abandoned during the Civil War when the USS *Arthur* took station off Mustang Island to blockade the Aransas Pass. The Federal sailors lived off the land, prompting six settlers to fire on them on February 11, 1862. The USS *Arthur* bombarded the island and a landing party further damaged property, leading to the islanders’ flight from the island.

Settlers returned here after the war, with many engaging in the booming cattle industry. By the 1880s, when the industry declined, islanders found markets for turtles and wild ducks. Many also offered goods and services, including guidance to hunting and fishing grounds, to workers constructing the Aransas Pass jetties. Sportsmen began to visit the island, and by the 1920s tourism became the basis for its economy. By 1929, two roadways and a ferry service allowed for easier access to the island and further development of the tourist industry. Today, Mustang Island continues to be a popular destination for visitors, while also serving as home to increasing numbers of Texans. (Text copyrighted by the State of Texas.)



## **Dip Mixes for sale at Museum**

The Port Aransas Museum Gift Shop is offering a new line of wonderful mixes for dips, cheese balls and more.

The line, called “Wind and Willow” was highly recommended by a docent who lives in San Antonio and buys their products there.

Schedule a visit to the gift shop to see which one is right for you.

Prices range from \$4 to \$5.

## **Big Bucks Raised in Raffle**

The dinner fundraiser by the Port Aransas Museum docents was a roaring success raising \$2340.

Local personality Mary Henkel Judson, editor and co-publisher of the *South Jetty* newspaper, agreed to prepare a gourmet meal for the raffle and docents sold tickets.

The winners were Corrine and Art VanVeen of Port Aransas. They won a big beautiful basket, two bottles of wine, cloth napkins and tablecloth, napkin holders, candles and candle holders, and the meal. The dinner for six consisted of spinach, fennel and mushroom-stuffed beef tenderloin (with Stilton sauce and horseradish mustard sauce), rosemary roasted new potatoes, grilled-n-chilled asparagus and goat cheese cheesecake with red grape compote.

The proceeds went into the museum operating fund.

**February SPECIAL in the Museum Gift Shop**

**20% off**

**All exclusive beach scent jar candles**

# Fishing in Texas

by Elda Mae Roberts, reported in the *South Jetty*

February 14th, 1929 - we joined several families who like the Roberts had come to Port Aransas and had put up driftwood shelters in Ragtown - hoping to make a living fishing. Farmers, mechanics, Land Office Workers - out of work - in the depression; but ignorant when it came to fishing in salt water.

We joined them on the pier - fishing for gaff tops - 5 cents a pound at the market. George soon discovered the shrimp in the water and got out the copper ring and webbing brought with us from Florida - hanging it under the dock so that soon the shrimp that were going against the tide were caught in it - and he not only had bait for us, but to share.

It was cold and windy - not much fun - but we were doing well enough to buy what we needed.

Then one night he discovered schools of pogies at the other end of the dock - feeding the larger fish - pike. Shall we keep on catching gaff tops for 5 cents a pound or gamble for pike at 10 cents? Started using pogies for bait and to our surprise - pike in Texas - was the corbio in Florida.

The last night in Passe Grille Florida - little Cuban children who had known George through many summers as they vacationed there, told him as he worked on the boat to make me catch some fish for us. My first time to meet some of them. George handed me my rod and perch out of the bait well. A wide path of light on the water and that was where the fish were feeding. While I waited

for him I caught five corbio - average weight about ten pounds. The children were delighted and their parents appreciated the entertainment. Left them lying on the dock.

Hard for the other fisherman because they would not bite shrimp and no one else knew how to cast out and snitch the pogy that would not bite a hook. Caught ten that first night - a dollar every time we landed one. But that didn't last long - a few nights and they were gone.

We started to fish off the jetty - Mackerel, pompano, and sheepshead. My parents had come and my brother and his wife to visit.

George was using the abandoned skiff he and the boys had found when we went to Rockport earlier. He and Francis had a trotline set in the old pass on St. Joe and were fishing out of the boat.

That was before the jetties were topped with cement and the huge rocks were coated with moss that make them dangerous when they were wet - which was most of the time. George got out some of the heavy fishing line and knit shoes to slip over mine - tied at the ankles. The knots were large and kept me from slipping as I make my way from one rock to the next. Fishing was good and lots of fun. One day my dad, my brother Russel, and I went with George. He let us out on the beach and we fished the N. Jetty. Dad was quite content to fish near shore. He caught a jack fish and was unhappy when a nearby fisherman told him to throw it back as they

*The Roberts' came from Florida in 1929 during the depression. There was another George Roberts, so George became "Florida" Roberts. He was a well known fishing guide and character. Elda Mae wrote articles for the South Jetty and the Aransas Pass Progress. She also was the author of the Stubborn Fisherman.*

were no good. A little later he caught a pompano and threw it back before the man could stop him. Disappointed, as he said "they look alike".

Russell and I had gone out to the end and were filling a burlap sack with mackerel. Having so much fun that we hadn't noticed that the tide had come in - and there was a hundred feet or more of the jetty covered with water. It was a scary trip as determined to save our fish - we put the rod down and waded waist deep to the next rock - helping each other and depending on our rods to hold fast as the waves washed over us. We were learning.

Soon Dad and Russel got a job plastering in Aransas Pass and that ended their visit to Ragtown.

I started fishing with George in the boat. A mile out to the end of the Jetty and it seemed going out or coming in - the tide was always against us. Using a long poling oar, he would push from the rocks and I with a paddle on the bow would keep close enough for the next push. Slow but sure we made it and anchored near the end. That was when there were lots of fish and it was easy to catch from 5 to 6 hundred pounds before the tide changed and they quit biting.

## Board Names Interim Museum Directors

**J. Guthrie Ford**

To manage some pressing life matters, Rick Pratt, Director of the Port Aransas Museum, has requested the PAPHA Board grant him an unpaid leave of absence (January through March). That approved, the Board also approved, on Rick's rec-

ommendation, the appointment of Mark Creighton and Guthrie Ford as interim museum co-directors—these fellows regularly contribute to the museum media displays and research projects.

Mark and Guthrie's job will be

made easy by the excellent extant management of the docent program and gift store. That will allow them to begin work on materials for the museum, the Community Center, and the new Civic Center history site.

**Mark Your  
Calendar**  
\*\*\*\*\*  
**Port A  
Centennial  
Old Town  
Festival  
Saturday,  
Oct. 16**  
Parade,  
Chapel Tours,  
Old Timer  
Talks,  
Vendors,  
Food, Fun &  
More!  
Call Pam  
Greene at  
361-443-4683  
or email  
communication  
@portaransas  
museum.org

## Winter Lectures Continue

Thanks to a Humanities Texas mini-grant, the 2010 Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association Winter Lecture Series has been entertaining and educating the public in Port Aransas. Humanities Texas is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Two free lectures have been held each month since January.

A wine and cheese mixer at 7 p.m. precedes each lecture at the Port Aransas Museum, 101 E. Brundrett at Alister Street in Port Aransas. Piano music by Marion Fersing begins at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center for your enjoyment.

The lectures begin at 8 p.m. in the Community Center, next to the Museum at 408 N. Alister St.

Remaining Lectures:

- Monday, Feb. 22: The Building of the Jetties

Dr. Guthrie Ford, Ph.D. and author of

three books, will expand on the current museum exhibit, "Taming the Channel," with the help of Mark Creighton and his ever-growing collection of historical photos.

- Monday, March 8: Mary Armario, The Last of the Karankawa

Where did they all go? Do you know? Dr. C. Herndon Williams, Ph.D. and chair of the Refugio Historical Society,

has a story about the Karankawa few know.

- Monday, March 22: World War II Project

Dr. William McWhorter, historian in charge of the WWII Project for the Texas Historical Commission led an oral history workshop for PAPHa in August. He will tell about the project and how it connects with the national effort to preserve the memories and stories of that era.



## ANTIQUITIES RAFFLE

The winner of the January raffle spice chest was Mae Greer; Nancy Donley won the cut glass pitcher. The secret prize in a drawer of the spice chest was a silver and carnelian- Bedouin necklace circa 1915-1925.

The February raffle item is a framed and signed etching, "Great Dane", by Kurt Meyer-Eberhardt a widely acclaimed German artist. Eberhardt was born in Leipzig in 1895 and died in Munich in 1977. In 1918 he opted to concentrate solely on etchings of animals whose lifelike appearances and poses have earned his work international recognition. The galleries handling Eberhardt's engravings list most of his signed etchings at \$ 250-400. The "Great Dane" was purchased in 1952 in Munich, Germany.

