



Volume 4, Issue 6

PAPHA Newsletter

June 2010

100 at \$100

Celebrating the first 100 years

Come celebrate the first party for Port A's 100th birthday on Saturday, July 10.

Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association is celebrating Port Aransas' 100th birthday all year long, but the public is invited to help PAPHA will kick off its annual membership drive with this event.

From 2 to 5 p.m., an old fashioned summer picnic of hot dogs, lemonade and beer will be held at the Community Center, 408 N. Alister St.

The goal is to have 100 members join or renew their membership at a special \$100 Centennial Level by the July fundraiser.

A Centennial glass will be given to all patrons that join at the \$100 level.

Sherry Lancaster

PAPHA members wish to express their condolences to PAPHA board member Herb Lancaster for the loss of his wife.

Sherry Lancaster of Port Aransas died Tuesday, June 1. Her memorial service was held Friday, June 4, on the beach.

A reception at the Community Center by Susan Castor, PAPHA and the Port Aransas Museum docents followed the service. Our thought and prayers remain with the family.

Membership information:

Annual membership dues go directly to the PAPHA operating fund enabling PAHPHA to provide new exhibits at the museum as well as keeping the lights on.

- * 2010 Centennial Level - \$100
- * Individual - \$25
- * Family - \$30
- * Merchant Memberships - as low as \$50
- * Lifetime Membership available.

Applications for membership are available at the Museum or at www.portaransasmuseum.org.

Coloring book creation continues

PAPHA, Port Aransas Museum Docents and the Art Center for the Islands continue to work on creation of the centennial coloring book. The book will be sold with profits split between the Art Center and the Port Aransas Museum to help in operation of both non-profit entities. Included are ferries, beach, gulf creatures and more.

The book will be available for purchase later this year at both places.

Membership cards are mailed to each member annually.

100 people joining at the Centennial Level for \$100 = Celebrating 100 years

Port A Centennial Old Town Festival Saturday, Oct. 16

All day affair will include tours to the Little Chapel on the Hill, the old Catholic Church and of the museum; fishing tournament; piggy perch contest; citywide picnic with activities; parade; dedication of new Historical Marker; burial of Time Capsule; Storytelling; PA Art About and more.

Make sure you are in Port A for this 'once in 100 years' party!

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Byrd Minter: 1906-1997

Charter & Lifetime Member Hall of Fame

Port Aransas Boatmen, Inc.

Submitted by PAPHA Board Member Mark Creighton

Byrd started his charter business by the age of eight charging people to take them fishing in a row boat. Leaving from his fathers fish house in Aransas Pass Harbor, they fished in Redfish Bay, around the Old Terminal, the guts and slough behind the lighthouse, the flats in South Bay and the Ransom's Island hole.

By the time he was 18, he was going into the gulf using his shrimp boat, when not shrimping. The catches were typical mackerel, kings and tarpon. When snapper fishing he would see and occasionally catch a sailfish. He knew they could consistently be caught if only he knew how. In 1937 a west coast tuna fisherman stopped by the Minter Fishhouse to make arrangements to buy shrimp. During conversation he told Byrd marlin and sailfish were plentiful in the Baja - Gulf of California. He suggested San Carlos Bay near Guaymas as the ideal location because of it's closeness to the U.S. border. He talked Mr. G. A. C. Haiff of San Antonio and his friend Dave Prior into making the trip to Guaymas, Sonora. Mr. Haiff had a big home on the seawall in Aransas, a 28' twin engine Chris Craft which Byrd cared for and operated when he was down. After planning and building a special trailer, in early April 39 the 'Olita' was put on the trailer and Byrd with a helper headed off on a 1,350 mile overland trip to Guaymas. Crossing into Mexico at Nogales, AZ the last 250 miles was over trails used by mule drawn freight wagon. This last leg took five days with the help of Indian guides. Mr. Haiff showed up the first of May for a months fishing. Occasionally a guest would show up. The trip was repeated in 1940, 41 & 47.

Prior to departure Byrd went to the Beaumont area with the trailer and new truck to pick up some seasoned Cypress slabs. While gone to Mexico Mr. Albert 'One Arm' Farley of Aransas Pass built him a nice 28' cabin boat for offshore fishing.

The art of bill fishing was learned, catching 2 and 3 striped marlin and several sails most every day. Returning in late June from the Mexico trip the "Lucile" was made ready for Gulf fishing. In late July Byrd proceeded to Port Aransas with the 'Lucile', outriggers attracting attention and ready to go after the sails.

Thus began 47 years of operating out of Port Aransas each summer; as he said "give me 100 days".

Tarpon were "king of the day" but after several weeks he convinced two San Antonio Sports Writers, after going out of sight of land, he could get them back. Each first caught a tarpon then proceeded off shore. Mid afternoon they returned with 6 flags flying. For the next 14 seasons his charters were almost exclusively for sails. His policy was "no fish - no pay". He never had to give a "free-be". Catch and Release was also his policy unless the fish was to be mounted. An early "Port Aransas Boatmen, Inc" flyer listed charter rates at \$15 & \$20 and had added "plus \$5 for sailfishing with Byrd Minter"

Some time around 1950, Charles Urshel, aboard his "Harpoon", fishing a tide streak in the area with Byrd, caught 6 sails with Byrd's party catching 5. The 6 fish records still stand.

Port Isabel invited Byrd to participate in their annual fishing tournament in 1949. He lead a flotilla of boats including the "Harpoon" - the "Siesta" - Mary O'Conner Braman; and one other private yacht across Corpus Bay, through the swing bridge opening into the last leg of the Intracoastal Waterway. After a 2-hour delay while dredges were making their final opening in the "dry cut" they arrived at Port Mansfield for the night. The next day they were welcomed at Port Isabel and an fished the three day tournament.

In the early 30s Byrd started a duck hunting operations using his shrimp

boat. Market hunting of ducks had come to an end. With the 'Lucile' duck hunting operations grew to 4 and 5 blinds every AM and 2 or 3 most afternoons. His blinds ran for 2 miles down the shore line south of No.5 and 6 bridges. This operation continued until the end of the 53 season when he sold decoys and blind locations to Texas Eastern.

In 1954 Byrd acquired a Jersey Seaskiff hauling a work crew to a private oil/gas operations on Shamrock Island. He continued to fish the gulf during this period. In 1964 he returned to Port Aransas full time with the rebuilt 'Mission Belle'. In 1976, at age 70, he decided "to hang it up". But the Dolphin Docks said NO! Byrd continued for 5 more years with the "Hustlet V". Again saying "it was time to hang it up".

But NO! said a longtime friend who bought a new boat for him to take care of and charter. Then on July 3, 1986, his 80th birthday, Byrd "hung it up" for the last time. He was due to renew his 12th Coast Guard Certificate which represented 60 years completed as certified to "Operate Motor Vessels for the United States and its Territories" it says.

A charter fishing guide for 72 years, he chartered into the Gulf for 62 years. Those who boarded his boats were a Mexican President, two future U.S. presidents, the abdicated King Of England. His customers were too numerous to mention, but there was a special. The week before he finally "hung it up", he was most pleased when a grandfather, taking his 10 yr. old grandson on his 1st deep sea fishing trip introduced them by saying "I want my grandson to have the same experience I did when my grandfather took me on my 1st deep sea fishing trip - you were the captain" - yes five generations of one family.

There were two families of four generations. All were - more than customers, they were best of friends.

One day in See 'Minter' on Page 4

An Island Neighbor to the North

Guthrie Ford and Mark Creighton

Matagorda Island lies just across Cedar Bayou from St. Jo; and like St. Jo, it is predominantly unpopulated. Nevertheless, Matagorda does have interesting historical features, and Mark and I recently climbed into his Cessna to bring them to you.

Over-flying Matagorda from the south, the first historical observation is of faint zig-zag impressions running across the island. They were created when Confederate engineers dug rifle pits in 1862. These were manned by infantry in defense of Fort Esperanza, a large artillery emplacement. The rifle pits saw plenty of action in November 1863 when Federal General TEG Ransom led a force of 1,500 up Matagorda to attack Fort Esperanza. The Confederates held out two days before spiking their guns, blowing up the munitions, and evacuating the island. (Nothing is left of the fort.)

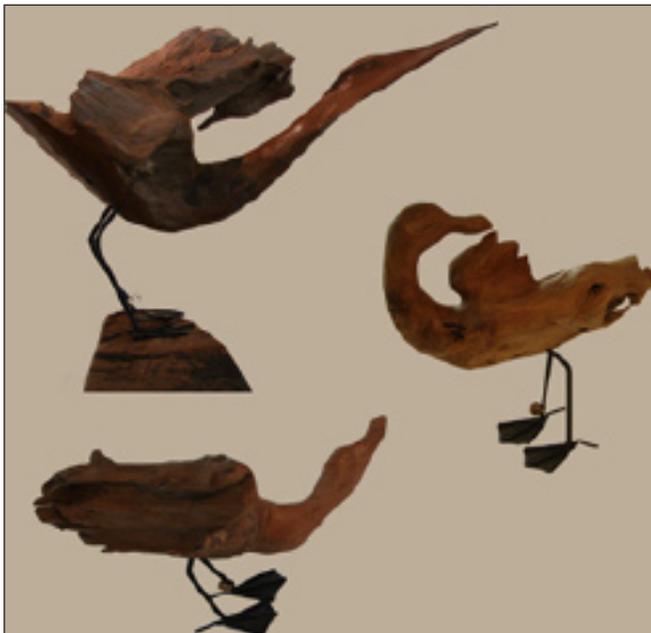
The next historical feature appearing over the nose of the aircraft was a matrix of parallel roads. In fact, these are runways of a 1943 Army Air Forces field, identified on a wartime chart as “Matagorda Island Gunnery Range.” Undoubtedly, that name reflected the field being integral to the 50,825 acre Matagorda bombing and gunnery range. Closed after the war, the field was re-activated by the US Air Force in 1949, when its name became “Matagorda Island Air Force Base.” As it had during WWII, the base served the Matagorda bomb range. The base closed in 1975.

Port A has at least one tie to this historic facility: Chief Warrant Officer Barney Farley served there during WWII.

The last historical feature obvious from the air is the Matagorda lighthouse. Built in 1852, it is the oldest of the three light sisters of the mid to south Texas coast: the 1853 Port Isabel light and the 1857 Aransas Pass (our) light.



Photos by Guthrie Ford



Exotic Birds for sale

Artist Parker Price has joined the list of vendors at the Port Aransas Museum Gift Shop.

Price says, “Teak wood roots, submerged beneath the Indonesian soil, have recently been rediscovered, there majestic trees cut by the Dutch over 100 years ago. Mother nature has eroded and shaped these roots with time and rain...leaving beautifully shaped roots that resemble the feathers of seabirds.

Parker Price and his team of artist have taken these roots and discovered the hidden seabirds waiting inside to be discovered and brought to life. So the final piece of art is truly a collaboration between Mother Nature and Mankind. Enjoy these unique sculptures that we call “Flying Teak” – presented in part by Mother Nature and in part by Human beings!!!!”

**Sport Fishing Exhibit
Coming at the end of June**



More Birds ...

Also available for purchase at the Museum Gift Shop are affordable and cute plastic birds in different poses.

Stephanie Mikeska has always loved working in the garden and wanted to buy garden art to add to her spaces.

However, everything she saw had some parts that would rust, as she lives in Rockport, Texas.

That's when she was inspired to design and manufacture her marvelous Yard Birds. They're entirely constructed, by Stephanie and her husband, Calvin, from PVC pipe products. Nothing will rust.

Each bird has its own personality and looks great among the plants in a garden.

Visitors to the museum can see one in the garden in front of the museum, or see a selection for sale inside the gift shop at the Port Aransas Museum.

More styles will be added soon, including one that moves in the breeze. They're all designed with pointed bottoms that are easily anchored into the soil. Some are blue herons and some are white cranes and they're available in several sizes.

361-749-3800
portaransasmuseum.org

Introducing an exciting new way to share your love for homes: Come check-in @home!

From our friend Josh Lasserre of the Texas Historical Commission

Some people like their homes. At the National Trust for Historic Preservation, we know that there are many who really love them. That's why we want to tell you about @home, our new online community for people who love homes to share ideas, resources, and more.

Over the last sixty years, we've learned a thing or two about saving historic places, including the fact that one of the best ways to save historic places is to celebrate them. That's why we created @home - to give people like yourself an opportunity to celebrate the story of your home, as well as share pictures and home improvement tips with other people who are as passionate about their home as you are about yours.

When you think about it, every person who cares for their home is part of the preservation movement. But sadly, we've got a bit of a PR problem. Too many people think of historic preservation as something that keeps them from living the life they want, in the home they love, rather than as a tool to help them do just that.

We're counting on @home as a way to begin to change that perception, by introducing a whole new generation of homeowners to historic preservation - the preservation that you and I know

and love. Preservation that says whether you're moving into your first place or caring for a family heirloom - you are part of our community. Whether you're restoring each detail of an 1850's Victorian to its original glory or respectfully rehabbing a 1950's modernist ranch to include another badly needed bathroom - you are part of our community. Preservation that says "Every home has a story and we want to know yours."

Getting started @home is easy. Simply click the link below to create a profile for your pride and joy - post pictures, share your home's history, and even find other home aficionados in your area. It's that easy!

CREATE YOUR PROFILE TODAY!

Whether you're trading tips, taking a home personality quiz, or taking part in our "First to 50" challenge, your passion, pride, and involvement will help the @home community grow. So check it out for yourself, spread the word, and get started on your @home profile.

Every home has a story. Come by and share yours today.

@home is a project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the nation's leading nonprofit organization helping people protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them.

Learn more by visiting: All Things Preservation - Preservation Nation; News and Stories - Preservation Online; Heritage Travel - Gozaic

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Minter ——— Cont. from Page 1

1995, while riding around with his son, he wanted to stop by the bronze statue "DOUBLE HEADER" which is at the entrance to Aransas Pass. After walking around the beautiful bronze he said "do you reckon I had something to do with this?" He was reliving history.

After Byrd finally "hung it up" on his 80th birthday for the next 5-6 years he roamed the fishing grounds he knew best in his 18' skiff and outboard with friends, his son and grandchildren. Hurricanes and dredges had changed the fishing grounds, there were too many fast boats, there were size limits, number limits, there were rules and rules - -

Born to Fish - Forced to Work - He Had the Best of Both Worlds.