

Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association

Volume 4, Issue 10

PAPHA Newsletter

October 2010



Poet Includes Port A in Tour

Karla K. Morton, the 2010 Poet Laureate of Texas, made a stop in Port Aransas on Wednesday, Oct. 6. The stop in Port Aransas Schools was part of the Little Town, Texas Tour, where she is taking poetry and the arts into schools, universities, organizations and more across Texas.

Her stay in Port A included a trip to the Little Chapel in the Dunes, where she graced us with multiple readings of her poetry.

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Centennial Celebration

See page 3 for schedule

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Extra Extra

Extra copies of the Centennial edition, a special publication by the *South Jetty* newspaper, will be

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Old Town Festival Timeline



9am: Little Chapel on the Dunes tour [meet at Museum]

10am: Old Catholic Church tour [behind Community Center]

11am: Little Chapel on the Dunes tour [meet at Museum]

12 noon: Port Aransas Museum opens - open until 5pm.

12:45pm: Line up for parade at the Community Presbyterian Church, 113 N. Alister

1pm: Parade through Old Town starts. Parade route: [Find a place along the route to watch in not participating] From church, right on Alister Street, right on Roberts, left on Church - passing Gibbs Cottages, Community Center, old city hall & jail; right on Oakes - passing the old Catholic Church, the Mercer Cemetery; left on Mercer - passing the old Studeman house, the old Mercer house, the old Farley house; left on White; right on Station; left on Cotter - passing the Tarpon Inn; left on Alister ending at the Museum.

1-4pm: Community Center open for non-profit & civic groups, merchants selling items, informing public of missions and accomplishments

2pm on Port Aransas Museum/Community Center grounds:

* **Welcome** by State Representative Todd Hunter and Pre-cinct 4 Nueces County Commissioner Chuck Cazalas;

* **Winners of Piggy Perch Contest** by Jr. Boatmen

* **Winners of Boatmen Centennial Fishing Tournament**

* **Dedication of State Historical Marker** by Guthrie Ford [A new state historical marker, "Mustang Island," will be dedicated on Saturday, October the 16th. The marker tells the multifaceted story of Mustang Island as a submerged shoal, a Karankawa haunt, a settlers' frontier, hunting and fishing paradise, and eventually a nationally recognized tourist destination.]

* **Time Capsule burial**

2:30-4pm: **Storytelling** under tent in the Old Catholic Church compound on Church Street behind the Community Center at 408 N. Alister St. Speakers include Peggy Nelson, Shirley Ehman, Vonnie Tanner, Verona Dorris, Marguerite Moore, Bubba Milina and Una Farley.

2:30-4pm: **Old Catholic Church** tours.

3pm: Little Chapel on the Dunes tour [meet at Museum]

Those at the Very Beginning

By John Guthrie Ford

As we celebrate an anniversary, it is meaningful to reach back to the very human beginnings of Mustang Island. In terms of settling the island as a place for permanent habitation, one can reach back no further than the Robert A. Mercer family.

Emigrating from England, Robert and Agnes Mercer arrived in Indiana in 1830, later moving with their nine children to Mobile, Alabama. From there, Robert sailed to Texas *circa* 1853 to investigate the relatively new state of Texas. (Attracted to the coastal climes, he remained on San José Island.) In August 1855, Agnes and the three youngest Mercers, Mary Agnes, Edward, and John, joined her husband, and the family crossed the pass to settle on unpopulated Mustang Island. (Seasonal habitation by the native Karankawa was long over.) Evidence of the family's success is in Agnes' 1856 letter to a daughter in Mobile: "We have plenty of provisions to last til Christmas, and beef, pork, and mutton for life.... We have over 40 young calves, 20 milk cows, and

have plenty of milk and butter...."

Others joined the Mercers, and at the start of the Civil War about a dozen families were settled on the Island. The good life changed dramatically when the Federal (Union) navy clamped a blockade on the Aransas Pass and began removing Mustang livestock. In response, a group of Islanders fired on a Federal party on February 11, 1862, and the next day sailors came ashore and torched the Mercer and Thomas Clubb places. As did all their neighbors, Robert and family left Mustang for the duration of the war; the Mercers went to Indian Point on Nueces Bay (where Agnes expired in 1863).

When the Mercers returned, they engaged in the booming Reconstruction livestock economy, managing cattle and shipping them from Mustang Island to area packeries. Additionally, the Mercer men were involved in the maritime world: Robert as Wreck Master, Nueces County Maritime District, and John and Edward (aka Ned) as bar pilots. In 1880, John was appointed the

first Keeper (Officer in Charge) of the Aransas Life Saving Station (forerunner of the Coast Guard station).

Robert Mercer saw his children married before expiring in 1875 (at the age of 76). Mary Agnes wed Frank Stephenson (*c.* 1865), an upcoming Island entrepreneur. (The belief that the Lydia Ann Channel was named for the Stephenson daughter is incorrect; the channel was named for Lydia Anna Dana Hasting Hull Wells.) Edward married Emma Thompson in 1873, and a year later John wed Emma Scott. (Edward and John's Emmas were referred to as Big and Little, respectively.) It was Edward and Big Emma's son Robert whom some believe was associated with the early 20th century prefabricated house that became the Port Aransas Museum.

John and Little Emma had a son, John Jr. He in turn had a daughter, Eva Rae. Eva (b. 1930, d. 2008) is notable for keeping and preserving the famous Mercer Logs. Indeed, Eva willed the logs to the PAPHA.



Are you making a difference?

Have you ever said "I want to help do this" or "I'd like to be involved in that"? Many people have grand intentions but forget about the importance of following through. It is far better to take the time to complete small deeds than to spend your time talking about what you want to do someday. Sometimes you may feel that a small deed will not make a difference. Just remember that every bit--even a small bit--helps. **Every good deed makes a difference to someone.**

1940s fun

Beach family 1947 above. At left, beach truck. Below, kids in a tub at Rock Cottages in 1940s.



Docent Doings By Docent Coordinator Mary Hammond-McKnight

The docents' September meeting was held Saturday, Sept. 8. Breakfast and Mimosas were served. A superb egg casserole was brought by Pepper Pendzinski [recipe at right].

The October meeting was held Saturday, Oct. 9, to discuss volunteer needs for the Old Town Festival /Centennial Celebration.

Pepper Pendzinski and Karen Larsen are preparing to "kick off" our second annual Docent "Dinner To Go Raffle" with a new "mystery chef". Raffle packets will be distributed to the docents Saturday, Oct. 30, and the drawing will be held at the museum Saturday, February 5, 2011. Corrine Van Veen was our lucky winner of the fabulous dinner 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 served prepared by "mystery chef" Mary Henkel-Jud-

son last year. The winner also received a basket with a tablecloth, candles and bottle of wine to accompany the meal. It was delivered, not served. The docent program made more than \$2000 from last year's raffle, and we expect to do even better this year.

The children's coloring book project that has been put together by docent Arlene Hughes in collaboration with the Art Center For The Islands and Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce will be available for sale for \$5 at the museum, the art center and the chamber beginning Oct. 16, for the Centennial Celebration. The coloring books' art work was done by 4th and 5th grade classes of 2009 - 2010 in Gay De Montel's art classroom; the prose was written by 4th grade students under the direction of Clare Mathews Adams.

Docent Gary Ramsey has spent many hours mapping the bricks/pavers that have been laid in the sidewalk of the Community Center and the museum. It

is now an easy task for each purchaser/honoree to locate their brick/paver. There has been a delay in getting those bricks/pavers that have been purchased since the beginning of the year, but orders are now at the engravers, and we should be receiving them shortly for placement.

Kim's Breakfast Bake

Prepare 1 [8.5 oz] pkg. Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix
Bake in 8" x 8" pan

Cool

Spray 9" x 13" baking pan with Pam

Cut ½ sweet onion & saute in 2 T of butter

Break up cornbread in 9" x 13" pan

* Add 8- 12 oz diced ham

* Add onions

* Add 1 or 2 [7 oz.] cans drained mushrooms

* Add 8 oz. shredded sharp cheddar cheese

* Make sure it is all spread evenly over cornbread

Beat 2 eggs & 1 ½ cup milk with salt & pepper

Pour over ingredients in pan

Sit in fridge overnight

Bake at 350 until set [30-45 min]

Serve and Enjoy!

Centennial Celebration Schedule

• Safe light - noon: **Fishing Tournament** by Port Aransas Boatmen. Weigh-in at Woody's Sports Center; winners announced after parade. www.paboatmen.org

• 8-11am: Hourly tours **Wetlands Education Center**

Fun Family Activities in Roberts Point Park

• 9-10am: **Piggy Perch Contest** (free) by Junior Boatmen, Roberts Point Park Pavilion: winners announced after parade

• 9am: **Kick off with Mayor Keith McMullin.**

• 9:30am: **Activities under the tents and on grounds** include old fashioned games, face painting, toss the can, spin the wheel, toss the boot, plant swap - all free.

• 9:30am: **Entertainment by Port Aransas Community Theatre** with songs and skits. Port Aransas Idol David Beane will MC and perform.

• 9:30-11:30am: **Coastal Paint-Out 2010** - Quick Draw for artists in Roberts Point Park. Paintings will be sold with sales benefitting Port Aransas Museum.

• 10:45am: **Westmutter Island Dog Show**, with judging in 5 categories, Best Kisser, Best Tailwagger, Best Trick, Hollywood Here I Come and Look-a-Like.

** Families and individuals are invited to bring lunches or snacks to picnic together. Lemonade, popcorn, cotton candy, water and sodas will be available at cost or free by local non-profit organizations **

Centennial mementos commemorative wooden ornaments and visors will be available for purchase.

Stamp Cancellation Another Memento

Here's another way to get something to save as a keepsake piece of the 100th birthday of Port Aransas. This is courtesy of the Port Aransas Post Office.

This will be with a special pictorial postmark cancellation. The postmark features the official centennial logo, "Port Aransas - Celebrating 100 Years of Fun," with the date.

If you ask for it, first class mail sent on Oct. 16, and for the following 60 days, will be cancelled with the commemorative postmark. This cancellation is free for the first 50 pieces of mail. More than 50 pieces will be charged \$.50 per item.

A representative will be at the celebration on Oct. 16 in Roberts Point Park in the morning and in the Community Center in the afternoon doing cancellations. You may bring your own cards and envelopes or purchase them from the representative. For mailing, postage is still required.

Businesses join in celebration

Some restaurants will sell box lunches at their establishments for pick up to take to the park for picnic lunch. Others, such as the Back Porch, will give a complimentary Centennial drink or have a special menu item to commemorate the event.

Check the *South Jetty* newspaper ads and billboards around town for details.



Poet

Cont. from Page 1

The Chapel was built by the Carter family for matriarch Aline Carter, who was the Texas Poet Laureate in 1935. As the first female Texas Poet Laureate in nearly 20 years, she has been described as “one of the more adventurous voices in American poetry”

Her poetry, which spans many subjects and forms, has been widely published in literary journals.

Among other works, her *Redefining Beauty* is a 2010 Next Generation Indie Book Award Winner written during Morton’s journey through cancer diagnosis, treatment and recovery.

An avid photographer, Morton has had several showings of her black and white artwork across the state, and loves to mix poetry with other art forms.

Morton was born in Fort Worth, graduated from Mansfield High School, holds a Journalism degree from Texas A&M University and currently resides in Denton, Texas, with her two children and husband.



Extra

Cont. from Page 1

available for purchase, with all proceeds benefitting the Port Aransas Museum. The keepsake issue will be an insert in the Oct. 14 issue of the paper to coincide with our Centennial Celebration and Old Town Festival.

The edition will feature the history of many businesses, along with the organizations, churches and schools. Also included will be a history of Port Aransas by historian and author John Guthrie Ford.

The extra Centennial publication will sell for \$5, and may be found at the Port Aransas Museum, Art Center For The Islands, Port A Gallery, Mustang Art Gallery, Felder’s Art Gallery and Potters On Cotter.



Back when

Above, clockwise from back, Port Aransas Museum Director Rick Pratt talks with Manny Mathews, Marcy Mathews Ward Thomas and Karla Morton about what it was like to listen to Aline Carter telling Bible stories. Below, Marcy and Manny pose in front of the altar, and Marcy and Karla chat.



PA·ART·ABOUT↑



4th Annual Art Walk
Saturday
October 16th 4-7pm

Galleries > Studios > Design > Port Aransas

1. Potters on Cotter
2. Debra Wilbanks Williams Studio
3. Bam Bam Artwares
4. Lazy Boy Lounge
5. Port A Gallery
6. Art Center for the Islands
7. Susan Castor Collection
8. Cita Resort Interiors
9. Donna Van Baalen Studio
10. Felder Gallery
11. A Mano
12. Mustang Island Art Gallery
13. Ida Ayala Pauken Studio

Art Center phone: 361-749-7334 www.portaransasartcenter.org

Maps for the Art Walk & Refreshments available at all loca-





"Pilot boat" by Rasty Jones

Port Aransas Coastal Paint-Out 2010

Schedule of Events

Thursday & Friday, Oct 14-15

All Day throughout the area

These 12 award-winning artists spend 2 days pulling out all the stops to capture the splendor of our bays, beaches and Old Town community. Look for them and gather around to watch as they create beautiful works of art. They'll be particularly active during the magic times of early morning and late afternoon into evening.

Saturday Oct 16

9:30-11:30 Quick Draw - Robert's Point Park

Join the artists at Robert's Point Park as they set up in the midst of the Port Aransas Centennial Picnic for the final brush to brush competition. At the sound of bagpipes the **Quick Draw** begins. Two short hours later the pipes call again, signaling time to stop painting. By then these artists will have created an incredible collection of art available for purchase later in the afternoon.

4 - 7 p.m. Reception, Show & Sale - Port A Gallery

Port A Gallery hosts an exhibition and sale of fresh and lovely paintings created during this splendid 3-day plein air event. **Vote for your favorite painting from the Quick Draw**; at the end of the evening one of these gifted artists will be presented the much desired **People's Choice Award**. Each artist will also exhibit two additional paintings produced during the Paint Out. These will be judged by their peers for the equally coveted **Artist Choice Award**.

This is a great opportunity to meet these renowned artists and purchase a piece of fine art produced right here in Port Aransas. If you are looking for a particular scene, commissions can be easily arranged. **All sales will benefit the Port Aransas Museum.**

Sunday Oct 17

Noon to 4 p.m. - Port A Gallery

Final Show and sale of paintings created during the grandest art event ever on our little island, the *3rd Annual Port Aransas Coastal Paint-Out 2010*.

This will be an unforgettable affair you won't want to miss,
Be there!

Port A Gallery, LLC

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