

Lancaster Historical Society

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New Officers = New Goals for LHS

At the February meeting of the LHS Board of Directors, new club president Patricia Siegfried-Giles presented her goals for the organization and a lively discussion ensued. These goals were presented to the full membership at the March meeting and were discussed further in a roundtable format. Members and visitors focused on four primary areas of interest to the club:

- Attaining higher and more positive visibility for LHS in Lancaster;
- Becoming an advocate for preservation; educating others about local history and its significance to the community;
- Producing a series of mini-fundraisers; and
- Producing interesting and educational programs for meetings.

Many exciting ideas were generated, and we'll follow up on them in future meetings. In addition, be sure to read more on this subject elsewhere in this newsletter.

2004 Schedule

The general membership of the Lancaster Historical Society meets at the historic MKT Depot on the third Sunday of every other month. The Depot is located next to the railroad tracks on Pecan Street, just East of Centre Street. Refreshments are served at 3:30 PM, and the meeting follows at 4:00 PM. Visitors are always welcome!

Upcoming Meetings:

Sunday, May 16

Picnic at the Depot with Show & Tell

Sunday, July 18

Lancaster Libraries

Sunday, September 19

School Daze

Sunday, November 21

Program to be announced soon!



Would you like to receive meeting reminders via e-mail? If so, send a message to board secretary Lynnette Lakey Taff at llt@lonestarmail.net.



Representatives of the Greater Dallas Bicycle Club say that their annual Lancaster Country Ride is the most popular of all their scheduled events. LHS worked hard to be a part of it this year.



Did you know....?

... Lancaster, Texas was named after Lancaster, Kentucky?

Abram Bledsoe bought half of the Roderick Rawlins survey in 1847 and five years later laid out a city plan near the community of Pleasant Run. He named his new township after his birthplace.

Source: The Handbook of Texas Online

www.tsha.utexas.edu

Bicycles, Bluebonnets, and Beginnings

The day started early for a few LHS board members on 2nd Saturday in April. That was the day some 1,000 bicyclists from the Greater Dallas Bicycle Club passed through Lancaster as they made their annual trek along the bluebonnet trail.

As one of our first efforts to raise the profile of LHS in our community,

board members agreed to participate in this event. In partnership with the Lancaster Lions Club, LHS set up a charcoal grill at the south end of the Lions Club parking lot and offered hot dogs, chips, and soft drinks for sale to bicyclists (and any other passers-by).

While our profits on this enterprise were modest,

board members agreed that our participation was a good beginning for our PR campaign. We learned a few things that we hope to put to use when we participate in this or other area events in the future. And we had a good time doing it. What more could we ask?



Wanted: A Few Good Men (and Women)

Because we must raise every penny we spend on repairs and maintenance for the historic MKT Depot, the LHS board is making plans for occasional “work parties” to take care of minor needs. We hope you’ll roll up your sleeves and help!

Opened in 1889, the Depot has seen many

changes, from the installation of telegraph lines, to the addition of electricity in 1921, to a major storm in 1936 that nearly destroyed the structure, to its relocation. Through the years, the Depot has served as a charming reminder of days gone by, and has also served as a meeting place for various

civic organizations. It currently serves as the meeting location for LHS and at least one historic neighborhood homeowners association. In addition, the Rose Garden is a popular place for taking special occasion photographs such as wedding portraits.

If you’re interested in volunteering a few hours of your time to help maintain this important piece of local history, please contact LHS president Patricia Siegfried-Giles at 972-227-5714.



MKT Depot as it looked when it was in use as a train depot.



Raising the Profile of LHS

One of the recurring themes in all of the roundtable discussions at the March meeting of the general membership was that we need to work harder to increase awareness of LHS and its good works in the community. Many people think of LHS as being more about the “Society” in our name than about local history or preservation.

To help change our image and raise our profile, a few members volunteered to take on special PR-type tasks.

If you’ve been reading the *Today News*, you may have

noticed one of the first steps we’ve taken. We’ve sent them information about our meeting schedule, and they’ve been kind enough to give us column space. In the future, we plan to submit one article each month about interesting people, places, or events that relate to Lancaster history.

Further evidence of our commitment to keep the community better informed of our activities is the publication of this newsletter. Minutes from each meeting are read at the following meeting, but it was suggested that

many members might enjoy reading a more “user friendly” record of the goings-on of this club. So while the official minutes satisfy the requirements of the bylaws, we hope you will find our newsletters to be more entertaining and enlightening.

Many other ideas were considered, so stay on the look-out for news and information about LHS appearing at a venue near you. And when you’re asked to do your part to spread the word, please say yes!



Tell us what you think—please! The LHS board of directors would like to know whether you think this newsletter is a worthwhile endeavor. In addition, we would love to hear from you if you have a bit of local history to share with the membership. Contact board secretary Lynnette Lakey Taff by telephone at 214-616-6961 or by e-mail at llt@lonestarmail.net. Thank you!

Becoming an Advocate for Preservation

LHS board member Jer Giles reports that the City of Lancaster has invited our organization to be involved in discussions about the preservation of historic buildings and sites in the community. Jer suggests that LHS should not only accept the invitation, but also take measures to become the real experts in this area so that we may take a leadership role.

Among our membership,

we already count many citizens whose families were local pioneers, so we have a wealth of knowledge at our disposal. In addition, we are fortunate to count our mayor and some city council members among our numbers. These individuals bring another dimension of knowledge and understanding that will help LHS become the recognized authority on preservation in this community.

At our March meeting, LHS members suggested that we consider working to pursue historic designations for several local landmarks, including Rocky Creek School, Rawlins Cemetery, and Edgewood Cemetery. Member and councilwoman Carol Strain-Burk has expertise in this area, having just completed work toward getting Indian Springs designated as a historic district.

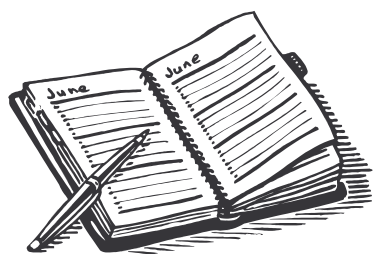


This is just one example of the many historic markers around town. This one is in front of First Presbyterian Church at 301 E. First Street.

Lancaster Historical Society



P. O. Box 173 ❖ Lancaster, TX 75146



Mark your calendar now and make plans to attend our next meeting at 3:30 PM on Sunday, May 16, 2004!

Program Plans Announced

At the April meeting of the LHS board of directors, president Patricia Siegfroid-Giles announced program plans for upcoming meetings.

May 16 - Picnic at the Depot with Show & Tell

LHS will furnish fried chicken and you bring your favorite covered dish or dessert. If the weather cooperates, we'll have a picnic in the beautiful Rose Garden, so be sure to bring your chairs

and/or a blanket to spread on the ground.

Members and visitors are encouraged to bring memorabilia from local history, including family records and photos, to share. This is your chance to brag about the pioneers or other notables in your family. We're looking forward to hearing some tall tales!

July 18 - Lancaster Libraries

Did you know that the ladies of the Shakespeare

Club started the first library in Lancaster? Come hear about the history of Lancaster's libraries, presented by the lively Billie Taff, who spent 25 years as the head librarian at Veterans Memorial Library. You're sure to learn something, and you'll be entertained at the same time!

September 19 - School Daze

LHS and LISD are putting together a panel of local experts to teach us

about Lancaster Schools, from the old High School to the formerly segregated Rocky Crest School, to the 21st century educational showcase to be built with funds from the recently approved school bond election. Dr. Larry Lewis, Superintendent of LISD, promises you won't feel like you've been sent to detention!

Mark you calendar now and make plans to attend every meeting. And bring a friend!