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# ACHS NEWSLETTER

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## ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST ATTRACTS 34 ENTRIES

*Winners to be Announced at Calendar Premiere on Sept. 28th*

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### ACHS Officers & Trustees (year term expires)

- Cheryl Livingston, President (2019)
- Marsha Hendrix, Vice Pres. (2020)
- Joan Truelove, Secretary (2018)
- Janie White, Treasurer (2019)
- Ernest Camehl (2018)
- John Jackson (2020)
- Jo Ann Morgan (2019)
- David J. Murrah (2019)
- Timothy Mullin (2019)
- Pam Stranahan (2018)
- Jeanie Schindler (2018)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
 David J. Murrah

The 2017 ACHS Photo Contest began in February and ended May 31. With 34 entries, our judges, Betty Shamel and John Martell, had a pleasant but difficult job selecting five winners. We thank them for their great work.

Our thanks to all those who entered photos in this year's contest. They include Chuck Ayers, Donna Dickinson, Cheryl Livingston, Emily Jane Moncreif, Jo Ann Morgan, Patsy Parr, Richard & Marian Robertson, Charles H. Smith, Joan Truelove, Wayne White, and James "Ozzie" Williams. Their submittals insure that we will have a 2018 Calendar of Historical Photographs that everyone will enjoy. All of the submittals will be on display at the Calendar Premiere on September 28 and at the ACHS Lab.

The Contest winners will be announced at the 2018 Calendar Premiere on September 28. Please put that date on your calendar now!

-----Janie White



Here is an example of the great photographs we receive for the annual Photo Contest. This one, submitted by Donna Dickinson for the 2013 Contest, depicts the old Marion Packing Company cistern in Fulton and was taken about 1920. The photo won second place in the 2013 Contest and was featured in the 2014 Calendar of Historical Photographs.

## NEW HISTORY BOOK NEARLY READY FOR PUBLICATION

The history book on Aransas County families, businesses and organizations is getting close to being ready for the publisher for their editing process. Volunteers continue to work on assigning placement numbers for all the photos, indexing the text, and preparing the manuscript. Thank you for your patience in bearing with us on this lengthy process.

-----Marsha Hendrix

## FROM THE LAB: A message from the President . . . . .

Summer has officially arrived and it's hard to believe we have passed the halfway mark of 2017. **David Murrah** stepped down as President earlier this year and I am the new President. Happily for ACHS, David agreed to continue to produce this popular and information-rich newsletter. Many thanks to David for all his hard work as President.

My family roots in this area are deep. My mother's side of the family are the **Canavero, Smith, Diederich** and **Garrett** families. My husband and I moved here permanently in 2014. I spent many wonderful summers and holidays here growing up and have always been fascinated by the area's rich history.

**The Lab** has been a busy place the past few months, with nearly 400 visitors that registered, and dozens more who did not. We hosted a large number of guests on March 18 for the **History Stroll**. 117 people registered for this event and 68 came to the Lab that Saturday morning to view a varied display of historical photos and documents. Also, **Janie White** spoke with members of the **Historic Survey** team on March 27 and showed historic photos of notable buildings in the area.

Our spring program on April 27<sup>th</sup> at the Maritime Museum also had a large turnout. It featured a talk, entitled "Wood, Water and Liberty" by **Phil Barnes** and focused on the Heldenfels Shipyard at Rockport and the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the U.S. entry into World War I. Thanks to **Janie White, Marsha Hendrix, David Murrah, JoAnn Morgan, Jean Schindler, Ernest Camehl, Joan Truelove** and others for helping with this evening at the Texas Maritime Museum.

Wednesday afternoons at the Lab continue to be a busy, friendly place to do research, ask questions or watch the **historical photo presentations every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month**. Janie White has an interesting selection of beautifully restored photos every month that generate some lively discussions and sharing of memories of Rockport's and Aransas County History. Please come by any Wednesday from 2 – 4 p.m. **All are welcome.**

On June 12<sup>th</sup> nine members of the **Friends of the Aransas County History Center** attended a special presentation at the Lab of photos from the early 1900s. There was discussion of the preservation and restoration of these valuable snapshots of history.

Thanks and appreciation to the recently disbanded **Rockport Computer Users Group**. Special thanks to **Ron Braun and Nancy K. Rodman Smith**. They donated a computer, projector, screen, office chair and \$412.00 to us as they closed out more than three decades of service to this community. Read more about them in the newsletter.

Come visit us on Weds. afternoons 2-4 p.m. We welcome your questions and value your interest in history of Aransas County. Your family history and stories matter to us and the generations to come.

—Cheryl Livingston

## RECENT ACHS SPEAKER HONORED BY TEXAS HERITAGE SONGWRITERS

Texas Heritage Songwriter's Association honored the life of Texas singer- songwriter and former Rockport resident Guy Clark, along with author, music producer, and documentarian Tamara Saviano at the

Darrell K. Royal Homecoming Show in Austin on April 7th.

Tamara wrote the recently published, *Without Getting Killed or Caught* biography of Guy Clark and is working on a documentary on his life. She did research in the ACHS Lab and recorded interviews in Rockport as she wrote the book.



Author Tamara Saviano of Nashville gave the ACHS program in October on songwriter Guy Clark. Photo courtesy Veronika Camehl.



A full house was on hand in April to hear Phil Barnes for the ACHS spring program.

Guy's musical ties to this area are evident in his music. Performing Guy Clark songs and telling stories about Guy at the event were Rodney Crowell, Joe Ely, Bruce Robison, LeeRoy Parnell, Jack Ingram, Verlon Thompson, Terry Allen, Brennen Leigh, Shawn Camp, The Trishas, Noel McKay and Terry McBride. It was a great once in a lifetime night of performances and tribute to Guy and his Texas roots.

—Cheryl Livingston



**Off to the Drag Races?** We received a letter from Jim Skorupski of Inverness, FL asking about drag racing in the 1960s at the Aransas County

Airport. Please contact him if you have any information to share. He can be reached at 352-419-7252 or Lookingglassenginebuilders@gmail.com.

# THIRTY YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE: A HISTORY OF THE ROCKPORT COMPUTER USERS' GROUP

by Phil Albin and Ron Braun

*[Editor's note: After more than thirty years of service to the community, the Rockport Computer Users' Group (RCUG) recently decided to disband as a non-profit organization and gave to ACHS and other non-profits its assets, such as computers, a projector and other equipment. Operating out of its lab in the historic Rockport School, where ACHS is located, RCUG helped hundreds of new computer users over the years to help solve the mystery of new electronics. It performed a valuable service and we shall miss their expertise and being just "down the hall" from us. The article below, compiled by RCUG's first and last presidents, Phil Albin and Ron Braun, provides a brief glimpse into the history and purpose of the club. Its records are also now preserved in the collections of ACHS.*

*Our community owes a great debt of gratitude to RCUG.]*

## From Phil Albin, first president of RCUG:

In the mid 80s Dick Harrington and I were about as deep into computers as anyone in Rockport. Dick was an expert data base guy and I was a "want-a-be". At the time, Dick was employed by the Dow Chemical Company at Seadrift just up the road from Rockport and I was struggling with my second computer, a luggable IBM Compact.



Phil Albin, co-founder and first RCUG president. Photo courtesy Phil Albin.

We loved to talk computers and knew other people in town were trying to use them too. We both thought it would be nice if we could share our interest in computers with others in town. However, we just didn't know who or how many would be interested.

I suggested we advertise with flyers around town for an organizational meeting. We did and to our great surprise more than 25 people showed up one evening

at what was then Live Oak Bank Community Center. Everyone was excited about computers and after much talk, I suggested we meet again and suggested once a month, but many in the group quickly responded, "No, no! Let's do every week.!"

Thus the Rockport computer club was born in May of 1987. I was elected the first president (one's reward for daring to stand up in front of a crowd). Soon after, the members chose the name "Port to Port Computer Users Group," later to become Rockport Computer Users' Group.

The first years of the club were a lot fun with learning and good fellowship. However, bigger and better things were to follow in the club's thirty-year history. As I was the first president, it would be appropriate to let the last president, Ron Braun, tell the rest of the story.

## From Ron Braun, last president of RCUG:

In 2003 RCUG received a Texas infrastructure grant. This was used to purchase computers, monitors and software. An education firm in San Antonio provided classes to club members. In return, the club members subsequently provided classes for the community.



Ron Braun, last president of RCUG. Photo courtesy Ron Braun.

The community of Rockport, through the generosity of the Aransas County Independent School District, also gave RCUG rooms in the historic Rockport School at no charge so that anyone could have access to the internet.

It is difficult to describe the interest that people had in computers in the early days. Classes were filled with people eager to learn about them. The club offered courses in Windows, Excel, Power Point, MS Word, Publisher, Photoshop, and others. A SIG (Special Interest Group) was created

for those interested in digital photography and Apple computers. It also made its computers available to the public five days a week for internet access. From the year 2000 to date, the club has had thousands of visitors and attendees.

Over time, technology advances. Many of the visitors were Winter Texans. As public, free internet access became more widely available in many areas, interest in learning programs waned as newer devices such as Smart Phones and tablets provided many of the features of computers without the learning curve.

In 2013 the club celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Our members recognized then that the landscape was changing. In 2017, they made the difficult decision to dissolve RCUG as a non-profit organization and to meet informally on a biweekly basis.

As the last President of RCUG I would like to thank the people of Rockport, ACISD, and the many members who helped the club grow and prosper. It could not have succeeded without their efforts. The decision to dissolve is a testament to change. RCUG was there when it was needed and now there are new avenues of technology and vistas ahead. Our members welcome and look forward to these changes.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE UPCOMING ACHS PROGRAMS!**

September 28: Calendar Premiere Party

October 12: Schools of Aransas County

**NOVEMBER 16: ROCKPORT'S HISTORIC CHURCHES**  
Time and place TBA

**Aransas County Historical Commission (CHC)**

The Historical Commission was awarded the 2016 Distinguished Service Award by THC. In 2017 the CHC welcomed new members: Jerry Brundrett, Mike Greer, and Barbara Gutner.

Plans for 2017-18 include identifying and nominating 2-3 sites for Historical Markers; distributing the ACHS Calendar of Historical Photos to 200 fourth graders; and supporting the Survey of Historic Resources with 17 volunteers walking the Heritage District.

Monica Burdette, a Commissioner for the Texas Historical Commission, attended the March meeting and expressed her interest in local historical preservation efforts.

**Aransas Pathways**

Many Pathways projects have gotten more visitors due to marketing efforts. The recent Stroll thru Rockport and Stroll Thru Fulton maps feature sites identified by Pathways. These new maps give visitors a route to follow to see the sites and are distributed at the Visitor Center of the Chamber of Commerce. Spring Fling reporters mentioned Pathways in their follow-up articles.

The Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary was re-dedicated in May with new signage showing birds, flowers, butterflies and history. “Coffee with Connie” was celebrated with 114



New signage at the Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary. Photo courtesy Pam Stranahan.

people attending. A kayak site at St. Charles Bay in Lamar was opened in June and features a handi-cap launch to enable more folks to get out on the bay for paddling and fishing.

**History Center**

The History Center for Aransas County will feature "Foodways: Culinary Traditions of Aransas County" opening on Saturday, July 22, 2017 at 6 p.m. Judge Mills and Monica Burdette, THC, will open the event. Member’s preview begins at 5:30 p.m. This exhibit showcases the area's unique heritage of Native Americans foraging and hunting, turtle canneries, cattle packeries, shrimping, fishing, hunting and oystering, truck farming, diners, drive-ins and



**Aransas County Judge C.H. “Burt” Mills, far right, presented the 2016 Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Historical Commission to the members of the ACHC during the Aransas County commissioners’ regular meeting on Monday, June 12.** Accepting the award are ACHC members, front row, from left, Linda Garcia Haynes (secretary) and Carol Thompson (chairman); back row, from left, Collin Jackson, Cassandra Perkins (treasurer), Barbara Gurtner, Jerry Brundrett, Mike Geer, Betty Stiles, and Geoff Bywater. Photo courtesy *Rockport Pilot*.

cafes, and community cook-books used as fund-raisers for non-profit groups.

The History Center is a venue of Aransas Pathways and is open to the public Saturdays 10 AM - 2 PM and Sundays 1-4 PM at 801 E. Cedar St. See its website at [www.aransashistorycenter.org](http://www.aransashistorycenter.org).

**Second Wednesday is PICTURES OF THE PAST DAY AT THE ACHS LAB!**



Come to the Lab on the **Second Wednesday of the month at 2 pm** for a showing of great historical pictures from the past! The Lab is open for research from 2-4 pm every Wednesday at the old Rockport School, 615 N. Live Oak, home of the **THE ARANSAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

