

Aug. 2009
Sheri Zoch, Editor

JAILHOUSE NEWS



Hey Gang,
We're almost up to 100 members strong !

Red Top Jail Garage Sale Sat., Sept. 19. Yeah, I know the city just had a big one, but we'll do another one in September. WE NEED ALL OF YOUR JUNK. Please set it aside and call us to donate. Everything that doesn't sell will go to the Llano Thrift Shop. Every sale at the jail will go to its restoration. We need lots of stuff, so go through your closets and see what you don't need.

Heritage Days, October 17. We will conduct jail tours, raffle a quilt (read on), feature a painting/rendition competition (shoot out!) and more!

Red Top Jail Paint-out! Sharpen up your pencils, clean your brushes, get your camera and take a shot at a rendition of the Red Top. We're having an artistic competition for the best painting/picture of the Red Top. The judging will occur during Heritage Days. Watch for details in the newspapers.



Sherry's Dream Quilt Raffle to Benefit the Red Top. No, it's not me, but Sherry Minzenmayer, a quilter who passed away recently. It was her wish to make this quilt as a fundraiser to benefit the Friends of the Llano Red Top Jail. The "Friendship Quilters, 2009" are raffling this beautiful quilt featuring the old jail, Inks bridge, courthouse, Southern Hotel and Episcopal church, all Llano landmarks. True to Sherry's dream, the proceeds will all go to the restoration of the Red Top. We thank Vivian Horlen, Brenda Reagor, Pat Winn, Ann Feller, Sheila Halliburton, Betty Tuckness, Carole Williams and Donna Rundell.

Interestingly, years ago the Daughters of the Republic of Texas also raffled a quilt made by Betty Sue Grenwelge Thames. The prices for the quilt were the same, \$2/ticket or 3 for \$5. It was also a full/queen size quilt. Guess we're just reinventing history?



HISTORY CORNER (*New feature*) **1972 Highlander Newspaper article found.**

LaNell McKinney donated this gem to the Friends. Ovetra reproduced this article so that we can display it at the jail (thanks ladies). The original article is in our safety deposit box.

Entitled “Llano Jail, Rich in History, Poor in Practicality”, this Highlander Newspaper article describes the history of the jail and the state of its use in 1972. If you remember, the Red Top was used as a jail until 1982. A picture of the front shows a sign that lists “Visiting Hours” (**can’t read the hours**) and says “No Loitering”.

The article shows a picture of the south jail cells used for solitary confinement and states, “the only ‘furniture’ in this area, which includes the two cells and the corridor room, is the commode pictured...The only cell with any privacy whatsoever is the solitary confinement cell, which has no beds or chairs...”

Another picture in the article shows the female prison accommodations. The caption for the photo reads, “YOU CALL THIS PRIVACY?—This narrow curtain is the only means of privacy offered to female prisoners in the Llano County Jail, despite the fact that the women’s cell is in plain view of the three cells used to confine male prisoners.” The last Red Top Jail Sheriff, Gale Ligon, was quoted saying that the Red Top has been “condemned by everybody who has seen it.” Several officers stated that “it actually embarrassed them to have to bring a woman into the jail. The curtain was so narrow that the commodes were in plain view.” From the picture, the curtain is indeed tiny, spanning only 3 iron bars out of 14, and the commodes are in brazen view! *We believe it to include the only picture of the women’s cell curtain.*

The article goes on to mention the inadequacy of sanitation, ventilation, heating and lighting, as well as large structural cracks and fire issues. It ends saying, “The county will soon be forced to action by Texas law, so public interest should provide a way to save the jail (*editor’s emphasis!*) and at the same time meet the responsibility of housing its prisoners according to Texas law.” If anyone knows the author of this article, Jan Ward, or her family, please tell them that we indeed care.

If anyone has any old items related to the jail, please let us know. We appreciate all that you can add to our history and will treat them with respect.

Architectural Master Plan nears completion and defines our future.

Karl Komatsu Architecture in Fort Worth has completed 65% of this plan for the restoration of the Red Top Jail. The plan will guide our efforts to restore the jail. Believe me, when I got into this jail preservation gig, I had no idea what to do first. At that time, Mayor Pinckney sent me to a grantwriting workshop at the Texas Historical Commission, where I learned the order of successful Texas grantsmanship endeavors. Prior to that, Llano had already obtained a preliminary structural engineering plan from Pat Sparks Engineering, who recommended that we also needed an architectural master plan. A grant from the National Trust and matching money from the City of Llano accomplished that. The first part of the Sparks report was to restore the roof. And... *We got ‘er done!*

New Business Members. We have new Business Class members who donated \$100. They will get their name on the sign in front of the jail as special donors. Thanks to Growing Crazy, Llano National Bank, Enchanted Rocks and Jewelry and Tom Shaw of ReMax.

T-Shirt Signage by Previous Red Top Guests. As a laugh, we are getting a T-shirt signed by all living previous inmates of the jail. Hey, if you were a teenager at the time, who cares, right? You are part of a BIG club. We want to get as many people who “Stayed at the Red Top” to sign this shirt as possible for a fundraiser auction later. Call us!

**THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT
FROM THE "FRIENDS OF THE LLANO
RED TOP JAIL" BOARD OF
DIRECTORS: (325 area code)**

President/Editor: Sheri Zoch 248-0284

Vice President: Tom Dalrymple 423-2516

Secretary: Sandy Shaw 247-1787

Treasurer: Ovetra Hartman 247-3188

Member: Frank Rowell 247-4137

Member: Gene Hall 247-4074

APPLICATION FORM

FRIENDS OF THE LLANO RED TOP JAIL

The Friends of the Llano Red Top Jail is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the Llano Red Top Jail and the Doolittle Chapel/School. Members are encouraged to assist in the restoration projects and attend an annual meeting to elect directors and discuss projects.

Name(s): _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Could you help us with: (circle one or more)

Jail tours Work parties (cleaning/painting) Fundraising

Historical research Newsletter Events Marketing

Assisting with bids for contractors Woodworking

Other _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES: (Check one and enclose \$\$\$\$)

Personal: Individual (\$20) Family (\$35)

Business: (Includes your business name on exterior donor sign)
Silver (\$100) Gold (\$500) Platinum (\$1000)

Adopt-A-Pier (\$1200) (Your name on a permanent plaque)

Please print out this form, enclose a check and return to Sandy Shaw, 295 CR 306, Llano, TX 78643. Call Sheri Zoch at 325-248-0284 for questions, comments or ideas. THANK YOU