

Sheri Zoch, Editor
December 2011

JAILHOUSE NEWS

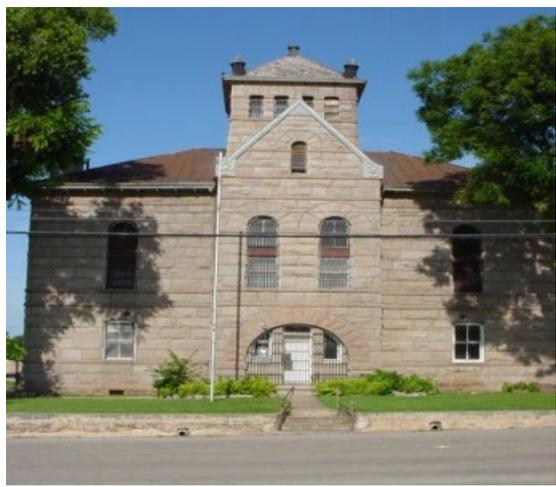


Dear Friends,
It was decided at the last board meeting that the newsletters are now to be *bimonthly*, so expect another one in February.

Dues are due! You've received your renewal letter, so please take the time to fill it out and send it in with your check! Thank you.

October Haunted Llano Tours. For every tour that the Llano Historical Ghost Society gave in October, the Friends of the Llano Red Top Jail received \$1. Kenny Hare and the Society gave 160 tours, so we received \$160! It all helps! Thank you, LHGS.

Christmas Tree Decorated at the Red Top. A lighted Christmas tree graced the lawn of the Red Top over Christmas due to generous donations of ornaments by Friends. While we were decorating, Sandy Shaw paid for the Llano High School band to sing and play carols for us. It was very special and the tree looks beautiful. Thanks to all who participated.



City-wide Garage Sale on January 21. The Friends will collaborate with Llano Main Street again to put on the City-wide Garage Sale, so bring your stuff to sell and volunteer to help. We will need people to man the door and help sell our items. This year, we are trying to sell quality items, collectibles and antiques, so leave the junk at home, please.

Grant Update. The Summerlee Foundation invited the Friends to submit a grant application to help finance the piers. Sheri Zoch will be writing the grant (requesting \$12,500). We were grant request no. 28 and yet were invited to submit a grant, due Jan. 5. Please keep your fingers crossed.

Fused Glass Plaques on sale now to benefit the Friends. Sheri Zoch and Steve Roberts have been creating fused glass plaques emblazoned with the 1900s Red Top Jail photo from Larry Jones on them. The plaque image is in sepia on cream colored glass. Proceeds benefit the Red Top. On sale now for \$15 at the Red Top Jail or at Enchanted Rocks and Jewelry. This project was spawned by the Llano Idea Lab.

Pier Update. The City of Llano rejected bids for the 32 piers needed for the Red Top because they far exceeded the estimate from our engineer. Finley DeGraffenried (city manager) and Tom Dalrymple (our president) are negotiating with Sparks Engineering to determine if we can construct the piers in phases. This would allow us to use our grant money from the Texas Historical Commission and possibly from the Summerlee Foundation. Call a board member for details.

Oral History Project. From our grant with Preserve America (part of the National Parks Service), we were able to fund an oral history project with Llano High School students. *****Deidre Henderson's classes over the past 3 semesters benefitted from audio/ visual/ computer equipment funded from this grant. The students interviewed numerous people who were either part of jailor's families or inmates at the Red Top and wrote up their stories. We even produced a movie: check out YouTube, "Red Top Jail the Movie".

This last semester we closed out this project with a class tour of the Red Top from Mike Reagor (thanks once again, Mike) and interviews from Sam Oatman, D.A. and Ernest Ligon. The verbatim transcript of Ernest Ligon follows....

Red Top Interview: Ernest Ligon. Written by Candyce Wilson, Llano High School, 2011.

Ernest Ligon, son of Gale Ligon whom was a former sheriff, was born in 1952, and was interviewed in order to gather pertinent historical information about the Red Top Jail. Ernest was four years old when his father was elected sheriff of the county. Several sheriffs were jailers as well, but Gale Ligon decided he didn't want to take on the role of both jailer and sheriff. In result, Lolette Rhodes and her family fulfilled the job.

Ernest is a key resource to finding out the history of the Red Top due to the fact that he often rode around with his father while he was on duty, to help him "fight crime," He usually tagged along when there were small crime such as public intoxication, theft, and hot checks.

In 1969, when Ernest was sixteen years of age, him and his father Gale were on duty and saw a man staggering down the road in the middle of the night; it was obvious the man was intoxicated. Gale and Ernest were familiar to this man, whose name was Lesley. Lesley was doing fine until he noticed they were crossing the bridge, and as soon as he finally gained the cognizance of where he was being taken he started pleading with Gale not to go to jail. Gale, by law, had to take him anyways. Lesley got very belligerent when he was being booked in, and tried to fight with Gale. Ernest helped his father fight off the

belligerent drunk, and got him upstairs, and that night was one of the most memorable of Ernest's Red Top Adventures.

Another one of Ernest's memorable nights was when his father, Gale, went in the bar to check things out, and came out with a screaming, kicking, and cursing young woman, who coincidentally was Lesley's sister. Gale and his accomplice had a hard time getting the woman into the back set of the cop car, until Ernest cleverly went to the other side of the car and pulled her in. She ended up spending a night in jail, which isn't that bad seeing as how they put curtains and blankets up around the women's cells for privacy from the male inmates.

According to Ernest there were many ways the old-timey jail was better than the modern day jail such as: the prisoners got to eat whatever the jailer and their family was eating, inmates could often get permission to leave and come back if they were trusted, the jailers would let the homeless stay in the jail if they needed somewhere to stay, if the prisoners were trustworthy, they were invited to eat with jailers downstairs, and because there was no air conditioning, the windows were kept open, which allowed people to sneak things up through the windows to the prisoners such as alcohol.

Ernest ended up following in his father's footsteps and became a highway patrol man. His abundant amount of stories and information was significant to our research and was helpful in the search of the Red Top Jail History.

"FRIENDS OF THE LLANO RED TOP JAIL" BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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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. 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)
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Business:	(Includes your business name on 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. THANK YOU.