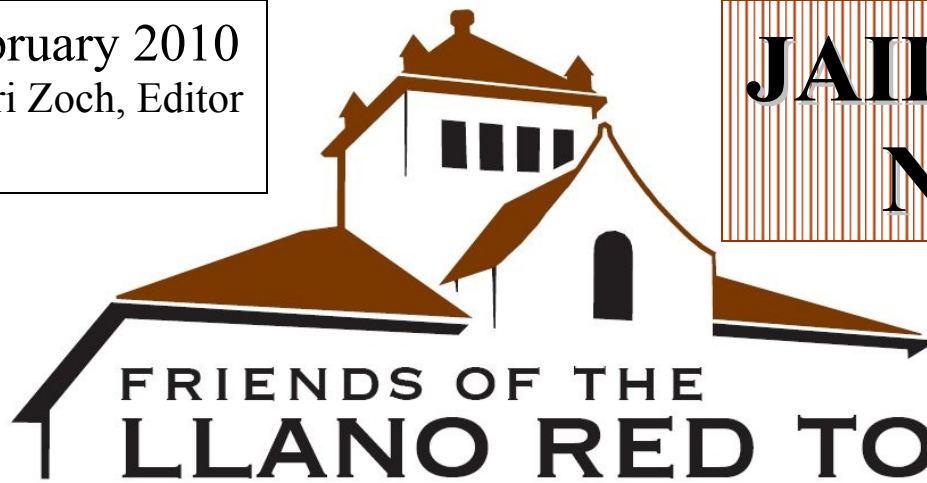


February 2010
Sheri Zoch, Editor

JAILHOUSE NEWS



THE LLANO RED TOP JAIL, ONE OF TEXAS' MOST ENDANGERED PLACES!

If you've had your head under a rock lately, you probably won't know that the Red Top has been named one of *seven* of TX' Most Endangered Places by Preservation Texas. This is the same year that the San Jacinto Battlefield was nominated – just to give you an idea of the enormity of this designation. A huge contingency from Llano was at the state capitol to accept this award, including Friends board members Sheri Zoch, Frank Rowell, Sandy Shaw and Gene Hall, as well as members Dave and Inell Franks. Mayor Mike Reagor and former mayor Roger Pinckney (and wife Cathy) were there, as well as Main Street Director Sarah Franklin. We got lots of good media coverage, especially from the local news. Thanks to all of our local papers for caring so much about this Texas treasure. This award will go a long way toward our fundraising efforts to restore the Red Top. I've told you before, but THIS GROUP ROCKS!



RED TOP JAIL EVENTS OF FEB. 12.

Jail Tours. The Friends held jail tours given by Mike Reagor, Ovetra Hartman and Sheri Zoch. This was one of the best turnouts for jail tours in a while. We had several contingencies from Canada, Wisconsin and other far away places. Some families tied to jailors came and told us a lot of jail stories. See more about this on page 2.

Desserts of Llano. Lone Star Bakery kindly provided banana pudding as part of the Main Street's Desserts of Llano Competition. The pudding was fabulous! Lone Star Bakery has a wonderful selection of kolaces, panini sandwiches and coffees, so please patronize their shop. We were proud to partner with them. Thanks to Jennifer McMillan for providing such a great dessert.

Llano Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting for the New Red Roof. The Friends have joined the Llano Chamber of Commerce. We had a ribbon cutting at 1:30 to dedicate the new roof of the Red Top with a HUGE crowd. Check the papers this week. Thanks, COC!

Paranormal Investigation. Past Life Investigations from Fredricksburg did an investigation in the evening. Members of Llano Ghosthunters were also there. All investigators had experiences there. They are now analyzing their audios and videos.

Meeting with Preservation Texas. Director Krista Gebbia sat down with Friends board members to discuss how PT can help us advance our cause. We decided that we need a strategic plan for our group – Krista told us to check with the LCRA for free advice on this. Also, we need to start a capital campaign. Krista will help us with all of this.

HISTORY CORNER

First Jailor. The family of Barry Hickman Russell, the first jailor of the Red Top, showed up for tours and brought some great photos of their great-great grandfather and wife Julia. From their family history, we learned that Julia probably died at the jail. They had 5 girls and 5 boys. The 2 little girls in the picture that Larry Jones found on EBay of the jail from around 1900 are probably Barry and Julia's. Barry Russell's son and his wife then became jailors, probably to help out with all the kids. Barry's grandson was also a jailor, so three generations of jailors ran the Red Top from the beginning.

Last Jailor. Another distinguished guest was the *last* jailor, the daughter-in-law of Betty Graham (now Janie Puryear). She and her ex-husband Ken Rhoades were married at the jail and helped Betty run the jail. Janie remembers when an inmate escaped at midnight via sheets tied from the second floor. This guy was really skinny, so could fit through the bars. Other inmates let her know that he escaped by stomping on the floor – her bedroom was below. The fugitive ran down the Llano river for some miles. She doesn't remember if he was caught. Janie also described a horseshoe-shaped piece of metal with a ring on it that was bolted to the gallows ceiling. Presumably, the ring held the gallows noose. One of her family used this piece as a headboard. She was asking if we knew where it was. *Help!*

Oh Where, Oh Where Have Those JAIL LOGS Gone? Another great tidbit that came out of the jail tours was that our old jail logs may be located upstairs of the County Tax Assessor's Office. A woman who used to work in that office (sorry, things were happening so fast I did not get her name) said that she remembers several large rectangular, old books that were stored upstairs of the annex. She thought that they were old jail logs. The upper floors of the annex were used as the jailor's quarters and the county lock-up after the Red Top closed. We need some history detectives to check this out. Maybe we can get some help from Llano High School students? Read on...

PARTNERSHIP WITH LHS

Sheri and Gene Hall met with Llano High School students in Ms. Deidra Henderson's Family and Community Services class to start some joint projects for HS credit. Sheri gave a brief history of the jail and told the students that we need help collecting oral histories of people who remember something about the jail. Gene talked about how her mother played cards with the inmates when she visited her jailor grandparents in the 1920s-1930s. Gene also described how she was embarrassed during a Brownie troupe tour of the Jail to find her family yardman, Al locked up from a drunken weekend. In the Doolittle Chapel room of the jail we have pictures of Al doing farrier work, roping and riding horses. Al made a box kite for Gene and she adored him.

Several of the students came to the open house on Feb. 12. We will do a jail tour for these students on Feb. 24 at 8:40. If you are interested in helping us partner with these kids, please come. I'd also like to train them to do jail tours, scan important documents and help us with that monster, "*the social internet*".

GRANT NEWS

Sheri wrote a grant for \$80,000 to Preserve America to start planning for a museum at the jail. We are starting to accumulate a lot of artifacts about the jail, which need to be displayed somewhere. We will be working with a museum design team and we'll get lots of input from all of you about the focus of the museum during town hall meetings. The LHS students will be an integral part of this.

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT FROM THE "FRIENDS OF THE LLANO RED TOP JAIL" BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President: *Sheri Zoch 325-248-0284*

Vice President: *Tom Dalrymple*

Secretary: *Sandy Shaw*

Treasurer: *Ovetra Hartman*

Member: *Frank Rowell*

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