

A Nearly Accurate History of Sunrise Beach

By Dick Hart (deceased)

Written for the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the City in November of 1998
recovered and updated in 2005 and continued by others (I hope, hjs)

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When one assumes the responsibility of attempting a historical recollection of the past twenty five years of a community, particularly when the old memory itself is in a state of decline, one can only question one's own sanity. However, with the best of intentions in mind, I will undertake this quest to the best of my recollections.

To be sure, one purpose in this effort is to make all who are now, have been, and will be future residents of Sunrise Beach, understand that Sunrise Beach just didn't come into being. It did not evolve out of nothing. It was built, bit by bit, by the people who are and were residents and who were willing to put forth much hard effort in the making of a community in which all could take pride. Regrettably, many of those who performed these many important tasks are no longer with us. And worse of all, it is my personal regret that I cannot remember all the names; there were so many. If in the process of this writing I mention a name, I, no doubt, will fail to mention one that should be. Therefore I apologize in advance for any omissions: I merely hope to give credit where credit is due. However, I seem to be digressing.

Most of this bit by bit building was done with donations, fund-raisers, suppers, flea markets, picnics, volunteer labor, and on and on. All were aware, especially before the community was incorporated, that if anything was to be accomplished that the residents would have to do it. The developers were only interested in selling property. And once the prime waterfront properties were all sold, the developer's interests were turned elsewhere, to Canyon Lake for instance. So, a few grabbed the bull by the horns and set out to build Sunrise Beach into something other than a lakeside fishing camp.

In the mid fifties, this land on which you stand was purchased and a development started. Once a few roads were graded the property started to sell. People bought property and built small weekend places before there was even water available. Most had to haul their drinking water from wherever their homes were. But man they could take a bath in the lake after a day of fishing or skiing or boating or whatever pleasure in which they indulged. I remember when you could buy a lakefront lot for a little as \$1200, \$200 down and \$20 a month for the rest of your life. I remember looking at the property which is now at the end of Beach Drive. Could have bought all three sides of the point for \$3800. Of course back then it might as well have been 35 million. I didn't have a pot to ..., well, you know.

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After a few homes were built, it quickly became apparent that a fire department was needed. Bruce McNair, the city's first mayor, and Herb Stehling obtained the proper charter needed from the state for a non-profit organization and started what is now our volunteer fire department. Someone donated a pickup, another actually bought an old pumper truck and through donations and fund-raisers the genesis of a fire department was begun. Now you talk about a slow start. First, there were very few who were here long enough to be volunteers, and many who were didn't want to do anything but sit on their cans. Most people were just weekend residents anyway. It was difficult, to say the least, to find enough people to train on the equipment so that a fire could even be properly put out if started. However as time passed, a few more people turned out for a meeting ever so often and were somewhat qualified. It was in about 1979 that a house fire over on E. Lakeshore broke out and was immediately engulfed in flames. The first guy on the scene with the pumper, pumped it dry without putting the lake draft into the water. Took a bit of time to get the pumper re-primed and up and running again. Had it not been for a floating lake pump that had been recently purchased, the house next door would have gone but the lake pump put out enough water to save it. Kingsland was called to pitch in and help.

Well they made our department look horrible. They had helmets and coats and gloves and all the things that a fireman should have and our guys looked simply ragged. On top of everything else it was about 25 degrees and everybody was freezing to death from being so wet. It became quite apparent that our department needed to establish a new way of doing things. First thing I did as President of the department Board was to buy three more of those lake pumps and set out on a fund drive. Between the annual fund drive and the efforts of the Ladies Auxiliary, slowly enough money was put together to start buying the necessary equipment and a regular training program was started. Unfortunately, it took such a disaster to wake people up and realize how important it was to have a good fire department. More people started coming to the meetings and more donations came in. Today, well what can I say. The Sunrise Beach Volunteer Fire Department puts every other department in this part of the State to shame. They make the other departments look like Smokey the Bear stomping out cigarette butts.

Now, let's talk about the Ladies Auxiliary. Properly, their title is The Auxiliary to the Sunrise Beach Volunteer Fire Department but I guess that is too much of a mouthful. Gotta stop right here and say that this was the first group of people on the beach that really got things moving. I once addressed the Auxiliary and told them simply and

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straight out that there would be no fire department if it were not for the ladies. I also suggested that they might kick a few rear ends and get their husbands out to the meeting. Wound up that they, the ladies themselves, began to show up; started dragging hoses around and driving those trucks down that steep hill; made their husbands so ashamed that they soon followed.

The Auxiliary also had humble beginnings. Their first meeting was held February 1, 1971. There were a total of 11 members present!! What a difference 25 years make!! During that meeting they reported an income of \$109 by way of a bake sale which they promptly donated to the Fire Department. By the following September, they had raised enough money to donate \$1387 to the department. The first President was Maxine Hester, Vice President Rose Mangleberger, Secretary/Treasurer Flo January. Connie Scales became President in October, and by the end of the year there were 60 members. They had their first Christmas party at the Sunrise Marina. Somewhere during that time one of the members, wonderfully outspoken Shirley Wiseman stated, "Come to our Bazaars and we'll come to your fire." That sorta stuck as a slogan. I remember when there was a gentleman named Ken Hardy who was always the leader in pre-sales of tickets to the annual bar-b-que. He would always tell people that if they didn't buy tickets; we won't put out your fire!!! Anyway, the only members from that first meeting (that I can remember) who are still around (not necessarily living on the beach) are Lavada Boies, "Cookie" Walker, Alice Leifeste. Faye Holland and Opal Thompson. All the presidents of the auxiliary since that first year are listed in that wonderful cookbook, Sunrise Beach is Still Cooking. (Great recipe for carp on page 61, sic).

These ladies took on so many projects that it boggles the imagination. Cake sales, bazaars, suppers, breakfasts. flea markets, ice cream socials, picnics, barbeques, cookbooks (now in about its umpteenth printing). crafts, and on and on. There is no point in my attempting to recall the officers of the auxiliary that followed. there are simply too many. It can only say that there were many and that their contributions were considerable as were the contributions and efforts of the members whose numbers have grown through the years. As I mentioned above. all the presidents of the auxiliary are listed in the cookbook. For so many years the Auxiliary performed all duties to the fire department in a most exemplary fashion. They were additionally called upon for nearly all civic functions. They formed a distress committee which originally was to aid victims of fires but was extended to a "distress" committee to bring in food during family crises such as deaths and illnesses. It was just the right thing to do if something needed doing. ask the ladies. Suffice it to say, any words

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that I might use to take this further would be grossly inadequate. No words can properly describe the contributions the ladies of the Auxiliary have made to Sunrise Beach.

Before I go on any more I must mention that the city has several standing boards and committees; an example being the Zoning and Building Committee, the Airport Committee, the Cemetery Board. The people that serve on the boards advise the City Commissioners. are empowered to hold hearings. provide input from citizens and so on. Without these people, the job of being a city commissioner would be even more difficult than it is. Again, through the years there have been so many who have served that it would be an injustice to try to mention any names. These folks are appointed and serve without any praise except the thanks of the commissioners. To all who have served and will serve, I tip my hat, for it is another of those thankless positions that must be filled or the city suffers.

I'll take a moment to apologize right now; as I had hoped to keep this historical project in a chronological and very orderly manner. It appears that will not be possible. The history of this community is so intertwined with so many events and timetables it is nearly impossible to tell about one organization without taking it to some logical finish (be it my own logic). Ergo. I may ramble a bit. Stick with me and maybe this will all come together and make some sense in the end. I know of no other way to do this in a narrative form.

I think it is about time to start talking about how the City of Sunrise Beach Village came to be. In 1973, this little piece of Texas was starting to get a bit crowded. Seemed that we now had about 120 houses here and there was no one who seemed to be in charge. Oh, we had a gentleman representing the developers that showed up once in a while. If you wanted to build a house on your lot he would just say something like "stay on that side of the telephone pole"!!! Well we all know that when two or more people live side by side there had better be some rules or there's gonna be a shoot out. Besides that, the developer seemed to be forgetting such little proprieties as taking care of the streets and the parks. Police protection didn't even exist. The sheriff might as well have been in Oklahoma... So, a group of interested citizens banded together and the Sunrise Beach Civic Association was formed. They demanded an accounting of the then \$20 a year assessment for maintenance of the parks and streets. A proper accounting did not appear to be within the realm of possibility for the developer so, The Sunrise Beach Village Benefit Association was born and they wrested from the developer the right to collect the

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\$20 a year, any un-paid assessments and insure that it was spent here and not at Canyon Lake or some other place. Title to the parks and all sub-divisions within the boundaries of Sunrise Beach came under their auspices. Later in 1975 a similar agreement was reached with the developers of Granite Shoals Lake Estates, North Sunrise Beach or whatever name you wish to call it. Its all just Sunrise Beach Village now anyway.

This all took some doing and required a lot of hard work. The effort was headed up by Henry Randle who at the same time was forming a group to incorporate the entire area into a city. For a few years the Benefit Association was able to take care of the parks and roads but as cost grew, the \$20 assessment didn't, consequently the city had to take over responsibility and the Benefit Association simply became a homeowner association and contributed its income to the city budget. For a while the contribution was a major portion of the city's budget but, as time passed, it became a minor part of the budget and the organization was eventually dissolved. What really expedited the dissolution was that during a period of unpleasantness, a small group of people who didn't like the way things were going banded together and sued the organization and the city and its officials. It reached a point that dissolving the association was the simplest way of ending the ceaseless legal fees incurred with fighting a lawsuit.

The beauty of having a city and a homeowners association working together allowed for considerable flexibility. The Benefit Association bought the property that is now the city complex where the city would have had to float bonds, hire special advisors and follow expensive state-mandated rules that cost major bucks. The Benefit Association simply bought the property and, when it was paid for, deeded it to the city. What you see now bears little resemblance to what was purchased. The city hall was pretty much as it appears on the outside but that is about it. The civic center was just a big welding shed. The main thing was that the city now had a home on which to build something and no longer was paying rent for whatever was available in the area. This purchase took place in 1978. The city and the Benefit Association approved funds to add rest rooms, a foyer and space for a kitchen but stopped short there. It was decided that no funds would be expended until the citizens expressed sufficient desire to have a city complex for various activities and group meetings. Thus, the Citizens for Community Action Association was born.

The CCAA (much easier to type) was called into being by Alice Oberg, who served as its first president. (I was second). She gathered

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together a group of good workers and said "let's get this thing off the ground". Ten people loaned the CCAA \$500 each for a \$5000 startup fund and I started the one hundred dollar club and off the yellow brick road we went. It wasn't long before we had the slab poured for the kitchen, rest rooms and foyer and the sides closed in. As soon as that was done we started having fund raisers in the partially completed civic center and before long we were closing in walls and the building process was on its way; all with contributions and donated labor. As soon as the sides were closed in we bought heat pumps for cooling and heating. It was really quite an undertaking for a small community, especially without tax dollars. Most of the lenders were paid off when contribution started coming in. However, most of the lenders said to keep half as their contribution. I remember that well as I was writing the checks to pay back the lenders of the startup fund.

Hardly a day went by that someone was not down at the new "civic center" working. Every time the CCAA put together a few bucks they would run out and buy materials. One guy who was a real standout in all this process was Ed Houy. I can guarantee he hardly missed a day working on that building until it was completed and useable. Many days it would be just he and I down there. I could pull wire through and hand him tools but wasn't much help other than that. Man did he really put the time into that building. Perhaps I will take a bit of writer's privilege here and state simply that without Ed Houy, we probably would not have a civic center. He got the ball rolling on the land purchase, drew the plans for the building, chased after most of the materials, and put in way more hours of labor than any other person.

One of the great things about the formation of the CCAA, is it allowed the Ladies Auxiliary to turn its full attention to supporting the fire department. We finally had another civic organization that could take on new projects and relieve the Auxiliary of a few that they had assumed. The Primary function of the CCAA still continued to be the maintenance and upkeep of the Civic Center.

In 1985, a 14 inch snowfall fell on the beach. It was pretty but did it ever mess up our civic center. The weight of the snow caused the roof to cave in and rendered the building unsafe and, of course, unusable. What to do? The CCAA has already milked the community for donations, hit on some of the companies out there for contributions; GTE, Exxon, even the beloved LCRA for example. The city had a little bit of insurance money coming in but not nearly enough to do the whole job (big deductibles you know). Well, behold the CCAA bunch

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decided not only to rebuild the center but to enlarge it. It had taken seven years to get as far as they had and here, all was nearly wiped out by a lousy snow storm. The city sure didn't have the money as they have to budget for everything a year in advance. The only ones around with any money in the bank was the Benefit Association. They borrowed \$15000 from them (see; I told you there was an advantage to having the Benefit Association), restarted the \$100 club and raised another \$10000 for what was to be a \$25000 project. That coupled with the insurance money and you see what we have today. There have been some improvements, upgrading, and maintenance since then but the building is as it was rebuilt. Big enough and of a sufficient size that it has pretty well met the needs of a growing community.

For several years I, as a commissioner, had wanted to get a neighborhood watch program going. I just couldn't find anyone to run with the project. In 1992, Sy Schiffman, Bill Philips and Ray Fleming among others, got together and approached the community and the CCAA about organizing a neighborhood watch program. My dream had come true. They wanted to take it even further. They also wanted to have an on-going neighborhood patrol, complete with highly visible signs for the vehicles and a radio to use in case they saw something going on. This was more than I had hoped for. It didn't take the CCAA any time at all to approve being the sponsor of this effort and once again the volunteers showed up. That particular program has done as much to reduce crimes against property as anything I know. No schedule, do it whenever you feel like it, you can never tell when eyes are watching. I well recall when our policeman was taking a prisoner to Llano when the conversation turned to theft. This particular prisoner was being transported as a favor to the sheriff, but he said that there were simply easier "pickins" than Sunrise Beach 'cause nobody knew how to get in or out and didn't know who was watching!!! Once when I was out patrolling; down on Glen Oaks, a part time resident stopped me and asked about how this all got started. I spent a few minutes with him and explained it was all strictly volunteers. Well, he wrote me a donation check to the CCAA for \$100 and simply said thanks for looking out for my property. This is the Citizen for Community Action Association, this is you, there is no membership, as every person on Sunrise Beach is a member. And that means without YOU there is no Association, no civic projects, no un-budgeted city improvements, no beautification projects, nothing. Keep it up folks, you're only helping yourselves.

Now, back in 1973 when the concerned citizens of this fair community were organizing and plotting against the developer, they were also

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trying to get the Sunrise Beach development incorporated. Enough people petitioned the county to have an election for incorporation and the election was held on the 7th of November 1973. 147 voted for incorporation and 20 voted against. The county judge declared the vote legal and ordered that Sunrise Beach be incorporated as a general law city under the laws of the state of Texas. They had chosen to go with the commissioner form of government and on that same day, Bruce McNair was elected Mayor with Bill Lanier and John Klepper as the other two commissioners. The first commissioners meeting was held at the Federated Church November 16, 1973, no money, no budget, starting with nothing. Now that is a humble beginning. I'll give you a few highlights of this early beginning:

Helen Haden was appointed City Clerk - Salary \$25 monthly.

City Hall was to be in an old lakeside "burger barn" on Beach Drive. It was about 8ft x 8ft. With Helen, her desk, a chair and a file cabinet, she could have one visitor at a time.

Mr. & Mrs. Henry Franks donated \$1000 to the city for the elected officials to use as they saw fit.

In March, Jan Smith offered the city a 1962 Dodge Dart for "patrolling purposes" - graciously accepted.

In April, the population (census) came in at 253.

In June, Ken Balog, recently retired from the Air Force was hired as Police Chief - salary \$300 monthly.

In August the Zoning ordinance was adopted and the first budget drawn up. With a levy of ten cents per \$100 valuation it brought in \$28000. A maintenance man had to be hired and equipment purchased, particularly a tractor, and thus the city was off to its first year.

This administration held office until April 1974 when regular elections were to take place They were re-elected for a full 2 year term.

In 1976, Bill Lanier was elected mayor along with Bill Steiner and Clyde Mason as the other two commissioners. Bill Steiner had been serving as Municipal Judge and when he was elected to office, the

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three ganged up on a guy named Hart and made him the Judge (here come de judge, here come de judge). Clyde had to resign before his term ended and Chuck Piper was appointed to replace him. By then, the city had come a long way. We were now renting the old restaurant down at Sunrise Marina with enough actual space for an office and meeting room. Gary Vick later wanted the space back which sorta led to buying the city hall property (I told you this story couldn't be told without overlapping).

It was during this time that a program was started up to re-surface all the streets in Sunrise Beach. In order to pay for it, an election had to be held for the purpose of selling bonds. The people voted to tax themselves and sell the bonds, to be repaid over a period of 16 years, and to accept an assessment on their property as partial payment for the paving program. Not many people remember how bad the streets were but two front end shops in Kingsland went out of business!!!

Shortly after the bond program was passed it was time for another city election, 1978. This time Ed Houy was elected Mayor and a rather unusual thing happened in the "race" for the other two commissioner spots. Chuck Piper received 142 votes~ Sharon Vick received 141 votes; and Dick Hart received 141 votes. Well, Sharon and Dick (me) argued that the other should serve. This went on for hours, hardly the usual politics. I said "lets flip a coin" - Sharon refused. Finally she did an end run and withdrew from the contest thereby avoiding the expense for a runoff election. And, it allowed the city to get on with the business of the very important re-paving program. To this day I'll never forgive Sharon. Took me sixteen years to get out of that job. Later Chuck had to resign so I thought I'd get even. I suggested that Ed and I appoint Sharon to fill out his term, Ha! She accepted but she got right back at us when she and Gary bought the water company. Now she had a conflict of interest and had to resign. Darn short revenge. Ed and I served for 16 years, and along the way with Harold Grant, Dee Philips, and your present Mayor, Dee Smith who is now in her own, third administration. I know she's had a "ball" in the office. Fighting the problems of 3 or 4 floods, LCRA, the State and County, an ever growing population and all the little "fun" day to day things that go on at city hall!!!

I was still trying to serve as Municipal Judge as well but we felt that a conflict existed. Here we were, making the rules and I was required to also enforce them. Besides, it was most difficult trying to settle problems with people whom you knew and who were also your neighbors. Also the state has mandated that all "lay" judges had to

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start taking law classes along with elected JP's. We decided then and there to hire an outside, properly schooled JP to handle the judge's responsibilities. Seems to have worked out quite well over the years.

The birth of the city was now history, and now, it is 25 years old. The city has grown tremendously and I hate to think what it would look like if there had never been an incorporation. Chaos, that's what. Instead of a nice community in which to live it would have been a mish-mash of ticky-tacky buildings and everybody would be mad at everyone. You would have no civic center or a fire department or an Auxiliary or a CCAA and property values would be in the dumper. Its that simple.

A good example of having the power of a city involved the airport. Its always been there, it was zoned as an airport in 1974, people bought property in Sunrise Beach because it was there but; the city didn't own it. As the remainder of the unsold properties in the city was passed from developer to developer, one realized one day that they had been paying taxes on the airport. He actually came out here and looked around to see what he owned. Next thing we knew here he came up with a proposal to sub-divide the airport into lots and sell them. Being a city, he had to bring the proposal to us before he could take any action. We learned later that he had already sold a piece of the airport to someone. He had to return the money because we told him to put his proposal where the sun didn't shine. Well, this went on for 3 or 4 years. I told him once that if he managed to sue and win, we would zone the area for no structures over 18 inches high. Next court battle would be when we allowed 2 feet high structures and so on. Finally, he got the message and asked "what do you want". It was laid out for him, we wanted at least two access lots for fire fighting if necessary, the airport would remain an airport, he could sell adjoining lots, except for the city's access lots, and he would deed the airport strip to the city, and we the city would incur no legal fees. He offered to give the airstrip if we would pay for their street paving assessments (which had never been paid), again we said no. He sorta grunted but in a few months here came his proposal with exactly what we asked, and more. Gave us 5 access lots one being large enough to use for visiting aircraft. I remember Ed looking it over and saying, very calmly, "this will do nicely". What an understatement! As soon as the guy was out the door, Ed flew out himself. drove to Llano with the proposal, probably breaking every speed record, and filed it with the County Clerk before anyone had time to think about it. Ed paid the \$3 filing fee.

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We had to appoint an Airport Commission right away as this now, a city owned airport, had to meet FAA requirements and also came under our city insurance. We got Russell Stokes, a retired airline pilot, Bill Lanier, former mayor and retired FAA official and Al Sargent, a retired aircraft mechanic and husband to Bill's former secretary. They put in a bunch of work but made sure we complied with all the FAA rules, and they got us in the pilots directory of airstrips and airports as the Sunrise Beach Private Airport.

Similar situations presented themselves many times, but as a city, Sunrise Beach has the power of the law and the state of Texas behind it. Without that authority, Sunrise Beach would have had a bad time of it. I've heard many say "I can't do nothin' I want to 'cause there's a rule against it". Well, think of 750 homes this crowded together with no rules! All I can say is that all the people in Sunrise Beach should thank those hard working people back the 1973 and 74 who did so much work to get this community up and running. It's a shame that they aren't around now to see just what they managed to accomplish. Surely, somewhere they are looking down on us and snapping their suspenders with considerable pride. We salute them for their marvelous foresight.

No history of Sunrise Beach would be complete without saying something about the 3 Churches that we have here. There's the Catholic Church, The Baptist and the non-denominational Federated Church. It seems these houses of worship preceded everything. The developers had donated a parcel of land for the building of a Catholic Sanctuary; so a group of families approached them for land to build a Baptist Church. The developer dismissed their request until a formal congregation was organized. Under the leadership of Mrs. Jewell McCarley and with the encouragement and assistance of the minister of the First Baptist Church in Llano, the Reverend Bill Kenney, a congregation was organized with 6 charter members. Brother Kenny served for a time as minister to both churches and was never late for either services in Sunrise Beach or Llano. This was all done in 1963. The church was actually built on the present site which was acquired in exchange for the developer's donated land (more than one way to accomplish a mission)! A new sanctuary was built in 1995 and as is the case in Sunrise Beach, it was done on a pay as you go basis. Volunteer labor and donations took care of the vast majority of the building. Donations even came from non-members who were so impressed by the undertaking. People from other churches as far as Marble Falls, not necessarily Baptists, pitched in on this impressive effort with labor, donations and meals for the workers.

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The Federated Church was also formed in 1963. Again, the closest church at the time to Sunrise Beach was the Walnut Methodist Church off the Round Mountain Road, not a short distance. So, once again a group of families joined together to start anew, this time, non-denominational congregation. The Federated Church has had permanent ministers but it has really served wonderfully as a facility for aspiring ministers from the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. A number of fine vowing people have had their beginnings in the pulpit at this church and I'm certain Sunrise Beach will always be very meaningful in their memories. A few years back, quite a number of improvements were made on the structure. I remember them installing new stained glass windows, painting and just a general "fixin" up of the entire facility.

Check out the Catholic Church on Saturday evenings. That is when they hold their obligation mass and folks from all over attend. I've seen the parking lot filled with everything from Pintos and Pickups to Rolls Royces. They serve quite a varying assembly.

It too was organized and the efforts to build a sanctuary begun in 1963. Herb Stehling sorta ramroded the effort as there were a number of Catholic families living on the beach, plus the part time residents. The first Priest assigned was Father Luyten. All the assigned Priests have been very busy fellows as they have to serve several parishes. Even so, they have taken the time to attend the various suppers and functions put on by people at the Beach. Again, a number of fine gentlemen have served this church and the surrounding communities wonderfully.

This nearly accurate history is all too brief I suppose it might do for "historical" purposes. Maybe even a chuckle or two. However, I would be here until the year 2000 if I tried to recall and write about everything that has happened in Sunrise Beach. There's been a lot of water under the bridge, some of it sweet and some sour. Good times and bad times. Growing pains and grown-up pains. We've seen a lot of good people come and go. I know its easy to forget people and what they have done for the community. If someone is trying to do a job that needs doing, don't be too critical of that person unless you are willing to take his or her place. No elected person or any person appointed to a board or commission or committee has ever made a dime out of doing what they do. To many it seems to be a full time job. To most it usually cost them their time and money. No one has every received any allowances for expenses or any other form of compensation from the city. Most of the workers that you see are doing it for the pure pleasure of seeing a job well done.

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I dedicate this work to all the people who have been, who are, and who will continue to work toward making Sunrise Beach a little better place than when they got here.

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TO: All Sunrise Beach Property Owners and Friends

Sandy Mountain Cemetery established in the late 1800's is to be used by all residents of the adjacent community.

This community cemetery, located in North Sunrise Beach Village and known as Sandy Mountain Cemetery has recently been granted a charter from the Secretary of State, George W. Strake, Jr.

The charter was granted to the Sandy Mountain Cemetery Association, so that it would be recorded as a non-profit corporation. One of the benefits of a corporation is that all donations are tax deductible.

The purposes for which the corporation was organized are the management, maintenance, operation and preservation of a private cemetery.

So that this historic cemetery can be maintained and preserved with respect to those interred, it will be necessary to ask for annual donations. The people of the community will no longer be asked to meet monthly for the cleaning of the plots.

The plots are currently being (sic) updated. Anyone having unused space in Sandy Mountain Cemetery is encouraged to contact SANDY MOUNTAIN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, CLICK RTE, LLANO, TX. 78643. This survey is necessary to make sure all plot designations are correct.

Your generous donation is needed for the current maintenance and for future preservation of our historic cemetery.

SANDY MOUNTAIN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

- XX -

A Nearly Accurate History of Sunrise Beach

By Dick Hart (deceased)

Written for the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the City in November of 1998
recovered and updated in 2005 and continued by others (I hope, hjs)

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"The following document was typed from a copy in the files of Paul Looney, an officer in the Cemetery Association. Date of document is unknown"

HISTORY OF SANDY MOUNTAIN CEMETERY

When Sunrise Beach Addition was established in the latter part of 1950's a cemetery consisting of one acre was included in the purchase. This plot was donated by the former owner to the sale and was to be used by the area citizens. At that time there were approximately fifty marked graves and several with head and foot stones recognizable. There was very little consideration given as to where the graves were located in the cemetery.

After the public began to purchase lots and build lake homes in the addition, the cemetery was used more. In the latter part of 1969 Berl F. Guyton, who moved to the Sunrise Beach Addition in 1964, decided it would be much more attractive if the cemetery could be cleaned and properly care for. He contacted the ranchers who lived in the neighborhood if they would permit the Sunrise Beach citizens to assist in putting the cemetery in order, also to permit the citizens to be buried in it if they so desired. Permission was granted for policing and burial purposes, but only for the families living in Sunrise Beach at the time of a death or while living on the Beach.

In September 1969 Mr. Guyton asked for permission to prepare a drawing of the cemetery, listing all the marked graves as well as other unmarked graves identified by stones. Permission was granted and a drawing was made by Mr. Guyton.

During 1974, after several additional burials, Mr. Guyton presented a revision of the original drawing listing the total number of graves to 73.

Effective November 1, 1982 he again revised the drawing which reflects a total of 107 graves.

This drawing or map consists of a character in the shape of a casket which as a number beside it. A separate paper lists the number in numerical order and name of each marked grave. On another sheet of paper an alphabetically, naming the occupant of each grave, if known, with the birth and death dates shown. Complete description of each grave may be identified by using these references.

The drawing, together with the two attachments, is kept in the Sunrise Beach Village City Hall, Phone 915-388-6438 for public observance, also the Chairman of the Cemetery Board, Mr. Frank Poplin, Phone 915-388-6963 has a copy. Mr. Poplin should be contacted prior to any burial.

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Approximately two years ago the cemetery was legally organized and named Sandy Mountain Cemetery Association, with Messrs. Frank Poplin as Chairman, Paul S. Looney, vice chairman and Mrs. Walter E. Mastin, as secretary-treasurer.

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SANDY MOUNTAIN CEMETERY

(Originally the Wootan Family Graveyard)

Compiled by Lillian Fowler, July, 2001

Sandy Mountain is a hill which rises above the surrounding terrain beside Sandy Creek in Southeastern Llano County, Texas near the mouth of the creek as it flows into the Colorado River.

In the 1850's as settlers migrated into the area the farmers and ranchers named the community 'Sandy Mountain' No record has been found of any church in the area, but according to Judge Wilburn Oatman, Sr. in his book, "Llano, Gem of the Hill Country, A History of Llano County, Texas" on March 17, 1859, the Post Office at Sandy Mountain was established with Mr. Francis M. Hodges being appointed Postmaster. On October 1, 1860, Mr. William E. Wootan became Postmaster, and six years later on November 5, 1866 the Post Office was discontinued.

It was re-established on October 19, 1874 with Samuel W. Tate as Postmaster. (1)

There is no record of the location of the earlier post offices, but the latter was located in the Samuel Tate home along with a general store. (2) This home was about 4 miles from the cemetery and, according to his granddaughter, Martha Phillips Hallford, Mr. Tate carried produce to Austin in wagons to trade for supplies for his store. The old house was moved and rebuilt at the Pioneer Farm in Austin, Texas, (donated by the Lyndon B. Johnson family). Only a portion of one chimney remains where the house stood. (3) Susan Tate Phillips, daughter of Samuel W. Tate, related stories about the Tate children riding on horseback four or five miles to school for a few months each year. It is not known where this school was located, but it is possible that it could have been the same building or in the same location as the school Alline H. Elliott, author of 'Rural Schools of Llano County' mentioned in her records. She stated that it was 'after 1893 that trustees formed the rural school

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district No. 10 called the "Sandy Mountain School District", (4) this one room board and batten school house was located just across the road north of the Cemetery, and it served the community until sometime in the 1930's when schools in Llano County were consolidated after which the school building was demolished or moved to another location.

The Llano County Courthouse burned in 1892, and many of the records were destroyed but according to the earliest deeds found, on January 1, 1874, a Mr. D. P. Allen deeded to Mr. William E. Wootan a portion of land out of the Middleton M. Hill League, but it is uncertain how many acres were deeded at this time. (5) On January 7, 1874 Mr. William E. Wootan sold 800 acres of this land from the Middleton M. Hill League, #360, survey No. #104 to Mr. G. Solomon "with exception of one acre of land reserved by William E. Wootan for (a word not discernable) to his heirs and assigns etc.-". (6) On the 11th day of November 1875, Mr. G. Solomon signed a deed to Mr. Benjamin Phillips for the above property "with exception of one acre of land reserved by G. Solomon for Wootan's family graveyard." (7) The oldest marked grave in this cemetery is for a child, Marion Walter Allen, son of D. P. and M. M. Allen. (8) One of the older graves is marked "Mary M. Wootan, born September 28, 1823, died July 13, 1875." She was the wife of William E. Wootan according to family records of Mrs. Mary Fay Wallace of Llano, Texas. (9) Mrs. Wallace's great-grandmother, a daughter of the Wootan's is also buried nearby. She was Cornelia I. Cates, wife of Rev. R F. Cates. She was born July 25, 1850 and died February 24, 1876 (10). Benjamin Phillips who served in the Texas Revolution and with the Texas Rangers, and his wife, Melissa Crownover Phillips who came to Texas with Austin's first colony, are also buried in this cemetery. (II) The graves of Samuel W. Tate and his wife, Martha and a number of their descendants are some of the older graves marked. (12) Nothing is known about the unmarked graves recognized by large stones, but some of the "old timers" of the community stated that there were "squatters" buried in this cemetery, possibly people who were traveling through this part of Texas in the early days.

The Sandy Mountain Cemetery is located in what is now the City of Sunrise Beach, Texas, incorporated in 1973. The Cemetery measures 198 feet by 220 feet which is exactly one acre, and there are 216 graves within the fenced area. A chain link fence and sign over the entrance gate were erected in the 1960's (13) and part of the enclosed area is reserved for descendants of the earlier settlers. Many of the Sunrise Beach citizens are being buried in the cemetery also without

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charge for lots. There are veterans of the Texas Revolution. World War I, World War II, and the Korean War buried here.

A Cemetery Association was formed in 1980 and the Cemetery is cleaned each year by volunteers. Each spring the ground here is covered with beautiful Texas wildflowers. The land surrounding the Cemetery which was originally ranch land has been developed and sold to individuals in small plots. The Cemetery is located at 106 Circle Drive, facing north. On the East side the land is owned by Mr. Douglas Fink, 3206 Western Drive, Austin, TX 78745-4618.

The owner on the South side is Mr. John E. Vandever, 6600 Kings Crown E., San Antonio, TX 78233-4721, and on the West side the owner is Mr. Ernest H. Oliver, 5295 C Dacy Lane, Buda Tx, 78510.
(14)

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ASK CITY HALL

By Ed Houy

SUNRISE BEACH. Sandy Mountain Cemetery is located within the incorporated limits of the City...the list of those known to be buried in the cemetery dates from 1873—Marion Walter Allen, eight month son of D. P. and M. Allen. Unfortunately nine plots are recorded as unidentified and unknown.

The Community has shown an interest in the cemetery since the first nearby residential lots were sold in the 1950's, but it wasn't until May 1980 when a local group formalized the concern by adopting a charter for the Sandy Mountain Cemetery Association. The Board of Directors accepting the new Charter and By-Laws was composed of Mr. Frank Poplin, Mr. E. B. Smith, and Mr. J. L. Bacon. Elmer Smith then offered his resignation as the third director. Mr. J. L. Bacon, Sr. offered his resignation and was replaced at the second meeting by Mrs. Ella Mastin completing the transition from a group of dedicated volunteers to a working board responsible for the business of the association.

The minutes of the association reflect the major concerns of the members: maintenance, eligibility for use; size and location of plots;

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appearance, improvements proposed by individual families. And of course the ever present question of funding to support approved projects. Early on it was decided not to charge for plots and make the family responsible for individual spaces used. That leaves the association with one source of funding-- Voluntary Contributions. If that interests you the mailing address is 311 Sunrise Drive, Box C, Sunrise Beach, Texas 78643. Basically the cemetery is divided into two parts, this has been carried forward from the original plan, one part for Tate family members and the remainder for the Sunrise Beach community that has grown up around the cemetery. In the community section use is restricted to someone living in Sunrise Beach or single children of Beach residents. The Board is the final authority for any decisions concerning interment. The current members of the board are President Paul Looney, Vice President R. J. Fisher, and Secretary Ella Mastin. The small gate remains open at all times but unauthorized vehicular use has made it necessary to lock the large gate. Board members should be contacted for access in the event none can be reached a key is available at City Hall to be used in emergency. There is no question as to the value of Sandy Mountain Cemetery to the residents of our community, both for the historical importance associated with the land we now occupy and the practicality of the facility. The board needs and deserves the help and support of the community in maintaining the grounds and controlling use and improvements that might conflict with the by-laws of the association. One individual has not been named in this article, but no discussion of the cemetery would be complete without the name of Berl P. Guyton. In 1969 Mr. Guyton undertook the project of listing and attempting to identify all the graves and markers, his revision of the original drawing listed 73 graves. In 1982 he revised his drawings to reflect a new total of 107.

An expression of thanks goes to past and present volunteers never hurts--So here is my personal Thank You !

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Of Sunrises and Beaches and History

I know of two Sunrise Beaches in the State of Texas but this one distinguishes it self in many remarkable ways.

This City of Sunrise Beach Village, as it is formally known, indeed faces the sunrises of all seasons from the beaches of what is now known as Lake LBJ, names after the ..th President of these United States. One present-day distinction is that it sports an airport in the form of a ... foot grass runway.

But this is now and certainly since 1973, when this Sunrise Beach became only the second city to be incorporated in Llano County. But long before then, say more than a billion years ago, this part of Texas faced the sunrises of that era positioned near the beaches of what was then the southern end of the North American continental plate.

The ensuing geological history left its prints uniquely visible on the surface of this area called the Llano uplift and shaped the lovely landscapes one can't help but love. Located a mere 30 miles from Enchanted Rock (now also a State Park), the high point of the Llano uplift the terrain generally, and every backyard particularly offer inescapable presents from the distant past.

The (Texas) Colorado River is credited with contributions to the "landfill" that, over the eons, has grown to a depth of 40,000 feet or more and supports such Cities as Houston, some 250 miles to the Southeast and still some 50 miles from what is today known as the Gulf of Mexico. This same river, joined by the spring-fed Llano is what today forms Lake LBJ as part of a 7-lake flood control system constructed in the 1930's.

But travel the Colorado upstream by boat from Lake Buchanan, the first in this series and you will soon be awed at the work this river has done on the landscape. Today, award-winning wines are grown on its shores and the American Bald Eagle has made it its wintering place of choice.

The Llano Uplift is unique among a few other places in North America. Precambrian rocks from the Proterozoic era bear witness to the collision of continents. Among these are the huge granite domes. In Marble Falls, just 10 miles to the East, these have yielded pink granites for the construction of edifices as far away as New York City and as close to home as the Texas State Capitol building.

But that was not the end of it. Cambrian Sandstone, Ordovician Dolomite and Limestone with all the fossils to boot, Devonian Shale, Sandstone and Chert with evidence of the first amphibians, Mississippian Shales and Limestone bearing evidence of fern-filled forests and coral, Pennsylvanian Limestone (Marble Falls among many others) speaking of coniferous forest and reptiles and another collision of continents that formed the Ouachita Mountains (now subterranean), all left their marks readily visible from the road.

But then, during the Jurassic Period (144-208 million years ago) things started to take shape as we know it. The mega Panganaean continent began to break up and the Gulf of Mexico filled. Dinosaurs were in charge then and left many a foot print in Texas. The Rockies were rising and the slop to the Gulf gave the rivers more muscle. Therefore, Jurassic rocks are few though Limestone Sandstone and Shale are about.

The Cretaceous period however, left marks in abundance, the Colorado River Canon upstream from today's Lake Buchanan to wit. That's when the dinos left us but the flora continued to prosper. And soon, man came onto the scene. From there it's just a short jump of 2 million years or so to tides of history in which this land was home to the buffalo, the Comanches, Apaches, Mexicans, and finally the mix of nationalities that ultimately declared themselves Texans.

Particularly, the "Texas Hill Country", as Sunrise Beach's surroundings are affectionally called, experienced a large influx of German settlers. Town names like Fredericksburg or Newbraunfels attest to that heritage and the German language is still found alive after so many generations.