



STAFF PHOTO BY MURRAY JUDDSON

## Yo, ho ho!

Parade participants (from left) Katie Horbal of Austin and Rebecca and Sarah Armanovs of Port Aransas entered the Old Town Festival parade dressed as pirates. They called their "vessel" the Scallywag. Estimates of the number of participants in the parade ranged to as many as 300.

## Entries invited for Holiday Forest

Once Upon a Time is the theme set for the annual Holiday Forest sponsored by the Port Aransas Parks and Recreation Department.

Each year the Port Aransas Civic Center comes alive with trees decorated by individuals and groups with their interpretations of the theme.

Now is the time to sign up to decorate for the 2006 event, so let imaginations run wild, said Rachael King, assistant director of the Port Aransas Parks and Recreation Department.

Civic, youth, church or family groups, or businesses are invited to decorate trees for the forest. Call 749-4158 by Sunday, Dec. 17 to register.

Trees will be set up from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17, at the Civic Center.

Judging will be held Monday, Dec. 18. Three prizes will be awarded. Best of Show will earn the decorators \$100, and two Judge's Awards worth \$50 each will be awarded. Prizes will be presented Tuesday, Dec. 19, at the Civic Center during the Decorators' Potluck Dinner Party from 6 to 8 p.m.

"Bring a dinner dish, enjoy some

holiday music and fellowship and find out the judges' decisions for the best trees of the year," King said.

Trees depicting the theme will be on display at the Civic Center, 710 W. Ave. A, from Dec. 18-22. Admis-

## Tour of Homes set for Jan. 20

A peek into some Port Aransas homes will be allowed Saturday, Jan. 20, during the 19th annual Tour of Homes.

Anyone curious about how island residents live can find out by going on the tour.

Tickets are available at \$15 per person for bus tours and \$10 for self-drive tours. Advance tickets are required for the bus tours, and tickets for the self-drive tours may be purchased at the Pollock Center behind Community Presbyterian Church, 113 S. Alister St., the day of the tour. Bus tours will depart at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. from the Pollock Center.

Self-drive tour hours will be 1-4 p.m.

For bus reservations, call Cecilya

sion is free.

Trees must be removed from the Civic Center on Tuesday, Dec. 26.

For further information, call the Parks and Recreation Department at 749-4158.

Ramsey at (361) 749-0453.

The tour will feature six homes ranging from island treasures in historic Old Town to an oceanfront condominium (open only for the afternoon self-drive tour) to luxury waterfront homes.

The tour is sponsored by the Port Aransas Garden Club, whose members are stationed in each home on the tour to answer questions and relate tidbits of interest to visitors. Proceeds benefit gardening projects on city-owned property and the club's scholarship program, which aids graduating seniors at Port Aransas High School.

Most homes are two-story and require climbing stairs. No cameras will be allowed in homes.

## Festival raises funds for old home

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beneath the original Island Café, which was on pilings and had a wood floor to the porch, for money.

"Trouble was, you never knew what you'd come face-to-face with under there," he said.

"No," Willey agreed, "but you always came out with a pocket full of change after a weekend."

The Tarpon Inn courtyard served as the setting for the certificate presentation by Tom Alexander, a commissioner of the Texas Historical Commission, commemorating Port Aransas' completion of the commission's Visionaries in Preservation program. That program, the commission said, "empowers Texas communities to shape the future of their historic preservation efforts through visioning and planning and provides training and assistance tailored to achieve local preservation goals."

PAPHA also sold T-shirts and reproductions of old-time photos to raise money to buy and move the old Mercer house for use as a museum and association headquarters.

A recent cultural survey of Port Aransas called the Mercer house the "crown jewel" of Port Aransas historical buildings.

The home, now at the corner of Oleander and Roberts streets, was originally in the Old Town section of Port Aransas. It was brought here by barge and assembled piece by piece from a Sears, Roebuck Co. kit.

It survived the 1919 hurricane and



STAFF PHOTOS BY PHIL REYNOLDS

## Memories for sale

Visitors to the reception behind the Tarpon Inn browse through a stack of historical photos offered for sale by the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association as a fund raiser to pay for buying and moving the old Mercer House, termed the city's "crown jewel of historical structures."

served as a temporary Coast Guard station when the permanent station here was wrecked by the storm.

It was later moved to its current location by being jacked up and put on rollers and pulled through city streets.

The property has been bought to be turned into town houses; PAPHA wants to save the home and move it to property where it can be used as a

headquarters and museum, something Port Aransas does not now have. City council members gave their blessing to that effort at the council meeting on Thursday, Nov. 16, though it does not involve any city funds.

A suggested home for the museum is on Alister Street where the Port Aransas Computer Center now sits; however, the council stipulated that no move could be made until another home is found for the Computer Center.

The center is now housed in a crumbling building that once served as a combination constable's office, police station, fire station and city jail. The property is owned by Nueces County, which leases it to the city for the Computer Center. City Manager Michael Kovacs said at the council meeting that the county would continue to lease it to the city if it were used as a museum site instead of as the home for the Computer Center.

Donations are still being accepted for the project, said PAPHA chairman John Fucik. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to P.O. Box 677, Port Aransas, TX 78373, marked for use in the drive to save the historic building, or taken in person to American Bank, 216 S. Alister St. A special account has been set up there to accept donations.

## City lights up for annual contest; Garden Club seeks more entries

Driving around town after dark, it is apparent that businesses are "lighting up" as they ready for the Christmas holiday.

The Port Aransas Garden Club is asking for more participation from buildings and boats in the annual lighting contest.

The club sponsors a community-wide Christmas Lights Contest that this year has been expanded to include boats and cash prizes in nonprofit categories.

Participants are asked to have their lights up before Saturday, Dec. 9, when the Lighted Boat Parade and Carolers Afloat will take place.

Call event chairman Nancy Phillips at 749-0321 no later than Monday, Dec. 11, to enter the contest. Judging will be Wednesday, Dec. 13.

First place winners in the non-com-

mercial categories will be awarded \$50. Those categories are residential (including individual condominium units), recreational vehicle/mobile home, and individual boats. Sponsoring these prizes with the garden club are the Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce-Tourist Bureau and the *South Jetty* newspaper.

The commercial contest categories are individual businesses and entrances to condominium complexes.

Judges will rate entries on originality, good use of lights, use of a theme, excellence in design and overall appeal.

Winners in all categories are asked to keep their lights on through the evening of Monday, Dec. 18, and photos of winners will be published in the Dec. 21 edition of the *South Jetty*.

**Picture Port Aransas in Days of Old**  
 You can purchase memories of yesteryear from the Port Aransas Preservation and Historical Association  
 www.portausa.com  
 Adding more each week  
 prints, buttons, key chains, calendars, mugs, t-shirts, DVD's

## Moby Dick's Bar and Grille

*A Whale of a Meal & a Whale of a Deal!*

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND - our fabulous CAJUN BOIL!**

Jump start your taste buds & tickle your tonsils with Fresh shrimp, Crawfish, Snow Crab Cajun Sausage, New Potatoes & Corn on the cob for only \$11.95, or try our phenomenal Louisiana Lobster Fest with Four cold-water Lobster Tails, served with New Potatoes & Corn on the cob for only \$19.95!

**Friday & Saturday from 4 p.m. till close**

*Welcome back Winter Texans - we appreciate you!  
 Watch for our daily lunch & dinner specials!*

**517 S. Alister**

**749-9447**

5:35 p.m. Thursday



## Lighting up the holidays.

As you begin using decorative lighting in and around your home this holiday season, AEP Texas reminds you to keep safety in mind. Check light strings for frayed cords, and use only UL-approved lights and extension cords. Remember not to overload circuits, and remind children not to touch lights or outlets. And on behalf of all of us here at AEP Texas, please enjoy a safe, bright holiday season with your family and friends. **AEP Texas is there, always working for you.**



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For more information about electrical safety, visit [AEPTexas.com](http://AEPTexas.com)