

The Blue Rock Banner

July 2022
Issue 8

Jaeger-Witte Heritage Cemetery Association

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2022-2023 OFFICERS

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Jeff Featherston

Vice-President
Steven Jaeger

Secretary
George Zemanek

Treasurer
Debbie Byrd

**Grounds and
Maintenance**
Kay Kulow

President's Report

Hello All,

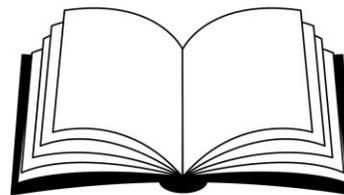
Not much to report this year regarding the cemetery. All of the major projects we were focusing on for the past few years have been completed. We continue to have clean-up days and anyone who would like to come and help is welcome. Keeping the cemetery grounds clean for our loved ones who are resting there is a way of honoring them and their memory.

We have applied for a historical marker and that process will take some time. George is heading that up.

We hope everyone has a great summer and look forward to seeing you all at the reunion.

Sincerely,
Jeff

Family Directory



Jaeger Witte Heritage
Cemetery Association
3802 Costa Rica Rd
Houston, TX 77092
www.JWHCA.org

Do you need a copy of the Jaeger family directory? Please contact George for a print or digital copy. 281-827-5350 g.zemanek.1@gmail.com

Celebrations and Announcements



Shelby Drews and Collin Lawson were married on April 22nd at Big Cedar Lodge in Branson, Missouri.



Kyle Drews graduated from Tarleton State University in May, with his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

In Loving Memory

Wayne Bierman passed away at home on March 26th. He is survived by his wife Rita (daughter of Mel and Theresa Jaeger), sons Alex and Chris, and daughter Angel.



Jay and Becca Kulow were married on April 9th in a beautiful outdoor ceremony underneath an oak tree on Chris' grandparents Jack and Delores Gummelt's farm in Burton, Texas. They welcomed their son, Jack, into the world on May 31st.

Historical Marker

In 2019 the Jaeger Witte Cemetery was recorded as a Historic Texas Cemetery. This is the first step towards applying for a historical marker. The Washington County Historical Commission approved our application for a historical marker. The final step is approval from the Texas Historical Commission. Applicants are scored according to age, historical significance, state of repair, diversity of topic, value of topic as an untold aspect of Texas history, endangerment level of property, available documentation and resources, relevance to THC programs, and relevance to the THC priorities. We are hoping to have a determination by the end of the year.

How You Can Help!

The family meets throughout the year for routine maintenance. We generally begin at 8:00am and finish by noon. Please contact Kay Kulow at kaylynnkulow.ka@gmail.com or (979) 277-8807 if you would like to participate. We also rely on financial assistance from family and friends. Your tax-deductible donations are used to cover the cost of maintenance and to fund special projects such as restoration and repair efforts. Donations can be given to any board member or mailed directly to:

JWHCA
3802 Costa Rica Rd
Houston, TX 77092

Please make checks payable to JWHCA.
Thank you for your ongoing support!



The Glasscrank Piano

By George Zemanek

Jeanette can recall the time in 1943 when she, Delores, and Bernhardt were outside their house in Port Arthur watching some furniture being delivered. She saw some chairs unloaded, then a table, and then something that would change her life. “Hey! We got a piano! Look, we got a piano!” she shouted to all who would hear. Later that afternoon, the neighbor girls Marilyn, Arlene, and Helen Wagner came to say hello. Jeanette shared the good news that they had just gotten a new piano. Marilyn was learning to play the piano and was so happy to hear that Jeanette would also be learning. The girls waited outside by the window while Jeanette ran into the house to play. “Blem, blem, blem” she sang, as her chubby fingers pounded away enthusiastically. “Blem, blem, BLEMMMMM.” Marilyn laughingly remarked “Oh that sounds better than ours!” Jeanette’s parents heard the racket and walked into the room. Upon seeing them, Jeanette hopped up and ran out of the house.

You see, this was not a piano at all. It was a *Glasscrank*, or “glass cabinet.” But to Jeanette, this was a magical instrument, taking her to a world of music that only she could hear. When the family moved back to the farm in 1946, Jeanette’s Piano, as it was called, came along too. It was placed in the living room and for many years, Jeanette would “play music” on the flat surface with her younger sister Edith sitting beside her as the audience. Her father had some old song books that served as her sheet music. One story she often tells is about the time she made pedals. She sneaked off with three of her mother’s good serving spoons and a roll of her father’s duct tape. When nobody was around, she used the entire roll of tape to affix the spoons to the bottom of the piano. When she saw that the pedals would not come back up after pressing them down, she placed a pillow underneath them. Later that day, Henry was looking for the tape to repair some egg crates and Lillie was looking for her spoons. They looked down and saw what Jeanette had done and walked out of the room laughing. How could they be angry with a child who wanted so badly to play music? They always said they wished Jeanette could learn to play, but lessons were 75 cents a week, a luxury that a large family could not afford on a farmer’s income.

When Liberace’s television show debuted in 1953, Jeanette was in love. Every Saturday from 2:00 - 2:30 p.m., she would run down to her father’s store to watch the show. She would listen to the music and pretend she was there beside her hero, sitting at his Baldwin baby grand and sparkly candelabra.

Jeanette wanted a real piano so badly that she would pretend to play music on anything. A box, a board, even sticks. She would often look for a large stick and place it beside her bed and pray for it to become a piano. Each morning she woke up disappointed. Her mother said finally, “God doesn’t answer prayers like that. But one day you’ll get your piano.”

When Jeanette grew up and moved into her own apartment in Houston with her sister, she saved up her money and purchased an electric organ at Montgomery Ward for \$152. She learned some basic hymns which she played over and over on her little organ. But she never forgot about her very first piano. It was so scratched up from her playing that her mother said Jeanette could come take it whenever she wanted. Sadly, the Glasscrank Piano was lost when the house caught fire in 1981.

Encouraged by son George, who had been studying piano since he was a child, Jeanette began taking formal lessons in 2009. And true to her mother’s words, she finally got her piano.

Favorite Name

By George Zemanek

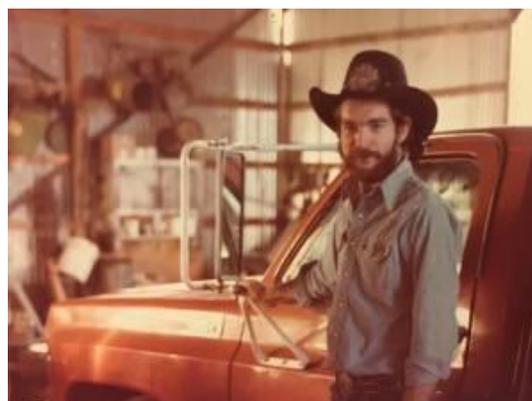
Have you ever had a family member with an unusual name? A cousin named after their parent's favorite car? Or maybe a nephew named after an obscure prophet from the Bible? In my family this honor goes to my uncle, Lanis Llayne Jaeger. Lanis, born on January 12, 1956, was the youngest of nine children. According to my mother, their father heard the name "Lanis" somewhere and thought it sounded nice. She does not know where Llayne came from though.

The name Lanis is of unknown origin. But, if you read enough baby naming books and websites, you'll find that a few say the name is of Celtic origin and means "little rock, the one who is peaceful." While I question the legitimacy of this meaning, it's an interesting take on an obscure name.

From 1880 to 2019, the Social Security Administration has recorded fewer than 300 babies born in the United States with the first name Lanis. The highest recorded use was in 1946 with a whopping total of 12 babies named Lanis. To put it into perspective, this name was given to .0003% of all babies born that year.

Out of 4,163,090 babies born in 1956, only five were named Lanis, and only one of those was named Lanis Llayne Jaeger. He was a rancher, a welder, a baby brother, and a beloved uncle who was as precious as his rare name. He was devoted to his parents and lived on the family farm, caring for it after their deaths. In so many ways, he was the "little rock, the one who is peaceful" and his presence is still felt on the land he farmed.

Lanis passed away on August 29, 2007 at the age of 51. He is buried in the Jaeger Witte Cemetery near his parents Henry and Lillie Jaeger.



Want more family stories? Check out our website!

JWHCA.com