



Christmas Girls Judy Aston, Karen Butts and Carla Case appreciate the beauty of Laura Omer's home on the Jefferson Candlelight Tour of Homes last weekend.

'Christmas Girls' Keep 30-Year Candlelight Tradition Alive

By BOB PALMER, Jimplecute Editor

Some tell you it's the trip not the destination that matters.

The "Christmas Girls" from Whitesboro quickly point out, however, the combination of pleasant traveling companions and century-old historic homes with elegant Christmas decorations make both location and journey memorable.

On the first weekend in December, for 30 consecutive years, Judy Aston, Karen Butts and Carla Case traveled from Grayson County

to Jefferson for the annual "Candlelight Tour of Homes."

"It's almost like stepping back in time," Butts said.

"We love to just stroll about," Case added. "I feel comfortable and safe."

"It's an old-fashioned Christmas," Aston said of the Jefferson atmosphere. "It restores my Christmas spirit."

Case was the

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This Winter, Bring Your Ice Skates and Umbrella

National Weather Service Expects More Rain; Lake O' the Pines Plans For Continued Wet Weather

By BOB PALMER, Jimplecute Editor

While authorities at Lake O' the Pines prepare to release surplus water in coming weeks, Brandi Richardson, senior meteorologist with the Shreveport office of the National Weather Service predicts a wet winter on top of a wet fall.

"For the rest of the winter, we are looking at a slight chance at being above normal for participation," Richardson said. "There is a 33 percent chance we will be above normal for the winter."

October and November have already proven to be above average.

Shreveport data showed November with 8.33 inches. November of 2017 the amount of participation was 1.43 inches.

Normal month to date for November should be at 4.32 inches. This places the area at 4.12 inches above normal. The year to date bump is also significant.

In 2018 the area received 54.77 inches of participation. The normal is 46.32, an 8.45-inch surplus.

Walt Sears, general manager of North East Texas Municipal Water Supply District, has observed the rise in water levels at Lake O' the Pines.

"About 20,699-acre-feet are in the lake beyond what is used for water supply," Sears said. "Water in the lake will be released downstream until the elevation is lowered to 228.5. Presently, the lake is about 1.1 feet above full."

Water elevation rose in October and November due to the rain events in those months.

"Please note that prior to the onset of the rain events, the lake was about 1.5 feet below the full elevation for water supply (228.5)," Sears said.

"During the month of November, the peak daily release was about 1,958 cfs. The maximum amount that the lake is authorized to release is about 3,000 cfs. In November, there were several days when the lake was releasing at a rate about 2/3 of the maximum rate. The last time that the lake released near the maximum rate was in the first half of March of 2018."

Both Richardson and Sears expect more rain.

"We have a 70-75 percent chance of developing an El Nino this winter," Richardson said. "We currently have neutral conditions that potentially could transition into El Nino. Typically, this means wetter and warmer winter months."

Richardson cautioned that El Nino is just "one piece of the puzzle."

Richardson would not be surprised if wet conditions took a different twist.

"We haven't had a big widespread ice storm in a while," Richardson said. "This would be a good time for folks to be thinking what to do if they are without power for a few days."

While Richardson says heavy rains will not necessarily translate into flooding, Sears said release of surplus water from Lake O' the Pines appears certain.

"The outlook is that water will need to be released from Lake O' the Pines during the next 60 days to lower the elevation toward 228.5," Sears said. "These releases will likely help the lake in managing future heavy flow conditions. The flow during the next 60 days may also create environmental benefits since the flow is sustained longer but at a lower rate than what would have occurred without the lake first holding back some of the flood flows reaching the lake."

Marion County's Last 19th Century Man Left Lasting Impression

MARION ROOTS: This is one of an occasional series of reports on people, events and places in Marion County's past.

Dec. 10 marks the 120th anniversary of the official end of the Spanish-American War (hostilities actually ceased in August). While few will note the historical significance of the Treaty of Paris, the date would have meant something to Karl Harris Graham, described by family members as "the last purely 19th Century man in East Texas."

A hermit, a moonshiner and a fixture around Jefferson for 50 years, Graham's story is also a love story, as told by a niece and nephew.

"Uncle Karl was my grandmother's brother," Marcia Thomas related. "He served in the Spanish-American War. He knew a lot about weapons, flora and fauna."

Jimmy Brown was Graham's nephew and a columnist for the Jimplecute.

"He was both my boyhood hero, role model and teacher," Brown wrote after Graham's death in 1959.

Born in 1876, Graham was the eldest of Capt. Charles G. Graham's three sons. The elder Graham served in the Confederate army and after the Civil War became a prominent businessman in Jefferson.

Karl attended school in Jefferson, then graduated from the University of Baltimore. A brief period of roaming the country followed until he signed up to serve in the Spanish-American War.

While training at Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio, Karl met Virginia Chew. He immediately fell in love.

Karl and Virginia married, but after only a year of marriage, Virginia contracted "consumption" or TB. Despite the best medical help available, she would die within a year.

"Broken hearted, he never quite recovered from grieving for 'the girl,'" Brown wrote.

Graham returned to Marion County moving onto the family's 150-acre place at Shanghai Landing on the Big Cypress where steamboats once took on wood for fuel.

"He grew corn," Thomas recalled. "He had an oil lamp and cooked his own meals. He had a spring near his house and made his own booze."

Brown remembered Graham living close to nature.

"He became something of a naturalist and we kids learned about snakes, varmints, wasps, bees - all kinds of critter," Brown wrote. "He taught us that 'Everything in East Texas woods will stick ya, sting ya, kick ya or bite ya, and that includes folks.'"

Graham taught nieces and nephews how to shoot which Brown wrote came in handy when it came time for his brothers and he to serve their country.

On his visits to Jefferson, first in his flat bottom boat and later in a truck which he taught himself to drive, Graham made quite an impression.

"He had a handlebar moustache and a goatee," Thomas said. "He always wore khakis and a snap brim straw hat." The shirt pocket would carry a Prince Albert tobacco tin and cigarette papers.

Brown remembered his uncle as a man who lived by a code that has almost vanished.

"His philosophy embodied all the noble many traits: Always keep your word. Look men straight in the eye. Respect womankind. Love your God and Country and be ready to die for it if necessary. Be self-reliant even when it hurts. Never lie, cheat or steal. Never flinch from the truth, hardship or a fight if one is forced on you. 'Above all, be honorable.'"

Brown recalled another Graham saying.

"I keep my guns loaded and my knives sharp," Graham would say.

Brown and Thomas recalled Graham's German Shepherd dogs. Thomas also remembered learning to drive "on that awful pickup."

People in Jefferson with long memories might recall, however, a simple, dignified man who looked you in the eye and would speak the truth, expecting the same in return.

Karl Harris Graham served his country and kept faith with the woman he loved. He is buried in Marion County soil and forever a part of her story.



Karl Graham and Vesta Brown

NEWSbriefs

WOMEN AT THE WELL OF ENCOURAGEMENT is hosting the 5th Annual Christmas Gala Dinner on Sat., Dec. 8 at 6:00 P.M. at the Jefferson Transportation and Visitors Center, 305 N Alley, Jefferson, TX 75657. Tickets information and sales may be purchased at Elite Tax Service, 201 W Broadway St. Suite A, Jefferson, TX 75657. For more information please call (903) 665-2445 or 407-9800. Dress is semi-formal.

THE COMMUNITY CENTER BOARD AND TRUSTEES is happy to announce the

recent changes made at the Marion County Community Center. We would like to give a special thank you for all the donations we received: Blue Bonnet Garden Club, MCDSCCO, the Jefferson City Council, Lowe's of Marshall, TX, and the volunteer community workers headed by Chris and our local Rep. Derrick Benton.

THE JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR will perform their Christmas Concert Thurs., Dec. 13 at 7:00 P.M. at Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Jefferson, TX. You won't want to miss as we will do a special tribute to "Silent Night" as this is the 200th anniversary of the song.



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