



GRAPEVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On The Vine

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING GRAPEVINE HISTORY

Grapevine's Wally Funk Experiences Space



Jeff Bezos and Wally Funk

Never give up your dreams no matter how long they may take to come true! For aeronautics pioneer Mary Wallace (Wally) Funk, the dream of going into space took 60 years to become reality, but at age 82, she did it! On July 20, Wally was aboard the Blue Origin New Shepherd 4 rocket (*New Shepherd named for astronaut Alan Shepherd*) on mission NS16, with her benefactor, Jeff Bezos, his brother Mark Bezos, and 18-year-old Oliver Daemen from the Netherlands. The launch occurred at 8:12 a.m. Grapevine time from Van Horn, Texas, and went 66.5 miles above the Earth into space. There the crew experienced several minutes of weightlessness and saw the curvature of the Earth from their windows. It was everything Wally ever dreamed of and more.

Her ride on Blue Origin completed that one missing piece of adventure in her distinguished aviation career. Her list of accomplishments is very long and impressive. She literally fell in love with aviation as a toddler and pursued her love of flying all her life. At age 21, she was one of the first women who trained in 1961 to be an astronaut as one of the Mercury Thirteen. But the

women's program was cancelled because the participants were women. (*Today, only the two youngest of the thirteen women are living – Gene Nora Jessen, who was 24, and Wally who was 21.*) Wally's enthusiasm never dimmed. She built more than 19,000 hours of flight time, became a professional flight instructor, an inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration and an investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board.

It was 26 years ago that Wally became personally involved with the City of Grapevine. As a member of the organization "Women in Aviation International," she suggested that their convention, which was going to be held in a neighboring community, have one of its social evenings in the Grapevine Historic District that Wally really loved. Wally contacted the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau about that possibility, and Marcy Roitman-Boothe explained that Grapevine would absolutely love to roll out the red carpet for Women in Aviation International, but they would need to hold their convention in a Grapevine hotel. Working with Shelly Wright, then Sales Manager at Grapevine's Hyatt Regency DFW, the convention was booked, and the event became legendary.

One of Wally's greatest personal characteristics is that she does not forget her friends, and she never forgot Marcy Roitman-Boothe, Mayor Tate, Paul W. McCallum or any of the other people who made her convention a success. She has made it a point to keep in touch. "We are so proud that our friend and Grapevine resident is the oldest space tourist," said Marcy Roitman-Boothe. "Wally's signature saying is, '*The only thing a woman needs to compete in a man's world is ability. Go for everything you can. Higher, faster, longer.*' Wally waited a long time, and we can't wait to hear about this magnificent flight," she said.

Sallie Andrews

Grapevine's First Winery

When Grapevine was first establishing itself as a town in the 1840s, it was largely a farming community and cotton was king. Several cotton gins were built in Grapevine by early pioneers. By the 1940s cantaloupes had taken over as the major crop and Grapevine was considered the "Cantaloupe Capital of USA." The Cantaloupe Festival was one of Grapevine's biggest events with a Cantaloupe Queen, parades and large cash prizes for the best cantaloupes.

Today the GrapeFest has replaced the Cantaloupe Festival and Grapevine is well known as a destination for sampling wines. This year's GrapeFest will be September 16 - 19, 2021. There was a vineyard on Main Street according to a 1930 map, so clearly wine has been produced in Grapevine for quite some time. But the first modern winery, or wine tasting room, in Grapevine was La Buena Vida on East College Street. While the building still exists, it is no longer a tasting room. La Buena Vida means "*the good life*" in Spanish.

La Buena Vida was established in the early 1970s by Dr. Bobby Smith, the son of cotton farmers. He bought a dairy farm in Springtown in 1971 and planted a vineyard in 1972. The winery released its first wine commercially in 1978. La Buena Vida is the third oldest winery in Texas and Dr. Bobby Smith was active in getting the Texas Farm Winery Act passed which allowed grape growers to produce wine in dry counties.

Dr. Smith was also a past president of the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association and president of the Texas Wine & Grape Growers Association. He also taught a wine chemistry course at UTA for nine years. Dr. Bobby Gene Smith, D.O. passed away June 2, 2020 at the age of 85. The La Buena Vida Vineyards in Springtown still exist - now run by John and Debbie Wilson of the Umbra Winery.

John Boyd

The Arrival of Air Conditioning

"Hot, oppressive nights... without a breath of air in motion... they wouldn't be so bad if you could be at the seashore or in the mountains... but at home in your bedroom... hot, uncomfortable, depressing."

Welcome to the Texas summer. In 1934, an unknown copywriter with Texas Power & Light described all too vividly the way the season could make you feel in a time before air conditioning. In their *Grapevine Sun* ad, they proffered the best answer at that time: electric fans in assorted sizes.

Electric fans followed the introduction of electricity like warm nights followed hot days - right behind lighting as one of the great changes wrought by electrification. Even in 1898, the local paper noted that "Electric fans are great favorites these summer days," although they cautioned that young boys should be kept away from their tempting blades, and admonished readers with tongue in cheek that the "Surest way to keep cool: Stop talking about the heat."

In 2021 we are coddled by limitless sources of cool air - at least until the power grid buckles. In fact, the availability of air conditioning was a major factor in Texas' 20th-century population boom. But that change was only completed in our lifetime. Before ubiquitous AC, people did whatever they could to keep cool.

Mostly that involved moving hot air around. Even the area's earliest "dogtrot" cabins (like the Gano log house now in Dallas' Heritage Village) were laid out to maximize natural ventilation through passive cooling.



Grapevine's Jerry Plumlee
visiting Forest Park on a warm
day in May 1945.

Turn-of-the-century houses included higher ceilings so the warmest air could rise, with transoms above many inside doors that could be opened or shut to keep some air flowing where it made sense. A loosely woven damp cloth placed in an outside window would help cool a room, and that trick worked in cars as well. Outside, covered porches with bench swings enabled you to create your own breeze.

see page three

Helped along by ice cream and neighborly chat, you could get through a sweltering summer night. Merchants offered their own options. In 1909, Wrigley Spearmint Gum was advertised as being more refreshing and better for you than ice water, while the Parlor Drug Store encouraged customers to buy a cooling soda that would give them "New Life and Energy." The *Sun* noted that the nation's ice cream sales in 1911 reached 200 million dollars, making the soda fountain clerk "an important citizen."

When electric fans came along, they represented real progress in taming torrid temperatures. Businesses were quick to adapt. Railroads promoted electric fans on trains in 1905. The State Fair Exposition Building in Dallas added thirty cooling fans in 1908. Locally, Will Taylor, who created the town's first movie theater in 1913, added rotary fans over the summer and advertised it as "the coolest spot in town." better. In 1912 the *Sun* described how progressive doctors were setting up rooftop tents with electric fans positioned by blocks of ice, and encouraging babies to spend the night in the tent in these (slightly) cooler surroundings.

And if a fan and ice were good, then perhaps more could be done. The evaporative power of the wet terry cloth could be scientifically harnessed. That's what Willis Carrier and others worked on during the early decades of the 20th century. Early attempts were large, cumbersome...and soon proved a real draw that could attract overheated people from miles around. Big city movie theaters jumped on the air-cooled bandwagon in the late 1920s, as the chance to escape the sun's heat for a cool dark movie palace proved irresistible.

For the ordinary Depression-era home, fans were the best option. Texas Power & Light aggressively advertised electric fans, promising they'd cool a room for three or four hours using just a penny's-worth of power. The prices of the fans themselves were a different matter. Small units sold as low as \$3, but larger models were \$30 and up. \$30 in 1934 is more like \$600 today, so monthly payment plans were offered.

The *Grapevine Sun* first printed the term "Air Conditioning" in a March 1932 article that promised you might soon "Make The Weather What You Want It." The syndicated story featured photos of a bulky brown box, looking a bit like an old radiator, which could be wheeled from room to room. "Leading economists, engineers and builders have hailed air conditioning as the next big industry of the nation:."

The first Grapevine business to take the AC plunge was the Palace Theatre, which retrofit its second home, the former Farmer's National Bank Building, in June 1936. They proclaimed proudly that a "battery of 50 mist sprayers thoroughly wash all air with iced water, removing all dust particles and insuring proper Humidity...This new cooling and washing system cools air from 12 to 20 degrees lower than the old dry-air fan system." Owner Kirby Buckner was lauded for his progressive outlook in installing the town's first air conditioning system. As local temperatures in 1936 had already reached 107 degrees, no doubt the investment boosted his business.

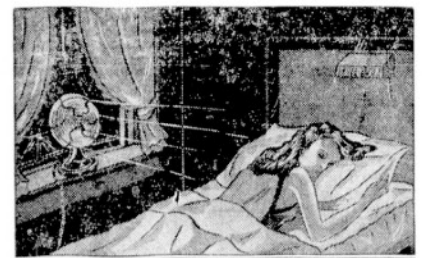
When Mr. Buckner built his new Palace Theatre four years later, a more modern AC system was part of the plan from the start. Those AC units chilled the building for the next 30 years.

Once the theatre showed the way, air conditioning began spreading around town. The First National Bank promoted its modern air-cooled lobby in 1942. In 1945, Dan & Ruth's Cafe invited patrons to "Cool Off...While You Dine In." Dueling ads in 1949 for Spinks Drugs and City Drug both touted their air-conditioned shopping.

Post-war, it was finally time for air conditioning to reach the home. The first ads suggesting whole-home cooling was within reach appeared in late 1944, and the Western Auto store sold a roll-around unit in 1947. It was when sales of window air conditioners heated up in 1950 that everyone started cooling off. TP&L's mid-century ads in the *Sun* swapped the fans for window units, but the essential message was much the same: "Everybody talks about the weather...the wise *do* something about it." Seventy years on, we now spend a lot more than a penny for four hours of cooling....but we seem to agree it's worth it.

Larry Groebe

Enjoy Restful Sleep on Hot Summer Nights



Hot, oppressive nights . . . without a breath of air in motion . . . they wouldn't be so bad if you could be at the seashore or in the mountains . . . but at home in your bedroom . . . hot, uncomfortable, depressing.

You can change all of this with an electric fan to bring life into the sultry atmosphere of the room, to give cool, invigorating breezes to caress your hot, feverish cheeks. How delicious it feels . . . just like spring . . . the reviving wind . . . fresh air . . . deep, dreamless, restful sleep.

Electric fans are so low in price and so economical to operate that you really can't afford to go through another summer without a sufficient number of fans in your home to give you relief from hot Texas summers.

Visit our store and select your needs in electric fans.



An Electric Fan for Every Need!

8-inch Fans	- \$ 3.00 to \$10.00
10-inch Fans	- 8.45 to 18.45
12-inch Fans	- 11.95 to 29.00
16-inch Fans	- 31.00 to 35.00

Convenient Monthly Terms

IT COSTS LESS THAN 1¢ TO RUN THE AVERAGE
ELECTRIC FAN FOR FOUR HOURS!

Texas Power & Light Company

Hot Time in the Old Town

Summers in Grapevine are always hot, and today we have the luxury of cooling off pretty easily! Take a look back to the old days...

We've Got To Move! -- Back in the "really" old days of 1843, President Sam Houston proposed to meet with Texas Indian chiefs in August at Bird's Fort to sign a treaty of peace and friendship. But the Bird's Fort site was just too hot and, being located on the Trinity River, too full of mosquitos. So the meeting site was moved north on the Grape Vine Prairie to a cooler spot with spring water. That move, due to the Texas heat, and the subsequent gathering on the Grape Vine Prairie is the basis for Grapevine having the Peace Circle public art in place at the corner of Main Street and Dallas Road! (*Don't miss the Peace Circle dedication on September 18 – 1:30 p.m. during GrapeFest®.*)

Morning Glory Air Conditioner -- From Calvin Price Dorman's book "Life on the Grapevine Prairie" written about the turn of the 20th century, he says "Staying cool in the hot summer was difficult. We had no large shade trees and electric power was still several years in the future. We used hand fans to cool our sweaty brows. My bed, at this time of the year, was located on the front porch corner near a heavy growth of morning glory vines that reached to the eaves of the house. Using the evaporative cooling principle, I doused these vines with a bucket of water and the prevailing south wind coming through the vines provided some cooling for nearly an hour. Our family (eventually) bought a mighty eight-inch electric fan, that at best could only cool one person; so I would draw a bucket of water from the well and continue to use the morning glory vines for short periods of comfort." (Sleeping on the front porch was not just a Dorman phenomenon. A look at the Torian Cabin on Page 104 in the Grapevine Area History book shows a bed on the front porch of the cabin – and that bed is now in the Grapevine Historical Museum. Another historic picture of Thelma Daniel Conine as a baby shows a bed on her family's front porch.)

On The Sidewalk -- From the Grapevine Area History book says, "Bob Lucas received his (mortuary) license in 1916, having married Frances Riley, and had one son, Robert (Bobby) Joe. Bob was the accountant for the J. T. Lucas General Store & Funeral Home (then located at 412 S. Main St.). He moved his desk to the front sidewalk "for a cool spot" rather than in the store where the ceiling fans only "stirred the hot air."

Air Conditioning -- In 1940, Jerome Kirby Buckner opened the new Palace Theatre at 300 South Main Street, featuring a first for Grapevine – air conditioning! Newspapers reported: "*Plans and specifications have been completed by an expert theatre architect to make this theatre ultra-modern, being air conditioned and having its own heating plant, and modern rest rooms. Two thermostatically controlled forced air gas heating units will furnish heat, while an evaporation-cooling system will be employed in the summer, thus making the theatre comfortable at all times.*"

Hot Footing It – In Sue Powers Franks story on Page 489 in the Grapevine's Most Unforgettable Characters book, she recalls keeping her feet cool, "*There were very few air conditioned buildings in Grapevine, but the Palace was one and the First National Bank (now Dino's at 342 S. Main St.) was another. I don't know why I didn't have on shoes, I did own some, but I would start out from our house, cross the street to the shade by the City Garage, then run across Main Street into the First National Bank lobby. Oh, how good that cold marble floor felt. The bank personnel never said anything, but I always felt a little sheepish.*"



President Joe Box inside the air-conditioned First National Bank, now Dino's Restaurant.

Ice House Memories -- On June 4, 1910, *The Grapevine Sun* published, "*The long-wished for Electric Light for our little city is now a realization...And the plant is about ready to begin making ice.*" This article marked a day when memories of "keeping cool" changed in the hearts of Grapevine residents. Years later, in 1940, at the end of the Great Depression and before World War II, Earl Copeland, a former banker, built the new

see page five

Grapevine Ice Company. Residents fondly remembered Mr. Copeland's friendly and efficient operation. They smiled at the thought of how they would eagerly wait to see blocks of ice slide down the chute for delivery. They recalled the iceman using iron tongs to haul the heavy blocks of ice to their vehicles. Others called to mind the early morning rides into town to fill metal cans and buckets with cold drinking water to quench their thirst later in the day. Ice cold watermelons were also a popular commodity, and you could rent an ice cream freezer there to take home so you could crank your own! At first, the plant produced 10 tons of ice a day, expanding to over 15 tons by 1947. An ice route covered the Grapevine area for the delivery of blocks of ice varying in size from 100, 50, 25, and 12 1/2 pounds. Each day, ice cards with the noted amount needed were conveniently posted in the windows of Grapevine homes. The company also furnished ice to nearby communities such as Hurst, Keller, Roanoke, and Coppell. (Learn more about production for ice for Grapevine at the Grapevine Historical Museum! It's a "cool" place!)

Sallie Andrews

Upcoming Events

We have no events scheduled in August, but will resume meetings on **September 20**, 6:00 to 8:00 pm with a **Welcome Back Celebration** with hors d'oeuvres and beverages at the Grapevine CVB Grand Hall. We will also honor our 2021 Lifetime Award Members: Gayle Hall and Billy & Mae Pearl Powers. Tickets to the event may be purchased on our website or at the Grapevine Historical Museum for \$20.00.

Regular meetings at the Grapevine Public Library will resume **October 25** with
"A Pictorial History of Quanah Parker"
by Richard Selcer.

The Grapevine Historical Museum is now open from 10:00 - 4:00 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

GrapeFest is **September 16 - 19** with a dedication of the "Peace Circle" on **September 18** by the new Hotel Vin and Train Station.

Past editions of this newsletter back to 1999 may now be viewed on our website:

grapevinehistory.org



"It is a great day for Grapevine when one of our most treasured citizens participates in such a historic event, Wally Funk is a true trailblazer, and I and all of the residents of Grapevine are so proud of her as she propels not only herself but the entire world into the realm of commercial space travel. In her 82 years her passion for air travel led her to experience many firsts. She was among the first wave of Americans, and the first group of women, who trained for space travel during the first space race. She is now the oldest and among the first to chart an unprecedented course for commercial space travel. Wally, as you fly into space, your Grapevine community flies with you, and we hope you have the ride of your life."

Mayor William D. Tate, July 20