



January 2018

A Message from the Vice-President

Dear VAHS members,



On behalf of the entire VAHS Board, I want to wish all of our members a Happy New Year! It looks like 2018 will be an exciting year for VAHS. The program committee has put together an excellent series of lectures with the theme “The Civil Rights Era-A Look Back at the 1960s.” You won’t want to miss these lectures. See the schedule below. Please note, due to renovations underway for the next two years at Village On the Isle, these lectures will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice Sanctuary, 1971 Pinebrook Road, Venice.

Also, in 2018 we anticipate being able to move the renovated circus car to the Historic Venice Train Depot campus. Having a retired Ringling Bros. car that was actually used in Venice is the ideal fulfillment of the original vision and plan for the campus. Fundraising continues for the development of interior educational exhibits. If you haven’t donated yet, please jump on board. All donations, both large and small, are important in helping VAHS complete the project. Please send checks, made out to VAHS, to:

Circus Train Car Project, Caldwell Trust Company, 1400 Center Road, Venice, FL 34293.

Thank you all for your support of VAHS. We look forward to seeing you at a lecture or at the annual meeting on March 28.

Brenda Holland

2018 VAHS Events Calendar



***January 16, 2018. 7 PM. "The Unknown Heroes of Florida's Civil Rights Movement."** Dr. Gary Mormino, presenter, is Professor Emeritus of History and co-founder of Florida Studies Dept. at USF, St. Petersburg. He is the author of many books including *Land of Sunshine*, *State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*. Dr. Mormino received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. In 2003, the Florida Humanities Council named him its first Humanist of the Year.

***February 20, 2018. 7 PM. "The Civil Rights Era in Sarasota County."** John McCarthy, Executive Director of Historic Spanish Point, known local historian and speaker, will moderate the panel consisting of James Brown, retired Sarasota County Education; Carolyn Mason, former commissioner of the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners; and other panelist TBA.



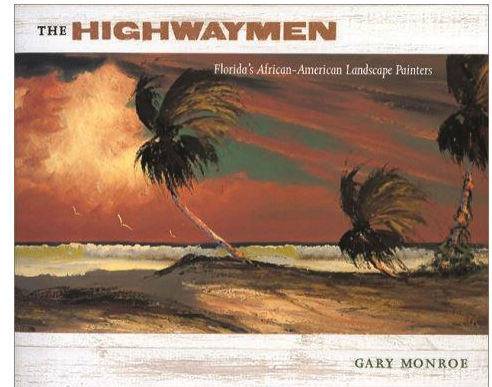
***March 27, 2018. 7 PM. Program: "Keeping Jackie Robinson Alive."** Presenters are Barry Zamoff and Richard Zamoff. These twin brothers, originally from New York, are long-time residents of Venice. In 1996, they founded the Jackie Robinson Project at George Washington University. The Zamoff brothers will share the story of a great athlete who broke "baseball's color line" and worked for equal rights throughout his life.

March 28, 2018. 11:30 AM. Annual Meeting at Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club. 499 Derbyshire Dr, Venice, FL 34285. Watch your email for more details.

April 7, 2018. HPCsc Annual Awards Ceremony Luncheon at the Venice Golf and Country Club. Save the date!



***April 17, 2018. 7 PM. Program: "The Highwaymen: Florida's African-American Painters."** Presenter is Gary Monroe. When he isn't traveling the world to photograph, he spends his time looking at life in Florida through his photography and his writings. Mr. Monroe's works have been recognized by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Florida Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs, and Florida Humanities Council. In his book, *The Highwaymen: Florida's African-American Landscape Painters*, he told the story of these painters and offers a fresh interpretation of their art.



****May 1-2, 2018. Giving Challenge sponsored by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. Help VAHS by donating and having your dollars matched. Watch for more details.**



***May 15, 2018. 7 PM. Program: "Mary Bethune: Civil Rights Leader."** Re-enactor Ersula Knox Odom is an author, Florida Humanities Council Viva La Florida performer as Mary McLeod Bethune, motivational speaker and prize winning life lyricist. She is a member of Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society and Zeta Phi Beta. She is a graduate of Eckerd College and lives in the Tampa Bay Area.

**The Betty Intagliata Lecture Series is sponsored by the Venice Area Historical Society, with permanent funding provided by the Bill Jervey, Jr. Charitable Foundation. All programs are FREE and OPEN to the public. Programs are held at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice, 1971 Pinebrook Road, Venice, FL 34292.*

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Circus Car Update

Workers at Uni-Glide Trailer Company are now repairing rusted segments on the exterior of the car and replacing the floor surface in the vestibule. They have uncovered windows that were covered during and since the Ringling years. Rubber surrounds and glass for all 22 windows were recently ordered and received, and a successful test installation has taken place. A steel door for the visitor entrance was purchased, a steel frame was constructed, and the door has been installed.



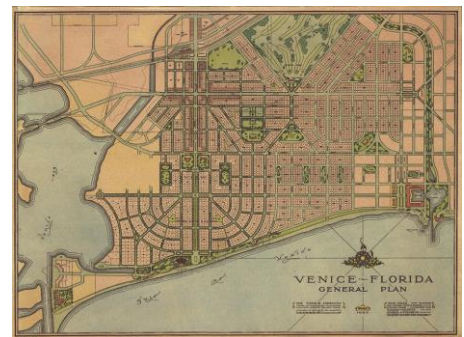
Joe DeMike, former Transportation Manager for the Ringling Circus at Feld Entertainment, has joined the committee. Joe is a tremendous resource in making decisions about the car's renovation.

VAHS has contacted Feld Entertainment, requesting permission to use a 1980s Ringling banner and the two Ringling globes that appeared on each side of the car. Feld is willing to grant an intellectual property license to recreate the signage, and VAHS is optimistic that legal details will be worked out among VAHS, Sarasota County, and Feld in the near future.



The Betty Intagliata Fall 2017 Lecture Series

More than 250 people attended the two Fall 2017 programs of the Betty Intagliata Fall Lecture Series. The first program was entitled "The John Nolen Plan for Venice," and was held October 17, 2017. Dorothy Korwek, retired Director of Historical Resources for the City of Venice, enlightened the audience with her vast knowledge of how Venice evolved from John Nolen's original plan. She described the successful campaign she led to secure a listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the John Nolen Historical District in Venice.



The second program was entitled "An Evening with Mable Ringling" and was held November 14, 2017. Sandy Chase, as Mable Ringling, provided a unique and engaging perspective on one of the lesser-known but very appealing members of the Ringling Family.

VAHS Member Profile: Meet Clarke Pressly



Clarke Pressly and his wife Beverly moved to Venice from Washington D.C. on Amtrak during spring break in 2006. Even though they had had family connections on the West Coast of Florida since 1965, the Presslys explored the coast from Bradenton to Fort Myers before selecting Venice as their own hometown. As a child, Clarke was an army brat who lived in the Philippines. As an adult, he pursued an IT career in the Washington, DC area, and Beverly was a teacher.

The Presslys made initial friends in Venice through Venice Newcomers, with Clarke becoming the President and Bev the Secretary. In 2009, Clarke visited the Triangle Inn, and his interest in history was rekindled. Particularly interested in military history, Clarke wrote a history of the local air base and its pilot training program. In 2010, after joining VAHS, he collaborated with Barbara Smith on an article about the Chinese Airmen who trained in Venice. Clarke also served as Vice President and President of VAHS. Another of Clarke's many accomplishments was researching information for the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary pamphlet on Military Memorials and Monuments in the Venice area. Currently, he manages the Society's Speaker's Bureau and Plaque Program, and he also researches information requests at the Venice Museum and Archives.

Clarke is committed to the proper recognition of the historical character of local assets through implementation of the County's comprehensive plan. Thank you, Clarke, for your interest in preserving Venice history and for your many years of service to VAHS.

Fall Tea Fundraiser



An enthusiastic group of women congregated at Flynn's on October 30th for another sold-out English Tea benefiting the VAHS Circus Train Car Project. Organized by Joan High, the event featured an array of teas and sweets, plus a flower demonstration by staff from Always an Occasion Florist & Décor. Mary Huba provided an update on the progress of refurbishing the former Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey (RBBB) circus car. She explained that a committee of VAHS members, former RBBB employees, and

community members is planning the interior exhibits.

Many of those in attendance sported fancy tea hats and fascinators. Sue and Jerry McCormick conducted the raffle. Thanks also to Carol Bailey, Marge Buchanan, and Brenda Holland who helped make the event a success.

Another English Tea fundraiser is planned for spring. Stay tuned for email updates regarding date, time, and place.



All Aboard the Legacy Park Train!

Almost eight years ago, a vision developed in VAHS of a train-themed playground on the campus of the Historic Venice Train Depot. Over the years, former VAHS Presidents Sue Chapman and Barbara



Smith advocated for this idea with city and county government leaders, attending meetings and talking to officials to keep the idea alive.

This autumn the idea became a reality. A recent visit on a sunny afternoon revealed a number of small children playing on the train at the playground. Supplemented with more traditional playground equipment for older children, the train is for the exclusive use of 2- to 5-year-olds. Keep this in mind when your young visitors come to Venice--the Legacy Park playground is a must visit destination. **ALL ABOARD!**

2017 Depot Statistics

In 2017, 2,408 individuals signed the visitor log at the Historic Venice Train Depot, and 45% of them visited in February and March. This total count is lower than the count in 2016 (2,876), but it is slightly ahead of 2015 (2,227). Since VAHS began giving tours of the Depot in November 2003, 33,562 visitors have been hosted. Thank you, Depot Docents, for your untiring dedication to sharing Venice history and Depot history with the public.



In Memoriam: Dr. Ron Higel (1937-2017)

Dr. Ronald Higel, a descendant of early settlers in Venice and a long-time VAHS member, recently passed away in England. Dr. Higel was a generous contributor to the Venice community, serving on the boards of the hospital, the yacht club, and various historical organizations. He was a well-respected dentist, and he was known for his many stories about our community. A memorial service will be scheduled soon in Venice.

VAHS Welcomes New Members

Welcome to Donna Day, Lynn Hippensteel, Tim and Dawn Jackson, Carol Kaplan, Eve Marino, Joan Piper, and Toni Vitelli.

Volunteer Opportunities Available

Are you interested in serving on the VAHS team? If you or someone you know has expertise and interest related to one of the needs listed below, please speak to a VAHS Board member, call 941-412-0151, or email president@veniceareahistoricalsociety.org.

Membership Committee. Individuals needed to assist with the following: proactive recruitment of members and volunteers, maintaining the Society's electronic database of members in Wild Apricot software, and making recommendations to the Board regarding membership issues.

Executive Assistant to the President. One person needed for clerical tasks such as picking up mail, accessing phone messages, and similar duties as assigned.

Special Events Committee. Two or more individuals needed (a) for program planning (securing venues, selecting menus when needed, preparing decorations, etc.) and (b) to arrange for VAHS participation in community events such as Sun Fiesta, Shark's Tooth Festival, Holiday Parade, etc. Duties include completing applications in a timely manner, planning participation activities, and implementing plans effectively.

Monthly Program Refreshment Team. Two or three people needed to purchase, set up, and serve light refreshments (e.g., non-alcoholic beverages and cookies) at each of the Society's seven Monthly Lecture Series programs. (VAHS assumes the costs.)

VENICE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP & VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE(S): _____

EMAIL(S): _____

Check your Membership and Volunteer choices:

- Individual \$30
- Family \$40
- Business \$50
- Non-Profit Org \$25



- Bronze \$100
- Silver \$250
- Gold \$500
- Donation of \$ _____

- Greet visitors at the Historic Venice Train Depot
- Share historical information with visitors at the Historic Venice Train Depot
- Greet attendees at the Society's Monthly Lecture Series
- Help with refreshments at the Monthly Lecture Series
- Help to recruit new members
- Help to prepare and present programs for children
- Serve as a day-trip coordinator
- Prepare and present topics related to local history
- Assist with the Society's publicity and communications
- Assist in production of the Society's newsletter
- Serve on a VAHS committee (*Communication, Development, Education, Finance, etc.*)
- Assist with fundraising efforts
- Assist with technology/computers

Skills or talents I can contribute are:

Make checks payable to Venice Area Historical Society.
Mail this form and check to VAHS Membership,
PO Box 995, Venice, FL 34284. For information, call 941-412-0151.
www.veniceareahistoricalsociety.org
membership@veniceareahistoricalsociety.org

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