



January 2019

A Message from the President

Dear VAHS members,



Most of us are heavily involved in the season's activities, and that certainly pertains to the Venice Area Historical Society. We at VAHS hope you have time to take advantage of our informative lectures. Betty Intagliata has planned an interesting new series about "Southwest Florida's Native Americans." As we know, this area was populated long before our Snowbirds started showing up!

This newsletter also includes an update on the status of the Circus Train Car Project. Our Oversight Committee has been working closely with our contractors to maintain a productive stream of work. This restoration project is complex and multi-faceted with "hidden" factors that can, and do, surface along the way; however, progress is being made.

Soon we will be asking for membership registration for the VAHS Annual Meeting and Luncheon scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, at the Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club. (Please see the article herein.) Also, please note an article about an agenda item for that meeting addressing the need to increase our annual dues in the fall of 2019. In accordance with our Bylaws, approval from the general membership is required for the increase.

Of course, I always enjoy promoting the VAHS Speakers Bureau. We are fortunate to have a group of dedicated members who have created informative presentations that are available to multiple organizations. If you would like to participate or need a speaker, please contact me for further information.

On a sad note, I wish to acknowledge the passing in December of Charlotte Neagle, a longtime member and active supporter. Charlotte served the Society in a number of ways, demonstrating her desire to promote our area's history and our efforts to present it to the general public. We will miss her. We were also recently informed that our community lost an historic preservation advocate, James Hagler, Venice's former Director of Historical Resources, who had pursued or supported several initiatives to save and restore historic structures in our area. His services to the Venice area are surely worthy of recognition.

Best wishes to all of you for an enjoyable winter season!

Clarke

Clarke Pressly, President

2019 VAHS Events Calendar

***January 15, 2019. 7 PM. "Our Local Treasures: Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring."** Presented by Steve Koski, Sarasota County Archaeologist.

***February 19, 2019. 7 PM. "Calusa Legacy."** Presented by Cindy Bear, Coordinator: Programs and Services, Randell Research Center, Calusa Heritage Trail, Pineland, FL.

March 19, 2019. 11:30 AM. VAHS Member Luncheon and Annual Meeting. Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club. See below for details.

***March 26, 2019. 7 PM. "The Seminole Wars."** Presented by authors John and Mary Lou Missall.

***April 16, 2019. 7 PM. "The Seminoles of Florida: Past, Present, and Future."** Presented by David Scheidecker: Research Coordinator, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Seminole Tribe of Florida.

May 18, 2019. Venice Museums Day. Historic Venice Train Depot. Details TBA.

***May 21, 2019. 7 PM. "Rising Tides--Shifting Sands--Ancient Sites in Peril."** Presented by John McCarthy: Executive Director of Gulf Coast Heritage Association and Historic Spanish Point, Osprey, FL.

**The Betty Intagliata Lecture Series is sponsored by the Venice Area Historical Society, with permanent funding provided by the Bill Jervy, 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.*

Annual Meeting Information—Save the Date!



The VAHS Buffet Luncheon and Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2019, at 11:30 AM at Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club, 499 Derbyshire Dr., Venice, FL 34285. The Honorable John Holic, Venice Mayor, will speak about "Venice and the Association of John Nolen Communities."

29TH ANNUAL MEETING
VENICE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tickets are \$25. Reservations for the luncheon may be sent with your check (made payable to VAHS), to VAHS Annual Meeting, P.O. Box 995, Venice, FL 34284-0995. You may also give your check to VAHS Treasurer Brenda Holland at either the January or February lecture. Please

list the reservation name(s) in the memo line. ***Final date for reservations is March 12th.***

Increased Dues Proposed for Fall 2019

Last spring, a four-member task force met to review the VAHS dues structure, and its recommendations were accepted by the Board of Directors. As required in the VAHS Bylaws, the recommendations will be presented to the membership for ratification at the Annual Meeting in March 2019.

These are the two recommendations:

1. Keep the present categories/levels: Bronze, Business, Family, Gold, Individual, Silver, Non-Profit, grandfathered Lifetime Members.

2. Increase dues as follows:
 - a. Individual ----- currently \$30 ----- increase to \$35
 - b. Family ----- currently \$40 ----- increase to \$45
 - c. Business ----- currently \$50 ----- increase to \$75
 - d. Nonprofit ----- currently \$25 ----- increase to \$35

In future years, as part of its lease agreement with Sarasota County, VAHS will be required to assume increased costs for maintenance of the circus car and the caboose. Thus, the proposed increase of \$5 per year for two of the membership categories is considered necessary but modest. In addition, the proposed dues are within the range of the fee structures of other local nonprofits, based on recent surveys.

For business members, the new fee reflects a 50% increase. However, for that additional cost, VAHS will provide an image of the member's business card, appropriately displayed, in each edition of the *Venice Express* newsletter. The newsletter is sent to contacts as well as members. A limited number of hard copies is printed.

If approved by the membership at the Annual Meeting, then these recommendations will apply to the 2019-2020 membership year and will be implemented on October 1, 2019. Members will be reminded when the 2019-2020 membership year renewals are slated to be sent.

Circus Train Car Update

This fall, during preparation for painting the car's exterior, a decision was made to replace 4.5 eight-foot panels of steel on the side of the car away from Uniglide's building. For some time, there had been discussion about how to repair a lengthy gouge and crease on that side. Once the repair was made, surface preparation continued, and the final gray primer was applied. Unfortunately, the cold, rainy weather in December has delayed painting on that side. The lighter temporary primer on the side near Uniglide's building will soon be ground off so that the final primer can be applied and painting can proceed.

Pictures show the transformation of the two sides of the car, as well as an example of areas where significant metal restoration was completed.

Side Away from the Building



Side Near the Building



Sample Metal Restoration



Behind the scenes, final decisions for insulating the interior of the car and installing HVAC and electrical wiring are being made.

Of great excitement is the fact that master craftsman Bill Dovel has virtually finished the Venice Arena miniature that will be displayed in the car. (Only exterior lettering remains.) Bill has devoted more than a thousand hours to this project. It will be a central element in preserving Venice's circus history.

Arena Miniature in July and December



Quilt Portrays Circus History



VAHS is indebted to Deanna Shellenberger Maxey of Indiana who recently donated a colorful quilt for display in the Circus Train Car. The 5' x 8' quilt memorializes her parents' roles in supporting Ringling Bros. & Barnum Bailey Clown College during most of the years that it was open in Venice (1968-1993).

Deanna's father, George Shellenberger, retired to the Venice area after a 30-year career in Indiana and used his skills as a master craftsman to create props for clown and circus acts. Her mother Mildred was a seamstress who assisted with costumes.

Using some of the actual costume fabrics, Deanna incorporated a variety of visual elements into the quilt that bring to life many aspects of the clowning world. In a special feature to personalize the quilt, she stitched a picture of her father in the center to accompany the other memorabilia.

Thank you, Deanna, for this special gift!

Evelyn Nelson--"Full Steam Ahead"



In an all-volunteer organization like VAHS, many individuals make significant contributions behind the scenes. The results of their efforts are enjoyed by many but known to only a few. Evelyn Nelson is just such a person.

Evelyn's story is not unlike *The Little Engine That Could*. When she was 30, Evelyn was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and was given a prognosis of five to ten years life expectancy. But like the little engine, nothing would hold her back.

At the time, Evelyn owned a courier service that served all of Western Massachusetts and Connecticut. After completing a degree in Computers and Design, she worked as a Graphic Designer who was sought after for painting and airbrushing murals. She also owned a balloon decorating company in which she made arches, sculptures, and decorations for elegant events such as weddings and for large events like Grand Openings and Marathons.

Evelyn moved to Florida in 1997. She continued as a Graphic Designer at the *Venice Gondolier*, and she subsequently ran a courier service in Sarasota for seven years—at which point, her health caught up with her. Tied to a motorized wheelchair and having to endure numerous surgeries, Evelyn developed a home-based business, and it was through that pursuit that she met Betty Intagliata.

At the time, the Society's publications and branding were in the early stage of development. Evelyn came on board as a volunteer and soon transformed VAHS's efforts into a very professional look. Over the years, she has designed numerous rack cards, newsletter issues, bookmarks, project pamphlets, brochures, t-shirts, signs, logos, etc. in a manner that pleases the eye and gets the job done. For several years, Evelyn assumed responsibility for VAHS's website and email accounts, and she helped with the transition to the Wild Apricot

software program. She even assumed wider leadership, serving for two years on the Society's Board of Directors.

Evelyn is always helpful and cheerful, and she brings great joy to anyone who has the good fortune to know her. The next hill may seem insurmountable to some, but Evelyn can and will conquer it through her gutsiness, determination, and perseverance. Thank you, Evelyn, for your many significant contributions to the Venice Area Historical Society!

William H. Jervey, Jr. Venice Public Library Opens



The William H. Jervey, Jr. Venice Public Library dedication was held on Saturday, December 15. At the ceremony, Director of Sarasota County Libraries Sarabeth Kalajian introduced many of the individuals who were involved in the planning and construction process, along with the library's benefactor and namesake: Dr. William H. Jervey, Jr. After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, a crowd exceeding five hundred attendees entered the new building for the first time.

Dr. Jervey, a VAHS Board member, kicked off fundraising for the Circus Train Car Project in 2014 with a major donation and challenge grant. He also sponsors the VAHS Betty Intagliata Lecture Series, a free activity open to the public. The picture shows Dr. Jervey entering library.

"Bertha Palmer: Queen of Chicago and Legendary Woman of Sarasota County"



On October 16th, Kate Holmes brought Bertha Palmer back to life to an audience of over 165 people in the first program of the fall season to be sponsored by the Venice Area Historical Society. Kate Holmes is a reenactor who has interpreted Bertha Palmer as a living history presentation to over 100 groups throughout Sarasota County.

Betty Intagliata, Program Chair, planned the event, which was hosted by the Venice Area Historical Society. The Bill Jervey, Jr. Charitable Foundation provided the funding. Pictured are Dr. Frank Cassell, Clarke Pressly, Betty Intagliata, Kate Holmes, and Bill Jervey, Jr.

"Kentucky Military Institute: 126 Years of Its History, Including the Venice Years"



On November 27, 2018, the Venice Area Historical Society hosted a free lecture presented by Larry Humes. Mr. Humes is a 1965 graduate of the Kentucky Military Institute (KMI), which had its winter headquarters in Venice for over 30 years. Nearly 200 people attended the presentation. The program was the last of the 2018 Betty Intagliata Lecture Series, funded by the Bill Jervey, Jr. Charitable Foundation. The theme of the 2019 series that starts on January 15 is "Southwest Florida's Native Americans," and the programs will continue monthly from

January through May. Pictured are Bill Jervey, Jr., Betty Intagliata, Larry Humes, and Clarke Pressly.

VAHS Welcomes New Members

Dorothy Elliot | Jason Gallourakis | M. JoAnne Gentry | Patricia G. McManus

Dave & Anne MacIntyre | Dave and Carole Metzger | Richard Packman

In Memoriam: Charlotte V. Neagle (1946-2018)



On December 4, 2018, VAHS was saddened to learn that our friend Charlotte Neagle had passed away. For many years, Charlotte served as Editor of the *Venice Express* and as a member of the Style Show Steering Committee. Charlotte organized several day-trip events for members, and she was one of the initial organizers of the VAHS Lecture Series and the Summer Book Club. She also served on the Board of Directors.

The Board is very grateful for Charlotte's important contributions over the years. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 19, 2019 at 2 PM in the sanctuary of UUCOV, 1971 Pinebrook Road, Venice, FL 34292.

HPCsc Awards and Luncheon



The Sarasota County Heritage Awards program for 2019 is currently underway. This program, which is in its third year, recognizes individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the preservation and recognition of historic heritage in Sarasota County. The competition consists

of seven categories, including a new Student Scholar Award.

Last year was the first year for the Lillian Burns Individual Achievement Award, and VAHS was pleased to nominate Program Chair Betty Intagliata as its candidate for that category. Recognizing the depth and breadth of Betty's efforts in her advocacy of the history of our region over many years, the selection committee chose her as the recipient for 2018. Nominations for 2019 must be submitted by January 15, 2019, and awards will be announced sometime in mid-February.

The awardees for this year will be formally recognized at an Awards Luncheon scheduled for Saturday, April 27, 2019, at the Venice Golf and Country Club. Specific registration information for this event will be provided by the Sarasota County Heritage Awards Committee at a later date.

Sarasota County Centennial 2021 Update

Sarasota County officially separated from Manatee County on July 1, 1921. To celebrate this 100-year anniversary, the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners and the History & Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County (HPCsc) formed a Steering Committee to plan year-long activities to commemorate 100 years of Sarasota's people, places, and achievements. Dr. Frank Cassell, Dorothy Korwek, Elizabeth Sweeney, Betty Intagliata, Rob Bendus, and Don Bayley are members of the committee, who meet monthly at Historic Spanish Point.

The Steering Committee is looking for *Partners* (historical societies, schools, service organizations, businesses, book clubs, etc.) who will use the official Centennial 2021 logo in their publicity and who will plan what events they will hold in honor of the Centennial. No monetary donation is required, and an organization need NOT create a new event if an existing activity can tie into the Centennial 2021 theme. For example, a VAHS event could be our annual Lecture Series. To find out more about the year-long celebration and how to become a Partner of Centennial 2021, interested parties can visit the website at

<https://www.sarasotacountycentennial.com>.

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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