



**April 2018**

## **A Message from the President**

Dear VAHS Members,



First, I want to introduce myself to those of you who may not know me. At the Annual Meeting on March 28th, I was elected the new President of the Venice Area Historical Society. For some of our longer-term members, you might say "He's back!!!" Yes, I am and looking forward to working with a tremendous board and off-board committee chairs this coming year on a range of activities being performed by the Society.

Before I get into such topics, however, my heartfelt thanks to the truly outstanding job that your outgoing ("Acting," as she would say) President, Brenda Holland, has done in providing unplanned leadership when, as Vice President, she needed to take the reins following the unfortunate resignation last June by our late President, Carolyn Redlin. We appreciate the way in which Brenda picked up the flag, so to speak, and forged ahead to keep the Society's efforts on track. Well done, Brenda! Fortunately, Brenda has agreed to become Treasurer in the coming year, so we still have access to a very skilled person on the board.

Well, we're off to a new year and a number of things continue to evolve as we begin this new period. For one, thanks to the efforts of our Program Chair, Betty Intagliata (more on her later), there are two more programs on the schedule of our lecture series. Plans are being formulated for a new season of programs that will commence in October.

I also want to recognize all of our many member volunteers, a dedicated group of people who serve in different ways to promote the history of our area. The centerpiece of that effort for VAHS has been, since 2003, the Historic Venice Train Depot. From that time, our docents have provided access to the Depot and the Rollins W. Coakley Railroad Park for over 34,000 visitors. Beyond that, we are now well underway with a marvelous new addition that will be coming to the park to keep company with our red Caboose -- the Circus Train Car. See article below for an update.

This year, we'll be collaborating with other history-related organizations in preparing for the county's 100th anniversary in 2021, working jointly with others on Venice area historic preservation policies, and continuing to provide informative presentations to local groups through our Speakers Bureau. If you

read, see, or hear about something that we do that sparks some interest, please contact us. We can always use more help.

Finally, we are excited about our fund-raising Victorian Tea planned for April 9 by Joan High--see the article below. We also urge all members to participate in the Giving Challenge, presented by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. To be held on May 1 and 2, it's a 24-hour donor activity in which each donation will be matched up to \$100 by the Patterson Foundation! It's a great opportunity to contribute to the Circus Train Car. See below for more details.

Enjoy the Spring Season!

*Clarke*

Clarke Pressly, President

## In Memoriam: Carolyn Redlin (1953-2018)

On February 7, 2018, VAHS was saddened to learn that Carolyn Redlin, former President, had passed away in Maryland. In her short time as president (just 15 months), Carolyn made a significant impact on VAHS. She was excited about the Circus Train Car Project, and she provided key leadership to the project at a critical time. She also moved the Society forward by recommending adoption of a new software program for managing membership and online communication strategies. The members of the Board of Directors are very grateful to Carolyn.



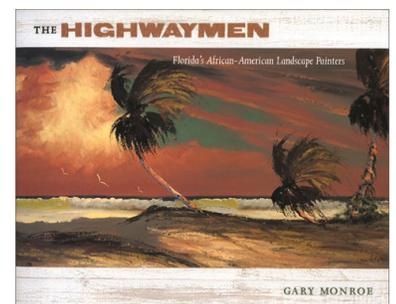
A full-time resident of Venice since 2009, Carolyn was active in many community organizations including Venice Newcomers, Newcomers of Venice Alumni, Venice Area Beautification, Inc., the Venice/Nokomis Women's Club, and Venice MainStreet. Carolyn was passionate about preserving the best aspects of Venice including its appearance and history. VAHS is appreciative for all of her contributions. A Celebration of Life Memorial Service is scheduled for Saturday, April 14, at First Baptist Church Venice, [312. W. Miami Ave., Venice](#), with the Gathering at 1 p.m. and the Service at 2 p.m.

## 2018 VAHS Events Calendar

**April 7, 2018. HPCsc Annual Awards Ceremony Luncheon at the Venice Golf and Country Club. Betty Intagliata and other award recipients will be honored. Deadline was March 30**

**April 9, 2018. Victorian Themed Tea with door prizes, demonstrations, and boutique tables.** Tickets are \$40. Tea dedicated to the memory of the late VAHS President, Carolyn Redlin. Proceeds will help complete the Circus Car, a project in which Carolyn had a significant role. For more information, contact Joan High, 941-484-5826.

**\*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. See article below.

**\*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.*

## The Circus Train Car—Now and in the Future

As can be seen, work continues to prepare the exterior of the train car for painting. The steel door for the visitors’ entrance has been installed, and rusted segments have been repaired on one side of the car. The test installation for the new windows was successful, although the final installation will not take place until after painting is completed.



Thank you to Evelyn Nelson, Graphic Designer and VAHS member, for creating the following beautiful new vision for the car’s exterior.



## The Giving Challenge

The Giving Challenge is an opportunity for you to double your donation if you wish to contribute to the expanded interior budget for the circus car. Interior displays will tell the story of the pivotal innovations in the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus during the Venice wintering years, describe interrelationships between the circus and the City of Venice, and highlight the many performers who stayed in the area to add to Venice’s circus legacy. The residences of three performers—Gunther Gebel-Williams, Chuck Sidlow, and Peggy Williams--will be presented for viewing.

**PRESERVE VENICE'S  
CIRCUS HISTORY!**

**MAY 1ST at Noon go to  
[www.givingpartnerchallenge.org](http://www.givingpartnerchallenge.org)  
Help Bring the Train into the Station!**

Donations up to \$100 matched 1:1 for  
each non-profit organization.

**DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!**

Giving Challenge questions: 941-488-5897



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
OF SARASOTA COUNTY  
PRESENTS



**Be The One**

The Giving Challenge is a 24-hour ONLINE ONLY giving event for non-profits in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto counties to be held May 1-2, 2018 from Noon to Noon. In order to participate, you will need to log on to the Challenge website during that time period and select the Venice Area Historical Society. After that, you will be able to enter your donation information. The Patterson Foundation will match every gift up to \$100! More details about how to participate will be sent

out from VAHS via email during the month of April. Please consider this valuable opportunity to “Bring the Train into the Station!”

\*\*VAHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and has registered with the State of Florida to solicit contributions. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES AT [WWW.800HELPPFLA.COM](http://WWW.800HELPPFLA.COM) OR BY CALLING TOLL-FREE WITHIN (800-435-7352) OR OUTSIDE (850-410-3800) FLORIDA. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.” Ch 32089

## 2018 Annual Meeting

VAHS hosted its 2018 Annual Meeting of members on March 28<sup>th</sup> at Pelican Pointe Golf and Country Club. About 65 people were in attendance. After a delightful buffet lunch, the business meeting took place. Officers for the coming year will be: Clarke Pressly, President; Betty Intagliata, Vice-President; Mary Huba, Secretary; Brenda Holland, Treasurer; and At-Large Board Members Tom Bowers, Ed Gates, Bill Jervey, George Miller, and Dave Taylor. Sarabeth Kalajian, Director of Libraries and Historical Resources for Sarasota County, presented a timely talk entitled, *Update on County Plans for the William H. Jervey, Jr. Venice Public Library*.

Below (L) Marilee and Bob DeCook enjoy lunch with Maggie and Vince Surwillo. On the right, Betty Intagliata and Sarabeth Kalajian are pictured. A good time was had by all!



## The Betty Intagliata Winter 2018 Lecture Series

### The Unknown Heroes of Florida's Civil Rights Movement



The January program was presented by Dr. Gary Mormino, Professor Emeritus of History at USF, St Petersburg. He chose to address the topic of Florida's civil rights movement by discussing individuals who might be honored as representatives of Florida in National Statuary Hall at the US Capitol. Each state has two statues, and the current statues honor Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith and John Gorrie, an early developer of refrigeration and air-conditioning. General Smith was the last Confederate General to surrender in the Civil War. He lived in Florida until he was six years old.

Recent events in Charleston and Charlottesville have prompted a re-evaluation of Florida's choices. Three Floridians were recommended to the legislature in 2016 for the replacement: environmental author Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, Publix founder George Jenkins, and educator and civil rights leader Mary McLeod Bethune. Dr. Mormino discussed an individual he considers another worthy contender-- Alexander Darnes, Kirby's personal valet, who became the first black physician in Jacksonville in 1880.

The Legislature approved the selection of Mary McLeod Bethune in late February. She will be the first black person to be honored in Statuary Hall. A daughter of former slaves, Dr. Bethune moved to

Daytona Beach from South Carolina around 1900 establishing a black private school that has become Bethune-Cookman University. She was active in the NAACP and an advisor to Presidents prior to her death in 1955.

### **The Civil Rights Era in Sarasota County**

The February program consisted of an informative presentation by a panel of prominent African Americans in Sarasota County. Pictured are (L to R) Newtown businessman Jetson Grimes, former County commissioner Carolyn Mason, moderator John McCarthy (Executive Director of Historic Spanish Point), and educator James Brown. Betty Intagliata and Bill Jervey are also shown.



In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, black communities in Sarasota County were established in Laurel, Woodmere and Overtown (today’s Rosemary District) as people migrated here for jobs in the lumber, turpentine, and construction trades. In the late 20s, the residents of Overtown were transplanted to Newtown as downtown Sarasota began to encroach on their neighborhood. Sarasota’s efforts at integration predated the civil rights movement of the ‘50s. Neil Humphries led efforts to integrate Lido Beach and Robert “Bud” Thomas led efforts to integrate the Bobby Jones Golf Course, Little League, and the community holiday party. Casperson Beach in Venice was the black beach in the area.

School integration finally occurred in the late 60s. A black boycott with alternative schools staffed with New College students, among others, marked the impetus for the change. As a result, black schools were closed, and their students were spread throughout the white schools. The sense of the panel was that integration has undermined the cohesiveness and interdependence of the Newtown community, and they are currently trying to restore these qualities. Efforts are underway to preserve Newtown’s rich history and to create a destination for all to experience.

## **Betty Intagliata Recipient 2018 HPCsc Award**

Congratulations to Betty Intagliata who has been awarded the Lillian Burns Individual Achievement



Heritage Award by the History and Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County! Betty’s nomination for this award was submitted jointly by VAHS and Venice Heritage, Inc. For those of us who know Betty’s background and accomplishments, there are few people in Sarasota County who are as qualified for this award as Betty. Her resume of volunteer activities on behalf of Sarasota County and the Venice area, many in positions of leadership, is incredibly extensive.

After moving to Venice in the early ‘80s, Betty served on the board of the League of Women Voters in Sarasota County, and she later co-founded Venice MainStreet and, in 1991, VAHS. She served on the initial board of Friends of Lord-Higel House (predecessor to Venice Heritage, Inc.), served as Vice Chair and Chair of the Venice Historical Commission and then worked

on the Venice Historic Preservation Board. She served six terms as President of VAHS, including the year in which she was a strong promoter for completion of the restoration work on the Historic Venice Train Depot. For many years, she has served as Program Chair for the Society's monthly lecture series, now named in her honor. As a former teacher, she also was a strong advocate for providing educational experiences in local history to students in Venice-area county schools.

In the county arena, she served on the Sarasota County Historical Commission, was chair of the county's Historical Marker Committee, served on the HPCsc board (including chair for three years), and worked with the Friends of the Sarasota County History Center, serving as President for five terms.

Betty has previously been formally acknowledged for her services, including the Mayor's citation in 2004 for 15 years of service to the Venice Historical Commission and her work on the video "Imagining Venice" that promoted the work of John Nolen in designing the City of Venice, an Historic Preservation Award by the Arts and Cultural Alliance of South County in 2009, and the Twentieth Anniversary Award by VAHS in 2011. At the state level, she was the recipient of the Individual Distinguished Service Award by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation in 2015. Betty now has been awarded a county-wide award for her services to historical preservation in our area. VAHS is proud of Betty's achievements!

## **VAHS Member Profile: Meet Joan High**

VAHS members have observed the cheerful, energetic, and very organized Joan High carrying out significant fundraiser activities for many Venice organizations these past few years. VAHS is honored to have Joan's leadership with its third tea this year. The tea will be held Monday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, Noon, at the Jacaranda West Country Club.



Joan has been involved with similar projects for many years. She oversaw eight Coast Guard Beauty Pageants, produced a wedding show for a local mall, and completed projects and fundraisers with the March of Dimes, Red Cross, Ipswich Country Club, Venice Symphony, and Venice MainStreet. Joan has been a model and even flew to San Antonio to model in a show a colleague produced. And this is only her volunteer work!

Joan and her first husband owned a typewriter repair and sales business. With 25 years in a self-initiated office furniture enterprise, Joan designed and furnished commercial interiors. She has well-earned pride in her understanding of commercial decoration and furnishings, and she continues to serve customers of many years. Simultaneously, she raised three children as a single mom and served as President, the first woman President, of a New England office machines association. On the side, she redid and/or rebuilt a couple of houses, amazing even close family members with the results.

Joan's entrepreneurial spirit came naturally. A native of Lynn and resident of Swampscott (Massachusetts,) she moved to Hampton Falls, New Hampshire when her father assumed management of a motel, and she later moved to Newburyport, MA where her father entered the construction business. As a graduate of Hampton Academy (NH), she pursued a commercial career tract. As a young woman, she became secretary to the late Wesley Powell (who eventually served as Governor of New Hampshire), and she served as secretary to the safety supervisor of all Raytheon Company plants.

Ron High, Joan's husband and enthusiastic supporter of her activities, retired as a financial planner for a leading New England bank and then began his own financial firm. Residents of Ipswich, Massachusetts, Joan and Ron came to Venice in 2009 as snowbirds, and just eighteen months ago, they became fulltime residents of the Lake of the Woods area here in Venice. Joan's three children are carrying on their mother's tradition through service as a Delta airline pilot, the manager of Joan's office furniture company, and a paralegal. Ron brought two children to their marriage as well.

Joan is very excited about the upcoming VAHS tea, and has single-handedly pursued corporate sponsorships, musicians' contracts, individual favor production, and unique teapot centerpiece plans. Those who have attended prior teas led by Joan know the story of her procurement of sufficient antique tea cups to service all tea attendees. Using high standards and a proven model, Joan understands how to produce successful events with energy and a lovely smile on her face, carrying them out with an orientation to detail from start-to-finish. VAHS is fortunate that Joan will serve as its Development Committee Chair this coming term.

Joan and Ron love the programs of VAHS's Betty Intagliata Lecture Series, specifically commenting on the February panel presentation of three Sarasota leaders, all of whom are from the Newtown area, native born, and of African American heritage. Of course, Joan was at the entry door, enthusiastically selling tickets for the upcoming tea.

## **Special Thanks to Business Members**

### **Collectors Gallery and Framery**

Collector's Gallery and Framery has served the Island of Venice Florida since 1983 and prides itself on its quality custom framing. The store is located at 114-118 S. Nokomis Ave. Venice Florida 34285. Phone 941-488-3029. Proprietor is Leah Sherman.

### **Sandy's Designer Clothing**

Sandy's Designer Clothing is a unique shopping experience on the Island of Venice. The store is located at 128 West Venice Ave. on the Island of Venice. Phone 941-484-9911. Proprietor is Sandy McGowan.

Thank you to our loyal Business Members Leah Sherman and Sandy McGowan!

## **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@veniceareahistoricalociety.org](mailto:president@veniceareahistoricalociety.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](http://www.veniceareahistoricalsociety.org)  
[membership@veniceareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:membership@veniceareahistoricalsociety.org)

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