

THE VENICE EXPRESS

Preserving the past to enrich the future.



NEWSLETTER OF THE VENICE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fall 2011



OCTOBER 25, 2011 @ 7PM “Excavations and Memories at the Venice Train Depot: Transportation and the Development of a Florida Town”. Uzi Baram, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, New College, Sarasota, FL; Founding Director of New College Public Archaeology Lab. Author of “Transformative Transportation: The Early Twentieth-Century Railroad on the Southwest Florida Frontier”, *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, May, 2011. Meet at Manor Hall, Village on the Isle, 930 S. Tamiami Trail.



NOVEMBER 15, 2011 @ 7PM “Florida on Maps: 1507 through 1819” Joel Morrison, Ph.D.; Venice resident. Formerly Chief, Geography Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Census; Director, Center for Mapping at The Ohio State University; currently Associate Editor of the six volume *History of Cartography* in process. Meet at Manor Hall, Village on the Isle, 930 S. Tamiami Trail.



NOVEMBER 30, 2011 @ 11AM - 2PM ANNUAL STYLE SHOW:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY VENICE

Celebrate the History

Fashions by Patchington

Venice Yacht Club, Tickets: \$30 each - Available now at Collectors'

Gallery, Venice Stationers, Paper Pad.

CELEBRATE:

The 20TH Anniversary of the Venice Area Historical Society

INCORPORATED NOVEMBER 11, 1991

Join us for cake & punch **NOVEMBER 15TH, 2011**



Historic Venice Train Depot Hours

November - April: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10AM - 3PM, All Year: Saturday 10AM - 1PM

Last tour leaves 30 minutes prior to closing.

Tours are led by a dedicated team of 40 Depot Docents. If you are interested in becoming a docent, please call 412-0151 or email venicehistory@comcast.net.

A Message From Our President



Venice is fortunate to be a planned community. Many of us have lived in communities that “grew like topsy”, where modern roads follow old cowpaths, circumventing rivers, bays, ponds, and, later, canals, interstates, power-lines, and railroads. In his 1837 book, John Lee Williams, author of “The Territory of Florida, or Sketches of the

Topography, Civil and Natural History”, suggested the cutting of a canal through the promontory of Horse and Chaise to permit a sheltered Gulf-coast waterway passage. And, now the mid-60’s Inter-coastal Waterway has turned Venice into an “island”.

Venice’s John Nolen Plan, renowned for its beauty, forethought and livability, is a gift not only for our enjoyment but future inhabitants. November 30th, the Society will honor Dorothy Korwek, VAHS member and President of the Triangle Inn Association, for her work in securing historical designation of the John Nolen Plan and its documentation in her hot-off-the-press book, “John Nolen Plan of Venice, Florida”. The Society’s 20th Anniversary Award was given to Betty Intagliata, in part, for her advocacy in keeping the John Nolen Plan alive.

Venetian foresight has prevented a “great tower wall” of hotel/condo development, allowing Gulf of Mexico visibility, public access, and long stretches of wild, scenic beaches. Recent citizen advocacy, spearheaded by the late Maxine Barritt, resulted in the jewel-like Gulf-front park which carries her name. Our area is pedestrian/bicycle friendly with options such as the Venetian Waterway, the Legacy Trail, bike lanes, and sidewalks throughout our area. The Myakka River remains an effective eastern boundary, giving easy access to wild scenic recreational areas, comparable to far more remote regions of our country. Sarasota County’s securing of land bordering the Myakka augments recreational options, safeguards the river environment, preserves wildlife corridors, and is not too dissimilar to the experience of Indians and explorers hundreds of years ago. While our area is dissected by the Tamiami Trail, the Inter-coastal Waterway, the railroad /Legacy Trail corridor, the airport, and I-75, most of us agree these changes are essential for modern commerce. We are privileged to be living in this

beautiful area, comparable to anything available in the world.

Society members serve as self-elected stewards of Venice’s historical legacy, not only for those of us who are privileged to live here, but visitors and future generations as well. The historical preservation of the Plan, parks and buildings is a key component of the livability of Venice. We understand the need to insure, to the extent feasible, that Venice’s historical structures and their legacies are here for future generations, for instance, the Walker and Gillette architected Venice Train Depot, the beautiful Hotel Venice, the unique pioneer 1890’s Lord-Higel House, and the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus Arena and campus. Also, once the structures are secured, there is an additional responsibility to insure that they are preserved in terms of their use, maintenance, and continued viability. Our mission, while significant, seems doable compared to the challenges of other communities. For instance, as tourists, we know the preservation challenges of the world’s ancient cities. During recent visits to Istanbul, Panama City, Ephesus, Prague, and Havana I’ve marveled at not only the restored buildings but the challenges, efforts, and accomplishments of the preservation projects. A big reason these cities are important tourist destinations are these preserved structures.

Near my family’s pioneer homestead, there is an historic, religiously significant community which is now in danger of being wiped out due to the fragility of an adjacent dam structure. To maintain its preservation, the entire village may have to be moved to another location. In comparison, the historic preservation agenda of Venice seems very achievable. It’s time to see the mercury line of the thermometer at Centennial Park for the Lord-Higel House campaign start climbing towards the goal.

The Society has work to do. The documentation and retelling of the story of Venice promote better understanding as to why this area is a designated paradise. Our efforts to promote the Society’s mission of research, education, and preservation of Venice history merit being sustained and redoubled.

October is the month to renew Venice Area Historical Society memberships. The Board has authorized a modest increase in dues. Even so this may be the time to choose a higher level of membership, an additional donation and/or legacy plan and to consider how you can help with this effort through your volunteer service. Ask your friends, relatives, and neighbors to join the Society as well. Regardless of whether we were born here, are sun trackers, moved here as retirees, or are only here part time, this is a way to support and sustain our community-of-choice. Respond quickly to your renewal notice. Share it with a friend. Let’s all stake our claim in safeguarding the Venetian legacy.

Barbara A. Smith, President

Ticket Please...

Venice Area Historical Society Calendar 2011-2012

OCTOBER 15 & 16, 2011

Sun Fiesta Booth

OCTOBER 25, 2011 @ 7PM

Program: "Excavations and Memories at The Venice Train Depot: Transportation and the Development of a Florida Town"

NOVEMBER 5, 2011 @ 9AM - 1PM

Celebration - Opening of the Legacy Trail/ Bypass 41 Bridge

NOVEMBER 15, 2011 @ 7PM

VAHS 20th Anniversary Program: "Florida on Maps: 1507 through 1819"

NOVEMBER 26, 2011 @ 7PM

Christmas Parade Trolley

NOVEMBER 30, 2011 @ 11AM - 2PM

Annual Style Show: Happy Birthday Venice - Celebrate the History

JANUARY 24, 2012 @ 7PM

Program: "Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal"

FEBRUARY 28, 2012 @ 7PM

Program: "The New Deal in Florida"

MARCH 8, 2012 @ 11:15AM

Annual Meeting & Luncheon, Election of Officers

Program: "PGT: 30 Years of Growth & Commitment to Employees, Customers and the Community"

MARCH 24 & 25, 2012

Celebration - 85th Anniversary of the City of Venice & The Venice Train Depot.

MARCH 27, 2012 @ 7PM

Program: "The Woman Behind the New Deal, The Life and Legacy of Francis Perkins"

APRIL 14TH & 15TH

Shark Tooth Festival

APRIL 2012

Business Meeting (date to be announced)

APRIL 24, 2012 @ 7PM

Program: "The Southernmost State: Image of the Depression Florida in WPA Guide"

MAY 22, 2012 @ 7PM

Program: Video titled "Local Memories of the Great Depression"

This newsletter is being distributed to you by email if you have previously provided an email address. If you would prefer a paper copy to be mailed to you by USPS, please email venicehistory@comcast.net. Conversely, if you wish to help the Society in what hopefully is a more economical and efficient distribution system, please provide your email to the venicehistory@comcast.net address and your copy will also be sent by email.

Next Stop...

VAHS Honors Dorothy Korwek

The Venice Area Historical Society will honor Dorothy Korwek as part of the year long Venice 85th Birthday Celebration at its luncheon "Happy Birthday Venice, Celebrate the History." She will be honored for her efforts in having the John Nolen Plan of Venice Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 8, 2010. John Nolen was one of the first Americans to be identified as a city planner. The Nolen Plan of Venice integrated a functional street layout and park system with a comprehensive zoning plan. The Nolen Plan gives Venice its distinctive "sense of place."

A signing for her book, "John Nolen Plan of Venice, Florida" will be held from **5-7 p.m. November 10, 2011** at the Venice Community Center.

Also join us in honoring Dorothy at our luncheon and Style Show at the Venice Yacht Club **November 30, 2011, 11AM - 2PM.**



VAHS Vice President Clarke Pressley congratulates Dorothy Korwek on her new book, "The John Nolen Plan of Venice."

Friends of Lord-Higel House invite interested persons to participate in a Day Trip visiting beautifully restored historic buildings on **Saturday, October 29, 2011 @10AM.** Meet in the overflow parking lot at the Triangle Inn. Docents will meet us in Sarasota's Pioneer Park for touring the historic Bidwell House & quaint Crocker Church. We are invited to bring our sack lunch & drink for lunching on the spacious Bidwell House's 'back porch'. Following lunch, we will carpool to Bradenton where a Docent will give us a tour of the Valentine House (this house was 'floated' down the Manatee River to its' current resting place, next to Robinson Preserve).

There is no charge for visiting these buildings but if you feel inclined to make a donation of appreciation - please do so.

This will be a Day Trip of inspiration & vision for historic homes restoration! Don't forget your lunch & H2O!

Please RSVP by email - jbauerx2@verizon.net



Join VAHS for a Big Top Circus Tour of "The Circus Side of Sarasota" (and Venice) sites on Thursday **November 3, 2011 @ 10AM.** Pick up will be at the Train Depot for this 3 hour tour. Cost is \$30 per person. Limited to 12 persons. RSVP charlotte.neagle@gmail.com by Oct 25th, if you would like to attend. We will schedule additional tours if there is a demand.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are needed for a variety of Society activities. Email venicehistory@comcast.net if you would like to be involved with any of these activities:

- Train Depot Docents MWF Nov.-May, Sat. all yr.
- Style Show Preparation, now through Nov. 30th
- Sun Fiesta Booth, Oct. 15-16th. 2 hour shifts
- Christmas Parade Trolley, Nov. 26th
- 85th Anniversary Celebration, March 24-25th
- Refreshments at monthly meeting, Jan-May
- Curriculum dev. for educational programs
- Oral history interviewers

Reflecting On The Journey

History of the Venice Musicale



Thanks to Bonnie Kaiser for submitting this history.

The first meeting of the Cecilian Music Society was October 4, 1951 at the home of Susan Hauser. There were 8 founding members - Susan Hauser, Emily Hightower, Johanna Maier, Ruth Higel, Sonya Terry, Betty Arnall, Mrs. Barry Wimbish and Mrs. H.L. Mandy. The club was chartered by Mrs. Walter Rowe Thompson of the Sarasota Club, and Mrs. J.L. Cardwell of the Bradenton Club. The Club dedicated itself to Music Education, and to the National Federation of Music Clubs. They formed early traditions of reciting poems, singing songs, and reciting prayers during the course of the monthly meetings. Since the beginning the Club always encouraged and supported young musicians in the community. The first scholarship awarded went to a student from Venice High School who would be going on to college to pursue a career in music. Many of the early recipients were students of the Club members. Now there is a system of applications, and tryouts for scholarships. We estimate that the Club has awarded more than \$150,000 worth of Camp and College Scholarships since their formation 60 years ago. Some of our scholarships are named for outstanding members like the Margaret Strong Scholarship, the Thelma Cohn, the Emily Hightower, and the Toni Samsel Scholarships. In the beginning there were 3 levels of membership - active, honorary, and patron, and we had many groups within the main organization, like the Ensemble (a group of semi-professional women singers), the Rainbow Chorus (singers of all levels of expertise), and the Speaking Choir (for members who did not play an instrument or sing). All of these groups raised money for scholarships, along with the various card parties, and showcases put on by the Club each year.

We also had 6 Junior Music Clubs at one time. In the last few years we have become a 501C3 organization, incorporated and tax-free, and we changed our name to better reflect what we do. We are now known as the Venice Musicale, and we are no longer associated with the National Federation. We meet at the Venice Library on the 3rd Thursday of each month, and we offer a free musical program to the public each month. The singing group which was named the Ensemble, has become Encore! and now has men singers too. They earn the bulk of the money raised for scholarships each year. We would invite anyone who has any kind of an interest in music, to come and join the organization. We may be contacted by using our mailing address 2357 S. Tamiami Trail #3, PO Box 179, Venice, FL 34293, or online at www.venicemusical.org.

LinesSouth, an historical railway magazine, featured an article by Bob Foley, "My Cab Ride in Seaboard 2028". Foley is the son of Richard (Red) Foley, the engineer of the Tampa-to-Venice SAL #2028, i.e. The Doodlebug. Foley recalls a childhood memory of riding the engine with his dad while his sister rode in the Pullman car from Tampa to Venice.

Venice's own **WWII Flying Tigers**, the 14th Air Service Group Chinese American, reunited September 22th at the Museum of Chinese in America, located in New York City. The ASG was formed here at the Venice Army Air Field and then, after training, left from the historic Venice Train Depot to travel all the way to the Kuming area of China, just north of Cambodia and Vietnam. The airmen traveled via railroad in the U.S. and India, boat across the Pacific, convoy across the Ledo – Burma Road or, in some cases, flew over the hump of the Himalayan Mountains. We have also learned that there is an oral history recording of 14th ASG veteran Edwin Lee in the Library of Congress. Later, these veterans established a memorial to General Claire Chennault of the 14th Air Force in Taishon, China.

Bells & Whistles



Polly Stinson Walther



Inez Sugar Thompson Bailey

Thanks to the efforts of VAHS oral historian, Ted Koszarski, our archives located on the VAHS website, venicehistory.com has a number of new additions for the use of our members, friends and the community. Recordings of four of the lectures from our 2011 series are available. In addition, oral histories with two of the three “bathers” in the 1927 Venice Company postcard promoting Venice have been completed. Inez Sugar Thompson Bailey, her twin sister, Trixie (now deceased), moved with their parents to Laurel from Mississippi. Their father was involved with the Arnold sawmill. They teamed with Polly Stinson Walther for the postcard. Walther came to Venice in the early 20’s and is a graduate of Nokomis High School.



Jarrett Losey was the recipient of the Betty Intagliata 2011 Scholarship. Jarrett is attending Florida State University to become a history teacher. (L-R, Betty Intagliata, Jarrett Losey, and James Hanks, Scholarship Chair). Contributions to the 2012 Scholarship can be sent to VAHS, PO Box 995, Venice, FL 34284.



The Venice-Nokomis Methodist Preschool students visited the Depot and were toured by Depot Docents John Osborne, Jim Middleton, and Frank Henderson. The children are holding train bookmarks, their souvenir train whistles were being withheld until they arrived back at school!

VAHS VIDEO ARCHIVES

Video recordings of four of the 2011 VAHS programs are available on the VAHS website, venicehistory.com. The Society is proud to offer this additional benefit to our members, friends, and the community. You will find the lectures of Dr. Gary Mormino, Diana Craig, Maurice O’Sullivan, and Dara Vance from the 2011 series, “Florida – Survival of the Great Depression, Impact of New Deal Programs Then and Now”. The series continues in January, 2012.

The Contribution Car

The Friends of the Lord-Higel House

Help our friends

Friends of the Lord-Higel House (FLHH) have a number of fund raising events in the next few months as part of their efforts to raise money to promote, restore and sustain the Lord-Higel House.

Visit the Venice Dairy Queen on East Venice Avenue between 5-8PM October 12, November 9, and December 14, 2011 where 10% of your purchases will be donated to FLHH.

50% of a membership to FLHH is contributed to the restoration fund.

Lord-Higel reproductions and tee shirts are available for purchase at the Train Depot.

The VAHS Speakers' Bureau offers a variety of programs which are available to area organizations. A small fee is requested which supports Society programs. The Society has an outreach program available to tell area organizations about the work of the Society. Clarke Pressly is the coordinator and may be reached at jcpresly@comcast.net or 493-4101.

THE LEGACY CLUB

The Legacy Club is a group of Venice Area Historical Society members and friends who have made a lasting commitment to historic preservation by making a lifetime gift to the Society or by naming the Society as a beneficiary in their estate plans. If you would like more information about the Legacy Club, please contact venicehistory@comcast.net or 941-408-1729.

The Village on the Isle and Gulf Coast Foundation of Venice have provided a grant of \$750 each to support the March 27th, 2012 program of journalist and biographer, Kirsten Downey, who will speak on "Rediscovering Francis Perkins: The Woman Behind The New Deal". Thank you to both of these wonderful organizations for their assistance.

Two energetic VAHS leaders who have generously served the Society have asked to take a sabbatical. Thanks go to **Lois Steketee** for her leadership of the VAHS Style Show Committee and to **Leah Sherman** for sharing her newsletter skills with us. **Serena Cannereli** and **Barbara Strife** are co-chairing the Style Show and **Evelyn Nelson** the newsletter publishing responsibility.

GULFCOASTGIVES.ORG

Supports VAHS Community Projects

GULFCOASTGIVES.ORG is a website sponsored by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation to promote giving to small non-profit projects by anyone. A successfully funded project enables organizations like VAHS to post larger and more costly projects in the future. VAHS' 20th Anniversary Project is the renewal and upgrading of the historic Venice Train Depot. Our request, \$480, is for materials to be used by a master craftsman and Venice resident, David Williams, to construct a museum quality visitor registration/gift center for the Depot. Please contribute to this worthy project by visiting GULFCOASTGIVES.ORG.



Penny Phelps and Marge Buchanan display Chinese Raffle baskets for the November 30th Style Show. The Committee has been using the summer to "get-ahead-of-the-game". Buy your tickets now and reserve your tables at Paper Pad, Venice Stationers, and Collectors' Gallery.

Frank Henderson has developed the Donald W. DeCoster station agent display in Waiting Room 2. It offers various information and tools a station agent would use on a regular basis such as a telegraph key and resonator, telephone, timetables, etc. While the original Depot cuspidor resides on the floor, we know Mr. DeCoster would have preferred it in a far-off corner. Frank also donated a clock which he had handcrafted for his mother. Time historians recognize that there is a close link between the concept of time and the development of the railroads. Thanks to Frank, the historic Venice Depot is "on time".

All Aboard

To become a part of this great organization, please fill out the membership application, cut it out and return it to the address below with your check. We look forward to our future together.

Venice Area Historical Society Membership Application

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN _____ ZIP _____

PHONE # _____ EMAIL _____



Check your membership choice:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|------------------------------|----------|
| _____ Student | \$10 | _____ Bronze Sponsor | \$100 |
| _____ Non-Profit Org | \$15 | _____ Silver Sponsor | \$250 |
| _____ Individual | \$20 | _____ Corporate Sponsor | \$300 |
| _____ Family | \$30 | _____ Gold Sponsor..... | \$500 |
| _____ Business | \$40 | _____ Donation | \$ _____ |

RETURN TO: VAHS MEMBERSHIP, PO BOX 995, VENICE, FL 34284-0995

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