

# THE VENICE EXPRESS



## NEWSLETTER OF THE VENICE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*"Enrich your life by celebrating history with us"*

### FROM THE ENGINEER'S CAB

The Venice Area Historical Society values its educational mission. Program Chair Betty Intagliata, and I represented the Society in both a sharing session and two symposiums, sponsored by the Patterson Foundation and the Sarasota County Schools. A goal of this project, Cultural Connections with Students Initiative, was to glean examples of programs that connect local cultural organizations with the public schools, to evaluate the outcomes of such efforts, to garner broad support for such efforts, to find ways for all to interface in a beneficial way, and to foster integrated curricula.

We were proud to report on the Society's programs that interface with school students. We discussed the Society's oral history projects with students of the Venice Middle School, led by teacher Barbara Woody; appearances of VAHS Bertha Palmer interpreters in the schools, one recorded this past July on WEDU's Gulf Coast Journal; and student field trips to the Venice Depot where our Depot Docent volunteers expertly provide both tours of the campus and provide talks on Venice history. The Society also offers transportation funds for these field trips through member dues and the style show fundraiser.

These two experiences, in which School Superintendent Lori White, Project Leader Laurey Striker, and Patterson Foundation CEO Debra Jacobs participated, caused me to reflect on what students gain from the Society's and others efforts.. From the Venice students' perspective, the Middle School Oral History Project required planning, research, interview skills, editing, production, evaluation, and public presentation. The project provided not only recorded interviews of noted individuals for local history archives but unique experiences and memories for the students. Field trips to local historical locales and the Ringling Circus Museum were also provided by the Society. Members who mentored the Middle School students are proud of their role. I sincerely hope the Society is able to continue and expand this work. If you have an interest in this kind of program, I can be reached at [venicehistory@comcast.net](mailto:venicehistory@comcast.net).

Barbara A Smith, President



Teacher Barbara Woody and VAHS President Barbara A. Smith at Cultural Connections with Students Symposium

# TIMETABLE



The Venice Area Historical Society is pleased to announce its series of lectures for the 2011 season. These lectures are funded by the Florida Humanities Council through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. (NEH). The central theme is: **FLORIDA: SURVIVAL OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION/IMPACT OF NEW DEAL PROGRAMS THEN AND NOW**. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in these programs do not necessarily represent those of the Florida Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## 2011

**NOTE:** Unless otherwise noted, ALL programs will be held at: VILLAGE ON THE ISLE, MARK MANOR BUILDING, 930 Tamiami Trail, Venice, Florida. Also, unless otherwise noted, all programs are at 7 P.M. and ARE FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC with no reservation necessary. For information call (941) 412-0151. Leave name and phone number.

<b>Tuesday, January 25th</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>DR. GARY MORMINO,</b> <b>UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA, St. Petersburg, FL</b> By popular demand, Dr. Mormino, Professor of Florida History returns to speak upon: <i>"Shadows Across the Sunshine State: Florida, the New Deal and the 1930's."</i>
<b>Tuesday, February 22nd</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>DARA VANCE, M.A., Teacher, PINELLAS COUNTY CENTER for the ARTS, GIBBS HIGH SCHOOL</b> Zora Neale Hurston was part of the New Deal's Works Progress Administration's writers program in the 1930's. Ms. Dara Vance will speak upon: <i>"Writer, Feminist and Mystic: Zora Neale Hurston as a Cultural Anthropologist in Florida."</i>
<b>Tuesday, March 22nd</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>DR. MAURICE O'SULLIVAN,</b> <b>ROLLINS COLLEGE, Winter Park, FL</b> Professor of English who has written extensively on literature, Florida, popular culture, Shakespeare, religion, education & current events will discuss the topic: <i>"Florida's W.P.A. Writers."</i>
<b>Tuesday, April 26th</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>DIANE CRAIG,</b> <b>B.S. HISTORY, ECKERD COLLEGE, St. Petersburg, FL</b> Graduate Student in Florida Studies, USF. Ms. Craig will speak on the topic: <i>"Artists on the dole: How the Federal Arts Projects supported and encouraged the arts in Florida and saved Key West."</i>

## ALL ABOARD!

### VAHS ANNUAL MEETING AND LUNCHEON

*Save the date*

Wednesday, March 30, 11:30 am  
Pelican Pointe Club.  
\$20. Reservations are necessary.  
Send to VAHS, PO Box 0995, Venice, FL 34285-0995

### BERTHA PALMER AND THE 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF HER ARRIVAL IN SARASOTA COUNTY

In spite of the events in the Gulf this past year, "BP" has had its own unique meaning for the Society. In Society parlance, "BP" has stood for **Bertha Palmer** and the celebration of Palmer's 100th anniversary of her arrival in Sarasota County. Beginning with her first appearance at the VAHS Style Show in December 2009 and continuing throughout 2010, BP has made 61 appearances through the volunteer historical interpretations of **Sue Chapman, Dorothy Fuhrmeister, Claire Suter and Betty Intagliata**.

**Pauline Joerger**, the great great granddaughter of Bertha Palmer, and her family, appeared as the Grand Marshall of the Venice Christmas Parade. The Society appreciates the dedication which has been given to this project by all involved, especially to Coordinator **Betty Intagliata**.



Ted Cover, Claire Suter, Betty Intagliata, Sue Chapman



Pauline Joerger and daughters



VENICE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
KICKS-OFF ITS TWENTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY YEAR

## ANNUAL MEETING – HISTORIC PRESERVATION COALITION OF SARASOTA COUNTY

THE SOCIETY IS THE HOST ORGANIZATION. SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2011, 4:30 PM, PELICAN POINTE COUNTRY CLUB, \$20 TICKET, PLEASE SEND RESERVATION CHECKS MADE OUT TO VAHS TO BETTY INTAGLIATA, 1675 VALLEY DR., VENICE 34292

## THE FRIENDS OF LORD-HIGEL HOUSE ORGANIZATION

Current fundraisers:

Selling wooden house miniature replicas of the historic Lord-Higel House, for \$20.00 each.

Call Director **Don Gaunt** - 941-484-1514 or Director **Judie Bauer** 941-488-1937, to purchase.

Quality soft yellow, 100% preshrunk 'T' shirts with image of the house printed on the front for \$15.00.

Contact Director **Lois Steketee** at Lois@ horseandchaiseinn.com or **Judie Bauer** at [jbauerx2@verizon.net](mailto:jbauerx2@verizon.net), to purchase. (Note: 'Miniature' and/or 't' shirts on 'e' mail 'subject' line.)

Selling tickets at the Venice Stationers; the Paper Pad; & the Collectors' Gallery & Framery, for their Buffet & Magic Show fundraiser that will be held FRIDAY, January 28, 2011, at the BirdBay Village Clubhouse, located at 606 BirdBay Drive, West (entrance at U.S.41 ByPass & Florida Shores Bank bldg.. Tickets are \$30.00 each, Prepaid reservation required. Contact Director **Dorothy Korwek** for additional information at 941-484-0302

## FUNDRAISERS FOR THE VENICE CIRCUS ARTS FOUNDATION, INC.

Chef Rolf's - Saltwater Café	Founders Ring Event	South Venice Expo	Gala - Black Tie Event
Thursday January 13, 2011	Tuesday January 11, 2011	Saturday February 8, 2011	Saturday February 19, 2011
Fundraiser 6-9pm	Venice Arena 6-9pm	9 am - 3 pm	K-mart Plaza 6-9 pm

*"Ladies of the Circus" Coffee Get-togethers! Come and meet famous circus personalities while sharing coffee, treats, circus videos and memorabilia.*

## ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORICAL WALKING TOURS OF VENICE

Architectural/historical walking tour of Venice, escorted by the author of "The Mediterranean Architecture of Venice and Sarasota Florida" Sebastiano Liseo. Tuesday AND Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.

\$10.00 per person Leaving from the Gazebo at Centennial Park, West Venice Ave. Venice. Starting 1/4/11.

For more info. call 941 484-5002 between 9:00&10:00 a.m. Special private tours for Society members.

## DEPOT TRACKING

One of the Society's most visible and important programs is its work with the historic Venice Train Depot, primarily its exhibits, historical and educational programs, and docent led tours. The Society has worked in partnership with Sarasota County (the caretaker of this historic structure, the Gunther Goebel Williams statue, Rollins Coakley Park and Legacy Trail campus) since 2003 when Depot restoration was completed. Now, as the Society enters its 20<sup>th</sup> year and the Depot finishes its 84th, this update is offered for VAHS members and friends:

- VAHS recently sponsored an orientation and training for ongoing and new initiates into the Depot Docent program. The Society is indebted to its trainers and coordinators: Jim Middleton, Jerry Madden, Joan and Dick Watson, and Ed Gates as well as our many experienced, dedicated docents. About 50 VAHS members serve as docents. Interested potential docents may contact 412-0151 or [venicehistory@comcast.net](mailto:venicehistory@comcast.net).
- VAHS offers hours and tours, M – W – F, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Year-round Saturday hours are being offered. The Society offers group tours including a school student field trip program with some transportation funding available. Call 412-0151 or [venicehistory@comcast.net](mailto:venicehistory@comcast.net) for reservations and information.
- Depot Docents are now attired in blue shirts with the red caboose logo, railroad hats, bandanas, and badges. All docents are required to be part of the Sarasota County volunteer screening process and learn new Sarasota County procedures related to the building and campus.
- The Society held two programs this past fall related to the Depot - the arrival of the legendary Bertha Palmer, who brought the train to Venice, and Venice station agents, Devon Hough and Donald W. Decoster, Sr. Both provided new history, stories, and perspectives of the Depot. The significant efforts of Ted Cover, Mary Huba, George Miller, Sue Chapman, Claire Suter, and Betty Intagliata are very appreciated.
- The Donald W. Decoster Collection of documents and artifacts, a gift of his family, with a provenance specific to the Venice Depot and the experience of its station agents, was first publicly displayed November 16<sup>th</sup> at the VAHS meeting. Plans are underway for its permanent exhibit.
- A new visitors educational brochure specific to the Venice Depot is in process, thanks to Jerry Madden.
- The Pelican Pointe Garden Club is the caretaker of the Gunther Goebel Williams statue gardens.
- The modest office of the VAHS with all volunteer staff is in the Caboose.
- Society member dues, fundraisers and other efforts support its Depot programs. Community, grant, business support and legacy gifts are essential to an ongoing quality endeavor.
- Located on the east bank of the Intercoastal Waterway, just north of the Venice Avenue Bridge, the Depot is the focal point of a unique, multi-use campus.
  1. The 10-mile long rails-to-trails Legacy Trail for pedestrians and bikes opened in September 2010 on completion of the Dona and Roberts Bay bridges. The Venice Bypass Overpass is due to open in October 2011.
  2. The two-mile Venetian Waterway Trail
  3. The development of the city's adjacent Legacy Park due for completion approximately 2012. The park campus should be compatible with both the Depot's legacy and the experience of Depot campus visitors. For instance, consideration should be given to the use of the railroad theme for playground structures, etc. and a playground location near the Depot and Caboose.
  4. The adjacent boat access to the Intercoastal Waterway and the Venice inlet.
  5. The SCAT bus terminal.
  6. The Venice Avenue Bridge
  7. Hatchett Creek Waterway for light watercraft
- As an entry point for tourists, the Society endeavors to provide information about the area's history and attractions and proposes to enhance this function with a new pamphlet rack..

- The Depot campus is accessible to pedestrians, boaters, bikers, public transportation, and automobiles with off-road access from Clark Road in Sarasota to Shamrock Park in south Venice and Venice Avenue.
- A Depot Task Force was recently convened to initiate a review of the VAHS Depot exhibits and programs. Its next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 6, 1:30 pm, Depot. Some enhancements and changes are forthcoming. The Task Force is considering among other things:
  - the display of the DeCoster Collection
  - the arrangement of displays
  - the docent's story related to the Depot's history including Bertha Palmer, the Seaboard Airline/Coastal Railways, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Kentucky Military Institute, Venice Army Air Base, Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus, Gunther Goebel Williams, the sawmill and freight business, and the interface of tourists, snowbirds, and local residents
  - the addressing of visitors' varying interests and ages, ranging from 2 to 95 years and includes both Thomas the Tank Engine and Seaboard railroaders, tourists, long-term residents, etc.
  - General building and grounds attractiveness and maintenance, appropriate to the standards encouraged for Venice and Sarasota County attractions.
- In that spirit, The VAHS Board and Depot Task Force is sponsoring a "roundtable" to receive community input and vision for the Society's Venice Depot historical displays and programs. This will be held Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm, the Depot Freight Room. All are welcome to participate and/or encouraged to email your ideas to [venicehistory@comcast.net](mailto:venicehistory@comcast.net).
- The City of Venice and a host of organizations which relate to the Depot campus will celebrate both the Depot's and the City of Venice's 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary in March 2012 with the dates of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> scheduled. A planning group has been convened. Commitments have been made by groups with historic and current relationships to the Depot, for instance, Kentucky Military Institute and Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus Alumni, Friends of Nokomis Park, and Friends of the Legacy Trail. This task force's next meeting is Thursday, January 27, Caboose, 10:00 am. Contact: [venicehistory@comcast.net](mailto:venicehistory@comcast.net).

**THE SOCIETY CONTINUES ITS IMPORTANT HISTORICAL STEWARDSHIP ROLE OF THIS KEY VENETIAN LANDMARK – THE VENICE TRAIN DEPOT.**



Jim Middleton, VAHS Docent Coordinator for the Train Depot tours Venice Cub Scouts and their families.

VAHS Depot Task Force l-r 1<sup>st</sup> row Sue Chapman, Jerry Madden, Betty Intagliata, 2<sup>nd</sup> row Frank Henderson, George Miller & Ed Gates . Jim Middleton & Barbara Smith (not pictured)

## STYLE SHOW AT VENICE YACHT CLUB

Featured were fashions by Patchington with many other area businesses and individuals supporting this endeavor including but not limited to *Cramer Honda/Toyota, Collectors' Gallery & Framery, Paper Pad, Puttin on the Ritz, Venice Stationers...* Thank You!



**Hardworking Style Show Committee**, led by **Lois Stekete**, successfully sponsored a sterling event, December 1, at the Venice Yacht Club.



A tableau of World War II nurses uniforms were displayed courtesy of military memorabilia collector, **Denny Metheny**. The theme of the style show was "A Salute to the WW II Nurses of the Venice Army Hospital".

VENICE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 995

VENICE FL 34285-0995

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/TOWN/ZIP

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INDIVIDUAL \$15

FAMILY \$25

BUSINESS \$35

BRONZE \$100.00

SILVER SPONSOR \$250

GOLD SPONSOR/LIFE \$500

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