



Sarasota Times - Fall 2015

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SARASOTA COUNTY

1260 12th St., Sarasota, FL 34236 941-364-9076 www.hsosc.com

Dig Out Your Treasures for Our Big November Event

On Saturday, November 14, HSOSC will sponsor a community-wide Antiques, Art & Collectibles Fair that includes an appraisal clinic. There will be vendors who will showcase and sell a wide array of unique collectibles including jewelry. Watch some of these beautiful items being created. The fun takes place from 10 am until 3 p.m. Our annual brick dedication will take place at noon in the front heritage garden of the Bidwell-Wood House. This all-day event is being organized as a fundraiser for HSOSC with revenue coming from vendors who buy display space and from the appraisal clinic.



Expert appraisers who will conduct the clinic are Bruce Crissy, Don Elder, Julie McClure and Garth's Auctioneers & Appraisers. They are volunteering their time to HSOSC. Items will be appraised for \$10 each or three for \$25. Board members Ron McCarthy (Curator & Keeper of Ca' d'Zan) and BrendaLee Hickman, both of whom have extensive experience running appraisal clinics, are in charge. Get your treasures professionally evaluated between the hours of 11-2.

There will be food for purchase, music in Pioneer Park and craft demonstrations. Tell your friends and be sure to come and help make the Antiques, Art & Collectibles Fair a huge success. Proceeds go toward maintaining the Crocker Memorial Church, the Bidwell-Wood House and to support HSOSC educational efforts such as our oral history project, docent program, print materials and more. ***If you can volunteer on the day of the Fair, please contact Linda Garcia at 364-9076, she will be thrilled to give you a job.***



Popular HSOSC Trolley Tours Provide a History Lesson on Wheels

The downtown Sarasota history trolley tours that HSOSC member Sue Blue conducts during the season are famous. This historian, writer and actress not only knows history but she presents it in a lively and entertaining way as her tour goes ride through historic neighborhoods where events central to Sarasota's past took place. A morning spent with Sue on her vintage red trolley will leave you knowing more about the place where you live or seasonally visit than you ever thought possible.

The tours are always on a Saturday morning. The trolley leaves from the Crocker Memorial Church at 10 a.m. and returns at noon, in time for you to have lunch with friends and talk about history. The cost is \$25 per person and reservations are required.

Call Linda at 364-9076.

Here are the dates:
November 14, December 5, January 9,
January 30, February 20, March 12,
April 2 and April 30.

Don't be left standing at the trolley stop, reserve your seat now!



A CHANCE TO MAKE A BIG IMPRESSION WITH YOUR DONATION AT THE 2015 GIVING CHALLENGE

If you did not give to the Historical Society through the online Giving Challenge last year, you can do it this year and your full donation will be matched up to \$250 by the Patterson Foundation.

The Giving Challenge is an annual online giving event open to nonprofits with complete and updated profiles in The Giving Partner at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. It's an event that inspires informed giving on all levels in our community.

The Giving Challenge takes place on September 1 - September 2 from noon until noon. So, mark your calendar and go your computer. Here is how:

Go to: <https://www.cfsarasota.org/>

1. On the right side of that page, there are Links, click the symbol for Giving Partner
2. On the right side of the Giving Partner slide, there is a blank space marked "Organization Name"
3. Type in "Historical Society of Sarasota County" and click on "Search"
4. The slide should say Historical Society of Sarasota County and the Blue button to the right should say "Donate Now" Click on that Button and follow the prompts, i.e fill in the blanks.

Collectibles Celebration

Antiques, Art & Collectibles Fair Saturday November 14th from 10 AM till 4 PM

Free Admission

Get your treasures appraised

Explore new collectibles from local crafters

Watch historical items crafter before your eyes

Relax in the shade with food & drink

Appraisers available from 11 AM to 2 PM

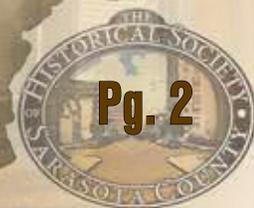
Appraisals \$10 each or 3 for \$25

At the Historical Society of Sarasota County in
Pioneer Park, 1260 12th Street
between Tamiami Trail & Coconut Ave.

www.HSOSC.com

941 364-9076

hsosc1@gmail.com



Conversations at The Crocker Opens Fourth Season With the Story of the Myakka River

It's more than the river as members and guests will discover when they attend the season opener of Conversations at The Crocker on Tuesday, October 13 starting promptly at 7 p.m. Retired New College environmental sciences professor Jono Miller will lead a conversation on the topic "Myakka, More Than a River," as he engages in conversation with John Mc Carthy, Paula Benshoff and Chris Oliver. In addition, the 14-minute film "Moods of the Miakka" will be shown and discussed. And the panelists will clear up the differences in the spelling of Myakka and Miakka. Conversations are a member benefit and free to all HSOSC members. Guests, \$10, payable at the door. A reception for members celebrating the new season of HSOSC programming starts at 5:30 p.m. on the porch of the Bidwell-Wood House. Members will have the opportunity to meet the speakers.

Conversations at The Crocker is a special series of monthly programs designed to show how past events and people helped shape Sarasota County as

we know it today. Conversations are always on a Tuesday night. Here is the schedule for the upcoming season. Mark your calendar and be sure to attend and join in the conversation!

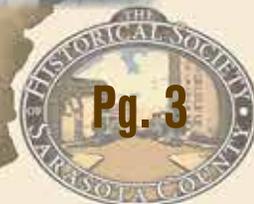
- **Tuesday, October 13:** Myakka, More Than The River. Jono Miller, John McCarthy, Chris Oliver and Paula Benshoff. Also the 14-minute film "Moods of Miakka."
- **Tuesday, November 10:** Sarasota Treasures Lost & Preserved. Jeff LaHurd.
- **Tuesday, December 8:** 6 p.m. Plenty of conversations at the Members Holiday Party. Supper-by-the-bite, music. Bring an old fashioned ornament for the tree in the parlor.
- **Tuesday, January 12:** TBA
- **Tuesday, February 9:** The Great Developers Past & Present. Harold Bubil.
- **Tuesday, March 8:** Fascinating Florida. Janet Snyder Mathews and Marion Almay.
- **Tuesday, April 12:** Historical Perspectives Through Local Museums. Curators from small specialty museums talk about the challenges and joys of preserving the history, culture and artifacts of past times.



Myakka River State Park

Le Barge Sets Sail Soon. Don't miss the boat!

The county's all-time favorite boat ride happens on Sunday, November 1, when Le Barge pulls away from the dock at Marina Jack at 11 a.m. for a fascinating floating history tour. You'll be back on shore by 1 p.m. Author, historian, and acclaimed raconteur, John McCarthy will be your guide as he points out places on shore and reveals the history behind the buildings, neighborhood or shoreline. These history cruises have been a special feature of the Historical Society's schedule of events for 20 years. Brenda Lee Hickman is the chair of the event. Price is \$40 per person and \$50 for a VIP ticket which gives you early boarding and a complimentary beverage. The Le Barge History Cruise is a wonderful gift to give to a newcomer to Sarasota. Reservations are required and there is a seating limit so sign up early. *Call Linda in the office at 364-9076. Don't let this ship sail without you.*





Ron McCarty

Members and Community Friends Keep HSOSC Vital and Moving Ahead

HSOSC is a membership organization which means whatever needs to be done – fundraising, planning programs, conducting tours, working in the gardens, painting, cleaning, producing printed materials, maintaining the Web site, you name it – gets done by the board of directors, the membership and community partners who routinely pitch in to see a project to completion. Grateful acknowledgement and sincere appreciation go out to the following:

Younkman’s Bamboo Gardens provided the landscaping on the west side of the Crocker in March completing board plans for making the parking lot both efficient and park-like. Tommy Younkman was married in the Church in April. His mother is a Whittaker and it was meaningful to the family that the Whittaker Cemetery is right next to the historic Crocker Memorial Church. Members **Gattone and Mary Clemons** have spent countless hours in the gardens working on beautification. Board member **Bill Kleber** designed and oversaw the whole project to revamp and improve the parking lot/garden at the Crocker. Recently his step-son made a wonderful rustic sign for the area.

Our thanks to **Neil Bass** of Mr. Sandless who refinished the floor in the Crocker Church and put protective pads under the pews. Board member **Meade Ferguson** keeps us supplied with paper goods for the kitchen and bathrooms throughout the year. **Margret Bering** maintains the vivid flower boxes at the Bidwell-Wood House and the urns on the

porch of the Crocker. New board member **Virginia Hoffman** is our official photographer and documents all our events. **Peter Piazza** collected the photos from last year and put together a PowerPoint show that was the hit of the annual meeting in May.

The reason we have a Web site (and it’s a great one!) and a social media presence is due to talented **Kate Holmes**. Longtime member and board member **BrendaLee Hickman** annually runs the Le Barge floating history tour and popular historian **John McCarthy** is the narrator. Member and former board member **Sue Blue** continues to organize and narrate historic downtown trolley tours that financially benefit HSOSC and provide an entertaining way to learn Sarasota’s history for both newcomers and those who have lived here for years.



Deborah Bowers

Board member **Bill Watrous** has the ongoing job of overseeing the

maintenance and preservation of the Rosemary Cemetery. Issues with homeless at the cemetery and working with the City of Sarasota and the Salvation Army have meant many volunteer hours for patient and persistent Bill. Our thanks to board member

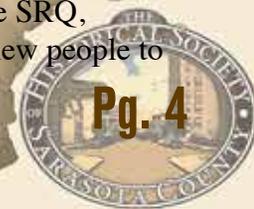
Deborah Bowers for writing the grant application that means



Linda Garcia

increased seating capacity in the Crocker. And thanks to Conversations co-chairs **Lynn**

Harding and Marsha Fottler for the programming that puts people in those seats. **Norma Kwenski** and board member **Ron McCarty** are at every Conversation greeting guests and handling donations. And whenever we have a reception that includes food and drink, Norma is there to organize it and recruit volunteers to help. Special thanks to **Jenny Townsend** for the \$1,000 donation from Tour De SRQ, which brought many new people to HSOSC this summer.



An Active and Successful Year: President's Report

From Howard Rosenthal (*this report was delivered by Howard at the May annual meeting*)

We began last summer with the Board meeting for Strategic Planning Sessions, facilitated by John McCarthy, which helped establish procedures and goals for the next few years

In the fall, we resumed our series of Conversations at The Crocker, with monthly discussions of subjects ranging from Sarasota's environment and architecture to the restoration of the Ringlings's private rail car, to how Sarasota became a jazz venue. Two Conversations were so popular that we had to turn latecomers away because the building was sold out.

In November the Designer Tag Sale provided bargains for our members and guests and essential revenue for the HSOSC. We held several other events specifically for members,



Howard Rosenthal

including a reception before the first Conversation in October, a holiday party in December, and a behind-the-scenes tour of Ca'd'Zan, the Ringling mansion. We continued our historical cruises on LeBarge narrated by John McCarthy and historical trolley tours of downtown Sarasota narrated by Sue Blue.



Viola Goldberg

We made improvements to the property including a major refurbishment to the Crocker roof, which was financed by a grant from the John Ringling Towers Historical Preservation Fund and the generous response to our annual appeal. Thanks to an anonymous gift, we installed black-out shades on the windows in the church. A grant from the Frances T. Bourne Fund at the Community Foundation gave us funding for the repair and restoration of the window sills on the east side of the church. The Woman's Club of Sarasota donated the time, financing and making of the new pew cushions. We completed improvements to our parking lot and

landscaping on the west side of the church. We added steps from the parking lot to the back deck. We also received a donation of a new sign in front of the parking lot. An oriental rug for the Bidwell-Wood House dining room was donated by Jill & Maurice Rex.

In the winter we added two new monthly events, a Brown Bag Book Luncheon with local authors making presentations followed by a luncheon on the back porch of the Bidwell-Wood House, and a History Book Club. We also rent the campus to groups and individuals for their own events. The Great Books Reading group meets here as does the Sarasota Earlye Musicke Consort. The Crocker Memorial Church is also the setting for weddings throughout the year, as well as the inaugural SaraSolo Festival in February.



Jeff LaHurd

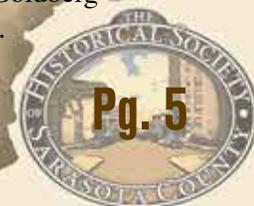


Harriet Burns Stieff

HSOSC has established two new awards and we selected the first recipients, who received their awards at this year's Annual Membership Meeting. The Hero of History award recognizes accomplishments in the areas of researching, writing, and teaching Sarasota county history, or historic preservation in Sarasota County, or similar accomplishments elsewhere by Sarasota county residents. The first recipient is Jeff LaHurd, a Sarasota County historian, who has published many books and newspaper and magazine articles on a wide variety of topics related to our history, and has been a speaker at the Historical Society on many occasions.

We also established the Distinguished Service award to recognize the contributions of individuals to the Historical Society itself. Our first two recipients of this award are Viola Goldberg and Harriet Burns Stieff.

More next page...



Viola Goldberg was one of the people instrumental in organizing the modern version of the Historical Society in the 1970's, served as its president, and has remained actively involved in the operation of the Society in the decades since then. She is a member of our Advisory Board. Harriet Burns Stieff is the living embodiment of Sarasota County history, having been born here in the 1920's. She has provided a unique insight into the history of this county, providing her own memories of events that most of us have only read about. She has been actively involved in the Historical Society for many years. She is a member of our Advisory Board.

Many people contributed to the success of HSOSC this year, and I

would like to thank some of them. Linda Garcia, our site manager, took care essential details to keep us going successfully. Marsha Fottler and Lynn Harding were in charge of the Conversations at The Crocker. Deborah Bowers headed our Finance and Development Committee. Kate Holmes was in charge of our website, Constant Contact and social media. Two students from New College, Joy Feagan and Melissa Rettig, were our first summer interns. They photographed events and cataloged the contents and property of HSOSC. Peter Piazza put together the slide show of photographs of the year's events which was shown at the Annual Membership Meeting.

Thank you to all of them, and to all of you for your continued interest and support of HSOSC.



An Exclusive Tour of a National Treasure

For the past four years HSOSC member Liz Jackson has collaborated with Ron McCarty (Curator & Keeper of Ca' d' Zan at the Ringling Museum) to organize a custom tour for Historical Society members. This is a backstage tour of the winter home of John and Mable Ringling, one of the most fabulous and celebrated private residences in the nation.

Tourgoers see what general ticket buyers do not. Ron McCarty leads the tour and conducts the narration as he talks about architecture, design, landscaping, Ringling collections and the lives of John and Mable Ringling. Their home Ca' d'Zan, which is house of John in Venetian dialect, is considered one of the great houses of America and expresses perfectly the cultural climate of the wealthy of the 1920s. Ron McCarty has a special affinity for Mable Ringling and how she designed and personalized the home and filled it with her collections and purchases. A tour of Ca' d'Zan with Ron is a window into the private world of a very public couple.

This event includes lunch with Ron at the Ringling Museum restaurant after the walking tour. It takes place Tuesday, January 19, 2016 and the cost is \$100 per person. You must be a member of both HSOSC and the Ringling Museum to be eligible. For reservations, **contact Linda Garcia at 364-9076**. This tour always sells out fast since the size of the tour group that Ron can accommodate is restricted. Act now if you want to be part this exclusive tour of one of America's most famous mansions.

Grant from Community Foundation Means More Chairs for the Crocker

HSOSC has received a grant for \$2,200 from the Frances T. Bourne Fund at The Community Foundation of Sarasota County for the purchase of additional chairs. The stackable chairs will match those already at HSOSC and will be used in the Crocker Memorial Church and in the Bidwell-Wood House for member meetings, weddings, seminars, music and theatrical rehearsals, local club meetings and for community-wide events. We also use the Crocker for Conversations at The Crocker and other special programs sponsored by HSOSC that promote the study of Sarasota's past. Board member Deborah Bowers wrote the grant application for us.



"We are cleared by the fire marshall to seat 150 in the Crocker Memorial Church building," said

Site Manager Linda Garcia, "but besides the original wooden pews and the blue stackable chairs we already own, we have never been able to accommodate as many people as want to come to some of our programs. Last year we had occasions of standing-room-only and that led to our submitting a grant to the Community Foundation. We are grateful that they acknowledged our need and approved the funds for additional chairs. Our members and the whole community will benefit."

Besides serving the needs of the Historical Society, the Crocker Memorial Church building is available for rental and is equipped with a sound system, projector, black-out shades and now seating for 150.

This historic structure is a popular destination for weddings and other celebratory events. The Historical Society considers the Crocker a model of adaptive use. Since 1901 it has been in constant use, first as a house of worship and now as a place that HSOSC and the Sarasota community use for a variety of programs and events. The Crocker has been preserved by being useful over a long span of time.



SRQ Tour de presents \$1,000 to HSOSC at a new event which brought many visitors

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Greg Dickinson, Treasurer
JoRita Stevens, Recording Secretary
Meade Ferguson, Corresponding Secretary
Deborah Bowers
Lynn Harding
BrendaLee Hickman
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