



## President's Annual Report, May 2021 Marsha Fottler

I don't have to tell any of you what kind of year it's been. We've all been through it and many of us have suffered more than others from the virus itself or from the societal complications brought on by isolation, loss of job and income, stress of trying to care for others and much more.

At the Historical Society doors have been closed for many months, but the board, members and site manager have not been idle. We have been in contact and conducted business by Zoom, email and phone. And Linda has come to the office twice a week.

Thankfully, we stayed solvent because people who care about Sarasota County's history stepped forward and made sure our buildings were protected and we could pay the monthly bills as well as reach our goal of \$100,000 so that the massive rescue repairs to the Crocker Memorial Church could begin. Thanks to all you who supported the Historical Society, including some special people who chose to remain anonymous.

Now, it's time to thank our volunteers who kept in touch and safely showed up for much-needed garden clean up that was organized by **Sue Padden**. Making sure our container gardens and window boxes are cheerful is **Gloria Nepstead**. Gloria notified us that she is moving out of state and hopes that her work will be carried on by another volunteer who will step up to maintain our container gardens. *[Ed. Note: Got a green thumb and want to keep the window boxes looking great? Email Linda Garcia, Site Manager, at [hsosc1@gmail.com](mailto:hsosc1@gmail.com)]*

Thank you to **Jerry Chesley**, **Rosemary Publicover** and **Brenda Lee Hickman** for organizing our most successful Designer Tag Sale ever in March and to **Linnea Appleby** of [jewelrytotherescue.org](http://jewelrytotherescue.org) for donating the jewelry for Sparkly Saturday. These tandem events raised approximately \$6,000. This year **Jane Kirschner** brought artisan vendors to the mix and it made a wonderful shopping day for all. **Norma Kwenski**, **Sue Padden**, **Linda Garcia**, **Will Pearson**, **Jon Stone**, **Bob Fottler**, **Kate Holmes**, **Deborah Walk**, **Kathy Chesley**, a student from Out of Door Academy **Zach Villeia**, were all on hand for set up, clean up and to work the event which was part indoors/part outdoors.

Huge thanks to **Kate Holmes** who handles all our digital platforms and was our contact with the community during the last year. Hundreds of people enjoy her amusing history lessons and they get vital information about HSOSC from what Kate puts on FaceBook, on our website at [HsoSC.com](http://HsoSC.com), and on her messages that reach readers via Constant Contact. She has made an amazing difference in raising the HSOSC profile in the community and we are so glad she's part of the team as an Advisory Board member. Our profile was elevated a bit in another area. HSOSC had a story in the academic journal called *In Context*, which goes to history teachers in the State of Florida. The March issue article, called *A Small Historical Society With a Big Mission*, was accompanied by photos of our buildings.

Our membership today stands at 406 and that is our core support. But we have the friendship and financial support of friends of Sarasota history from all over and their appreciation of what we do in the creative teaching of history and in curating two historic properties is vital to our operation.

Despite the sad demolition of vintage properties lately, the people of this part of Florida emphatically believe in history education and historic preservation. **Jeff LaHurd** has been doing a truly valiant job of bringing issues about preservation and history education to the public forum in the articles he writes for the Sunday Herald-Tribune newspaper. Thank you, board member Jeff LaHurd. You are the people's historian.

Advisory Board member **Bill Watrous** continues to work with the Doyle Trust and the City of Sarasota to preserve and maintain Sarasota's historic Rosemary Cemetery. Bill has done this for several years now and his knowledge about the cemetery and his curating efforts are indeed exemplary. The Doyle Trust funds this ongoing enterprise through the Historical Society and Bill delivers a detailed report to the Doyle Trust annually.

The year 2021 is a county-wide celebration marking the 100th year of Sarasota detaching from Manatee County and becoming the independent Sarasota County. There is an ongoing county-wide observance this whole year. Many events have moved to online because of the pandemic. The HSOSC contribution to the centennial is a play, written and directed by board member **Kathy Chesley** and based on Dr. Frank Cassell's authoritative book *Creating Sarasota County*. Since the play, *The Roads We Traveled to Sarasota County*, could not be staged and performed before a live audience, it is now in the form of a "theatrical play reading." It was videotaped recently and will be widely available to local organizations to screen as part of a program. Sponsors of the videotaped play reading are **Howard and Janice Tibbals** and we thank them. In November HSOSC intends to screen the play reading at The Crocker Memorial Church as a Conversation at the Crocker. An audience discussion will follow.

Seeing that all these events take place is our Site Manager **Linda Garcia**. She is the heart and soul of the organization and the person the public most often deals with. She is vital to the organization. Linda is simply the best.

Over the next month or two **Daron Nouri**, a young man working toward his Eagle Scout status will install another handicap parking space, this one at the Crocker Church. He has been working with HSOSC's **Bill Watrous** and **Jon Stone** on this project. He has set up a go-fund-me page to bring in the funding for the project, which is about \$2,000. We need another handicap parking spot and Daron came to us with the project. This is a good collaboration between our historical society and the Boy Scouts.

In July members of the board will sit down with Site Manager Linda Garcia to put together a season of events starting in October and ending with the annual meeting next year. This calendar will be sent out to all near the end of summer. In the meantime, we continue with work on the Crocker and have some maintenance issues at the Bidwell-Wood House that needs addressing. We will need another work day in the garden too.

By mid summer Linda will be able to schedule the November Le Barge History Cruise, weddings, book club meetings, music rehearsals and other community activities in the church. The date for our deferred Hero of History event honoring **Jon Thaxton** is November 18, 2021 at Michael's on East. We begin our Summer Grant Challenge on Memorial Day and will keep everyone posted on our progress through Constant Contact and Kate's blog posts on HsoSC.com and timely reports on Facebook.

Thank you to all our loyal members, our preservation friends in the community and to all the people who believe in history education and who actively support preserving our heritage buildings. Our Historical Society Board of Directors is inspired by you, encouraged by you and we appreciate your friendship.