

Monthly Publication from the Zephyrhills Historical Association

Volume 14 – Number 10

October 2012

The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 6th at the Zephyrhills Depot Museum, 39110 South Avenue. The business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. Refreshments are always served.

Speakers

Our speaker for the October meeting was Vicki Elkins, ZHA member and Head Librarian at the Zephyrhills Public Library. She talked about the history of the library and plans for the expansion. The library was started in 1912 when a group of citizens pooled their resources for a total of 71 books and began meeting in the homes of the members each month. We have plans to celebrate this 100-year mark when we turn over the first shovel of dirt for the planned expansion. An actual library was constructed in 1927 on 6th Avenue. The City of Zephyrhills acquired the library in 1963, and the current building was constructed in 1964. It was expanded in 1981 and is about to be expanded again. Our library is part of the Pasco County Library System but is still our hometown library as always. Those in attendance enjoyed Vicki's presentation very much.

Our speakers for November will be Larry and Harriett Morton Weicht. Both are life-long residents of Zephyrhills and will be talking about their history here. Harriett grew up in the historic Hercules Camp. She was there until her sophomore year in high school. We're confident some interesting discussion will result. You'll want to be part of this. Come and be with us.



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ZHA Mission Statement

The mission of the Zephyrhills Historical Association is to research, gather, and share local historical information with all generations, through our literature, programs, and scholarships, and to volunteer assistance to the Zephyrhills Depot Museum and WWII Barracks Museum.

Member Spotlight

William Kustes

By Clereen Brunty

Zephyrhills has its own golf pro, Bill Kustes! It all began in Fulton, Illinois where Bill was born on October 26, 1927 to Frank and Kathryn Kustes, a farm family with four sons and two daughters living in a Dutch community. He recalls the fun times growing up especially going duck hunting on the Mickelson Farm in the early 1940's.



In 1946, Sergeant T-3 William Kustes served as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division of the United States Army for three years and also was a drummer in the military band. While stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, he was introduced to the game of golf – he fondly remembers the golf lessons from Sergeant Ray Floyd, father of Raymond Floyd, a famous golfer.

Bill then attended St. Bernard College in Alabama and studied Theology. In 1949 he also attended John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio where coincidentally he ran track with Don Shula. He readily admits that running was natural for him, but through practice and eventually a state-of-the-art set of golf clubs, he also perfected the game of golf as well.

More than just a game however, Bill sees golf as a metaphor for life which he readily imparted to his students – ‘a good golfer fosters character, honesty and self- confidence – all qualities for success,’ not to mention Bill reminds us, ‘that golf is a life-long exercise and mental stimulation’. It is not surprising that Bill earned his own Professional Golf Association (PGA) card in 1977, passing tests and completing the required schooling. One of his classmates, who he still communicates with, is Peter Kostis (famous golf analyst/instructor), Bill explained that the PGA qualifiers enjoyed the play on words of the names of Kostis and Kustes and to this day, Peter and Bill joke about their name similarities.

Bill instills two of life's important lessons: ‘doors open to opportunity’ and ‘seek knowledge as a key to life’. The gift of service which Bill Kustes has given to Zephyrhills encompasses contributions as an educator, sportsman/golf innovator, historian, patriot and friend. Many more roles were uncovered which include expertise as a businessman, woodworker, golf course designer, organizer, musician and much more.



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Bill met the love of his life in 1959 in South Carolina while teaching. Gloria Davison Dunnigan was a clerk in the school office. She was raising three daughters, Thea, Janette, and Judi and after a few months of dating, they discovered an attraction and fell in love. The Kustes family moved to Zephyrhills in 1961 and soon after two sons were born, Dennis and Robbie.

Zephyrhills High School Principal, Charles Henderson, offered him a position as a Latin teacher. He taught from 1961–1968 and is fondly remembered as a stern but innovative teacher. He loved to act out the lessons so when he was teaching about prefixes or suffixes, for example, it was not unusual for him to dive under his desk or illustrate the lesson in a memorable fashion. Many of his students fondly remember the game he played each week called ‘Latin-a’ in which they played a Bingo-like contest to commit the challenging Latin vocabulary to memory.

All of his children are graduates of Zephyrhills High School – Thea, class of 1967, Janette, class of 1968, Judi, class of 1973, Dennis, class of 1980 and Robbie, class of 1981.

Bill is so proud of all of their accomplishments. Growing up in the Kustes home was almost like home schooling, whenever any of the children had a question which Dad did not have a ready answer for, he would always say, let’s look it up in the encyclopedia...he was always the seeker of knowledge. Thea’s greatest endeavor while working for Pasco County was being Director of the STAR bus service for seniors and the handicapped. While there she initiated, implemented and managed the public bus system which is now known as PCPT (Pasco County Public Transportation). It has grown considerably since she left in 1992 when she went to work for CARES, a Pinellas senior service organization running their senior transportation program. She received her Master’s Degree in Public Administration in 1992 from University of South Florida. Along the way she also worked 6 years for the City of Zephyrhills Library when Dona Kelly was Head Librarian. Public service was her career. In 1994, Janette, began her career on the Circuit Court Bench as a Judge with the 12th Judicial System in Manatee County, Florida and undoubtedly inherited her love of knowledge from her dad as well. And youngest daughter, Judi, has been in the banking industry since high school and over the last few years, heads up the Treasury Management program over a large footprint of Bank of America offices. As mentioned before, Dennis and Robbie has been very instrumental helping their parents at the Valle Oaks Golf Course by maintaining the grounds and helping wherever needed. And now Robbie is currently the lead singer in a local rock band “Jaded”. Music now comes full circle.



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Bill had many other hats at ZHS as an English teacher, Class Sponsor, Club Leader to name a few. He did a stint as tennis instructor at the city courts but most proudly divulges that he organized the very first high school golf team for ZHS. The 1968 Teacher's Strike in Florida impacted many educators across the state and catapulted Bill into a new chapter of his life in which he says, 'one door closed and another door opened'.

In the summertime, Bill and Gloria would help manage the Zephyrhills City Pool with Coach Johnny & Beanie Clements where he was required to take the life guarding instruction from legendary Marianne Simons. Bill attends the St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Zephyrhills and has been a member for more than 50 years!




In 1971, the PGA Pro managed the Zephyrhills Municipal Golf Course by the airport along with his wife, Gloria, and renovated the grounds, built the back 9 holes, implemented the first carts and strategized ways to put it on the map. Bill's influence on the Zephyrhills Golf Course in fact, took it from an annual budget of \$16,000 to one of \$160,000 when he

left in 1979. Bill ran the golf program and Gloria ran the Pro Shop. The original clubhouse had been a WWII military barracks that had been renovated by the Zephyrhills Golf Ladies Auxiliary with carpet and decorations and enjoyed by many local ladies such as Joan Arnot, Raybelle Surratt, Christine Douglas and others. Later a Pro Shop was moved in, literally, to the course. (Bill shared that the Pro Shop was the former office of Billy Eiland's Used Cars). Most of us know Billy as the police chief – but this was his office during the time he worked at Reutimann Chevrolet as a used car salesman – they moved the building from highway 301 to the golf course. Businessman, Jesse Kaylor, also later built a locker room addition as well.

After leaving the Zephyrhills Golf Course and working for a short time at Pebble Creek, Bill developed and built Valle Oaks Golf Course on Wire Road which he operated for several years. He eventually sold Valle Oaks to the Krusen family in 1989. Bill readily admits that his wife, Gloria, who passed away in 2004, was the "hostess with the mostest" and had magnificent business and organizational ability. Gloria served for 22 years in the business of managing the Pro Golf Shops, first at Zephyrhills Golf Course and later at Valle Oaks. Longtime family friend, Jim McGinnis said of Gloria's business prowess, "She's right on top of everything. She is a good businesswoman and good in public relations."

After purchasing the 93 acres for Valle Oaks, Bill and his son, Dennis, developed the course in record time – only six months. In 1979, heavy rains made the finalization of the ninth hole a challenge and Bill remembers using dairyman Fred Gore's commercial pump to rid the course of water.

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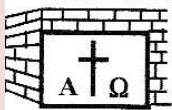
Imagine back in the 1970's you could pay your annual dues for \$56 and cover green fees and cart for just \$5. At Valle Oaks which numbered 500 members, the Kustes duo hosted many tournaments and scrambles; all in all, says Bill, it was a great adventure. Valle Oaks had a large waiting list for membership. Bill said he was appreciative to his sons, Dennis and Robbie, and helpers, Edith and Ed Endeman, Earl Tripp and others for their support.

Another door which golf inadvertently opened for Bill was that of history. While developing the land for the Valle Oaks course, near the original Greer's Saw Mill, Bill uncovered magnificent 'heart of pine' logs that had been buried in the remnants of the sawmill. He unearthed the logs and learned of the location of one of the first businesses in Abbott Station later renamed Zephyrhills. His interest in history was born with it. From historian, Rosemary Trottman, Bill was able to piece together the information regarding Zephyrhills early history. With this glorious wood in abundance, Bill also utilized his woodworking skills which he had honed from repairing golf clubs for many years, to begin a tangent career as a carpenter and woodworker. His home proudly displays many of his lovely woodworking pieces including the one that displays his military recognitions. He had done carpentry and remodeling projects around Zephyrhills for many folks over time.

Since retiring, he has been active in many civic projects including the Zephyrhills Historical Association where he has been a member since the mid 1970's. He has held the positions of Secretary, Vice President and President in the early 1980's and 90's and continues to serve on the various committees. Bill had also contributed many articles and ideas to both the Pioneer and Depot Museums. He is also a member of the American Legion Post 118 and many of us know him through his volunteer work with the legion and the schools and enjoy many other community endeavors.

Bill continues to contribute to our community. He enjoys being the Vice President (formerly Social Director) at Wedgewood Manor Homeowners Association and he quipped, "On Tuesday for coffee hour, we all attend and I bring the jokes; sometimes there is laughter before I even tell the joke! Wedgewood Manor is still the best kept secret in Zephyrhills."



<p>CornerStone  Baptist Church 7th Street & 8th Avenue Come be our special guest Coffee & Donuts 10:30***** Worship 11:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. Dr. Neal Resue—Pastor * NealDoe1956@verizon.net</p>	<p>In Memory of Ryals Furniture Exchange And Great Parents Powell & Maude Ryals From son James God Bless America</p>
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Bill says he has a couple of favorite movies, *GiGi* starring Leslie Caron, Maurice Chevalier and Louis Jourdan, a 1958 musical film directed by Vincente Minelli based on a rich playboy and a youthful courtesan-in-training enjoy a platonic friendship, but it did not stay platonic for long. Film is based on a romantic comedy on the confections of the Parisian society. The screenplay originally by Alan Jay Lerner, is based on the 1944 novella of the same name by Colette and later became a film that featured songs with lyrics. Another favorite of Bill's is *West Side Story*, which is also a 1957 Broadway production that spawned into an innovative 1961 musical film that starred Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Rita Moreno, George Chakiris and Russ Tamblyn. It was inspired by William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. The story is set in the West 50s and West 60s of the Upper West Side neighborhood in New York City in the mid-1950's, an ethnic, blue-collar neighborhood. Bill also considers Burt Lancaster as his favorite actor.

He also enjoys reading and writing and says "From Here to Eternity" written by author James Jones is his favorite book. It is based on the troubles of soldiers stationed in Hawaii in the months leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Bill also enjoys eating at the Golden Corral and his favorite color is blue. Every now and then you can hear Bill playing his Lowery organ which gives him great pleasure. He has become quite the musician as a one man band with his high tech machine. It can almost play by itself. Most often you can see him wearing his suspenders decorated with the ebony and ivory keys!



ZHA Dinner Out — Village Inn — October 12, 2012

From the Desk of the Editor

You'll notice that I included a membership form on page 8 of this month's newsletter for those of you who would like to make use of it. I'm not sure I'll have room for it in November or December. Actually if you are simply renewing your membership or advertising, and nothing has changed, you can simply send a check. The form is not necessary. If you are making additional contributions you can simply note it in the memo portion of the check. Notice that charges for advertising have changed for non-members. The charge is now \$25, but you will continue to get the newsletter. I would encourage those of you who advertise to spend another \$5 and become a member. Dues and advertising are due at the end of the year.

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