

West Pasco Historical Society Museum and Library

"The Old Schoolhouse in Sims Park"

Volume IX, No. 5

November 1996

From the President's Desk...

It is with deep regret that I must resign as President due to business commitments. David Prace has agreed to completing my unexpired term.

Going back to June, 1994, we have accomplished a lot.

Under Curator, Belva Green, we started cleaning house in the Museum, set up our first "Window of History," the Zane Rankin Country Store, organized records and planned ahead for displays. Belva's recording of minutes as Board Secretary has been outstanding.

Frances Mallet set up the hallway of local history and gave us a real insight into local history, got us into the Chasco parade and the boat parade where we took two awards, gave many talks on local history, a tour of historical New Port Richey, and never let us forget our purpose.

Julie Obenreder accepted the challenge to update our book "West Pasco Heritage," adding the last 20 years.

We obtained the copyrights to Ralph Bellwood's "Tales of West Pasco" and to Kathleen Strode's "Now and Then." Doris Szymanski, while Curator and Treasurer, found the source of the Miller book on Hudson, along with the original back-up material used by the author.

Howard Chenoweth, besides being a great advisor and Director, revised and saw to publishing a complete set of bylaws, this done for the first time in years.

We reclaimed our two seats on the Pasco County Preservation Board that had not been filled in over five years.

We reached out to the community by becoming active in the Chamber of Commerce, NPR Garden Club, and the New Port Richey Community Cooperative, with Anne and George Brandli attending their meetings and giving us a voice in the community.

George, as our Treasurer, has done a fantastic job of bring our records up to date, not to mention his monthly reports. Let's not forget his innovative newspaper rack and the new mail box he designed and made.

Norma Nelson reorganized the Indian Room, brought in some great programs, conducted the Fashion Shows, embarked on a Youth Program and brought in the first youth member in over 6 years.

We have had some great Open Houses, Christmas parties and potluck dinners, not to mention our July Thanksgiving celebration for the exchange students from Spain.

We applied for and received a grant for our computer, a first for WPHS. Thanks to David and Midge Prace it is getting used. David, as Vice President and Midge as Curator have done a fantastic job with exhibits, the best of best I feel was our "Walking in their Shoes" Exhibit for which we received recognition from the Secretary of State and the County Commission.

We celebrated Black History Month for the first time. I hope this will continue. We celebrated Finnish-American month thanks to Audrey O'Neil and Norma Nelson.

After years of neglect, Edie Hempel restructured our membership records and brought them up to date, collecting dues from 19 members who were as much as five years delinquent, and her reports were excellent. We also thank her for the yearly audits.

After years of thinking that we were tax exempt, we found otherwise and applied for a 501(c)3 status and were granted approval by the IRS. This was a big one!

Mary Jane Prichard has provided us with outstanding art displays and demonstrations - we have become a real part of the "March on Art" program, thanks to her help.

We have participated in two years of Market Days, telling our story to the public only made possible by

the 6 AM setup by Sam Eaton, Howard Chenoweth, George Brandli, Leon Szymanski and faithfully manned by Ceil Zubrod, Edie Hempel, Yolanda Conrow, Anne and George, David and Midge and others.

Bernie Denley redecorated the Country Store gift ship, brought in artistic merchandise and passed along to us the base for an on-going income source.

Back to the Museum, we set up the Pasco Press, the Thomas Meighan corner and the Hacienda exhibit. We have a start on the Moon Lake Lodge and Dude Ranch exhibit that I hope I can finish.

We took control of the Gazebo from the City and can now count it as part of the Museum.

Thanks to Frances Mallett, we erected a fantastic new sign in front of the Museum and restored the one over the porch. We also painted the steps red, thanks to Ceil.

We celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the NPR Library, donating a large portrait by Norma Nelson of Dr. Avery.

Thanks to Karen Arendell we preserved and laminated years of old newspapers.

We welcomed close to 7,000 guests through the Museum, representing at least 19 countries and 38 states. We received more press coverage in the last two years than all the years before, combined. Thanks to the calibre of our programs, projects and exhibits and the thankless work of Ceil Zubrod, who pounded down local media doors and said "Here we are, recognize us," time and time again.

Financial gifts and donations were higher than ever, over \$8500 in cash bequests alone, not to mention over a hundred items of importance, printing press, chairs, paintings, buttons, mileage machine, World War items, corn husk dolls, telephone, scrapbooks, pottery shards, Indian artifacts, etc., etc.

We travelled to St. Petersburg to see the Czar, Egypt and Alexander; we toured homes at Christmas and walked the streets of New Port Richey.

We started a collection of video tapes and hope to get others into our library along with the many new books that are available on Florida history.

Thanks to Sam Eaton, we have repaired fans, changed electrical circuits, treated the building for termites, replaced or repaired lots of outside wood, pressure cleaned the building and last but not least,

repainted the entire building with paint donated by Home Depot and labor supplied by the Holiday Kiwanis Club.

We even got the flagpole straightened and painted. This week Sam, Howard, George and Ceil finished painting the Gazebo.

A very special thanks go to Ceil Zubrod, without her dedication, drive, push, shove and kick, we would not have accomplished all that we did. Always ready to type, run here and there, go for that or go for this, lick stamps, proof read, listen to problems and give sound advice, to painting the gazebo, she has always been there: Thank you, Ceil.

We have printed calendars, three books, put out profuse newsletters and our exhibit sheets produced by Dave Prace have become almost a collectible item.

To cap it all off we presented Governor Chiles a copy of each of our books when he visited New Port Richey the first week in November in 1996.

I intend to remain an active member in as many projects as I can fit into my business and personal schedule. If I have missed a project or a member's contribution in this "report" it was not intentional. We have a fine group of members, a good board of directors, and we have contributed to the legacy of this agency in a way we can all be proud of. I wish David Prace the best as he takes the reins of the West Pasco Historical Society, Inc., a maturing institution, growing in value in every way.

Sincerely,

David Spriggs

Kiwanis Paints Museum!

Are we ever proud of our fresh new look. Saturday, the 26th of October, the Kiwanis of New Port Richey painted the Museum. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to the 16 people who did the deed. We are also grateful to a major hardware retailer who were kind enough to donate 20 gallons of white paint. And lastly, a special thanks to the City of New Port Richey who donated brushes, rollers and trays, and scaffolding.

!! BUY A CALENDAR !!

Gift Shop

by Mary Jane Prichard

Our 1997 calendars, West Pasco Heritage, Now & Then, Tales of West Pasco, and The Genesis of West Pasco are available in the Book Corner of the Gift Shop. All of these will make great gifts for Christmas. We especially need to sell the Calendars before the end of the year. Remember, these calendars will be collectors items. Each member should buy five, one for yourself and four for gifts.

Thanks to the following members who donated items to sell:

Marguerite Marchman --- jewelry

Audrey O'Neill ---- jewelry

Laura Helms ----- notepapers and Xmas cards

With Christmas coming please think of us in the Gift Shop when you are doing your Christmas shopping.

Notice

People who enjoy studying antiques might like to know that the Baileys Bluff Chapter of the Questers has membership openings. Call Belva Green 942-7354 regarding membership. They meet on the 3rd Tuesday, October through May.

Membership

by Ruthe Joyner

Puzzled over what to get your neighbor? Tired of giving ties to your uncles and scarfs to your aunts? Why not give the gift that keeps on giving all year long...a Membership to your Historical Society! For just eight dollars for an Individual membership or twelve dollars for a Family membership, your friend, neighbor, or relative will receive our Newsletter, be welcomed at the many interesting and informative Sunday programs and be able to enjoy our wonderful exhibits and resource library! They will see for themselves the marvelous changing exhibits in our Museum and be able to browse through our revamped Gift Shop! And, your gift will help to encourage the preservation of our local history and fund our ongoing educational programs.

We'll send a lovely Christmas Card to announce your gift along with all the Membership information. Sound like a great idea? Pick up Membership applications when you next visit the Museum or call me at 849-7344 with your "list." It's a gift that is sure to be a perfect fit!!

!! BUY A CALENDAR !!

Christmas Tour

by Midge London-Prace

Join us for a tour to the 12th Annual Victorian Christmas Stroll at the H.B. Plant Museum in Tampa on December 6th featuring a Fairy Tale past.

The year is 1891 and one of the most luxurious resort hotels in the country opens its doors along the banks of the Hillsborough River, ushering in a new and vital era that will transform the little village of Tampa into a bustling city, "A Grand Hotel Celebrates the Season."

Featured are lavish period decorations and costumes, beautiful holiday music and yuletide refreshments, all served up among the minarets and gardens of the former Tampa Bay hotel, now the University of Tampa campus. The 18 rooms, which display the opulent European furniture, art treasures, mirrors, porcelain and sculptures that originally adorned the hotel will be decorated by floral and interior designers who have donated time and materials to the project.

The Museum store also reflects a Victorian influence and offers visitors an opportunity to do some unique holiday shopping.

In our Meeting/Indian room there will be a sign-up sheet or call Midge at 847-3129 or Ceil at 847-4808.

Ruminations from George...

by George Brandli

At times, I am certain that Docents must feel like ants who were playing football with a team of elephants. One of the ants, striving for success, grabbed the ball and started for the goal. The other ants did not help him, but he ran on and an elephant stepped on him. The others yelled and screamed why didn't someone help him, but the elephant said, "I'm sorry he failed, but I was only trying to trip him." Perhaps we are like that. The Society has an idea for success and works hard to have 1,000 calendars published depicting sketches of many historical sites in West Pasco by Kathleen Strode. They are beautiful! Here is the chance to put some money into our treasury.

Many members do not totally support the Society with their time or money; well, they can now by purchasing a calendar, or two, or three, or more. At \$5.00 each, it will give the Society an additional \$5000.00. We have about 60 days left to sell these calendars and yet, to my knowledge, only about 10 docents and members have made any effort to sell them. My question is, where are the other 190? Just

think what we could accomplish if ALL MEMBERS were active and really supported the Society.

We have had exceptional expenses this summer, and they were all required to maintain the building and continue our growth. If the Society is running for the goal that has been agreed upon, please let's not be an elephant. To all members...please rise to the occasion and sell calendars, volunteer to come down three hours a month and be a docent on Saturday or Sunday. Relieve those dedicated individuals who are there hour after hour, day after day. Help us with rummage sales, buy our publications, support our Gift Shop. It is rewarding and we wish no one to be excluded. Our existence could be in question if 90% of our registered members stay at home. So, y'all come on down and see what a great experience it is. We need your ideas and support.

The Library

by Elizabeth Jones

The library has remained open both on Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer with staff members on duty regardless of many being away on vacations.

Our visit to the City Library was very beneficial. We especially enjoyed the Dr. Avery room, knowing that he came here from Cleveland, Ohio with thousands of books and started both the city and our Historical Society Reference Libraries. Dr Avery was the city's first mayor. Our discussion following the tour, over delicious cupcakes baked by Susan Dillinger, Head Librarian, that morning and coffee, gave us answers to our many questions. Thank you Susan.

The holidays are rapidly approaching. We are preparing an exhibit of the origin of Thanksgiving which is so often overlooked due to anticipation of Christmas.

A reminder here is due on the use of the Library by Society members. Any and all materials borrowed from the Library may be done so when any librarian is advised of it. If materials are borrowed during nonregular hours, please leave a note advising us.

Curator Committee Report

by Midge London-Prace

The committee met to break down the Schooldaze exhibit and replace it with the Old Fashioned Christmas toy exhibit. We still have room for more antiques or well loved toys in our display. Please let us know if you can contribute or know of someone who may have a collection. If anyone has village

buildings and figures for under the tree, it would be a nice addition to the train set.

The decorations for the holiday seasons are pretty much in place. The Thanksgiving display in the Meeting room was put together by Laurie McWade. She did a super job and we are very appreciative. After Thanksgiving we will be replacing it with holiday wreaths or sprays. We would like members to loan a wreath that they have made or bought to display on the wall. The variety should be interesting. We've had a nice group working together putting together the decorations: Frances, Ceil, Mary Jane, Norma, Anne and George, Audrey and myself. We will add other things as we get closer to Christmas.

Copies of our museum brochure were sent to Betty King at the AAA Auto Service in St Petersburg to be distributed to the telephone service center, to use as information for points of interest in the area.

Our thanks goes to the following list of donors to the museum:

1. David Jones and his sister, Jean H. Simmons donated in memory of their parents Raymond W. and Mary M. Jones rock specimens of agatized coral, tourmaline, pyrite and quartz, lazy agate and Florida crystals.
2. Carol Spicuglia and Helen VanBrunt donated 4 dip pens over 70 years old and a bottle of ink.
3. Anne Brandli donated a china head doll, Karolinka, to the gift shop.
4. Beverly Risen donated a chair that her parents bought for her when she was a child. The chair was from the Thomas Meighan home. She gave it in memory of her parents, Mr. & Mrs E.L. McKinty.

The Flea Market was held on the 19th of Oct. Chairpersons Emil and Ellen Renner and their helpers did a great job. Thanks to all!

The West Pasco Quilter's Guild held a demonstration of their craft for two days on the 12th and 13th. The arrangements were made by Mary Jane.

!! BUY A CALENDAR !!
!! PLEASE !!

A Glance at the Early Settlement of Florida (Part One)

by Norma Nelson

Theory has it that 25 thousand or more years BC, Asiatic tribesmen probably crossed a land bridge from the Orient to Alaska. Descendants of these people spread throughout North America and were later called "Indians" by the Spanish.

Authentic discovery and meaningful settlement of North America by Europeans came late in the 15th century. However, there are legends of earlier explorations but regardless of the authenticity of these stories neither visible evidence nor documentary proof of their visits exists. At the beginning of the 11th century the Vikings sailed to the northeastern shores of North America. Their temporary colonies disappeared long before Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492.

Columbus and his contemporaries founded colonies in the Caribbean Islands, South and Central America, and Mexico. But, North and East of the Rio Grande, exploratory expeditions greatly outnumbered actual attempt to settle in the first half of the 16th century. Colonization was not the prime directive in early exploration...they focussed more on finding precious metals and converting the Indians to Christianity.

From 1520 to 1564 there were four real efforts to settle areas now lying within the U.S. The first of these was led by Juan Ponce deLeon who had discovered Florida in 1513. In 1521 he loaded his ships with seeds and agricultural equipment to give his colonists the means of producing food. In addition to founding a colony, Ponce deLeon planned on determining whether Florida was an island or part of a continent. But after almost four months in searching for a suitable site for a settlement, a savage battle was fought with the Calusa Indians on the lower Gulf Coast (perhaps today's Charlotte Harbor). He was severely wounded in the thigh, and he and his colonists sailed back to Cuba where he died.

In 1526 Lucas Vasquez de Allon, a justice of Santo Domingo, assembled 500 people including number of Negro slaves. His expedition sailed north along the Atlantic coast. Perhaps, he landed near the Cape Fear River or the Chesapeake Bay to build homes for his settlers. The hostility of and rebellion by the slaves terminated the colony within two months and Vasquez de Allon was killed.

Disillusioned, the settlers constructed a boat and sailed for home, bearing the body of their leader. Their ship was lost at sea and only 150 survivors returned to Santo Domingo.

The third settlement during this period lasted two years and earned for Pensacola credit for the first substantial colonization attempt within the present territorial limits of the U.S. In 1559 Tristan de Luna y Arellano led a large colonization party backed by the King of Spain, the Viceroy of New Spain, the Governor of Cuba, and officials of the Catholic Church. The hopes of the 1500 colonists and soldiers who sailed into Pensacola Bay were frustrated on their arrival by a hurricane. Although most of their supplies were destroyed, the settlers endured the hardship of living for two years in a wilderness inhabited by unfriendly Indians. Dissension among the colonial leaders resulted in the replacement of Tristan and the abandonment of the settlement.

After many exploratory expeditions and three attempts to colonize the area, Spain tentatively decided that the region north and east of the Rio Grande, then known as Florida, was unsuited for settlement.

Reference material:

"Settlement of Florida" by Chas. E. Bennett
"Florida-From Indian Trail to Space Age" by Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau and Ruby Leach Carson

Notice

Basket of Cheer raffle tickets are on sale at the Museum at \$1.00 each. The basket looks beautiful!

Preservation Board News

Ceil Zubrod and David Spriggs have just been appointed as our representatives on the Pasco County Preservation Board. Sam Eaton will continue to participate as an observer.

!! BUY A CALENDAR !!
!! TODAY!!

Add to List:

Stephenia Fuller
10531 Farnam Court
Port Richey, FL 34668

Change Address:

Dorothea L. Prisament
P.O. Box 7176
Hudson, FL 34674

Ruth C. Perkins
10535 Farnam Court
Port Richey, FL 34668

Deceased Members:

Gerald & Jean Taylor
9111 Royal Palm Avenue
New Port Richey, FL 34654

Peggy Carr
Mary Morgenthaler

!! BUY A CALENDAR !!

They can be purchased at:

WPHS Gift Shop

Flowers by GRU

Columbia NPR Hospital Gift Shop

Dates to remember:

Dec 4	3:15p	General/Board Meeting
Dec 6	11:00a	Fairyland Christmas Stroll at Plant Museum, meet at WPHS
Dec 12	6:00p	Annual Member "Christmas pass-a dish dinner" at the First Presbyterian Church, 7540 Ridge Rd.
Dec 14/15	9:00a	Christmas in the Park & Parade

West Pasco Historical Society, Inc.

6431 Circle Boulevard

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