



Estero Historical Society, Inc.

February 2011
Volume V, Issue 1

A 501 c 3 Non-profit Corporation

Officers:

President: John Yarbrough
Secretary: Betty Shandor

Vice President: Jean Pryal
Treasurer: Beverly MacNellis

For more information or questions call:
Jean - 239-498-5296 or Betty - 239-947-2346

Highlights:

Presidents Letter
Progress on Houses
Bamboo Island Tour
Texas Style BBQ Fund Raiser
Fashion Show
Holiday Lunch at the Park
Pioneer Picnic
Annual High Tea

Dauray's Gift to the Society
Boomer Home Tour
Speaker Woody Hanson
Our Famous Chutney
The Passing of Vicki Fernandez
Ruby Gill House & Randell Research Center
Speaker Alex Grantt on Railroads
Remember When
Up Coming Events

President's Letter

I first want to wish everyone a belated Happy New Year, and welcome all of our seasonal residents back to Estero and Southwest Florida.

The Board members of our Estero Historical society have been quite busy this past year in several different events and fundraisers.

To those who have participated we want to sincerely "thank you" for participating ... and for those who haven't ... we want to encourage you to participate in our future endeavors.

Our goal is to assist in preserving the history of Estero for future generations.

As most of you are aware, we have been working very hard to complete the adaptive renovation of the Hall- Hanson House. We had hoped to have this project completed January of this year.

However we have endured some challenges on this project with unexpected expenses.

These unexpected expenses (approximately \$50,000) were not in our budget. However, we applied for a Grant from Lee County and have been approved by the Lee County Historical Preservation Board. I feel confident we will complete this project this summer.

But we still need to raise significant dollars to fund the handicap accessible ramp before we will receive a "certificate of Occupancy" from Lee County.

Please join us in continuing to raise funds for this project, as well as the Schoolhouse restoration. We will continue soliciting donations and donors, and we are confident the Community will help us reach this goal.

By the way, we still need volunteers to help with our Organization. We have vacant position in Membership, Newsletter and Publicity, and are hopeful members will fill these positions.

Thanks to everyone who volunteers countless hours, and we look forward to a exciting year.

Kind Regards,
John Yarbrough



Progress on the Hall-Hanson-Collier- House

We hoped the House would be finished by now. Our contractor said he found unanticipated structural problems. These problems prevented him from completing the House by December 31. The Lee County Board of County Commissioners has approved additional monies to complete the House. We believe work will re-start in late March or early April and be completed this summer.

What has to be Done

Outside, except for the roof, much of the House's exterior is complete. The underlayment for the metal roof was installed in November. The metal will be laid down soon after the project is re-started. Railings were added to the front porch. We have expectations of finding private funding for the handicap ramp.

Inside, work restoring the floors has begun and some of the plumbing and electrical work has been roughed in. Underground electric, water and sewer connections need to be hooked-up. The interior electrical and plumbing work need to be finished. Insulation, drywall, trim, painting, cabinets, sinks and air conditioning also need to be completed.

Bamboo Island Tour

In January, members of the Society and friends toured little known and hard to find Bamboo Island in Estero. Earlier, perhaps six or seven years ago, the Society toured the Island before the current owners bought it. The six acre "Island" isn't really an island, rather it appears to be a triangular piece of land wedged in between the Estero River and its tributary, Braman Creek. It is east of Sandy Lane at the end of Tanglewood. Access to the private island is by a sturdy wooden bridge over Braman Creek or by kayak. The current owners live in Colorado and we were told they need to sell the property. We were told that 20/20 had considered the possibility of buying the Island and preserving it for the public. However the

continued on next page



Bamboo Island Tour (continued)

Island, we were told, did not meet 20/20's criteria at that time.

Touring the Island one could easily feel he or she is taking a walk back in time or in a forgotten land; you would never think you are in Estero. Except for a few small private houses, one feels the Island's flora hasn't changed much in the last 100 years. There are also two limestone caves on the Island. We were told that Bamboo Island is the only place in southwest Florida with caves. The Island was used to ship fruit by barge down the Estero River to the Estero Bay and then to Punta Gorda. There, citrus was loaded on trains for shipment north and elsewhere. Only remnants of the dock where the citrus was loaded on barges remain on the Island.



Texas Style BBQ Fund Raiser

In October the Society was treated to a Texas style BBQ put on by Carla and Bob Morris with the help of and some of their friends. The fund raiser event was held at the Estero Community Park and lasted until dark. Besides providing all the food Carla and Bob also provided a blue grass band. Both the food and music were superb. The BBQ raised almost \$1,600 which will be used to help in funding the construction of the House. **Thanks Carla and Bob.**



Bob Morris, Robert Jensen, Carla Morris, Marlene Fernandez



Bill and Dottie Brown



John, Ali and Damien Yarbough

November Fashion Show and Luncheon

Maryann Weenen organized the event held at Pelican Sound in November. Pictured below are Mimi, Jean Pryal and Mary McFadden. Maryann announcing the winners of raffle prizes. Modeling clothes: Carla Morris and Ruth Mason.



Our Mimi, Jean Pryal and Mary McFadden



Model Carla Morris



Hostess MaryAnn Weenen and Jean Pryal



Model Ruth Mason



Shelly Gentile, Barb Toth, Connie Mansfield, Marianne Heben, Judy Dailey, Betty Weegmann and Phyllis Sanderson

Annual "Holiday Lunch at the Park"

December 17, 2010
Estero Community Park

Our Christmas luncheon was held again this year at the Hall-Hanson-Collier House in the Park. As in the previous year a delicious box lunch from Chic-fil A was served. The music was provided by the Brooks Brothers. We thank Bev MacNellis for her work in arranging all the details for the luncheon. The party raised about \$1,255 for the Society.



Bob and Georgia Nelson



Donna and Joe Reynolds



Jack Lienesch, Bev MacNellis and Tennille Sevigny



Carla Morris and Betty Shandor



Dave Pryal with family



The Brooks Brothers



Next year our deck should be completed and the Hall-Collier house open. Plan on coming and enjoying the afternoon.

Estero Historical Society's Pioneer Picnic

April 17, 2010
Estero Community Park

Members and friends of the Estero Historical Society met with the pioneers of Estero to have lunch under the large pavilion at the Estero Community Park. Mimi Straub, founder of the Society, Marlene Fernandez organizer of the event and many pioneer families attended the annual event this year.

Families that were represented:

Antonia & Mary Fernandez descendants Soto, Luettich and Alverus-Smith, The Horne Family descendants Bill, Jim, George and Fobes, King Schermerhorn descendants Lilly & Susan, Linda, Susan & Scott (King was the founder of the first volunteer fire department in Estero). Other families represented were Newberry, McCullers, Shandor, Mason, Nelson, Fein, Pryal, A. Fischer, Hodges, Galvin, Passero, Hessler, Carter, Evrard, Horton, S. Fischer, and Garcia.



George Weenen & Mimi Straub



Carolyn and August Fischer



Georgia Nelson, Marlene Fernandez, Barb Draper



Sis Newberry and friends



Bob & Georgia Nelson, Andrea Carter, Eileen Galvin

Charles Dauray Gives Society \$28,500 - Dauray Receives Thanks

June 8, 2010

Charles Dauray, president and CEO of the Colege of Life Foundation and governing board member of the Southwest Florida Water Management District, was the guest speaker at the Estero Historical

Societ's April 12 meeting. Vice President Jean Pryal recognized his support for the society's efforts in restoring two of Estero's historic buildings. Dauray donated the two houses and almost \$129,000 to move the buildings to Estero Community Park and restore them.



Annual Society High Tea

March 22, 2010 - Pelican Sound



Mimi and Eileen Galvin



Chair MaryAnn Weenen and speaker Susan Toth.



Boomer Home Tour

Feb. 10, 2010



Keystone Cops and Charlie



Marilyn Noethlich, Debbie Burnett, Dottie Woytow, Mrs. Boomer and Mimi.



Speaker Woody Hanson

February 2, 1910 - Estero Community Park

On February 8, 2010, Woody Hanson, a fifth generation Lee County resident narrated a power point presentation to an overflow gathering of the Society. He spoke about his family's history in Estero and Southwest Florida. Woody is the grandson of W. Stanley Hanson, the white medicine man to the Seminoles. He is the keeper of his family's extensive collections of Seminole and Miccosukee Indian photographs and artifacts. Woody's grandfather owned the Hall-Hanson-Collier House in the 1920s and 1930s.



Ladies at the tea dressed in black and white.

Our Famous Chutney



Our chutney is Edith's Trebell's recipe she put together herself and sold. Her customers came from Naples and from New York City and every where in between. She used locally grown fruit at their peak of perfection. She used all natural ingredients in her jellies, preserves, candy and other products. She also invented and had fashioned many of the tools she used in her canning plant.

Her employees helped her in all phases of the process from picking and gathering the fruit to washing, cleaning, peeling and cooking. Which meant when the fruit was "ready" it might mean going to the beach for Sea Grapes or to the woods for Downy Myrtle or to the grove for what ever orange was in season to make that marmalade. It was long days, hard work and no air conditioning. Her products were always popular and ready for any occasion. She shipped them everywhere.



Marlene Fernandez is our chutney "Queen"! As a young girl she worked for Edith and tells stories of how Edith had to have everything perfect!

Today it is Marlene that carries on the tradition of Edith Trebell's chutney. Until our Hall-Collier home is finished the society has been using Marlene and Tom' home for years to make this in demand chutney.



To order or for more information call:

Marlene Fernandez
239-992-3178



Historical Society loses one of its best Geneva Estelle 'Vicki' Fernandez

It is with much sadness that we report the death of one of our founding members Estelle Geneva 'Vicki' Fernandez. Vicki was born August 18, 1927 in Early County, Georgia, was a lifelong resident of Estero, Florida. Her husband, Joe E. "Bud" Fernandez, was a professional fisherman. Bud was a respected weather forecaster for the fishing fleets. Vicki was a homemaker, Mother, bookkeeper and school bus driver. When the children were old enough, she went back to school and got her high school diploma. She was always involved in community projects for the baseball team, Fire Department, Garden Club, Civic Association and her church.



Vicki was an accomplished artist in the broad sense of the word. Her generous spirit and depth of faith fed both her art and poetry. Her membership in the Estero Art League, which she helped organize and under whose auspices she taught, gave her works exposure and friendships in the art world. She delighted in her classes that first met in her home and later taught to both her younger and older enthusiasts at the Fellowship Hall of the Estero United Methodist Church. When the new church sanctuary building was occupied on February 7, 1993, the former church building became Fellowship Hall. It is here that we see the garden scene mural that Vicki designed and painted as a labor of love with Barbara Coite.

Vicki did not limit her artistic expressions to paint and canvases. She was also a poet of esteem. Numerous poems are being compiled for a projected publishing of the collection. One of her poems was so touching that it inspired the late Vi Thrasher, organist of the Estero United Methodist Church for many years, to put it to music to be sung by choir and congregation.

Vicki also served as a community Historian. She was a pioneer member of the Estero Historical Society. Her detailed knowledge of the history of the Estero United Methodist Church is included in the Society's publication, **Early Estero**, by Quentin Quesnell. (2002) Her collection of photographs and her stories of intrigue and adventure have entertained not only her adoring grandchildren, but also many an adult hungry for perspective on the culture they now enjoy. *Dottie Brown*

A Visit to the Ruby Gill House and Randell Research Center on Pine Island

Jan 17, 2010



Society members inspect the Ruby Gill restoration on Pine Island. Afterwards members visited the

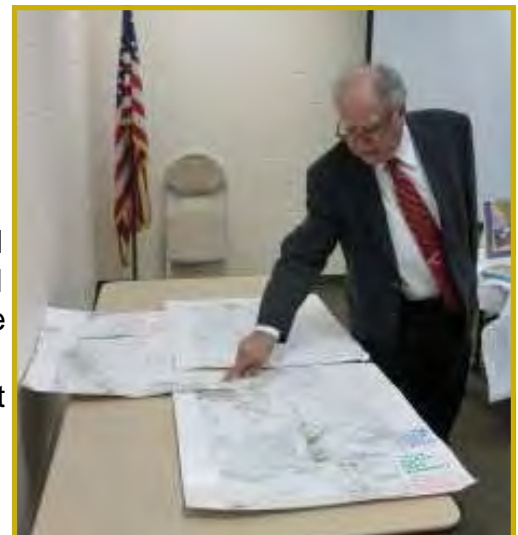
close by Randell Research Center - a site of a Caluse Indian village. An archaeologist from the Center let us explore an archaeological "dig" he was working.



Early Railroads in SW Florida Speaker Mr. Alex Grantt

Feb. 14, 2011

Mr. Alex Grantt, a Bonita Springs businessman and a railroad enthusiast, provided an informative history of railroads in Florida and Estero since the 1882. Mr. Grantt displayed a wide variety of maps showing the railroads in SW Florida. He discussed the large tracts of land the State granted to the railroads needed to encourage rail development. He also discussed the abandonment of passenger freight service since 1950s.



Remember When . . .

Estero History in the making in the middle of the night

May 2009



The day before the move, all the preparations were made. The houses sat idle on the big trucks waiting for the middle of the night to slowly move down Tamiami Trail and Corkscrew to their new home at the Estero Community Park, now a historical site.

Coming Events . . .

Pioneer Picnic - April 16th

The annual Pioneer Picnic will be held on April 16 at the Estero Community Park's large pavilion. Festivities begin at Noon and will last until we run out of stories. Everyone is welcome, we especially welcome the Estero pioneer families. When you arrive please bring a delicious covered dish and a dessert of your choice along with a table service and drink. Call Marlene (992 3178) or Betty (947 2346).

Annual Society High Tea - March 21

Our Tea will be held at 11 o'clock March 21 at Pelican Sound Country Club. Featured will be a turn-of-the-century fashion show. Laurie Nienhaus will present, "The Story My Close Can Tell", showcasing authentic costumes and their history. We will be taking a step back in history to see how ladies dressed in the 1900s said Chairwoman Eileen Galvin. These are beautiful clothes, it is just going to be lovely." The Tea luncheon

menu features Poulet Francaise, a French chicken dish along with a scrumptious dessert. Numerous raffle prizes will be given away at the event. **Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased by phoning Eileen Gavin at (239) 947-4471.** All proceeds go toward the Historical Society's restoration of two century-old buildings. The

1904 Estero School and the 1906 Hall-Hanson-Collier House. Both buildings were donated to the Society by the College of Life's Charles Dauray.

Trip to the Mound House and Mound Key Planned

Our members will be receiving an email with more details as they become available.





Estero Historical Society, Inc

If you'd like to join,

make checks payable to:

Estero Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 1314

Estero, FL 33929

Information: (239)498-5296 or 947-2346

Please check member category

Individual: \$20_____

Family: \$35_____

Business \$50_____

Patron: \$500_____

Lifetime: \$1,000_____

MAKE A DONATION TO HELP PAY FOR RESTORATION OF THE OLD SCHOOL AND COLLIER HOUSES.: \$_____

Date:_____ Check enclosed: \$_____

Name:_____

***Email Address: _____**

** Your acceptance of e-mails allows us to keep you up-to-date on events and saves the Society a great deal in mailing costs.*

Phone:_____

Permanent **Snowbird**

Mailing Address:

Other Mailing Address:

We are a non-profit organization. These memberships are tax deductible to the letter of the law.

Estero Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 1314

Estero, FL 33929