

Venice Museum & Archives



Newsletter

April 2014

We are excited to share highlights from the past few months at the Venice Museum and Archives of the many activities, events and accomplishments so far this year. Enjoy!

New Concept Drawings for Museum

The team at FleischmanGarcia, led by architect Dan Ionescu, recently provided updated concept drawings for the proposed, new state-of-the-art museum.



2014 concept drawing for new museum by FleischmanGarcia

“This is the second version of many future concept drawings to come for the new museum. This will be a community effort with community input to help decide the look and feel of the museum.”

- James Hagler, VMA Director



Aerial view of Cultural Campus showing location of new museum

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DIGGING UP DISCOVERIES

Southwest Florida Fossils



**On exhibit now
thru June 4**

Open M-W 10am-4pm
First and third Saturdays 10am-2pm
thru April 19

350+ fossils on loan from the Manasota Fossil Club and Southwest Florida Fossil Society

Fossil Fest April 19

Mark your calendar to stop by the VMA on April 19 for Fossil Fest. It will be the last Saturday the Museum is open for the season, plus there will be fossil fun for the whole family!

- ◆ Have your mystery fossils identified
- ◆ Fossils for sale by Randy Boshela, collector and dealer for World Fossils, Minerals and Gifts; fossil vendor Tom Granata
- ◆ Activities for kids
- ◆ Book signing by Robert Fuqua, author of *Hunting Fossil Shark Teeth in Venice, Florida*

Fossil Exhibit is Huge Hit

A record-breaking number of visitors have come to the Museum to check out "Digging Up Discoveries" thanks to the great media coverage the exhibit has been receiving. Since its opening, our reception volunteers have counted more than 1,300 people in a three month period...slightly more than half of our typical annual attendance!

VMA and Venice Centre Mall Partner for KMI Exhibit

Thanks to the generous support of Legacy of Valor, a campaign created by The Patterson Foundation, the Museum was able to partner with the Venice Centre Association, Inc. to provide exhibit panels on the Kentucky Military Institute (KMI) to help provide historical information for visitors to the Mall. The Venice Centre Mall has an extensive collection of KMI material hanging in its first floor hallway and in three display cases. The exhibit is a great way for the Museum to provide outreach to our community and shine a spotlight on the important history of the KMI in Venice.



March 20, 2014 Fossil exhibit reception Terry Raymond (left) and Norma Pennington (right) loaned their beautiful collection of shells and corals for the exhibit.

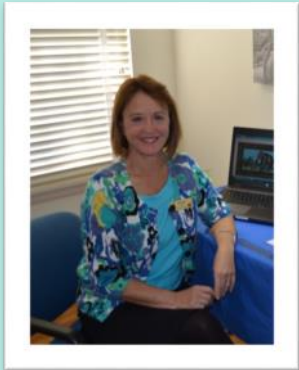
Going Green: New LED Lighting

To improve our fossil display case lighting from the harsh fluorescent lights they had, new LED lighting was installed. Thanks to the expertise of Reid Pettit (at left) of Consolidated Electrical Distributors, Inc. (CED), a low-cost, high quality option was selected. The amazingly thin strip of peel-and-stick lights emit no damaging ultraviolet light and low heat. Reid also helped the Museum select overhead LED track lighting to help us improve our lighting standards for proper museum environmental conditions for exhibits. Thank you, Reid and CED for brightening up our Museum!



March 27, 2014— Reid Pettit of Consolidated Electrical Distributors, Inc. (CED) installs thin strip of new LED lighting

Janie Ewell Joins the VMA Team



Janie Ewell, a certified language arts and social studies teacher with a Masters in Communication, joined the VMA team as a contractor to develop educational programs for learners of all ages aligned with the Museum's collections and area history. Participants, through hands-on project-based learning experiences, will analyze museum artifacts and documents, weigh evidence, and share ideas. Programs encourage participants to analyze history through varied perspectives, respect mentors, and to put into action 21st century skills including literacy across disciplines and community service.



Students and faculty from the State College of Florida get a behind-the-scenes tour, March 2014

Summer Program at Laurel Civic Association



Janie Ewell (left) and Sandra Terry (right)

A pilot, forty hour program will be in place this summer created in collaboration with the Laurel Civic Association. Janie Ewell is working closely with Sandra Sims Terry and John Jefferson to create a historical component of their summer Teen Empowerment Program so teens experience hands-on study of area history through workshops and field trips that invite exploration, discovery, team building, and creativity. Teens will explore area history from prehistoric times to the present and create exhibits based on their learning experiences. Janie is also working with Bay Preserve, Historic Spanish Point, Oscar Scherer State Park, Sarasota Parks and Recreation, the Sarasota School District, libraries, and other child/family organizations to develop educational programs that are engaging, inspiring, and relevant for learners of all ages.



Additions to Collection

Each month new donations of material are brought into the Museum. After a review of whether or not the items support the VMA's mission and collecting plan, accepted items are added to the collection through a process called accessioning. Here are the recent accessions for January through March:

William Zopff—Kentucky Military Institute (KMI) uniform, 1951 yearbook, KMI documents; **Larry Humes**—Robert Peters memorial materials (KMI); **Jen Stutesman**—aerial photo of downtown Venice circa 1955; **Lois Steketee**—1920s-1930s bathing suits, uniform, photos and stair railing piece from Horse and Chaise Inn; **Vee Garry-Chiulli**—DVDs with videos of "Vee on Venice"; **Karl Kuehne**—KMI 1963 yearbook, KMI documents; **Carolyn Wolf**—photos of Clown College graduation and Vazquez circus wedding, 1983; **Bob Byler**—music, photos and videos of Venice musician Tim Allan; **Timothy Gomer**—printing plates from *Venice News* newspaper circa 1926; **Venice Library**—documents from the Walter Farley Landmark; **John Williams**—documents relating to Venice from Farley Funeral Home; **Claire Suter**—circa 1980 aerial photo of Venice.

Search Collections Online

A portion of VMA collections are available for viewing online.

1. Visit www.VeniceMuseum.org
2. On the homepage, scroll to "To access the collection online" select "click here."
3. Enter your keyword(s) and select one or more of the content types: All Content, Objects, Library, Archives, Photos.

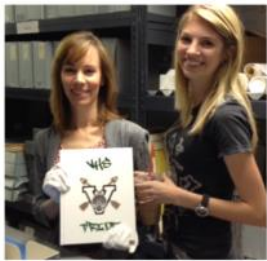
For assistance with your research, please contact Michelle Harm, Curator at 941-486-2487, mharm@venicegov.com



Wicker chair, Hotel Venice

New Curator for Museum

Michelle Harm joined the VMA staff in December, as the first curator for the Museum. She has a Masters Degree in Museum Studies and sixteen years of experience managing collections for art museums, history museums and private collectors. Her curated traveling exhibitions have toured throughout the United States and internationally. Having grown up in southwest Florida, Michelle is excited to be back in the area to continue working in her field while being near friends and family.



Michelle Harm (left) helping SCF student Lauren Gadoury (right) find her senior photo in VHS yearbook in collection

Collection Spotlight

In February, VMA staff acquired an original 1926 Hotel Venice wicker chair from the estate of Robert Briner, our beloved volunteer.

Oral Histories

VMA volunteer Larry Humes interviewed local fossil collector and dealer Randy Boshela for an oral history on his experiences and memories of fossil hunting in Venice. Excerpts from the interview are featured in the April 2014 issue of *Venice Life* magazine. Thank you, Larry and Randy!



Some of Randy's personal collection of fossils are currently on display at VMA



Model of Venice Circus Arena made by Jerry Bergman



Mini Circus Arena

Model-maker Jerry Bergman used photos from the VMA collection to figure out some of the architectural details of the Venice Circus Arena. In April, Bergman completed a scale model of the 1960 version of the Arena and donated it to the Venice Circus Arts Foundation.



Arena aerial photo (2014.17.01)
New donation from Claire Suter

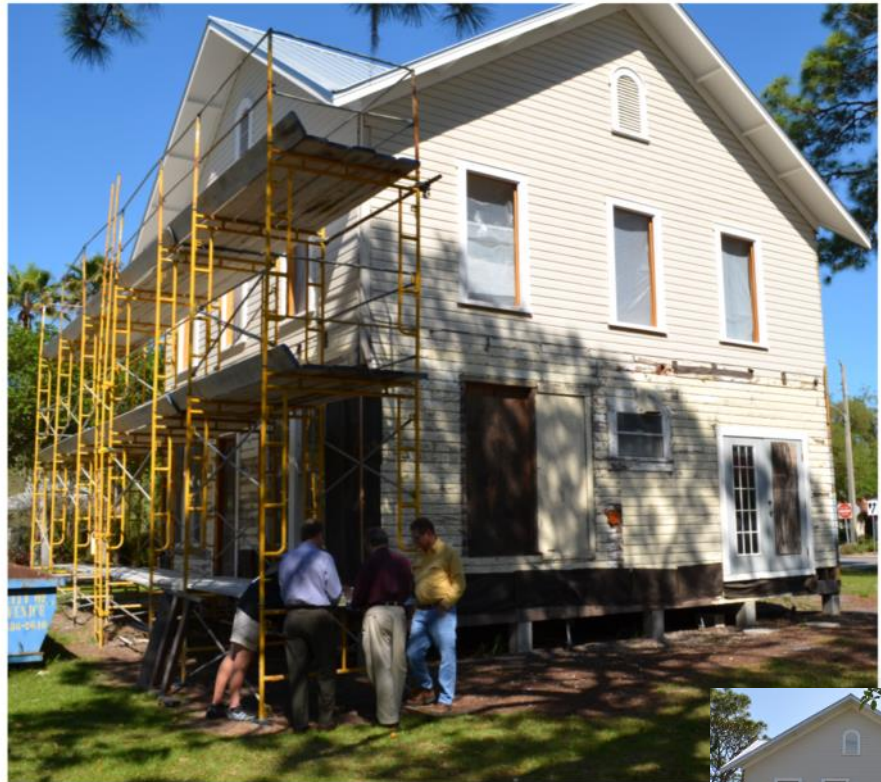
House History

According to lumber invoices, the Lord-Higel House was constructed in 1896. It was built on the highest ground of ninety acres purchased four years earlier by Joseph H. Lord to establish a citrus grove. The house site and surrounding acreage were located south of Roberts Bay, in the area now known as Bayshore Estates subdivision.

Designed in the Queen Anne vernacular style, the two-story house was constructed of “fat lighter” pine, often referred to as heart of pine. This type of wood contains high levels of pitch, making the wood impervious to insects, and so hard it is difficult to saw and nail.

In 1950 the house was moved to Laguna Drive, requiring the removal of its defining architectural feature, a wrap-around porch with cypress support columns. It was then converted from a single family residence to a duplex.

The house was converted back to a single family residence in the 1990s. In 2005 the house was saved from demolition by the City of Venice’s Historic Preservation Board and given to the City of Venice. It was moved to a city-owned lot on Granada Ave., one block south of West Venice Avenue (behind City Hall).



Lord-Higel House, April 1, 2014– James Hagler met with Jack Bauer, Pat Ball and Sam Holladay to discuss plans



House Update

The Lord-Higel house is the oldest remaining residence in the Venice area and is now nestled into a permanent location on a city-owned lot on Granada Avenue. Saved from demolition by the City of Venice’s Historic Preservation Board, it was adopted by a dedicated group of volunteers who are working hard to bring it back to its original beauty. Restoration and fund raising efforts are steadily taking place through Venice Heritage Inc.

Exterior painting of the second story has been completed thanks to the donated time of Eric’s Painting and donated supplies by Sherwin-Williams.

In April, James Hagler met with lead volunteer Jack Bauer, lead architect Sam Holladay and lead restoration/construction manager Pat Ball to discuss electrical and plumbing plans, as well as a ramp leading to a bathroom.

The next step is for the exterior, first floor siding to be replaced and ready for painting. Approximately \$150,000 is needed to complete construction of the wrap around porch, roof, and other restoration and repairs.



Lord-Higel House, also known as Stone Grove House, circa 1948



2014 concept drawing for new museum by FleischmanGarcia

Leading the path...

By Larry R. Humes, VMA Steering Committee

One concept for the proposed museum is a permanent display telling the story of the early pioneers who helped tame this region we've come to think of as home. Those families, with names like Knight, Roberts, and Higel, cleared the path that we would follow. It's a great story, but in so telling, is easy to lose sight of the fact that there are still pioneers among us today.

I first met Julia Cousins-Laning in her role as a volunteer docent at the Venice Museum & Archives, which is housed in her childhood home, the Triangle Inn. As we walked through the historic building, she regaled us with stories of growing up there, helping her mother to operate the bed and breakfast.

I would later learn of Julia's wonderful gift of \$1 million toward the planning and construction of a new state-of-the-art facility to showcase and preserve the museum's more than 20,000 artifacts. The vision for building such a much-needed museum did not originate with Julia alone. But she was, and is, the pioneer who set us on the path toward making that vision a reality. Thank you, Julia, for lighting the fire to guide our way!

Although still in the conceptual stages, I'm pleased to tell you that progress is being made to deliver on that vision. And I am honored to be a part of that process. Venice has been a part of my life since discovering this community as a Kentucky Military Institute cadet some 50 years ago. Upon retiring recently, I became a volunteer working with the museum's oral history program. I since was invited to serve on the organization's steering committee that will facilitate planning for the campaign to raise funds for the new facility, as well as to communicate the expanded role the museum will play in interpreting our past in order to lay the groundwork for our community's future.

We have much to share with you during the coming weeks and months. But for now, I would like to invite you to share with us your questions and your thoughts. How can we improve upon this vision? What questions would you like answered? Please feel free to write me at: venicehistory@yahoo.com so we can get this conversation going. I look forward to hearing from you!

State-of-the-Art Exhibits

These exhibit gallery sketches show the potential of what the new museum could be. Thirteen proposed galleries will hit the highlights of Venice area history with interactive, engaging exhibits for all ages.

Concept drawings below by Fricker Studio



Main exhibit hall leading to KMI, Venice Army Air Base, 1920s Boom and Bust, and circus exhibits



The Circus Comes to Town exhibit



The Nature of the Place fossil exhibit

In January, we kicked off the year with our Appreciation Luncheon for our dedicated museum volunteers, Progressive Dinner fund raising event, and one day exhibit about the Venice Army Air Base created for the Venice Veterans Gala. Here are a few more events from February and March.

Southwest Florida Heritage Festival

Janie Ewell, VMA Educator, participated in the Southwest Florida Heritage Festival by providing a booth with information on area pioneers.



Janie at Crowley Farm, February 22

Welcome Newcomers

A lively group from the Venice Newcomers celebrated St. Patrick's Day in style at the Museum.



A sea of green visitors get a tour from James Hagler, March 17

Upcoming Events

**Fossil Fest at VMA
April 19 (see page 2)**

**Progressive Dinner
April 25**

Join us for a night of great food and culture at the Cultural Campus. The first course will begin at the Museum at 6PM.

KMI Plaque Dedication, April 26

A new plaque commemorating the contributions of the Kentucky Military Institute (KMI) to Venice will be dedicated on April 26th in Centennial Park, once the parade grounds of the KMI from 1933 to 1970. The VMA contributed photos and information from its collection to help Sarasota County with the creation of the marker.

'A Taste of Culture' progressive Dinner
Friday, April 25, 2014 at 6pm
\$40 Covers Dinner and Drinks

You will visit the Cultural Campus:
Venice Museum & Archives
Venice Library
Venice Community Center
Venice Art Center
Food provided by Java Cafe.

Tickets:
Seating is limited, so stop by at one of the Cultural Campus locations to get your tickets. To pay over the phone, call 941-485-7136

Venice Cultural Campus
Toscano Vineyards
Java Catering
Venice Museum & Archives
Venice Art Center
Venice Community Center
Venice Community Center Partners

Book Fair a Success

Proceeds from the Venice Book Fair and Writers Festival benefit the efforts of Venice Heritage Inc.



Book Fair, April 5

500+ on Facebook



We hit 500 followers on Facebook in April! Posts from our page have been viewed by people from as many as 40+ US cities and 39 countries. Shares and views of our top

posts of postcards include 4,800 people- Venice Jetties; 2,300 people- San Marco Hotel; and 1,200 people- Myakka Bowling Alley. Join the fun, check out historical photos and artifacts from our collection, and stay up-to-date on VMA events and activities.

www.facebook.com/veniceflarchives

Pink Flamingo at the Inn

Venice MainStreet and a film crew flocked to the Museum to shoot a segment for their commercial to promote Venice.



Philanthropic Educational Organization

In February, members of the Philanthropic Educational Organization visited the Museum for a special tour with Director James Hagler.



Thank You, Troop 542!

In March, Girl Scout Troop 542 brightened up our garden with spring flowers.



Happy 50th Anniversary

VMA staff worked with Venice Area Beautification, Inc. to create a new plaque for the Venice Beach Pavilion to celebrate its 50th anniversary.



Museum Gift Shop



Thank you, Randy Boshela (at right), for donating some great shark teeth specimens for our gift shop.

The VMA gift shop features a variety of books and videos on local history and nature, as well as novels by local authors. Fossil-related books, gifts, and jewelry are also available.



Book Review: Tales of Old Florida

Edited by Frank Oppel and Tony Meisel

Book Review by June Gurley, VMA Volunteer

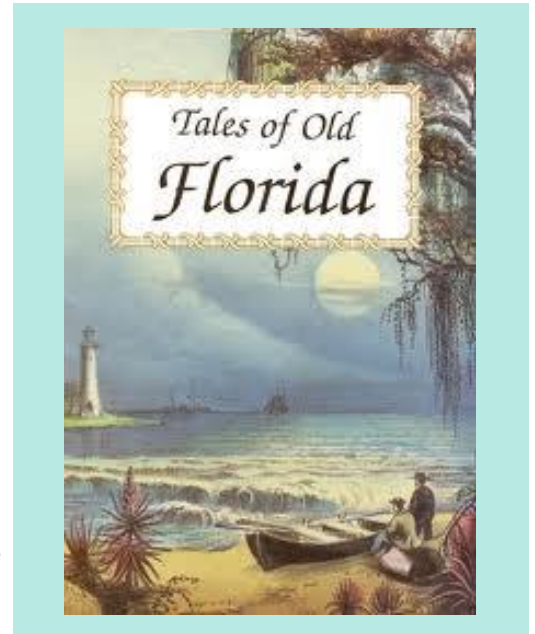
This book contains a collection of forty tales from the Florida frontier. Just over one hundred years ago Florida was a wilderness. Swamps, beaches--some with high dunes protecting the mainland, dense forests, and abundant game existed within its boundaries. There were fishing villages that served the needs of the traders of the Caribbean. And of course, there was St. Augustine, known today as our country's oldest city.

The state was populated with a few farmers, ranchers, and at times, also a few sportsmen. Hunting was a popular activity for the northern gentlemen of wealth and leisure, but the fish known as "The Silver King" was an even bigger lure. The favorite winter habitat of tarpon in Florida waters is south of Sarasota Bay. Charles Richards Dodge tells of one of his many trips from Tampa via steamer to Key West. He comments on tarpon fishing in the area around what was then known as Myers (Ft. Myers). This subtropical part of Florida is located where the Caloosahatchee River empties into beautiful Charlotte Harbor. It is here that tarpon fishing becomes serious business.

When Mr. Dodge steams into Key West, or Bone Island, as it was called during the Spanish occupancy, he describes other industries found there besides fishing. In 1894 cigar manufacturing is the chief commercial enterprise. Key West was also at that time the market center for the sponge industry. The turtle trade was another industry, though not as important as before, when the sea turtles were more plentiful. An interesting point made by the author is that Spanish was the main language of the street in Key West in 1894. Of the 25,000 residents, less than 1,000 spoke English.

Another chapter of this book is devoted to turkey tracks in the Big Cypress, while another tells of Turtling in Florida in the 1890s. A Visit to Death Lake in the Florida panhandle is a chapter which tells of a descriptive passage to the river and creek leading to a special lake. One can almost smell the fumes coming off the secreted lake where fresh brim were abundant. Please remember this book is a collection of tales written by various authors. Mr. E.P. Powel writes of Truck Farming in Florida. Perhaps this subject pales in comparison to the sportsmen's pursuit of hunting and fishing, but Florida has an unrivaled advantage in the truck garden business. Florida can get vegetables and fruit to markets in Philadelphia, New York, Boston or Chicago at least two weeks ahead of any rival. He describes the "backbone" of Florida, made up of high rolling land, where every hollow is a beautiful lake. He even tells about the mosquito.

The stories in this collection speak of times from the 1890s through the first decade of the 1900s. For that reason one can gain an inkling of what life must have been like for people who lived in or visited the area. The reader will have to be the judge of how much Florida has lost or gained in the past 127 years with its increased population and ensuing development.



Thank You, Carol Bailey and Seasonal Volunteers!

A heartfelt thanks goes out to our dedicated Volunteer Coordinator, Carol Bailey for all of your hours of service to the Museum this busy season. Thank you, volunteers Tina Bird, Peg and Wendell Kapustiak, Jerry Madden, and Jim Nemec who are also headed north for the summer. See you in the Fall!



Carol Bailey

Help Make History

Show your support for the Venice Museum & Archives expansion project and help us collect and preserve the history of the Venice area in the future. Please consider making a monetary donation through:

- ♦ **Gulf Coast Community Foundation at gulfcoastcf.org**
(On the homepage, scroll down and select "Donate." Under "Fund" click the down arrow and scroll to "Venice Museum Expansion Fund" to select, then complete the online form.)
- ♦ **Venice Heritage Inc. at VeniceHeritage.org**
(On the homepage, select "Click Here to Donate." Scroll down and select the "Donate" button next to "Donate to the Archive Expansion.")
- ♦ **Check payable to Venice Heritage, Inc.**
Indicate in memo portion: "Expansion" and send to Venice Museum and Archives at address shown in the column to the right.



Join Julia

A generous \$1-million donation from long-time Venice resident Julia Cousins-Laning has enabled the Venice Museum and Archives to embark upon a capital campaign to raise the rest of the funds to build a larger home. **Please join Julia and join our effort to make history!**

Contact Us

For more information about our exhibits, collections and educational programs contact:

Venice Museum and Archives

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Venice, FL 34285

(941) 486-2487

For comments, corrections or ideas for our newsletters, please contact Michelle Harm:

mharm@venicegov.com

Visit us on the web at
VeniceMuseum.org



Like us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/veniceflarchives



Free Wi-Fi Available

The mission of the Venice Museum and Archives is to collect and preserve historical and archaeological material relating to Venice and the communities of Laurel, Nokomis and Osprey, whose histories have all been interwoven from 1867 to the present time.

The museum is located in the historic Triangle Inn building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum is within the Venice Cultural Campus that includes the Venice Library, Venice Art Center, and Venice Community Center.

The VMA is free to the public and open Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am- 4pm



Member



City of Venice