**The Historian**

The Newsletter of the Boynton Beach Historical Society

Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Briny Breezes, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton, in addition to supporting the preservation of the history of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida as a whole.

2019 VOLUME 1

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| JOIN US: JANUARY MEETING! |
| MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2019 |

**THE ART OF SPACE**

Debra Yates creates highly curated, carefully detailed spaces for special clients. She considers her 3-dimensional work, *The Art of Space.*

Yates, with her son and design partner, Benjamin Burle, are internationally known for their subtle spaces that blur the line between outdoor and indoor living. Their vision is for space to feel warm, like it belongs and is in perfect harmony with the surroundings. Whether it be distinctive boutique hotels, coastal estate gardens, sculptural pools or indigenous custom selected plantings, the art is in the design. From Palm Beach to Key West to La Jolla, Yates & Burle bring their distinctive look of modern elegance with an old Florida feel.

Burle Yates Design is award winning and often published, with projects featured in the New York Times, Garden Design, House Beautiful, Florida Design, as well as numerous garden design books.

**About the Speakers:**

**DEBRA YATES,** a 4th generation Conch, was born and raised in Key West, graduated with a BA degree from Florida State University. Her first Art in Public Places project was a 100' x 8' abstract mural for the Miami International Airport. An award-winning designer, Yates has completed over 13 Art in Public Places Projects, created 25 large-scaled mosaic tile garden/pool walls and has had 23 solo exhibitions of her abstract paintings. Her completed design projects have been published in The New York Times, Conde Nast Traveler, Garden Design, Casa Vogue, House Beautiful, Florida Design, Miami Home & Decor and many others. She is inspired by her long-time friendship with Roberto Burle Marx.

**BENJAMIN BURLE** was born and raised in South Miami. Burle has a BA Degree in Interior Design from Miami International University of Art & Design and also attended the Master's Program in Landscape Architecture at FIU. An award-winning designer, Burle has tremendous knowledge of the Indigenous coastal landscapes of Florida and a passion for creating naturalistic landscapes.

All programs are FREE and OPEN to the Public

SAVE THE DATES FOR OUR 2019 MON NIGHT PROGRAMS: Feb 18, Mar 18, Apr 15

www.boyntonhistory.org

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BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Our website is www.boyntonhistory.org. The e-mail address is boyntonhistory@gmail.com
P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425.
You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:
www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach
www.twitter.com/boyntonhistory

The Historian is usually mailed eight times a year—September, October, November, January, February, March, April and May—to all members. No copies are produced in December, June, July and August. Copies from past years are posted on the website.

LIFE MEMBERS
Lenore Benson Raborn Boonstra
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A REMINDER!
Dues for 2019 are now due. Our membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. Dues are not prorated. The following memberships were paid for this year prior to January 1. If you sent in your dues to arrive after that date you will be listed in a later issue of The Historian. Thank you for supporting the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

LIFE:
[Life members are listed in the column on the left.]
Easy Pay Tire Store, Inc. Doug Beseecker, Ruth Beseecker
Patron:
Robert and Virginia Foot
Suzy Winchester

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James “Gym” H. Weeks
Dorothy F. Whittaker
Herbert Zobel

STUDENT:
Peter Aispuro
FROM OUR NOVEMBER MEETING
One recent project for the Boynton Beach Historical Society was the restoration and frame repair of 5 paintings presented to Forest Park School over 40 years ago by renowned muralist Bernard Thomas. The story of this restoration was the topic of the Society's November meeting.

Mary Scheiter also sent us a brief history of the Boynton Beach Garden Club which she wrote in 2012 and in which she mentions the trees which are under discussion.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BOYNTON BEACH GARDEN CLUB

Seventy-four years old and still going strong!

Back in 1938 Boynton Beach was a small village shaking off its farming roots, growing into a thriving town with civic pride and great ambitions. So, a small group of women banded together to form the Boynton Beach Garden Club, organized by Bertha Chadwell and its first president. The goal of the club was to encourage home and civic beautification; the goals today are the same although greatly expanded.

One of the club’s early project was the planting of trees (we still do that today). You can see some results of those early efforts, we believe, when you go to the old Boynton Beach High School on Seacrest & Ocean, and see those two magnificent Celia Pentandra trees (belonging to the Kapok family) in the schoolyard.

Another early project was to have a proper cemetery so members worked tirelessly for years, and in 1952 the cemetery was turned over to the City of Boynton Beach.

The club started a fine collection of horticultural books that was eventually incorporated into Boynton Beach’s first public library.

In 1953, the Boynton Beach Garden Club became a member of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs (a member of the National Garden Clubs) which expanded its horizons to state and national activities.

At one time Route 1 was the only highway to run up the eastern coast. When it was widened and called Federal Highway, the club undertook planting and maintaining two full miles of it. They also donated a Blue Star Memorial Marker located at the northern edge of the city, which was renovated four years ago, and then they landscaped the site.

Today the club provides scholarship monies for a wide range of horticultural activities. We join with other garden clubs in the area for joint meetings; we also have fundraisers, bus trips, carpool trips, and much more. We meet once a month where we always have an interesting program. Several times a year we have hands on workshops.

If you have a love of flowers, gardening, and conservation we invite you to join us. New members enjoy the club for its informal, informative, as well as an enjoyable experience and forming friendships.

We look forward to another productive and rewarding 74 years!

9/15/2012

WHAT WILL BECOME OF THESE BUILDINGS?

Earlier articles in The Historian have discussed City plans for two former homes, both now located on E. Ocean Avenue, the former Magnuson House and the Ruth Jones Cottage.

The Magnuson House at 211 E. Ocean Avenue was added to the Boynton Beach Register of Historic Places ion 2012. The building was sold to be converted into a restaurant, but the plans fell apart. After the developer took possession, the house continued to sit vacant for months and the CRA invoked a reverter clause to reclaim the house.

Oscar Magnuson, who was from Sweden, built the two-story, single family residence in 1919. For South Florida it is a rare 100-year-old building which retains many of its original features such as wood siding and wood-frame windows. Because of the expense of upkeep and the failure of a potential buyer to materialize the City is considering demolition. Unfortunately the City Commission believes most of the value currently is in the land.

[Continued on page 4, Old Buildings]
THE BOYNTON BEACH MALL

Is the Boynton Beach Mall going to disappear? All indications are that it is in bare survival mode. Much of the glory that made it a regional shopping destination when in opened in the fall of 1985 has faded.

Morrison’s Cafeteria, on the west side of the Mall, a popular after church dining spot on Sundays, represented a favorite type of Southern eatery. Changing conditions, even in the 1980s, closed Morrison’s restaurants throughout the South, and even though another cafeteria took its place, that too closed after a short time.

So-called “anchor stores,” such as Burdines, “the Florida store”; Lord & Taylor; Jordan Marsh; J.C. Penney and Sears attracted a wide audience of buyers. Later Macy’s and Dillard’s opened. Of these, after February of this year only Penney’s and a stripped down Macy’s will remain.

Smaller stores have also moved away—Build-A-Bear Workshop, the Disney Store, Dairy Queen, Mrs. Fields, Bucca Di Beppo and Too Jays have all left.

The changing retail market which has moved heavily to on-line and catalog shopping has certainly had an effect. Location, too, is often blamed. The Mall is almost hidden and inconvenient to reach from I-95. Rows of smaller malls along Congress Avenue tend to further obscure it, and reportedly, these buildings rent for less than mall space prices.

Demographic changes have also occurred. Higher end malls which have opened in other areas of the county tend to attract more affluent customers. People with lesser incomes have made stores like Walmart, Target and Kohl’s the Mall stores’ major competition.

Finally, there is a question of customer safety. After a murder in the central corridor near Penney’s on Christmas Eve in 2016, many people stopped shopping there. Disorderly teenagers would often congregate near the main entrance in the early evenings. Simple fear has kept many people away.

Some optimists believe that the advent of Christ Fellowship’s location in the old Dillard’s store will set the tone for a multi-purpose facility with a combination of offices, retailers and restaurants. Time will tell, and it may well be that Malls are fading into history.

GOODBYE, OLD CITY HALL

As the City moves forward with its plans for relocation, new buildings and the creation of Town Square, some of the old buildings are vanishing. This is the demolition of the City Hall on December 12, 2018. The historic schoolhouses are on the right.
The exhibit, scheduled for 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., will feature several of the original artists in attendance and showcase some of their paintings, some of which will be available for purchase.

Randall Gill, President of the Boynton Beach Historical Society and Kay Baker, President of the Boynton Womans Club hold two paintings of Florida Highwaymen.

INTERACTIVE ART to be FEATURED at NEW TOWN SQUARE

Debby Coles-Dobay, the City’s public arts manager has announced that the City Commission has approved over $1.15 million to fund the purchase and installation of several works which are expected to make the New Town Square “iconic, interactive and connective.”

This is the flyer for a cooperative program the Boynton Beach Historical Society and the Boynton Womans Club are holding on Saturday, January 19, before the Society’s scheduled January program meeting on Monday, January 21. Both will be at the First Presbyterian Church.

Who are the Florida Highwaymen? They are a group of 25 African-American men and one woman who painted nature scenes of Florida during the late 1950s through the 1980s, and traveled along the road, primarily U.S. 1, from Fort Pierce to Miami, selling their works.

A popular white Florida landscape artist, A.E. “Beanie” Backus, took the first of the artists, Alfred Hair, as his protégé, teaching him painting techniques over time. Soon others joined them and they met as a group at least once a week at Backus’ house.

They originally sold their paintings for $25–$35 each using cheap canvas boards, pieces of plywood and scrap lumber to fashion frames. People in the cities along their routes bought numerous works over the years. Merchants and businessmen in Boynton were no exception. Some of their works are still viewable at Oyer, Macowiak and Associates Insurance and at Scobee-Combs Funeral Home and Crematory.

By around 2000, however, the original Highwaymen had begun dying off. Backus, too, had died. But the paintings of his trainees began soaring in price and in demand. Paintings of tropical trees, watery landscapes, and fiery sunsets had dynamic appeal. Some sold for thousands of dollars, others for a few hundred.
BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Member's Name__________________________________________

2nd Member's Name__________________________________________

Street_____________________________________________________

City__________ State____ Zip_____________________

Phone_________________________ Cell_____________________

E-mail_____________________________________________________

The Society is a 501©(3) organization so dues are tax deductible.

Type of Membership: INDIVIDUAL ($25.00) ___

(Family ($35.00) ___

Patron ($50.00) ___

Corporate ($100.00) ___

Student ($10.00) ___

Life ($500.00) One time Payment only

Membership year is January 1 to December 31. Dues are not pro-rated. Membership Expiration Date on Mailing Label.

Complete this form and mail with payment to
Boynton Beach Historical Society
P.O. Box 12
Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012

Boynton Beach Historical Society
P. O. Box 12
Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012

Dues Expire: 12-31-18
Anne C. Rimler
11313 Piping Rock Dr
Boynton Beach FL 33437

EXAMPLES of KINETIC ART for TOWN SQUARE

This is an artist's rendering of "Synesthesia" a kinetic art piece described on page 5. The City expects to erect it in the plaza by the new City Hall and Library. Reflective columns are to be placed in a circle and have LED lights at the top.

"Reflections," another kinetic sculpture, is also shown in an artist's rendering. It is to be erected at the entrance plaza of Town Square on the northeast corner of Seacrest Boulevard and Ocean Avenue.

(Some of the information presented here is from an article in The Palm Beach Post, December 20, 2018 by Chelsea Todaro entitled "Iconic and interactive Town Square project unveiled.")

Renderings courtesy CITY OF BOYNTON BEACH/PALM BEACH POST.COM