



# The Historian

*The Newsletter of the Boynton Beach Historical Society*

50<sup>th</sup>

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.

2018 Number 5

May 2018

## MEET with US on SUNDAY, MAY 6 for our ANNUAL DINNER and a SPECIAL SPEAKER

### THE COVERED-DISH DINNER:

We are meeting in a new location for the dinner since City construction has made previous meeting places unavailable. This year's dinner will be at **5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 6 at Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church, 235 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue**, two blocks west of Seacrest Boulevard. This event is open to Members in good standing and their guests. Each person who attends is asked to **bring a salad or vegetable dish, large enough to serve 8**, or to contribute \$10.00 at the door. The Historical Society provides the entrees, the beverages and the place settings. And since we are celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, **the BBHS IS PROVIDING THE DESSERT.**

### THE PROGRAM:

Our program will feature one of our long time members, **Richard E. Philpott**, who will discuss "The History of Boynton Lodge No. 236, Free and Accepted Masons." Richard became a Freemason in local Boynton Lodge No. 236 F&AM in 1976. Since then he has traveled over the world and has served in different capacities at the local, district, state, and international levels. He has become a "Masonic Historian" on the history of the Boynton Lodge and has documented by video many of the events and lives of members of the Lodge since its inception in 1915. The Lodge has had several locations over the past century, and its members have formed the backbone of Boynton's history, politics and business. Richard will outline some of those lives and highlight the contributions these men gave to the growth of Boynton Beach, Palm Beach County and the State of Florida over the past century.

### PRESENTATION, 2018 EXCELLENCE AWARD

for Contributions to the Preservation of Local History, to Curtis Weaver and Alice Nain Weems Weaver.



Richard E. Philpott



Curtis Weaver



Nain [Nainie] Weaver



# BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2018-19

## OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Randall Gill
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Anne Rimler
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
Recording Secretary	Jeffrey Fine
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
Treasurer	Frances Tuite McKeral
[Non-Elected]	
Editor, <i>The Historian</i>	Voncile Marshall Smith
Archivist/Facebook/Webmaster	Janet DeVries
Facebook Administrator/Webmaster	Ginger Pedersen

## DIRECTORS [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2019	Tim Bednarz
2019	Judith Merkel Howard
2020	Steven Anton
2020	Barbara Ready
2021	Heidi Bell
2021	vacant

## TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2019	Susan Merkel Shaffer
2019	Virginia Farace
2020	Diana Dennis
2020	Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher
2021	Susan Oyer
2021	Voncile Marshall Smith

Our website is [www.boyntonhistory.org](http://www.boyntonhistory.org). The e-mail address is [boyntonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:boyntonhistory@gmail.com)

Please email inquiries or information to our local address

P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

[www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach](http://www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach)

[www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory](http://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  
Randall Gill  
Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak  
Melear Bros., Inc. - Cliff and Rick Melear  
Wayne and Eva Brooks Knuth Netzer  
Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson  
Alexander "Sandy" Simon  
Ernest G. Simon  
Voncile Marshall Smith  
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi  
Dorian Beck Trauger  
Charlotte Tatum Weaver  
Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

## CORPORATE MEMBERS - 2018

BMark Properties, William and Gaye Weaver  
Boynton Memorial Chapel, Stormet Norem  
Boynton Woman's Club  
Easy Pay Tire Stores, Inc., Doug Besecker  
Florida Coalition for Preservation  
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

## MEMORIAL GIFTS - 2018

Bob Gaylor, to honor Pfc. Winfred Wade Gayler KIA 1944  
Daniel R. Suiter, to honor William P. Suiter  
Voncile Smith, to honor Harvey E. Oyer, Jr.  
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi, to honor Marie Shepard

## IN MEMORIAM

**WILLIAM "BILL" P. SUITER** - The Boynton Beach Historical Society recently learned of the passing of Bill Suiter on October 30, 2016 when his nephew, Dan Suiter, sent a memorial gift derived from a small inheritance Dan had received from Bill.

Both Bill and Dan have been members of the Historical Society for many years. Bill had not renewed his membership in the past year, but we had continued to mail him copies of the *Historian* which were not returned by the Post Office. We would not have learned of his death had Dan not written us.

Bill was born in West Palm Beach in 1930 and graduated from Palm Beach High School in 1948. He enlisted in the United States Air Force after graduation and was commissioned in 1957 and served in many places in the United States and around the world. He spent more than 15 years serving in other countries including the Berlin Airlift in 1948 and 1949 and the Military Assistance Group in Iran in 1977-78. During the Viet Nam War he served in Thailand and the Philippines in support of the war effort. He retired as a Lt. Colonel and was living in Vero Beach at the time of his death. He is buried in Palm Bay.

Bill and his nephew Dan are both descendants through their mother and grandmother Verna Rousseau Suiter of one of the founders of Boynton Beach, Robert Henry Rousseau, who was also one of the first County Commissioners of Palm Beach County. Robert Henry Rousseau's grandfather, William Henry Rousseau, had served in the Florida Territorial House of Representatives from Columbia County and then later became the first State Senator from Suwannee County.

Bill is survived by grandson Jerry M. Suiter (Michele) of Palm Beach Gardens and granddaughter Bethany A. Conkling (Joe) of Palm City and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, many of whom still live in Florida, and his nephews William J. Suiter of Indialantic, Florida and Daniel R. Suiter of Griffin, Georgia. We send our sympathy and good wishes to all his family members.



## MEMORIAL GIFTS

The Boynton Beach Historical Society received two memorials to add to our gifts account this month.

The first was from Daniel R. Suiter which he sent us as a part of a small legacy he had received from his uncle, William P. Suiter. It honors his uncle who passed away in October, 2016 whom we memorialize on page 2.

The second from George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi honors the memory of Marie Shepard who died this spring after a long period of declining health. The Suiters, the Shepards and the Weavers have had long histories with the Society.

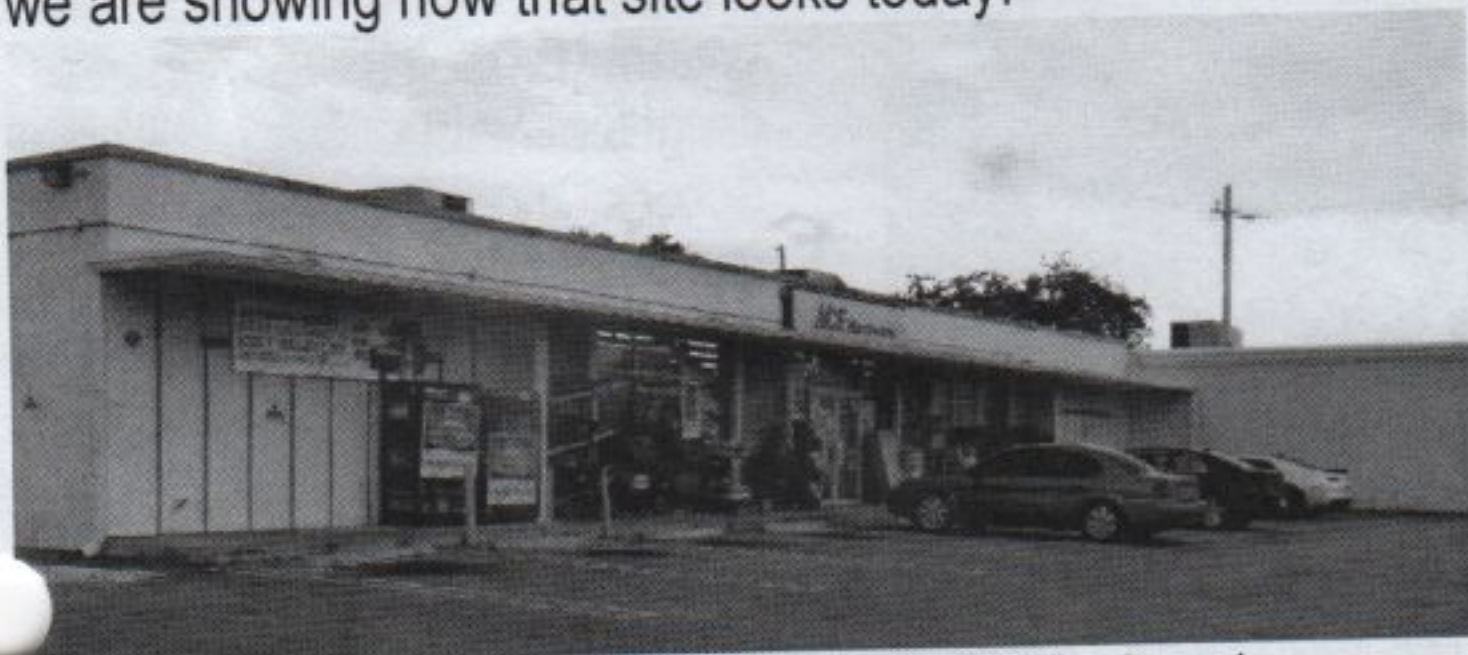
Our gifts account is used to fund special projects relating to historic preservation. Earlier gift funds have been used, for example, to help establish the Schoolhouse Children's Museum; to salvage and reissue the 1970s film, "The History of Boynton Beach"; to clean, repair and restore the Bernard Thomas paintings at Forest Park School, to help support the annual Conrad Pickel Festival, to establish a historic marker for the dedication of the South Palm Beach (Boynton) Inlet as a historic site, and for other projects of historic significance.

## The MASONIC LODGE and EARLY BUILDINGS

Our May speaker, Dick Philpott, will give us a comprehensive review of the role Masonic members have played in the history of Boynton Beach.

Last month in the April *Historian*, we presented contrasting pictures of Ocean Avenue today and Ocean Avenue in the past. The following continues that contrast. At one time, major civic activity centered within the original Town of Boynton boundaries and Ocean Avenue (formerly Main Street) and Boynton Beach Boulevard (formerly Lake Avenue) were in the midst of this activity. Records indicate that the original Lodge was in a barn at a lumberyard on the south side of Lake Avenue just west of Dixie Highway (now U.S.1). The barn had a second floor and that's where the Masons began. The barn was located about where Ace Hardware is today.

*The Historian* does not have a picture of that barn, but we are showing how that site looks today.



Ace Hardware on East Boynton Beach Boulevard

The Masons moved from this early site to another early site way out of "downtown" to a building on Green Street (now

Seacrest Boulevard). We do not know just where that building stood.



The Masons purchased the original Boynton Woman's Club building on the south side of Ocean Avenue and Palmetto Street (now S.E. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue) a block east of Dixie Highway (now U.S.1) after the Woman's Club moved to their new building on South Dixie Highway in the mid-1920s. The Masons met upstairs and rented the first floor to commercial tenants. (See April *Historian* for other pictures of this building.)

In the mid-1950s the Masons built and moved into a new building east of this one, pictured below. Here they met also on the second floor and leased the first floor to tenants.



The building on the right was the Masonic Temple until ca. 2000. As the town grew and expanded westward, the Masons built a new lodge at 2701 Quantum Drive.



The current home of Boynton Lodge No. 236 F&AM

[Continued on page 4 - Masonic]



[Masonic - Continued from page 3]

Below is the building that has replaced all the buildings on the south side of East Ocean Avenue between Federal Highway and S.E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street.



The new 500 Ocean building on Ocean Avenue. The previous Masonic Temple stood where this middle door space is located.

### A LITTLE LEVITY

From time to time the internet yields fun time historical observations.

#### "EATING in the FIFTIES

'Pasta' had not been invented; one ate macaroni or spaghetti.

'Curry' was a surname.

A 'take away' was a mathematical problem.

'Pizza?' Sounds like a leaning tower somewhere.

All chips were plain.

Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and was never green.

Cubed sugar was regarded as 'posh.'

Chickens did not have 'fingers.'

No one had ever heard of 'yogurt.'

Cooking outside was called 'camping.'

Seaweed was not a recognized food.

"Kebob" was not even a word, much less a food.

Muesli was readily available but was called 'cattle feed.'

Water came out of a tap; if someone had suggested bottling it and charging for it, they would have become a laughing stock."

### LAST HISTORIAN UNTIL OCTOBER

Because of the Boynton Beach Historical Society's need to schedule meetings at temporary locations, we have decided to suspend September meetings and begin our fall schedule in the month of October. Therefore, members will receive a combined September/October *Historian* in October before our October meeting. We have traditionally not issued editions in June, July and August when we have had no programs scheduled.

## BETHESDA HOSPITAL DEDICATION

Next winter, on January 24, 2019, Bethesda Hospital will mark the 60<sup>th</sup> year since it was dedicated on January 24, 1959. Below is the second page from the printed program of that day which lists the people who comprised the Southeastern Palm Beach County Hospital District. Planning for the new hospital had included groups from Boca Raton, Delray Beach and Boynton Beach since in the late 1950s the nearest full-service hospitals were in West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale.

### SOUTHEASTERN PALM BEACH COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

Serving Boca Raton, Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, Gulfstream, Highland Beach, Hypoluxo, Ocean Ridge and The Village of Golf.

### BOARD OF HOSPITAL COMMISSIONERS

Emory J. Barrow, Chairman	Col. Andrew L. Fabens
Charles Senior, Vice Chairman	Paul Mercer
Catherine E. Strong, Sec'y-Treas.	W. J. Snow
	Mrs. Charles Spalsbury
Neil E. MacMillan, Attorney	

### MEDICAL STAFF

<b>Medical Doctors</b>	
Charles D. Akes	Curtis C. Johnson
John C. Alley	Graham W. King, Jr.
Virgil Abele	Edward Lewis
James R. Anderson	Willard Machle
Vernon B. Astler	Richard Manthey
M. E. Buerk	James R. Nieder
John Failla	Wm. G. O'Donnell
S. Ward Fleming	Jack H. Raulston
Wm. E. Flynn	Robert E. Raborn
Wm. McKee Germain	C. A. Robinson
Wm. Gernon	Julius A. Roth*
Walter Burt Grenell	Malcolm S. VanDeWater
Fredrick K. Herpel	Nathaniel Weems, Jr.
Russell D. D. Hoover	Nat M. Weems, Sr.
F. S. Huntington	Thomas Whitehead
Walter Hurt	Louis Zasly
John W. Jolley	Louis Zasly
	<b>Honorary Members</b>
	J. R. Cason, Jr.*
	K. M. Davis
	W. C. Williams, Jr.
<b>Dental Doctors</b>	
Wilford A. Caldwell	John Moore
E. M. Farber	Jack Odum
A. C. Foley	John Arthur Walker
Donald Owen Hunter	

\*-Deceased

### HOSPITAL ACTIVITIES

Under the direction of  
Dr. Merrill F. Steele, Administrator  
Mrs. Evelyn Brown, Director of Nurses

R. E. Hewitt, Business Office Manager	James R. O'Neal, Engineer
Mrs. Barbara T. Watson, Secretary	Mrs. Anna Bateson, Housekeeper
Mrs. Agnes O. Payton, Dietician	John E. Hostetter, Pharmacist
Daniel Hancock, Laboratory	Miss Elizabeth Lawson, X-Ray
Mrs. Virginia Wilson, Medical Records Librarian	Herman Smith, Consultant



Robert Henry Rousseau 1909

**ROBERT HENRY ROUSSEAU** is mentioned in the memorial on p. 2 as the grandfather of William P. Suiter. Robert's daughter Verna was William Suiter's mother. Eb Rousseau and John Louis Rousseau were Verna's brothers.

Robert Henry Rousseau was one of the first Palm Beach County Commissioners when the County was established in 1909 after the area was separated from Dade County.



## REVIEWING AN OLD HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

Although the history of the early years of Boynton has been presented several times in *The Historian*, sometimes newer members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society have not seen one of them, or, perhaps, others of us need a fresh perspective on a familiar story. The following was written in 1975 and was published in a directory by the Greater Boynton Beach Chamber of Commerce.

## HISTORY OF BOYNTON

This year all Americans will proudly participate in our country's Bicentennial celebration. Many cities along our eastern seaboard are much older than that, and have to look back quite a ways to remember when they were "just" 200 years old. With all of the accent on age, it may be a bit hard for some to realize that the City of Boynton Beach is a mere youngster of only 55 years. In fact, it wasn't until about 80 years ago that any serious settling of the area was undertaken!

During the 1880's and early 1890's a few hardy settlers were scattered along the edge of the waters of Lake Worth working their homesteads. The soil and climate combined to allow several harvests a year. The woods were full of wild game and the waters teemed with fish. Life wasn't easy by any means, it was at least a three week trip by boat up the coast just to secure supplies you couldn't raise or make yourself. However, in 1895 there were two major developments that changed things from a frontier type condition to an area much sought after by farming interests and those seeking a warm climate during the winter. First the Florida East Coast Railroad pushed their rails south on the way to Miami and right behind them came the East Coast Canal (Intracoastal Canal) digging an inland waterway to Miami.

Promoters had been interested in this part of the country for some time. Now it was finally accessible for tourists, plus having a reliable method of shipping perishable farm products to distant markets, their interest knew no bounds.

### TOWNSITE IS FORMED

In 1897 Major Nathan S. Boynton, a veteran of the Civil War, arrived on the scene from his home state of Michigan. Realizing the potential of the area, he purchased a large tract of land on the west side of the canal and had it laid out as a townsite, which he named "Boynton." In addition, he purchased land between the canal and the ocean for a special use. Knowing that the well-to-do of the north would welcome a comfortable place to stay during the winter months while enjoying the wonderful climate, he proceeded to build a great rambling structure of some 50 rooms on the oceanfront, which he named the "Boynton Hotel."

Finding that the hotel would occupy all of his time, he sold his townsite holding to Fred and "Birdie" Dewey. The Deweys then made the plat and recorded the new town in 1898. They found a ready market for their sites among the employees of the hotel and those wishing to farm the land outside the boundaries of the plat.

### TOWN STARTS TO GROW

The year 1900 saw the beginning of formal education in Boynton. After only two years there were enough families living in the area that the need for a school and general meeting hall was decided upon. So a one room building was erected — and school was in session.

Land along the East Coast Canal was very fertile and vegetable farms lined its banks as far south as Delray. In 1912 a tract of land covering 40,000 acres west of the present cities of Lake Worth, Boynton Beach, Delray Beach and Boca Raton was purchased and prepared for farming. Drainage canals were dug and a veritable Vegetable Garden of Eden was created. Imagine — three crops a year, with little or no cover needed during the winter!

Between the vegetables along the canal and the large vegetable farms to the west, in what is now the residential sections of our city, pineapples were the principal crop. These farms continued to prosper until the land boom of the 20's, when the value of the land increased to a point that it was no longer profitable to farm it.

Being in the center of all of this farming activity, Boynton became the rail shipping center to New York and other eastern markets. Commercially, the Bank of Boynton was formed and the town itself had grown to the extent that a new six room school was needed.

### LAND BOOM

Early in the year 1920, the qualified voters living within an area extending 2 3/4 miles along the Atlantic Ocean and 1 1/2 miles inland, decided there was a need for a closer and better organized management in the affairs of the community. Consequently all were called to a town meeting and the proper forms voted upon and duly filed. And the Town of Boynton came into being. This prosperous little town could now boast as having two Banks, four Hotels, 3 Churches and 12 very very busy Real Estate offices.

Boynton played its part in the Florida Land Boom of the early twenties. Property was sold and re-sold. Prices soared and fantastic schemes were hatched. Steel was placed to build a six story hotel in the downtown section and curbs were poured and streets put down for new residential sections. And then it happened — the bubble burst on the land speculation and then the depression of the thirties. A low point was reached, but a new and brighter day was yet to come.



BOYNTON HOTEL — 1895

## A POPULAR RESTAURANT LONG GONE

Boynton had a number of family owned restaurants in the 1950s until well into the 1980s. Some still exist, but most of the dining spots in the area are now members of national chains. Tropical Acres Restaurant was considered a very good steakhouse. The founder of a restaurant in Yonkers, N.Y. opened a restaurant in Dania, FL in 1949 which he named Tropical Acres. With another partner he added a second Florida restaurant in Pompano, renamed his Yonkers restaurant "Tropical Acres" and acquired another partner from Boynton Beach to open a restaurant here. Mickey Tofano and his family were the Boynton partners. The Tropical Acres Restaurant on South Federal Highway was very popular. But as the value of property soared and demand by developers intensified, the restaurant was sold about 1980. Much of the restaurant business was moving westward and competition from the chains was intensifying.

Serving Until 10:30 Saturdays

## Tropical Acres Restaurant

"STEAKS" & Prime Ribs of Beef  
... that's our business

Finest in South Florida!

SENSIBLY PRICED!

Listed As "TOP RESTAURANT"  
by TREND Magazine

Chicken - Chops - Seafood  
PRIVATE ROOMS FOR PARTIES

Open Year Round 5 P.M. Daily

SUNDAY 4 P.M.

So. Federal Hwy. Phone 732-9444  
BOYNTON BEACH

OTHER TROPICAL ACRES

Dania - Pompano - Yonkers, N.Y.



The restaurant sponsored fund-raisers for charities within the community. Shown here are City Commission representatives with Tofano family members: John Archie, Mickey Tofano, Frank Tofano, and Gene Moore. Only the Tropical Acres in Dania still operates.



**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: (Check one)	INDIVIDUAL	(\$25.00) _____
	FAMILY	(\$35.00) _____
	PATRON	(\$50.00) _____
	CORPORATE	(\$100.00) _____
	STUDENT	(\$10.00) _____
	LIFE	(\$500.00) One time Payment only.

The membership year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year.  
Dues are not pro rated.

Complete this form and mail it with a check for the appropriate amount to  
Boynton Beach Historical Society, POB 12, Boynton Beach FL 33424-4012.  
You may pay by PayPal at [www.boyntonhistory.org](http://www.boyntonhistory.org)

*The Historian*

Boynton Beach Historical Society  
Post Office Box 12  
Boynton Beach FL 33425-0012

**REMEMBER!**

**The BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**ANNUAL COVERED-DISH DINNER IS**

**SUNDAY, MAY 6<sup>TH</sup> at 5:00 p.m.**



**at the FIRST PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP HALL.**

**EACH PERSON is to BRING A SALAD or a VEGETABLE DISH LARGE ENOUGH to SERVE 8, or EACH PERSON MAY CONTRIBUTE \$10 at the DOOR. The SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE the ENTREES, the DESSERT, the BEVERAGES and the NAPKINS and PLACE SETTINGS.**



**COME SHARE**



**FRIENDSHIPS, STORIES and a GOOD PROGRAM.**