



# 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 West Boynton to US Hwy 441



Honoring Our Veterans, November 11, Veterans Day



Rejoicing for our Bounty, November 22, Thanksgiving Day

Voncile Smith, President

Volume 2007, No 8, November, 2007

Voncile Smith, Editor

## PUDDLE JUMPERS OF LANTANA

### COASTAL PATROL BASE No.3 CIVIL AIR PATROL (CAP) 1942-1943

will be presented on November 12, 2007 as the topic for the November meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. **Richard A. (Tony) Marconi**, Education Coordinator for the **Historical Society of Palm Beach County**, will speak with a Power Point computer slide show about his research on this topic and the interviews he conducted with the present day survivors of this group.

The Civil Air Patrol, created December 1, 1941, as the official civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force (at that time the United States Army Air Corps), is credited with sinking at least two German U-boats during World War II. In January, 1942, Germany launched "Operation Drumbeat" sending their submarines across the Atlantic Ocean to attack vulnerable allied shipping along the U.S. east and Gulf coasts. In response to this threat the CAP established the first anti-submarine patrol bases. Coastal Patrol 3 flew between Palm Beach County and Cape Canaveral. During the unit's 17 months of service it flew 18,712 hours, 1,546,500 miles and made 14 attacks dropping 20 bombs on suspected U-boats. They saved the lives of numerous mariners by attacking and driving off U-boats and directing rescue boats to burning and sinking ships.



Three CP 3 survivors whose oral histories contributed to Tony Marconi's research. They are Charles Weeks, Jr.; Owen Gassoway, and Dave Thompson. [Photo courtesy The Historical Society of Palm Beach County.]

**WHAT:** PowerPoint presentation by Richard A. "Tony" Marconi on Lantana Civil Air Patrol, WWII

**WHERE:** BOYNTON WOMAN'S CLUB  
1010 S. Federal Hwy  
Second Floor Ballroom

**DATE & TIME** MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12  
6:30 p.m.

**ALL MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2007-08**

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The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is [boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org](http://boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org). You can contact us at our e-mail address [boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com](mailto:boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com) or mail inquiries or information to our mailbox at P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012.

*The Historian* is 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. Back issues and an index prior to the current year are posted on our website.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

The officers, directors and trustees constitute the Board of Directors, but any member is welcome to attend the meeting which will be held Wednesday, December 12, at the Boynton Woman's Club at 5:30 p.m. The agenda will be forthcoming and, in addition to being mailed to the Board members and any member who requests a copy, will be posted on the website.

**NO HISTORIAN IN DECEMBER**

After this November issue the next *Historian* will be distributed in January. There is no December issue. We mail out copies in only the months of September, October, November, January, February, March, April and May.

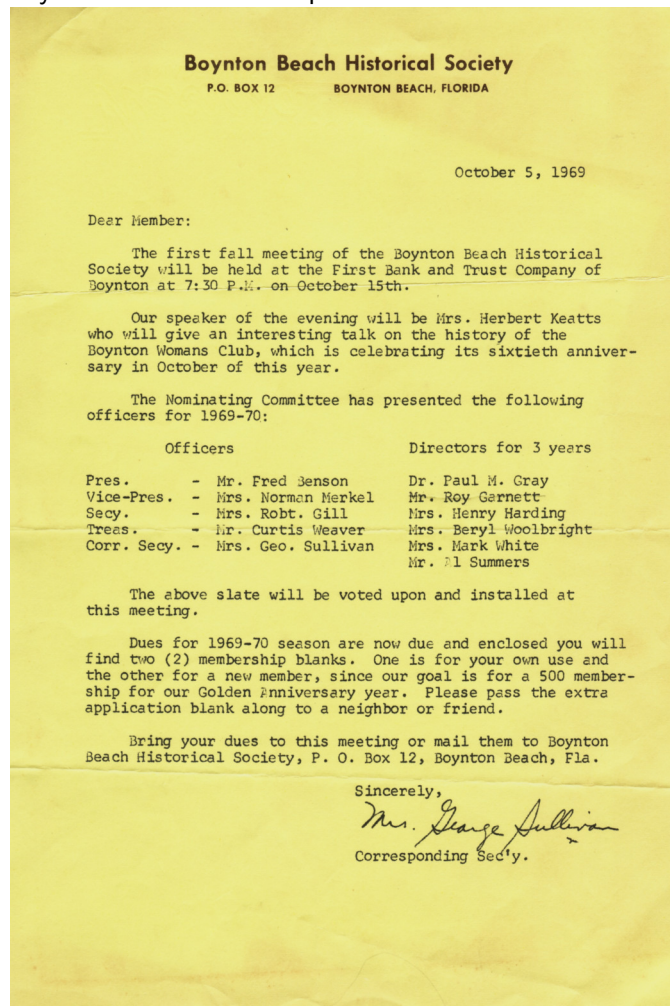
**A FLORIDA HUMANITIES COUNCIL  
PROGRAM FOR JANUARY 2008**

"Journal of Light: A Photographer's Search for the Soul of Florida" by Florida nature photographer **John Moran** is our program scheduled for Monday, January 14, 2008, at the Boynton Woman's Club. Mark your calendars!

**2008 DUES DUE JANUARY 1<sup>st</sup>**

Our membership year is from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31, but since this is the last *Historian* before January, we hope you will send in your dues after receiving this copy. You will save us about forty-five cents per membership if you send in your dues before we have to mail notices.

The letter reproduced below is from 1969 when the Boynton Beach Historical Society was a year old. In 2008 we will celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Note that the goal in 1969 was 500 members by 2018. We do not expect to come close to that this year, but with your help we will continue to grow. Please send in your dues as soon as possible.



Meeting and Dues Notice from 1969

If you are a renewing member, you do not need to fill out a membership form unless you have name, address, telephone, or e-mail changes. Simply send you check for the appropriate amount to P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach 33425. If we do not have your e-mail address on file, please include it. We share it with no one, but sometimes we may need your help on urgent issues. If you are a new member, please complete the membership form on the outside of this notice, or write the information requested on your check. Thank you.



## OLD HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

A coalition, Save Old Boynton School [SOBS], which includes the Palm Beach Arts Council, the Boynton Beach Historical Society, representatives from the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, and others is struggling to convince the Boynton Beach City Commission of the advantages of saving the historic old high school on Ocean Avenue. We have been in contact with representatives from the Florida Department of State office for historic preservation and they assure us that considerable funding is available for the restoration of historic buildings such as this 1927 structure. Among sources are outright grants, matching grants, tax-credits, and loans.

The estimated amount for restoration varies from \$4 to \$8 million, but restoration architects, restoration contractors, representatives from the State, others, as well as our group are confident we can raise this amount, despite the present economy, if the City will formally assign the building to the coalition giving us extended time to do so. In the past, some of the Commissioners have expected us to raise funds in 90 days without even assigning the building to us.

Numerous studies are available on the economic value historic restoration provides to a community. The University of Florida has compiled a booklet showing the additional monetary wealth, as well as good will such restoration brings.

We are in the process of applying to have the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Despite baseless argument to the contrary by the City staff, we have assurance from representatives from the Florida Department of State that the building will easily qualify if the city will refrain from destruction and give us time to get it listed. We have just applied and listing takes about a year.

As we have stated before, Boynton Beach has only three public buildings of historic significance—the **Boynton Woman's Club**, the **1913 Schoolhouse Children's Museum**, and the **1927 old high school**. The quality of construction of these building is generally regarded as far superior to current building standards. Once a building is destroyed, it cannot be replaced.

I am reminded of the Talaban's recent destruction of the historic Buddhist statues in Afghanistan that were centuries old. After the U.S. invasion the new government said it would

reconstruct the statues, but, of course, it cannot. I do not mean to imply that our City Commission is like the Talaban who believed the statues represented sacrilege, but destruction of any building by any group is equally irreversible.

## THE CASINO AT THE MUNICIPAL BEACH

One public building the City has demolished in the past was the Boynton Beach Municipal Casino which was torn down in 1967.

The Boynton inlet, a mile north of the Boynton municipal beach was dredged in 1926 and a bridge was built across it. Today some believe that the opening of the inlet caused erosion to begin on the municipal beach. The erosion eventually caused many of the coconut palms and Australian pines which were there when the beach was purchased to drop into the ocean.



Boynton Casino 1930s. Notice the wide beach.

After a mass meeting in September, 1927, the townspeople decided to build the casino. The building, scheduled to be completed on or before April 1, 1928, was a Spanish-style structure of stucco with a red tile roof. Inside the open-air, screened-in dining room were vaulted ceilings, and the doors, beams and wood trim were all of "pecky" cypress. This wood, much prized for the many tiny holes in its surface, was used extensively in **Addison Mizner's** architecture.

The casino, built on the ocean ridge, faced east, with an expanse of coconut palms and Australian pines between it and the ocean. The palms were believed to have grown from the 600 coconuts planted on the Armour claim after the wreck of the *Providentia* years before.

The casino dining room had vaulted windows stretching from the ceiling almost to the floor. The tables and chairs in the casino were rustically fashioned of wood. The building also had showers and locker rooms, bathrooms, and a breezeway between two sections of the building,

[Continued on page 4, Boynton Casino]

[Boynton Casino, continued from page 3]

a concession area, and an apartment upstairs. The entire building was contained under one roof.

Mr. **H.R. Farnham** was the first custodian, who assisted by his wife, lived in the apartment upstairs in the casino and was responsible for the cleaning and upkeep of the grounds and building. He was also deputized as a special police officer to enforce the law which included prohibition of liquor on the grounds. The Farnhams also ran the concession stand.

In 1931 the Town of Boynton split into two different towns divided by the canal. Boynton was in financial difficulty and wealthy homeowners on the beach agreed to assume the town's indebtedness if the "beach side" was allowed to become a separate entity. An act by the Florida Legislature created the new "Town of Boynton Beach" east of the canal. The name was changed to "Ocean Ridge" in 1937, and four years later in 1941, the Town of Boynton changed its name to "City of Boynton Beach. Its only claim to the "beach part of the name was the casino and municipal beach which were retained by the original town after the separation. The Boynton Beach municipal beach is within the town limits of Ocean Ridge.

In 1946 **Lucille and Otley Scott** rented space in the casino from the town and operated their restaurant there before their building on South Federal Highway (now operated by the City as a Senior Center) across from the Woman's Club was completed. Before they came, the main hall of the casino was completely open with only screens to protect against insects. The Scotts glassed in the tall, arched windows, using the hall for their restaurant dining room. The concession area became the kitchen, and the Scotts lived upstairs in the caretaker's apartment. The Scotts used the casino until 1948.

After the Scotts left, **Willard Bryant**, an electrician, became the casino caretaker for the next ten years. During this time the casino continued to be an ideal spot for parties, showers, and picnics. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the Gold Coast Aquatics, a skin diving club founded by **James Warnke** and **Dennis Dorsey**, held their meetings in the building. The first meetings of the Boynton Beach Boat Club as well as several other organizations were also held there.

In 1967 the casino was torn down, much to the sorrow of town residents who had known and

used it for almost 40 years. The building had remained intact on the beach despite being buffeted by numerous hurricanes. The City complained of the cost of upkeep and difficulty in policing the building in changing times, arguments that probably apply today to the boardwalk and the nondescript buildings the City erected to replace it.

The beach, of course, continues to be used heavily by town residents and visitors, but the facility which provided a central focus for so many gatherings and community activities was gone forever.



Boynton Casino viewed from A1A ca. 1965

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### THE EDITOR RECALLS. . .

When I was about five years old, I remember being in a car headed for a shopping adventure. We were going to visit what I, in a carry-over of early childhood mispronunciation, called the "din-din tore." The adult with me asked me repeatedly to say "Ten-cent store." I remember that by the time we arrived, my pronunciation had improved.

What wonderful memories that phrase evokes. Whether it was called "dime store," "five and ten cent store," or simply "ten cent store" it represented a wonderful shopping experience.

I remember walking down Clematis Street in West Palm Beach when I was a little older. Woolworth's, McCrory's, and Kresge's were main stops. They all emitted special odors, pleasant and unforgettable, that often were a blend of the smells from lunch counters, popcorn machines, and the hot grease from donut making machines as well as those smells usually associated with new merchandise.

[Continued on page 5, Ten Cent Store]

[Ten cent store, continued from page 4]

The lunch counters were wonderful. At Woolworth's, for example, there were several "blue-plate" specials. For 25 cents one received sliced roast turkey, stuffing (we called it "dressing"), mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, a vegetable, and usually a dessert—all prepared on the premises. Beverages—sodas (called "soft drinks"), coffee, and iced-tea—were 5 cents. If one did not want the blue-plate, a hamburger or a hot dog was 5 cents. A BLT sandwich cost a dime. An ice cream cone was a nickel.

A friend recently told me that each Christmas his father gave him and each of his 4 siblings \$1 to shop at one of these stores for gifts for all the family members. One could return home with an array of presents—perhaps embroidery floss (2 skeins for 5 cents or 5 skeins for a dime) for mother, a new pocket mirror for a sister, a beautiful little vase (made in Japan, of course) for grandmother, nail polish for another sister, a model plane to construct for a brother, a new comb for Dad, a new shaving brush for granddad, and perhaps a yo-yo for little brother. Other possibilities abounded.

Most of these stores also sold "yard goods," fabric by the yard. Most women sewed many of the family clothes. I remember gingham, chambray, batiste, organdy, and broadcloth selling for 15 to 20 cents a yard. Most fabrics were 36 inches wide and four to five yards was sufficient for most dresses. Even with the addition of notions [thread, snaps, and hem tape] one could usually get the makings for a dress for no more than a dollar. Patterns—Simplicity, McCall's, and Butterick the most common—were about 25 cents each, but often each represented several styles and were reused and shared among friends.

My grandmother had a set of the wonderfully colorful Fiesta Ware which she used for everyday meals. It was available at all the dime stores, and when I look at the prices these early pieces bring at antique shows today, I wish my mother had used it and given it to me.

Curtains, clothing, yarn, toys, glassware, kitchen ware—a veritable department store, but with prices in a far lower range.

For the most part, such stores have disappeared. Kresge and Kress (the founders of the two were friends) combined to become K

Mart. An acquaintance recently told me the present day "dollar" stores were the equivalent, but I do not agree. The dollar stores have some nice inexpensive items, but they do not have the smell or the soul of the "Ten Cent Store."

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### ANOTHER RECOLLECTION . . .

Until the early 1970s, girls enrolled in Florida High Schools were required to take a course in Home Economics. My older two daughters who finished high school in 1969 and 1970 had to meet this requirement. The younger two, who graduated in 1975 and 1977 did not. One semester usually focused on meal preparation, and home economics departments had full kitchens so that students could practice making meals. Emphasis was on good nutrition, and we studied and memorized the food pyramid. We had to pay a lab fee to pay for the food we prepared and ultimately consumed. The other semester was directed toward home management and economy, and we were in the "sewing" lab. We each had to produce several items.

I enrolled in home economics at Boynton High School in fall, 1945. There were eight of us in the class. One side of the room was set up as a kitchen, and the sewing desks and machines were on the other side. Electric sewing machines were still somewhat of an innovation, but the room had one. There were also three treadle machines. **Hazel Lacey McGregor** was our teacher. She emphasized that we must learn to use both machines, and I was proud of mastering the coordination required to operate the treadle machine.

We made a sampler of the different kinds of seams commonly used. Mrs. McGregor required that we each make pajamas because they required a strong double seam known as a flatfell (try to find that in a current dictionary!) seam. Each of us also had to complete a dress. Later in assembly we had to model our products before the entire school. I was the only one who had departed from conventional styles and had made midriff pajamas. My pair had long pants, but the top had ends that tied in the front to reveal an expanse of bare midriff. We came on stage separately, as Mrs. McGregor described our styles. A part of the audience whistled when I appeared. As a fifteen year old, I was embarrassed and after that never really enjoyed wearing those pajamas.



## *The Historian*

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

### BECOME A MEMBER OF THE

## BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2008

Memberships are for the Calendar year, January 1 to December 31. Check the appropriate line and return this form with the dues for that category to The Boynton Beach Historical Society, P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012. If you have questions, please call 561-742-6397 and leave a message, or email [boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com](mailto:boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com) or President Voncile Smith at [smithvm@bellsouth.net](mailto:smithvm@bellsouth.net)

Individual Membership     \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_     Family Membership     \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Membership     \$ 100.00 \_\_\_\_\_     Patron Membership     \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Members Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Telephone/E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If you would be willing to serve on a Committee for the Society, please check all that apply:

Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_ Educational \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Minority History \_\_\_\_\_  
Refreshments \_\_\_\_\_ Archives/ Preservation \_\_\_\_\_ Fund Raising \_\_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the Society is to act as a living repository for the traditions and history of Boynton Beach, to interpret items of historical and antiquarian significance, and to promote a better understanding of history. We are proud to serve Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf, Briny Breezes, and all areas west of Boynton Beach to U.S. Hwy 441, and, on occasion, greater Palm Beach County.