



# *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.

2016 Number 7

October 2016



## **BOYNTON BEACH'S GOLD COAST BAND**



The October 17 program sponsored by the Boynton Beach Historical Society will feature Ken Wilbanks, the present Gold Coast Band Director, discussing the band's humble beginnings 40 years ago through its remarkable growth to its present size of over 110 members. Founded in 1976 by the late Dr. James E. Buffan, it is composed of volunteer musicians of all ages. Performances are usually held at the Boynton Beach High School Auditorium from September through May each year. Ken will also describe the new structure of the band board, changing to a non-profit status, and how the band fits into the City's new proposal to bring the Arts to the City. He will include information about the band's use of modern musical media presentations and social media to the change of musical repertoire and venues.

A Texan by birth, Ken Wilbanks received his Bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University and his Masters from Texas A&M where he also did additional work in doctoral studies. He was a member of ASCAP, the Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Band Masters Association and Kappa Kappa Psi. He served as a guest conductor and clinician. He left a career teaching high school band to enter the corporate world through estate planning and finance, but when he retired in 2007, he returned to music.



Ken Wilbanks

**WHAT: Boynton Beach's Gold Coast Band. 40 Years!  
4 Conductors. One of the Finest Community Bands  
In Florida. By Ken Wilbanks, Gold Coast Band Director**

**WHEN: Monday, October 17 – Meet & Greet 6:30 – 7:00 pm  
Program 7:00 – 8:00 pm**

**WHERE: Boynton Beach City Library Program Room  
208 South Seacrest Boulevard**

**ALL PROGRAMS OF THE BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARE FREE  
AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2016-17

### OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Randall Gill
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Anne Rimler
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Voncile Marshall Smith
Recording Secretary	Ginger Pedersen
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]

2017	Steven Anton
2017	Barbara Ready
2018	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
2018	Diane Gerino
2019	Tim Bednarz
2019	Judith Merkel Howard

### TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2017	Ginger Pedersen
2017	Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher
2018	Janet DeVries
2018	Vacant
2019	Susan Merkel Shaffer
2019	Virginia Farace

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

Please mail inquiries or information to our local address P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425. Voncile can be reached at 561-734-5653. Boynton Beach Historical Society number is 561-327-4690.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

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

[www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory](https://www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory)

*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. Copies from past years are posted on the website.

### LIFE MEMBERS

Lenore Benson Raborn Boonstra  
Randall and Ann B. Gill  
Robert and Christian Oyer Mac c. 1967  
Melear Bros., Inc. - Cliff and Rick Melear  
Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson  
Alexander "Sandy" Simon  
Ernest G. Simon  
Voncile Marshall Smith  
Dorian Beck Trauger  
Charlotte Tatum Weaver  
Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

### CORPORATE MEMBERS – 2016

Boynton Woman's Club  
Delray Awning, Inc., Don and Regina Day  
Florida Coalition for Preservation  
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi  
Marion Weaver Clark Wester  
Pearce Doors & Windows Inc., Glen Pearce, President  
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

## NEW RECORDING SECRETARY

Dr. Ginger Pedersen was elected Recording Secretary by the Boynton Beach Historical Society Board of Directors on September 26, 2016 following the resignation of Diane Gerino who had succeeded Diana Dennis.

Ginger fills many hats for the Society and the Board is grateful that she is willing to take on this additional assignment.

## FROM THE 1960s



*MEETING HIGHLIGHT* — One of the highlights of the District Cabinet meeting at Boynton Beach was the attendance of a real lion cub. Examining the lion is District Governor Robert Hueston and Lions Terry Hunter, Herb Zobel and James Hunter. More than 350 Lions and their wives attended the meeting.

[Clipping courtesy Herb Zobel. Publication name, c. 1967, not identified]

A scene such as this would undoubtedly cause an uproar [no pun intended] today since a wild animal, especially a baby one, would not be used for display purposes outside a zoo. The scene pictured above represents more than just a commentary on changing animal rights, it shows an active and vibrant service organization that played a vital role in service to the community. Since the 1970s, service and fraternal organizations in Boynton Beach and elsewhere have often drastically declined in membership.

## BEFORE LEISUREVILLE, A WILDER LAND . . .

Local columnist Adelaide Nowak interviewed C. Stanley Weaver in September, 1980, about the property where Leisureville is now located. Stanley was very much concerned about preserving information about the area and this is one of many articles he contributed to concerning his recollections and family stories that describe earlier life in Palm Beach County and Boynton Beach in particular.

Nowak writes,

"Where Leisureville residents stroll and bicycle along winding streets, turbaned Seminole Indians once trod with moccasined feet through the sand.

"Where Leisureville residents swim and golf within confined recreational areas, young boys swam in the natural lake which covered a large part of the Leisureville area.

"Where Leisureville residents have placed wooden bird feeders between the white houses, coots, snipe and blue heron once nested along the brackish water.

"And where Leisureville residents have planted flowering bushes and trees in an orderly fashion, wild pines and scrub palmettos once housed doves, quail, bob-white and blue martins and periwinkle flowers covered the ground,"

She notes that Stanley was from a family that settled early in the area and that since then, many changes have taken place.,

Stanley served for several decades on the Board of Directors of the Lake Worth Drainage District and from the District's history knew of the formation of the gridwork of canals they began in 1916 for draining water from the land. He watched the wild recreational area change into land that would support an adult residential community.

Stanley's family arrived in 1910 and settled on 1,500 acres on Military Trail and Old Boynton Road.

According to Stanley, in the early years the Seminoles had already discovered and been using the land long before developers named it Leisureville. They crossed it on their way from the Everglades to the Sun Dance held in West Palm Beach during the years of the Great Depression in the 1930s. They picked wild huckleberries to sell in West Palm Beach and gathered the wild poisonous rosary beans to string for decorative purposes.

Stanley recalls swimming in old Boynton Lake in what he refers to as "back to nature type swimming." The deepest part used for swimming was where Ocean Drive covers the land with pavement. Those who fished the lake caught bass, bream and soft-shell turtles ([called "cooter"] and alligators.

Just north of 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue where Boynton Leisureville is situated was woods used for hunting doves, quail, snipe and gallenule more commonly called "coot" because of its call. The land was also used for foraging.

By the end of World War II, the Drainage District had completed the 500 miles of canals that stretched from Lake Okeechobee to the Hillsboro Canal. Boynton Lake had disappeared.

Palm Beach County reclaimed the land that had been Lake Boynton and placed it on sale. Stanley's father sent him to the land sale and he purchased 375 acres for \$10 per acre. That land was the beginning of what is now known as Leisureville.

Weaver said that Leisureville residents should not fear flooding by living in an old lake bottom because the Lake Worth Drainage District maintains and the Water Management District controls the level of canal water. Furthermore, the muck from the lake bottom was dredged out and the area that was Boynton Lake was filled with soil to 12 feet.

In the 1950s the land was sold and passed through several owners until Grenados, a developer, eventually put together the balance of land now known as Leisureville. Caldos, and then Campanelli Inc., developed the communities known as Palm Beach Leisureville and Boynton West Leisureville.

[Information from Christine Weaver Ternenyi and article, "Times Certainly Have Changed for West Boynton," p. 3. South Extra, September 27, 1980]



A Typical Leisureville Home



## IDENTITIES

[In the April 2016 Historian we printed the following picture from the program booklet for the Boynton Junior Woman's Club Follies of 1959. We had the names of those photographed, but did not know which people in the picture to fit them to. Christine Weaver Ternenyi—whose mother Erna Weaver is one them—has labeled them for us.]



L to R: Rose Duncan, unknown, Bee Hanson, Carnella Rogers, Unknown, Betty Blanchette, Unknown, Erna Weaver, Ileana Tambasco, Dot Whittaker, Unknown. Charlotte Weaver is in foreground on right. The names of the 4 unknowns are Myrna Yinger, Nancy Ross, Gladys Ahearn, and Wilma Melear, but we need help in attaching them to the right picture  
With Chris's help, we think we have the correct identities for the people in this second photograph.



L to R: Patsy and Pete Weeks, Dot and Walt Whittaker, Irene and Bill Hays, Harold and Betty Blanchette, Fred and Myrtis Burnett, and Ileana Tambasco is seated in front. Punch Yinger who danced with Ileana Tambasco is missing from the picture.



Boynton High School Cheerleaders, c. 1948

L to R: Joane McCall, Charlotte Tatum, Mary Alice Darrow, Mary Shook



Boynton High School, c. 1948

Note the Coconut Palms. Many coconut palms died of lethal yellowing in the 1970s and 1980s. These withstood the hurricane of 1947, but were apparently removed later. The flagpole on the right was actually in the front yard of the 1913 Schoolhouse. The Elementary School students used to line up on the sidewalk by grade in front of the 1913 school and salute the flag as it was raised on this flagpole each morning (weather permitting). If the rope slipped from its pulley at the top of the pole, an older boy, usually in 6 grade, climbed the pole and rethreaded it into the pulley. (Florida had fewer lawyers at that time.)

## A BOYNTON LANDMARK-- ALBERTS AND MERKEL BROS. NURSERY



Jean Merkel examines an orchid, April, 2000

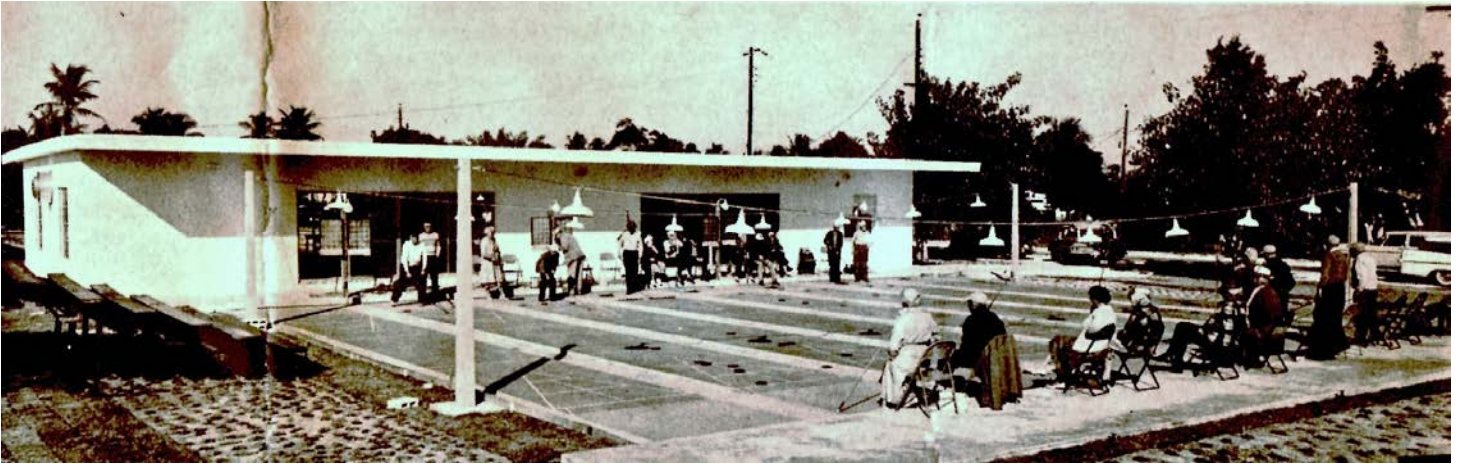
[Photo courtesy Palm Beach Post]

For years the Alberts and Merkel Bros. Orchid Nursery stood on South Federal Highway between the highway and the Intracoastal Canal.

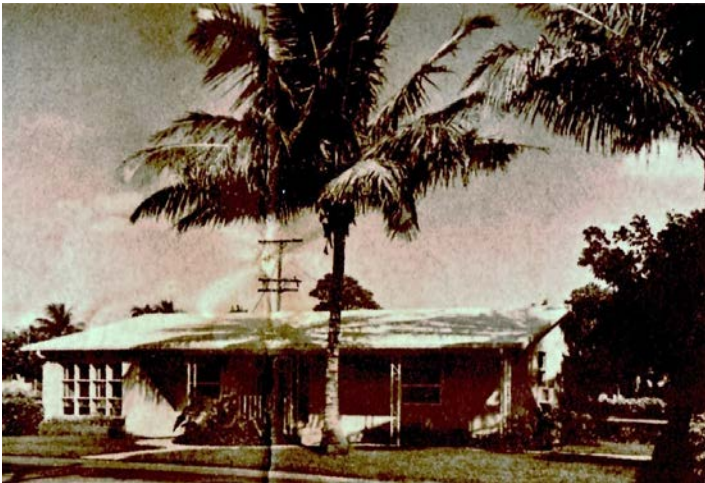
Brothers Norman and Jean Merkel opened the business in 1936 and over the years developed about 10,000 new species of orchids. Bruce Albert, an orchid expert who began breeding orchids in 1917, joined the business in 1947.

Norman Merkel died in 1990, and Jean and Norman's children, two of whom are members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society—Judith Merkel Howard and Susan Merkel Schaffer, sold the land in 2000 to a developer who built Tuscany, an apartment complex where the nursery had stood. Jean moved the nursery west to Hagan Ranch Road just south of Boynton Beach Boulevard. He was 88 years old at the time. The new nursery was hit by a series of hurricanes in 2004 and 2005 and was destroyed never to reopen. Jean died in 2005 at age 93.





Shuffleboard has been an important activity for many older residents in South Florida for many years. At one time the municipal courts were located where the Ruth Jones Cottage was moved several years ago, but the shuffleboard courts at that location had been replaced by a parking lot in the early 1960s. In 1961 the City opened the 16 new courts shown here behind the Civic Center.



The Boynton Beach Municipal Library was this house remodeled and dedicated in 1961. It had belonged to a person who later helped organize the Boynton Beach Historical Society in 1968 and the City for many years shared space for the Historical Society to house its papers and artifacts. Around 1970 it was razed when the new Library was constructed.



An elementary school class posed at one of the side entrances of the 1913 schoolhouse c. 1935



The Boynton Beach City Council in 1963. R to L: Mayor John L. Archie, Vice-Mayor J. Allison Banks, and Councilmen Thomas A. Summers, James J. Mahoney and Walter A. Madsen.

### GOLD COAST BAND CONCERT

The Gold Coast Band will be presenting a concert on Sunday, October 13, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. at the Boynton Beach High School Auditorium. Tickets are \$8.00 and may be purchased at the door, or on line.

After you hear Ken Wilbanks at our program on Monday you may want to plan to attend to see what a really fine municipal band we have available to us. The Arts need support and we hope you will encourage both the band and the City Arts Council by attending their events when possible.



**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*

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**The Gold Coast Band**