



The Historian

The Newsletter of the Boynton Beach Historical Society

50th

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

JANUARY 2019

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

**THE ART OF SPACE:
Creating sophisticated
coastal gardens by
incorporating a unique
palette of mature native
species**

**Presented by Debra
Yates & Benjamin Burle**

Doors open 6:30 pm

Program 7-8:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Pratt Hall 235 SW 6th Ave

Boynton Beach FL 33435

Two blocks west of Seacrest Blvd

Free Parking

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 BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2018-19

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2 nd Vice President, Membership	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
Recording Secretary	Jeffrey Fine
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
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[Non-Elected]

Editor, <i>The Historian</i>	Voncile Marshall Smith
Archivist/Facebook/Webmaster	Janet DeVries
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Our website is www.boyntonhistory.org. The e-mail address is 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

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
Candice Tomei Brueggemann, P.A. Real Estate
Easy Pay Tire Stores, Inc. Doug Besecker, Ruth Besecker
Randall Gill
Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak
Melear Bros., Inc. - Cliff and Rick Melear
Wayne and Eva Brooks Knuth Netzler
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

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 Besecker, Ruth Besecker

PATRON:

Robert and Virginia Foot
Suzy Winchester

FAMILY:

L. Don and Jeanne Combs
Robert and Jeanne Gayler
Anne Michael, Elizabeth A. Michael and Michele Michelle
Michael DePollo
Ward and Martha Parker
Isabella and Ronald Pause
Michelle Quigley and Steve Plamann
J. Robert and Jayne Rousseau
Family of Eleanor Murray Sala
Wyman and Barbara Scott
Robert and Sheila Rousseau Taylor

INDIVIDUAL:

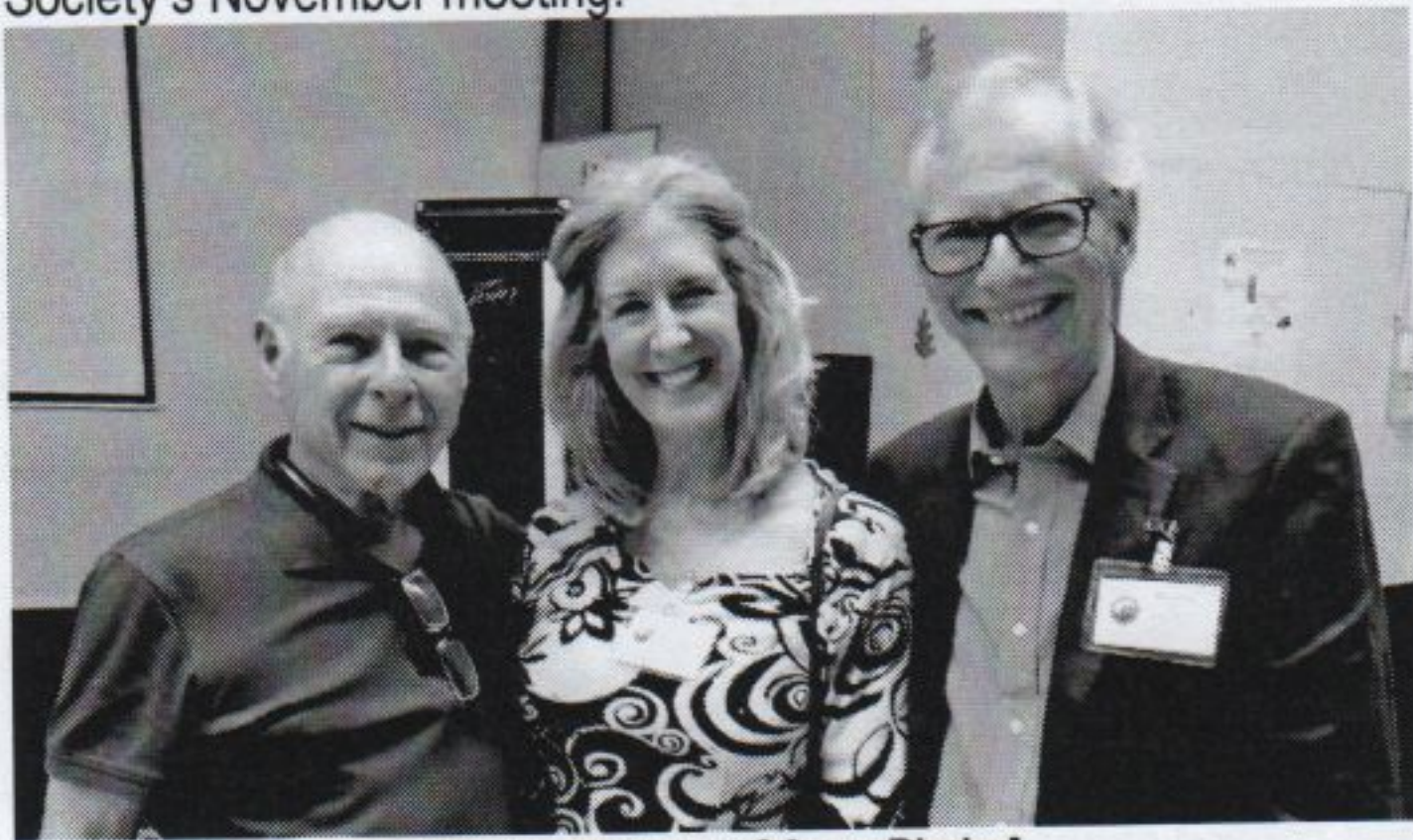
Cecil Adderley, Jr.
Patricia Atwater
Jane Burke
Richard B. Castagnoli
Marion Weaver Clark
Brian D. Combs
Lois Oyer Dooley
Donald Edge
Nancy Fillion
Wendy Franklin
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Nancy Hogan
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Carol Kuenzel
Frances Tuite McKeral
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Gerald Murray
Neil Omenn
Sandie L. Pike
John I. Rogers
Marilyn K. Rousseau
Mary Lou Muster Ryder
Mary Patricia Ryan
Susan Merkel Shaffer
Donna Fuller Smith
Irma Hackle Stonecipher
Anne Watts
Cynthia Cummings Weeks
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.



[Photo courtesy of Anne Rimler]

L to R: Ralph Papa, the artist who restored the paintings; Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher, the daughter of Bernard Thomas; and Boynton Beach Historical Society President, Randy Gill.

THE KAPOK TREES

For the past several months there has been discussion around town and in the newspapers about two very old kapok trees on the grounds of the early historic schools. Apparently one of the developers of the areas around the schools plans to remove one of the trees. The other is to remain intact. Questions concerning the trees ask who planted them and when. We received a copy of the following letter by Mary Scheitler of the Boynton Beach Garden Club. It offers a plausible answer to those two questions.

81 Cedar Circle
Boynton Beach, FL 33435

December 7, 2018

Mr. Colin Groff
City of Boynton Beach
3301 Quantum Blvd., Suite 101
Boynton Beach, FL 334

Dear Mr. Groff:

In Tuesday's Post (12/3/18, page B1), I read the article by Chelsea Todaro on the Kapok trees located at the high school and east of the schoolhouse, with thoughts of who may have planted them back in the 1930's. It prompted me to write, stating I believe the Boynton Beach Garden Club is the organization that planted them.

I have no definitive proof of this, only mention of it in an historical paper the club had put together, probably back in the 60's, which I am attaching. In 2012 we had a celebration and I retyped it as written. As you will read, the garden club was formed in 1938 and was active in improving the city. I joined the club about 14 years ago and was president a couple times, and this has been at the back of my mind all this time and it would be nice to receive the recognition I believe the Boynton Beach Garden Club deserves.

It is wonderful to read the Kapok tree at the high school will remain in its location. My hope is that the developer can come up with an idea for saving the second Kapok within the next year before it is taken down. Are they, and the city, working with an arborist who is knowledgeable with Kapoks? I know \$120,000 is a lot of money, but, in my mind, I think it's worth trying to move it, taking the chance that we could lose it. Perhaps the city and developer might work together in paying for the move? Let's keep those roots formed like a back of a chair for Mayor Grant to lean against for outdoor functions.

Sincerely,

Mary Scheitler

enclosure

cc: Mayor Steven Grant
Chelsea Todaro
Boynton Beach Historical Society
Christine Johnson & Lorelei Wolff/BHGC

Mary Scheitler 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 Ceiba Pentrandra 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 in 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]

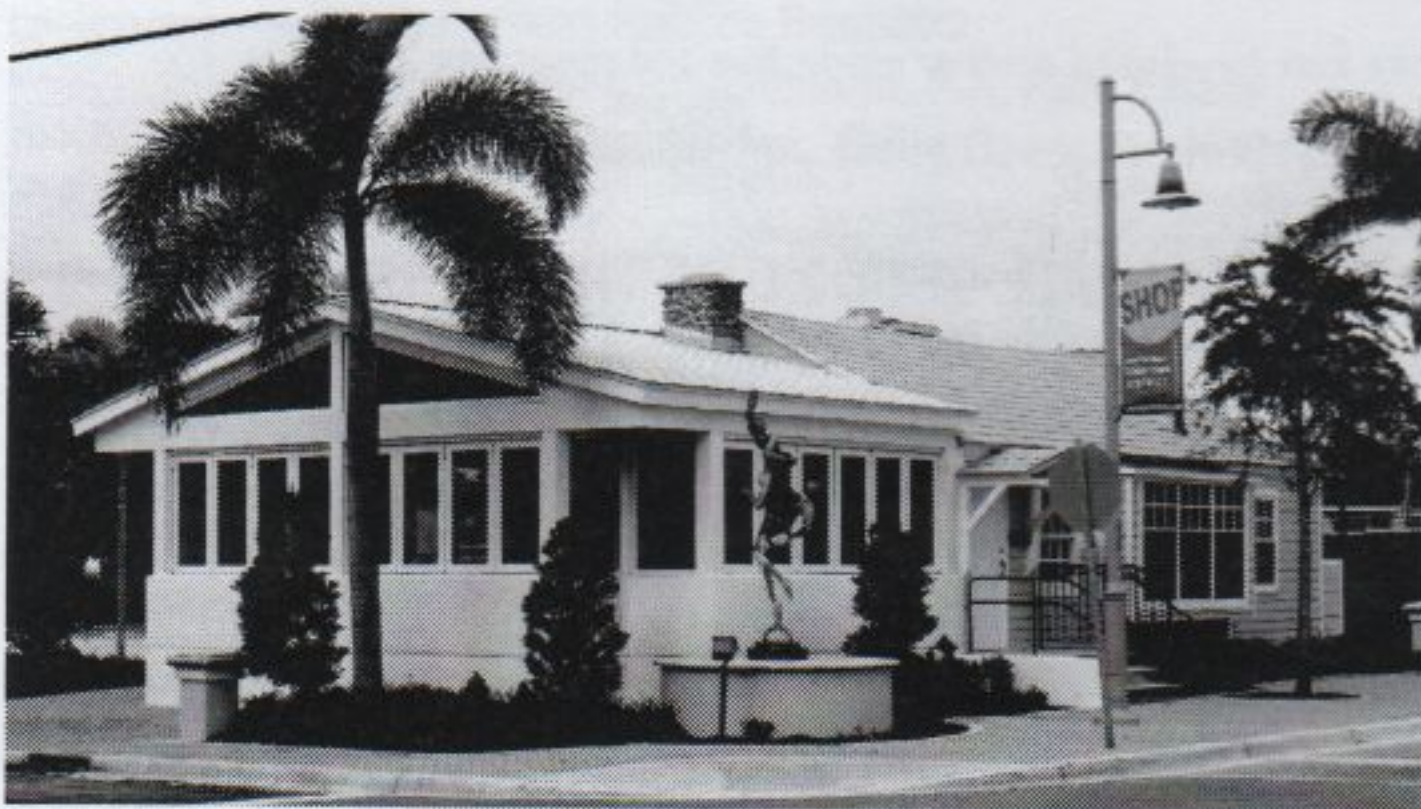


[2018 Photo courtesy of Voncile Smith]

This house was built in 1919 by Oscar Magnuson.

The Ruth Jones Cottage was built in 1940 at 201 N.E. 1st Street. In 1946 Ruth Jones and her husband Mason Jones bought the little house and after her husband's death she lived there until 2011 when she sold the property to the CRA. Ruth moved to Leisureville and the City moved the house to the corner of E. Ocean Avenue and 4th Street. After substantial renovation which stripped away most of the original construction materials the building opened as a small restaurant known as "The Little House." After only a few years, that restaurant closed.

Then the CRA sold it to the current owners—Richard Lucibella, a former vice mayor of Ocean Ridge, and Barbara Ceuleers who paid \$335,000 for the property. In 2017 they added a full kitchen and extended the dining area by enclosing what had been a front porch and had served as a patio area for the previous restaurant—a project that reportedly cost \$500,000.



[2018 photo courtesy of Voncile Smith]

The Ruth Jones Cottage, or "The Little House" as it is sometimes known, after renovations in 2017.

The current owners had expected to lease the property for a tapas restaurant to Lisa Mercado who was the owner of "The Living Room," a restaurant off Congress Avenue, but Lisa closed that facility and moved to Hawaii. So far Lucibella and Ceuleers have been unable to find a tenant.

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 it 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 Toojays 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.



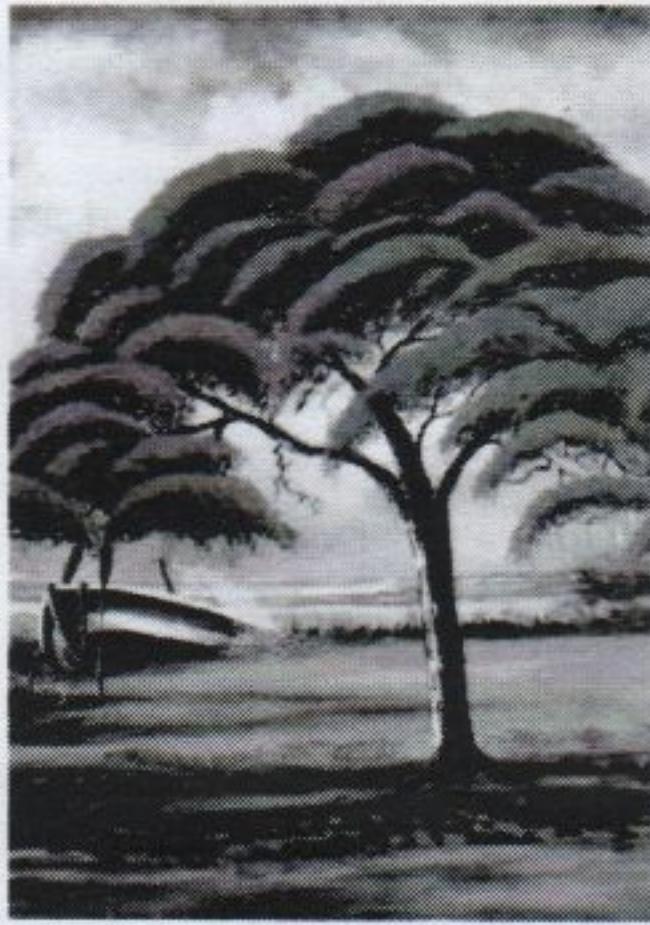
[Photo courtesy of Barbara Ready. Taken from Post Office lot on Seacrest.]

THE FLORIDA HIGHWAYMEN EXHIBIT



The Florida Highwaymen Exhibit

Saturday, January 19, 2019 11 am to 3 pm



**Featuring Original Highwaymen Artists and their Paintings
Show and Sale – Free Admission**

First Presbyterian Church, 235 SW 6th Ave, Boynton Beach, FL 33435

Contact 561-369-2300 or www.boyntonhistory.org for information

This is the flyer for a cooperative program the Boynton Beach Historical Society and the Boynton Womens 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, Macoviak 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.

The exhibit, scheduled for 11:00a.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 Womens 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."



From left: Debby Coles-Dobay, Mayor Steven Grant and Forest Park School Principal Nancy Robinson at November meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. [Photo courtesy of Anne Rimler]

One piece called "Synesthesia" will be erected in front of the new combined City Hall and Library. It is to be composed of a circle of reflective columns with lighted surfaces. Presumably all ages will find a fun connection as the columns emit different sounds at different hours.

"Reflections" is the name of another work and it will be displayed at the northeast corner of Seacrest and East Ocean. The piece replicates birds' wings with seven long stainless steel pieces on top of each other. Art will also be at the new Kapok Tree Park, the fire station, police headquarters and two parking garages.

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(c)(3) organization so dues are tax deductible.

Type of Membership:	INDIVIDUAL	(\$25.00) _____
(Check one)	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