



SARASOTA TIMES II

Winter 2015

1260 12th St., Sarasota, FL 941-364-9076

www.hsosc.com

Crocker Memorial Church Roof Repairs in Progress

Thanks to the enormous generosity of HSOSC members and community friends of history, the annual appeal will come in at \$16,380, a record for our organization. The total includes \$4,000, which came to us as a matching grant challenge, and \$2,000 that is a corporate match to a member's donation. This outpouring of concern for Sarasota's historic Crocker Memorial Church means we could call in the Sutter Roofing experts and start the work to stabilize and improve the metal roof on the Crocker. Bravo to all members and to community friends for demonstrating such timely and important support.

Targeting the roof of the church building is part of an long-term board strategy to follow a maintenance schedule that has been recommended to us by a professional historic preservation contractor. A special Buildings and Grounds committee of board members and members at large of HSOSC has been established and they are diligently working to establish priorities and then allocate the funds to get the work done.

A grant from the Frances T. Borne Fund at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County allowed us to replace the rotten window sills on the outside of the Crocker Memorial Church. The Crocker is used by the Historical Society and the community just about every day of the week. And it's become quite popular for weddings and small receptions.



Built in 1901 by Peter Crocker and his friends as a place of worship and community gathering place, the Crocker Memorial Church has been moved three times and is now under the protection of the Historical Society of Sarasota County. Owned by the City of Sarasota, the historic building in Pioneer Park is used for public events, weddings, memorial services, social and civic club meetings, business seminars and by HSOSC members for organization programs and membership meetings. As a heritage building it is a model of adaptive use.



John McCarthy

Sign up now for the LeBarge History Cruise on Sunday, March 8. Popular narrator and historian John McCarthy tells the story of Sarasota's past and points out places of importance while the LeBarge glides along the Sarasota Bay shoreline. This tour by water is a Historical Society tradition and John McCarthy has narrated this exclusive time-travel-trip into the past for 20 years. And for most of that time, HSOSC member and teacher **Brenda Lee Hickman** has organized the event and been on board to see that there is smooth sailing. Enjoy the sunshine, refreshments, the company of friends while you learn all about the place you now call home or that you call your favorite seasonal destination.

The boat leaves from Marina Jack at 11 a.m. and returns at 1 p.m. Ticket price is \$40 per person and \$50 for VIP, which means early boarding and a complimentary beverage. Reservations are a must. Call site manager Linda Garcia at 364-9076.

Events and Volunteers at HSOSC

Conversations at The Crocker and membership meetings are held in the Crocker and start at 7 p.m. Members free and guests \$10 for a Crocker Conversation event. Announcements just before Crocker Conversation. The remaining Conversations for the season are:

February 10: *The Young Turks of Architecture*. Based on Sarasota's past, they envision the future. Discussion leader is Harold Bubil, real estate editor of the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* and lecturer in architecture.

March 10: How Sarasota became *A Place for Jazz*. Live music and lively talk.

April 14: *Mable Ringling* and her influence on Sarasota. A lecture by the Ringling Museum's Deborah Walk.



HSOSC thanks member Jerry Chesley, who was on the committee for the Designer Tag Sale, which earned \$5,917.00 in November. This event takes place every other year at the Crocker Memorial Church. Jerry's creative displays of the items generated lots of buyer interest.



For the past four years HSOSC member **Liz Jackson** has organized a private tour of Ca' d' Zan (the John and Mable Ringling bayfront mansion) in conjunction with curator Ron McCarty, who is also an HSOSC board member. Held in January, this walking tour is open to HSOSC members and their guests. The day includes the exclusive tour and lunch at the museum restaurant. The cost is \$75 per person. The tour is limited to a small number (no more than 18) so that Ron McCarty can take the group into places most visitors to Ca' d' Zan never see. If you want to go next year, sign up early because this tour is always a sell out. Liz came up with the idea for this event and coordinates the entire thing every year as her volunteer project for the Historical Society. The tour held this January earned \$1,000 for HSOSC and it was a wonderful friend-raiser for our organization and for the Ringling Museum. A special thank you to Ron McCarty for sharing his knowledge and making us feel so welcome in a grand mansion he affectionately calls "Mable's house." By the way, Ca' d' Zan means house of John in Venetian dialect.

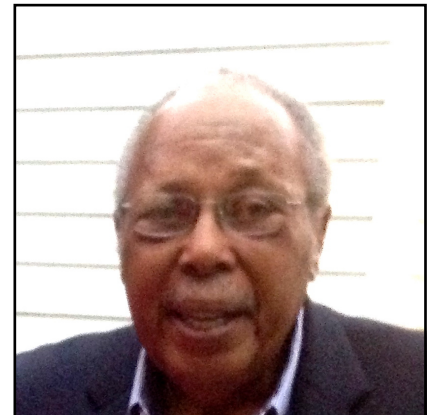


Ginger and Peter Mermin both donated items to the Designer Tag Sale and came to purchase accessories for their new Sarasota home.

Sue Blue's Famous Trolley Tours

February 14, March 7, March 28, and April 18. \$25 per person. From 10 a.m. till Noon. Reservations required. Call site manager, Linda Garcia at 364-9076 to reserve. Trolley leaves from Crocker and tours historic downtown places. Hop aboard! These lively tours sell out fast. You'll be so much smarter about Sarasota after one of these entertaining and educational excursions with Sue.

At the October Conversation, Dr. James Brown led a discussion about the history of Newtown. He was joined on stage by Mayor Willie Shaw, Henry Battie and Jetson Grimes. This Conversation was part of a year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of Newton.



Message from the President of HSOSC



The Historical Society of Sarasota County is always looking for additional activities for its members. Accordingly, we have added two new programs this year. The **Brown Bag Book Luncheon**, held at 11:30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, brings authors of books about local and regional subjects to the Crocker Memorial Church for discussions, slide shows or other presentations, as well as a chance to answer participants' questions and to sell and sign their books. Participants are invited to bring their lunch and eat on

the back porch of the Bidwell-Wood House. We supply beverages.

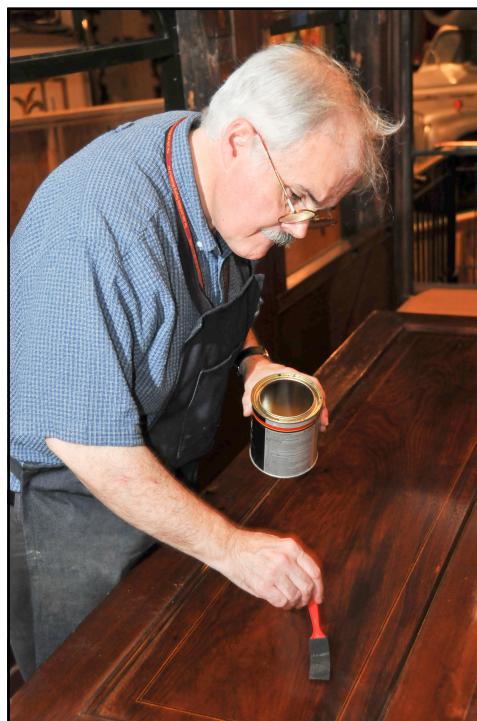
Admission is free for HSOSC members and \$5 for non-members. (Annual single membership to HSOSC is only \$30).

The new **History Book Club** meets at 1 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month, also at the Crocker Memorial Church, to discuss books specifically about Sarasota or Florida history. This event is limited to HSOSC members and admission is free. Our first book was *Sarasota: A History* by Jeff LaHurd. We welcome suggestions from participants for books to discuss at future meetings. Both groups will continue to meet monthly through April, and then resume activity in the fall. We hope that you will join us for these events.

I would also like to thank the many volunteers who have contributed so much time and expertise to enable HSOSC to provide you with the opportunities we now offer. These include, but are not limited to, Marsha Fottler and Lynn Harding, co-chairs of our Conversations at the Crocker series; Bill Watrous, chairman of the Rosemary Cemetery Committee; Sue Blue, the narrator of our Historic Downtown Sarasota Trolley Tours; Kate Holmes, our webmaster; Deborah Bowers, chairman of our Finance and Development Committee; immediate past president, Jane Kirschner-Tuccillo, who serves on the Advisory Board since her retirement from the Board of Directors; and Linda Garcia, Site Manager.

Howard Rosenthal, President

Historical Society of Sarasota County



David W. Duncan, Pullman Railroad Car historian and the consultant on the restoration of John Ringling's custom train car, the Wisconsin, was the November lecturer at Conversations at The Crocker. He told the history of the custom Pullman Car era in America as well as the story of the ongoing restoration of the Wisconsin. A power-point presentation of rare photos added to the fun and to our education. Upwards of 125 HSOSC members and guests attended and engaged in the a spirited conversation with Duncan at the end of his presentation. Our thanks to board member Ron McCarty (curator and keeper of Ca' d'Zan) for putting this program together. It was a huge success and encouraged guests at the lecture to become members of HSOSC and to go to the Ringling Museum to see the Wisconsin.



Glenn Compton and Julie Morris participated in a Conversation at the Crocker this season that focused on the challenges to Florida's environment, past and present. Now in its third season, all Conversation events focus on an aspect of Sarasota's past (people and events) that have shaped the way we live today. Speakers are drawn from the community (they volunteer their time) and they are experts in their fields.

The High Tea and Plein Air Painting event held in January earned \$1,000 for HSOSC and provided a lovely day for participants celebrating a gracious domestic ritual of tea and socializing. Thank you to **Judy Alexander** for once again organizing this popular annual event.

Additionally, one of the Plein Air artists donated a piece of art work to HSOSC to be auctioned and HSOSC realized \$200 from that. Events such as this, organized by volunteer HSOSC members, help give us community visibility, earn money to support the Bidwell-Wood House and the Crocker Memorial Church and events bring new members. In 2014, we saw membership rise by 44 new members.



Historical Society of Sarasota County
P.O. Box 1632, Sarasota, FL 34230

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Deborah Walk

Linda Garcia, Site Manager
Monday - Friday: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
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The Landscape Committee has begun to tackle the parking lot on the west side of the Crocker Memorial Church, starting with a small bromeliad garden on either side of the steps off the back deck leading to the parking area. The bromeliads were donated by **Nancy Bushnell**. The committee is now hoping for some flowering shrubs such as blue or white plumbago that would be installed near the pine trees in the area. There is no budget for this project, so if HSOSC members would like to donate one-gallon containers of the shrubs, the committee will gladly plant them, thus improving the curb appeal of the Crocker Memorial Church and clearly defining parking spaces and garden spots.