



Historical Society Of Sarasota County

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Dear fellow HSOSC members and friends,

This is our annual report to the membership of the Historical Society of Sarasota County. An earlier version of this report was read by HSOSC Vice President Marsha Fottler to members attending the annual membership meeting at Crocker Memorial Church on Saturday, May 11, 2013.

The Mission of the Historical Society of Sarasota County is to foster public awareness of the rich historical heritage of Sarasota County and the state of Florida, encourage inquiry and research into this history, promote collection and preservation of memorabilia, develop a broader appreciation of its historical communities, and protect its historic sites and structures.

We maintain and operate two historic buildings - the Bidwell-Wood House, the oldest surviving residence in Sarasota County, and the Crocker Memorial Church, the oldest surviving church building in Sarasota County. Part of our mission regarding these two historic buildings is to make them examples of adaptive use. They had a head start before this historical society took over curatorship in 2006 when the buildings came here to Pioneer Park. They've always been in active use. The Bidwell-Wood House has served as a home, rooming house, office space, and now an educational tool for teaching local history. The Crocker was always a church and meeting place, and it continues to serve the community today as a wedding destination, meeting place for civic and social clubs, and as a venue for Historical Society monthly meetings and Historical Society special events. We also use the dining room of the Bidwell-Wood House to videotape ordinary historians, the two most recent have been artist/gallery owner/teacher Marti Hartman and historian/actress/writer Sue Blue. You can partake of their Sarasota memories by borrowing the CD's. All of the Ordinary Historian discs are available in the HSOSC office.

Since our last annual meeting, the Crocker has seen eleven weddings and a memorial service. The Earlye Musike Consort meets here as do the Founders Garden Club,

Great Books group, and other organizations. The James Joyce Society holds its annual James Joyce Birthday celebration here. Since our last annual meeting, we had the big Designer Tag Sale here as well as a music and lecture program on Florida's place in the Civil War and an elegant tea party. We've also organized six Conversations at The Crocker events that illuminated various aspects of local history while bringing together local experts for lively chat. These events have increased membership and have increased community

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Viola Goldberg

Brenda Lee Hickman

Kate Holmes

Veronica Morgan

Ann Moore

Jim Nilon

Harriet Burns Stieff

Deborah Walk

awareness of our work here, as well as providing revenue. We have also utilized the Back Porch and Dining Room of the Bidwell-Wood House, and the Crocker Memorial Church, for a variety of classes; this year, Maggie Nevins conducted a course in water color painting in the Church. We also held a lecture and book-signing by Michael Lancaster, a descendant of Charles Ringling who has published a novel about his famous family.

The Gift Shop is becoming a destination for books about local history, and Jane Kirschner-Tuccillo continues to build up the stock. Additionally, we have on consignment the works of 43 vendors who sell locally made crafts objects.

Sue Blue's trolley tours sold out this year, and we had a good turnout for the history cruise aboard LeBarge.

The garden continues to improve and, although we'd like to expand to the west side of the Crocker Church with trees and flowering shrubs, we do not at this time have a water source over there. A big improvement to the Crocker will take place over the summer -- porch railings will be added. Dr. Clifford Smith, city planner in charge of historic structures, has approved our plan. The Hand Rails Committee has been negotiating estimates and the necessary permits.

Three Board members - Kate Holmes, Chuck Resh, and Margaret Hoffman - have chosen not to run for re-election. We thank them for their service. Kate will be moving to the Advisory Board and will continue to do our HSOSC Web site and Constant Contact. We also thank the Board members who will continue to serve, and welcome our newly-elected members. An election was held at the annual membership meeting. Recording Secretary JoRita Stevens, Board members Ron McCarty and Lynn Harding, and I were all re-elected to new two-year terms. Jane Kirschner, former Board member and immediate past president, was elected to a new two-year term on the Board. Bill Kleber, a new Board member, was also elected to a full two-year term. In addition, Deborah Bowers was elected to a one-year term to complete the term of a former Board member who had previously resigned.

The meeting was followed by the traditional pot-luck picnic on the Front and Back Porches of the Bidwell-Wood House.

We are planning a variety of events for the new year, and hope to see you at many of them. We also welcome your suggestions for events and activities which you would like to organize for us. Please feel free to contact us at hsosc@yahoo.com.

Howard Rosenthal
President, Historical Society of Sarasota County