

HISTORY CENTER TIMES

A NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026

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FOSCHC
P. O. Box 91
Venice, FL 34284



FRIENDS OF THE
SARASOTA COUNTY
HISTORY CENTER

Celebrating 20 Years!

The Friends Organization was founded in 2005 by Pete & Dianne Esthus.

OUR HISTORY CENTER: A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN NUMBERS

**30,000**
THE NUMBER OF
SQUARE FEET THE
NEW HISTORY CENTER WILL BE, WHICH
BROKE GROUND JULY 3 2025.

**39** PUBLIC
PROGRAMS
WITH A COMBINED
ATTENDANCE OF
1,252 PERSONS

**55** PATRONS
RESERVED THE
MEMORY LAB FOR MORE THAN
200 APPOINTMENTS
TO PRESERVE PRICELESS
FAMILY TREASURES

**55**
NEW DONATIONS
FROM A WIDE VARIETY
OF SOURCES

**300**
IMAGES DIGITIZED AND CATALOGUED
FOR THE CITY OF SARASOTA
PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

**1,564**
HISTORICAL
INQUIRIES
ANSWERED

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

Note From the President

Hi All,

The first half of 2026 has been busy! Here are some of the updates:

Long Timers of Sarasota County (LTSC), are Friends (FOSCHC) members who have lived in Sarasota County for more than 30 years. We have had many committee meetings, especially to have the LTSC involved in the next FriendsFest 2026 picnic. Please let me know if you have lived in Sarasota for over 30 years and would like to join us.

FOSCHC **Annual Luncheon Meeting** was on Saturday, January 31st.

History Day in the Park at Phillippi Estate was on Sat Feb 7th – FOSCHC had an information table inside the mansion along with the History Center's display.

ENGLEWOOD Cracker Fair – Feb 14th FOSCHC was there with our tent and table and spoke to many Englewood residents about our Sarasota County organization and what we do.

We raised over \$7,000 in April with the ***Community Foundation of Sarasota's Giving Challenge*** and have received many more donations.

We continue to sponsor the **Sarasota County History Center's monthly Lecture Series** of historical presentations (see upcoming talks below).

Our **DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** started a campaign for the New History Center contributions that will be from FOSCHC.

SARASOTA FARMERS MARKET – As *Long Timers of Sarasota County*, Ken Esthus and I always enjoy when we get a free tent and table at the market. We get to talk about FOSCHC and what we do and especially connecting with other Sarasota Long Timers. Some we knew in our childhoods here.

We are very pleased that our FOSCHC **Board of Directors** now consists of 10 directors.

The Friends donated an especially needed **new laptop** for the volunteers of the History Center. This is one of the major reasons we do fundraising for the History Center.

Be sure to **SAVE THE DATE for the next FOSCHC – FRIENDS FEST 2026 Picnic SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2026, at the PHILLIPPI ESTATE PARK!**

Thank you to all of our *FOSCHC* Members, we who support the SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER!

I hope we all have a happy and calm summer!

Best,

Kim

Kim Patton Manning, President

FRIENDS OF THE SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER (FOSCHC)

America 250 Celebration

**Saturday, July 11
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Celebrate America's 250th anniversary with live music, Florida history presentations, a Sarasota and U.S. history timeline exhibit, community art activities, refreshments, and interactive fun.

For all ages.



Scan for
details.



**Sarasota County Libraries and Historical Resources
Selby Library**

1331 First St., Sarasota, FL 34236

SarasotaCountyLibraries.org | call 311 or 941-861-1110



Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities. View the complete policy at scgov.net/ADA.

A Brief History of the Friends

At the urging of David Baber, General Manager of the Sarasota County History Center, a “Friends” steering committee was formed in July of 2005. Linda Greaves, Manager of the Office of Community Involvement for Sarasota County spearheaded the formation of the steering committee composed of private citizens Diane and “Pete” Esthus, Kim Hart, Bill LaGasse and Nathalie McCulloch. Also serving on the committee were David Baber, Jeff LaHurd and Ann Shank, members of the History Center staff.

The Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Florida Department of State and on August 17, 2005, the new organization received 501(c)3 nonprofit status. The purpose of the “Friends” is to promote programs and services at the History Center, further efforts to assemble historical exhibits, help preserve a constantly growing collection of artifacts and materials from our past and promote research for our future based on the heritage of Sarasota County.

Membership has grown from 68 members in 2006 to 129 members as of June 15, 2026.

The Long Timers of Sarasota County (LTSC) group was formed in 2025 and now has 46 members. Are you a Long Timer? (FOSHC members who have lived in Sarasota County for over 30 years can join.)

FLASHBACK: Our President’s Report from 2017

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE FRIENDS PRESIDENT



This past year proved to be a busy and productive one for the Friends and our sponsors. The Historical Exhibits and Education Center has been bustling with energy from many new faces and great exhibits, which included Ted Morris’s “Florida’s Lost Tribes”, “Crate Expectations”, and the current Jack West, exhibit. Jim Clubb’s walks and talks brought new members and seasoned members to his presentations. We love seeing the excitement when our friends get together to learn and discuss new information.

We will continue to bring as many programs as we can in the new season, which kicks off with the exciting panel discussion on Jack West shown above. Our Florida Humanities Council Speaker Series starts on February 1 with Dr. Jack Davis speaking on the Gulf of Mexico and its role in our culture and history. The series will feature an interesting diversity of topics; all programs will be next door at the Sarasota Garden Club.

Many of our friends are interested in helping to keep the Friends of the Sarasota County History and Education Center operating. We do need your help to bring these wonderful programs to you. We are small but mighty and want to encourage you to join in our efforts.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2018 programs at the Historical Exhibits and Education Center. Bring Friends!

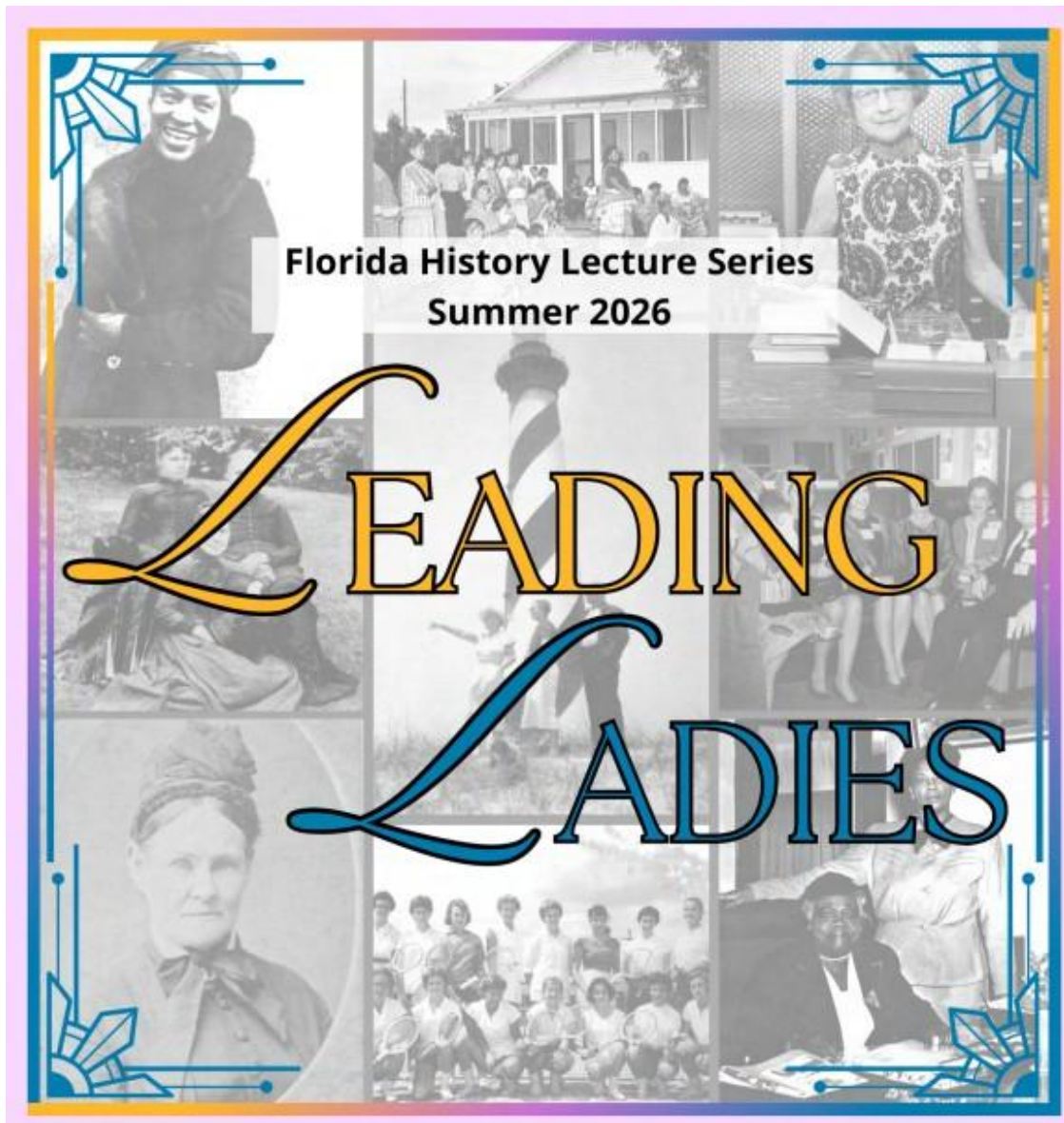
*Margaret Borrow, President
Friends of the Sarasota County History Center*

History Center Update

"Our most sincere and excited thanks to the Friends for purchasing a new volunteer laptop for the History Center! This type of technology makes it so much easier to facilitate collections volunteers in their projects and will be a huge benefit as we prepare to pack and move the collections between our multiple current buildings."

---Leah Lapszynski, History Center Assistant Manager, Libraries and Historical Resources

This is why we do our fundraising, to give support and supply additional equipment when needed.



REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

Click [HERE](#) to Register (Select Osprey Library & Confirm)

Speaker Series



The Leading Ladies of Sarasota County

Tuesday, July 21 • 2-3:30 p.m.

An introduction to the "Leading Ladies" series, this presentation explores the lives of Sarasota's influential women, including Bertha Palmer, Marie Selby and Emma Booker. Using archival photographs, correspondence and records from the Sarasota County History Center, we'll uncover stories of leadership, philanthropy, education, business, preservation and cultural innovation that shaped Sarasota County.

Meg Lepak, Program and Outreach Specialist,
Sarasota County History Center



Florida's Unsung Heroines

Thursday, Aug. 6 • 2-3:30 p.m.

Meet sixteen influential women who made impacts in Florida overall and in the Tampa Bay area specifically, through the lens of business, culture, preservation, science, social history and community leadership. These women may not be well known, but they contributed to their communities in ways that in many cases are still being felt today. Their actions and vision helped shape the unique state and region that we live in today.

June Mansfield, History Krewe Docent,
Tampa Bay History Center

Here are two of the Speaker Series lectures scheduled for this Summer at the History Center.

The Friends contribute honoraria for this series. We are also present at most of the lectures, setting up a table with information about the Friends. Stop by and say "Hello!"



THANK YOU!

To all who donated during this Spring's exciting GIVING CHALLENGE.

The Friends raised over \$7000!

Auto Tours

Don Bayley and Marilyn Gerkin updated all 9 Auto Tours to reflect construction, road changes and sites that sadly are no longer here. Narration scripts were updated to reflect new sponsorships and public awareness of the Friends and the History Center. All images included in the app were provided by the History Center archives.

The Auto Tour app enhances awareness of our county's rich history and promotes the Friends and our mission to support the History Center. The app is free thanks to our generous sponsors and can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play. Search "Sarasota County Auto Tours." More info [HERE](#).

Treasurer's Report

The Friends paid for:

Display materials for the *America 250 Celebration* at Selby Library on July 11 (see flyer on page 3)

The aforementioned laptop for History Center volunteers

3 museum quality panels for History Center exhibits

Honoraria for Spring Lecture Series

Food and supplies for Longtimers Meeting and Giving Challenge Meeting

Liability Insurance (monthly) (required for having a booth at the Farmers Market)

Note Cards for donor Thank You's

Gulf Coast Community Foundation Workshops. Attended by several Board members. President Kim Manning says "The workshops have been always enlightening, and I have learned something from each one. The speakers are informative and present interactive ways for us to learn. Also being with other nonprofits' executive directors, BOD president, staff, etc. the networking that happened also helped us learn what other nonprofits were doing or had found what not to do. Invaluable!" There were 13 workshops in all. Topics included: Creating An Effective Fundraising Plan, Conflict Prevention & Resolution, Design & Facilitating Board Meetings, Maximizing Cash Flow for Non-profits, Succession Planning and Mastering Donor Dialogue.

Several Board members also participated in workshops in preparation for the Giving Challenge.

FOSCHC donations update:

2023: \$2,000 2024: \$7,000 2025: Almost \$17,000 2026 (to June 1st): \$11,346

Save the Date – FRIENDS FEST 2026 FUNDRAISER

Sunday, November 15, 2026 • 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Phillippi Estate Park

Food trucks • Live music

Admission: \$20 adults, \$5 children (5 & under free).



NEW HISTORY CENTER PROGRESS!

