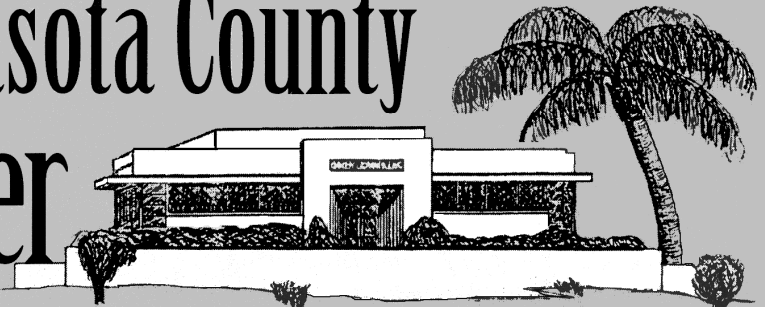


# Friends of Sarasota County History Center



Vol. 3 No. 3

[www.foschs.org](http://www.foschs.org)

Jul-Aug-Sep 2009

## Refurbished History Center Ready

The Sarasota County History Museum where Sarasota's past is on display. The newly refurbished History Museum is located in the Chidsey Building (c. 1941), and is located at 701 North Tamiami Trail just south of the Municipal Auditorium.

The museum shows a panorama of Sarasota's past, including the Sarasota School of Architecture, and features a glass enclosed exhibit of John Hamilton Gillespie's personal effects. Mr. Gillespie was prominent among Sarasota's early pioneers and was widely credited with introducing golf to Florida.

Current exhibits include the Settlement Era and Boom Years & Paul Rudolph is well represented with "The Florida houses", and there is also an exhibit about Life in Ancient Sarasota. All exhibits are free to the public.



Chidsey Building



Colonel John Hamilton Gillespie

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

*Saturday, April 17, 2010*

**Sarasota High School**

**GRAND REUNION**

[WWW.GRANDREUNION.ORG](http://WWW.GRANDREUNION.ORG)

## From The President

G r e e t i n g s   T o   U s   A l l :

I hope this newsletter finds you in good (or at least, remedial) health. If so and you've got free time on your hands, personal satisfaction is only a phone call away; 861-6886 connects you to Hope Black, our volunteer coordinator.

Back in May, the Blue Ribbon Panel, part of the History Center Transition Committee, presented its recommendations to the County Commission. However, budgetary restrictions rule the day, so progress is slow. Check it out on [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).

But history goes on and the "Friends" continues to assist the History Center in all of its endeavors.

July 17 found me at the dedication of the St. Martha Mission Church historical marker. The Sarasota County Historical Commission spends many, many person hours in this worthwhile program that recognizes events of historic significance. The next marker is for the desegregation of the Lido Beach area.

With the addition of Joyce Waterbury, the Friends Board of Directors is at full capacity and we are alive and kicking.

Sincerely,

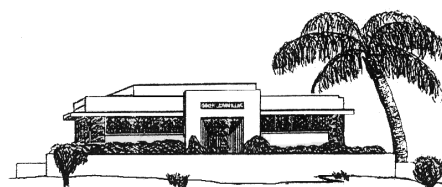
Pete

## Volunteers Welcome

As with many organizations which are allied with all levels of government, many of these organization rely heavily on citizens from the community who possess time and talent in a particular area. Friends of the Sarasota County History Center are one of those organizations.

Without our corps of excellent volunteers a number of important tasks would never be completed or projects brought to fruition.

You can become one of those revered volunteers nearly painlessly! Simply call Hope Black at 941-861-6886 and begin an incredibly rewarding experience. We'll thank you for your service and you'll thank us!



### FRIENDS OF THE SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

6062 Porter Way  
Sarasota, FL 34232

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Marshall K DuBois, Publisher

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# The Chidsey Library

Author: Ann A. Shank, former County Historian

On May 12, 1941, the cornerstone was laid for Sarasota's first public library building. It was the second major structure to be built in the WPA developed Bay-front Park between what are now Sixth and 10th streets, west of North Tamiami Trail.

The library itself had begun nearly 40 years earlier. Under the auspices of the Town Improvement Society, the fledgling library was housed in space donated first by the town's mayor, John Hamilton Gillespie, and later by developer Owen Burns. A few years after the society disbanded, the Woman's Club took on the management of the library and moved it to their new building on Coconut and Palm, which is now the Florida Studio Theater.

In the early 1930s, the library was moved to the unused old high school on Main Street: Because this was an unsatisfactory location, the junior Chamber of Commerce adopted the project of building a new library. John and Ida Chidsey responded to the Jaycees' request for funds and pledged to pay for the structure if the Jaycees would furnish it.

Martin Studio of Architecture designed the Chidsey Library. Thomas Reed Martin had come to Sarasota in 1911 to design a winter home in Osprey for Bertha Palmer. He stayed on, contributing much to the Mediterranean Revival architecture in Sarasota during the 1920s.

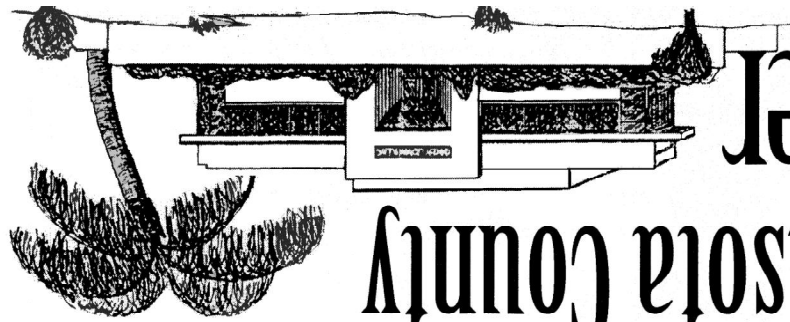
The Jaycees sponsored a formal dedication ceremony for the \$25,000 library November 13, 1941.



An audience of 100 packed the Municipal Auditorium for the event. In his dedication address, the Rev. Francis Trowbridge Cooke, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Bristol, Connecticut, the Chidsey's summer home, testified to the community mindedness of the Chidsey's in Bristol as well as Sarasota. The Sarasota High School band played, and Frank Martin presented to Mr. Chidsey a photo album he had put together showing the day-to-day progress on the building. Mayor E.A. Smith officially accepted the building from the Chidsey's and the furnishings from the Jaycees.

As the library's needs outgrew the Chidsey building's space, the Selby Library was built which today houses the G-Wiz building for young people who are interested in science. The Selby Library was relocated to a new building downtown next to Five Points. Today the Chidsey Library building contains a museum for the Sarasota County History Center and space devoted to the Sarasota County Visitors and Convention Bureau.

Source: Sarasota County History Center  
Email: [jlahurd@scgov.net](mailto:jlahurd@scgov.net)



# Friends of Sarasota County History Center

**Friends of Sarasota County History Center**  
 6062 Porter Way  
 Sarasota, Fl. 34232



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Individual	Family	Organization	Corporation
\$20	\$30	\$100	\$250
Patron	Benefactor	Individual Lifetime	Student
\$50-99	\$100-500	\$250	\$10

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 6062 Porter Way - Sarasota, FL 34232

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I am interested in volunteering \_\_\_\_\_

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