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Lake County Historical Museum
Lake County's best source for history since 1954
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Tangelo

The Newsletter of the Lake County Historical Society and Museum

From your Society President Bob Grenier

Greetings Everyone,

I hope this issue of the *Tangelo* finds everyone well. I wish to start out by saying happy 65th birthday to the Lake County Historical Society. This fabulous organization was founded in 1954.

We had an exciting trio of events this quarter – author Gary Corsair, National History Day Fair with Lake County Schools, and Museum by Moonlight featuring guest speaker, Judge Larry Semento. Within this newsletter, you will see photographs taken at those events.

I want to focus this message on museums and why we have them. First of all, what is a museum? By definition, a museum is a building, place, or institution devoted to the acquisition, conservation, study, exhibition, and educational interpretation of objects having scientific, historical, or artistic value.

I adamantly believe that all cultures have a right to honor and memorialize their heritage. It's one of the great freedoms we, as a diverse people, are supposed to have in the United States of America. Our brave men and women in our military service have fought for that freedom – and continue to do so. Near the end of World War II, there was an elite group of historians and museum curators, who became soldiers, whose mission it was to save timeless treasures from the hands of fascism. They were known as the Monuments Men.

Since the dawn of time, all cultures of humanity, at one time in world history, have celebrated triumphs, as well as have suffered through tragedies. We humans, through the passage of time, pass away, leaving behind artifacts that tell the story of our culture's history. Institutions were built centuries ago, such as by the ancient Greeks and the Egyptians, to house these artifacts of books, documents, statues, art, and more. We know these institutions as museums. These museums do exactly what the definition above describes.

Museums should NEVER have their hands bound by censorship or politics. Museums are the three-dimensional educational tool for mankind to learn about their past as each generation comes and goes. Believe me, our youth want to know these stories. I witnessed that at the National History Day Fair held at the museum in March.

The erasing of American history and vandalism of monuments and statues in this country is quite sad and disappointing to me. This erasing and destruction of monuments are not limited to Confederate monuments - our Founding Fathers,

such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, presidents, such as Teddy Roosevelt and William McKinley, discoverers, such as Christopher Columbus and Lewis & Clark, song writers, and poets, such as Stephen Foster and Francis Scott Key, the author of a poem, which became the Star-Spangled Banner, as well as people like legendary actor John Wayne and children's author, Dr. Seuss. Military statues from World War I, World War II, and Vietnam are being attacked and vandalized – and yes, religious statues as well.

The Lake County Historical Museum in the past six years, since I have had the honor of being appointed the Curator, and putting together an awesome museum team, have turned our museum into one of Central Florida's highly regarded entertainment, educational, and elite attractions. We did not do this with censorship or politics – but with the desire to preserve and educate for today's generation - and for generations to come.

From Laisa your Office Manager



Hello everyone, I hope you all have had a wonderful year so far. Since the beginning of January, we have had a number of events at the Lake County Historical Museum and each one has been more amazing than the last. To kick off this year on January 19, we participated in the Tavares Arbor Day Festival in which I had the pleasure of setting up our table. On January 25, Gary Corsair gave a presentation on his book, *Legal Lynching: The Sad Saga of the Groveland Four*. This was following the pardon of the four young men involved in this 70 year old case. It was truly amazing to hear and see firsthand accounts of Gary Corsair's journey in writing his book. Seeing members of the families of these four young men finally receive the vindication they deserved was very moving. Our next event at the museum was our National History Day Fair. President Bob Grenier, Vice President Don Campbell, and museum team member Roy Berry served as hosts for the over 500 people attending this event. Vice President Don Campbell served as a judge. I could not attend this event. Our most recent event was Museum by Moonlight red carpet gala. This was my first Museum by Moonlight and I have to say that it was a wonderful experience. From hearing Judge Larry Semento talk about his book *Tears in the Wind* to our auction and raffles throughout the night, I would have to say it was an unforgettable night.

The Lake County Historical Museum never ceases to amaze me. I am surprised at just how many amazing events have taken place at the museum in just five months of my becoming office manager. The thought, creativity, and hard work that is put into organizing these events by our awesome museum team is astounding. Here's to many more amazing events and a great rest of the year!

The Lake County Historical Society Celebrates



Happy 90th Birthday to Society Board Member Betty Burleigh (pictured at far left) who was born on January 27th, 1929. Besides being on the Board of Directors, she is also on the board of the Tavares Historical Society and is Tavares's premier historian; who attends every Tavares City Council meeting presenting stories from Tavares's past. She was a charter member of Kinseekers Genealogical Society and attends the Roots and Branches genealogy group at the Tavares Public Library. She was on the Tavares Library Board Advisory Committee, a library volunteer and member of the Friends of the Tavares Library for 20 years. She has attended the annual Tavares Library Ladies Tea every year for the past 15 years and participates in the Page Turners Book Club. She never misses a Society meeting or event.



Happy Birthday to our museum's art designer Michael Pierce who was born March 26th. Mike is the owner of the WOW Factor Scenic and Paint Company. Many of you who have visited the museum have seen Mike's magnificent murals in the museum's lobby as well as in our galleries. Mike is regularly subcontracted at Walt Disney World and his work is featured in many attractions including *Frozen, Pandora – The World of Avatar, the Mexican Pavilion at Epcot,* and much more.

The Lake County Historical Society Remembers



The remarkable life of John Griffin. Besides being a former board member of Lake County Historical Society, he served 17 years on the Groveland City Council, was a business owner, being the founder and president of Tamjo Signs, a cattle rancher, a veteran who served in the U.S. Army from 1965-1967, a musician and drummer, and a Black Seminole Indian reenactor and historian. Among his interests, Mr. Griffin had a lifelong fascination of the American Wild West and cowboys. He was a Groveland native born in 1944.



Lake County Historical Museum Events

Arbor Day Festival

On January 19, the Lake County Historical Museum participated in the second annual Tavares Arbor Day Festival. The festival was held at Wooton Park on Lake Dora in Tavares. The museum had a display table set up and designed by office manager Laisa Abreu. Marty Wilkins manned the table from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Laisa opened the museum for guests and gave tours.

Gary Corsair

On January 25, author Gary Corsair gave a presentation titled *The Path to Pardon*, based on his best-selling book *Legal Lynching: The Sad Saga of the Groveland Four* and the recent pardon of the four young men, Charles Greenlee, Samuel Shepherd, Walter Irvin, Ernest Thomas, by Governor Ron DeSantis. There were 165 people in attendance. Following the presentation, Lake County Commissioner, Leslie Campione, presented family members of the four young men a binder with letters written by the commissioners and Lake's Constitutional Officers to Gov. DeSantis requesting the pardon of Greenlee, Shepherd, Irvin, and Thomas.



Bob Grenier, Gary Corsair and Don Campbell



Comm. Leslie Campione presenting family members with letters to Gov. DeSantis



165 captivated attendees



Lake County Historical Museum Events

National History Day Fair

On March 2nd, the Lake County Historical Museum was host for the Lake County Schools National History Day Fair. The National History Day contest encourages students around the world to conduct historical research on a topic of their choice. Competition categories include exhibits, websites, documentaries, live performances, and research papers. 1st and 2nd place winners in each category in different age groups move on to the state competition in Tallahassee with the possibility of advancing to nationals in Maryland. Over 500 students, parents, and teachers filled the museum for this event. It was a great partnership between Lake County Schools and the Lake County Historical Society Museum & Museum. Natalie Heitman and Noris Aguayo were the Lake County Schools coordinators for the fair. Vice President Don Campbell served as a judge.





Museum by Moonlight

On March 9th, the museum hosted its third "Museum by Moonlight" red carpet gala. Retiring judge Larry Semento was our keynote speaker. Judge Semento spoke of his time on the bench, his life in Lake County, and his book *Tears in the Wind* which is the story of triumph and tragedy on America's highest peak. The evening's festivities included a silent auction, a raffle, and a scavenger hunt. Over 70 people were in attendance.



Judge Larry Semento

Ray Powers, Bob Grenier, Marli Lopez, Judge Brian Welke, Judge Larry Semento





Sue Pait and Laisa Abreu



Henry Smith, Joan Brown, Sanna Henderson, and Charles Calhoun

More Museum by Moonlight















Museum Exhibit Spotlight

Greg Newson was born in New York City. He is an author, educator, and artist. His artistic artwork styles range from realism to surrealistic and portraits. As a young man he won numerous art shows and later received a scholarship from the Famous Artist School in West Port Connecticut. He eventually ended up working as an assistant art director at Viking press, and as of 2016 has not only written but illustrated his own books. Mr. Newson presently owns two companies, *It's About Time Advertising* and *Newson Publishing*. His paintings can be viewed in our Military Veterans Gallery.





News and Notes

- ✓ Membership Meeting Tuesday, April 30th at 6:15 pm.
- ✓ The Arts and Entertainment (A&E) Network will be coming to the museum this month to film an episode of their TV program *Psychic Kids: The Next Generation*.
- ✓ Don't forget to visit the Lake County Historical Museum website and Facebook page.
- ✓ We wish to thank Commissioner Leslie Campione and the Lake County Engineering and Facilities staff for refurbishing the Lake County Honor Roll sign in front of the museum. This sign pays tribute to our courageous service men and women past and present.
- ✓ The Society is partnering with the Lake County Library System to make the research collection available via the Library Catalog.





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Officers

President Bob Grenier
Vice Pres. Don Campbell
Treasurer Howard King
Secretary Marli Lopez
Past President Skip Babb

Directors

Sanna Henderson
Betty Burleigh
Robert Redd

Curator
Bob Grenier

BCC Liaison
Comm. Leslie Campione

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Museum Office Manager

Laisa Abreu

Museum Staff

Laisa Abreu
Don Campbell
Bob Grenier
Marli Lopez
Mike Pierce
Robert Redd
Roy Berry
Sue Pait

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Legal Advisor
Julie Law

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Yearly dues are payable in April of each year. Please remit if you haven't already done so:

We are continuously updating contact information. Please send us your email address so that we may save on the cost of mailing the Tangelo each month.

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Do you want to become a member? Here's how:

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Phone _____

Student $5.00

Individual $15.00

Family $20.00

Corporation $125.00

LIfetime $200.00

Make checks payable to:

Lake County Historical Society.