



South Brevard Historical Society, Inc.

Founded 1966

E Newsletter **DECEMBER 2020**

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

This year has been a challenging time for organizations such as the SBHS to maintain the organization structure, carry out necessary business and fulfill their mission. Our website has remained active to inform and connect to the community. Historical information, our Newsletters and our contact information is listed there. I've been able to assist phone inquiries, usually by referring them to the proper resource.

We have made some progress toward evaluating and reorganizing the artifacts and archival items of our collection. Board members have kept in touch using phone and emails and an on site board meeting has been scheduled for December. We have been able to reach consensus on several issues using emails which can form the record of votes and opinions.

We have no procedure in our bylaws that deals with the challenge this pandemic presents but in keeping with the spirit of the bylaws and precedence of the organization the SBHS Board of Directors has concurred on the following:

1. Continue the adopted budget of the 2020 fiscal year.
2. Suspend membership dues for the year 2021. To those who have joined as "life members", we extend a special "thank you" for their ongoing support.
3. All current Board members will continue to serve through 2021.
4. Board meetings and General meetings will be planned according to health and safety guidelines.

We are exploring ideas for programs and safe venues for such time as the outbreak curve is on a downward trend and public health officials deem gatherings more suitable. We shall meet together again!

Wishing you all a safe and healthy Holiday Season.

Carol

THINGS TO DO

MUSEUMS OF BREVARD INAUGURAL CHRISTMAS TOUR OF HOMES

Field Manor – Green Gables – Pritchard House - Rossetter House

Sam's House - Lawndale

Visit Brevard's historic homes during the month of December. Tickets are \$35 per person. All but Sam's House and Field Manor require reservations. Visit the Green Gables website to view the details of the tour and to purchase tickets: <https://greengables.org> Tickets may also be purchased at the homes. Proceeds will go to the participating historic homes.

FOR THE READER

Reading on line!

Go to the December Senior Scene Magazine article, "Where Have All the Sparrows Gone? – to Disney!" written by SBHS Vice President Diane Barile. If you know where physical copies are available on a regular basis, please let us know.

FOR NOW, YOU CAN GO TO <https://seniorscenemag.com/senior-scene-magazine-december-2020>

NATURAL HISTORY – THE SBHS – and THE ZOO

In mid November the SBHS received a call from Robert Marks, our long time friend from AAA Malabar Storage. Someone had abandoned a storage unit and among the items left behind was a beautiful paper wasp nest. It had been constructed under the floor boards of a mobile home and had been mercifully preserved when removed from the structure. The SBHS had stored our collection for several years at AAA Malabar Storage so he knew we have a respect for “old stuff” and artifacts and he hoped we would be the ones to help find a home for the nest.



The wasp nest measures approximately 18” x 36” and was constructed attached to the underside of the floor board - the photo is upside down.

This is how it would have appeared if you had peeked underneath the mobile home. If you enlarge the reading view (zoom button) from 100% to 150% on your computer you can see the individual cells.

The wasp nest now resides at the BREVARD ZOO and will be utilized in their education programs. The Brevard Zoo is a good, “in open air” place to take a walk. There are plenty of distractions from our current plight and you might even come upon a wasp nest.

Zoo Rules: IN ORDER TO PROTECT VISITORS, STRICT GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR ZOO ATTENDANCE.

Members and Non Members must schedule an entry time online
You must purchase or reserve your tickets online prior to your visit.

For more information call: **321-254-9453** or go to: **<https://brevardzoo.org/>**

YOUTUBE/VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE MONTH

Enjoy this fascinating interview with JAMES MIZELL. He shares memories of the early space program, life in Brevard in the 1950's, involvement of the Germans and the intensity of working on the frontier of this technology. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqydItP8iWg>

SBHS Officers and Directors: Carol Andren, President; Diane Barile, Vice President; Barbara Arthur, Secretary; Annita Full, Treasurer. Directors: Denise Bozeman, James Cox, Wiley Elliott, Bob Gross, Nancy Grout, Kathi Harbaugh, Diane Newman, Jim Poulos.

DECEMBER SPECIAL FEATURE:

REVELATIONS OF AN AMATEUR HISTORY DETECTIVE

By Barbara Arthur

Upon watching an episode of History Detectives on television, I thought I would try my hand at being one. I decided to explore the history and mystery behind four letters and a small book I had received in my teens that were from the same family. I was not related to the people in the letters nor to the author of the book, but I knew from the names they were prominent in the early history of Melbourne. I decided to focus on a woman who was the recipient of three of the letters

My first approach was to contact people I knew that could direct my research, those people being Bob Gross, Ed Vosatka, and Ann Flotte. They were extremely helpful in my getting started. I reread the letters and tried to recover names and dates from them. I then went online to a genealogical site to determine a connection with those names and dates. I filled out three family trees before narrowing down my research to only one.

I was close to determining the lineage from the 1700s to present day except for a generation gap I was determined to resolve. I focused on researching baptismal and death records. After hours of research, I found the information I was looking for. Now my question was answered and I was confident my research was accurate.

One of the impediments I encountered was the fact that the letters had an address in another country. Another problem was being able to read the letters as they were written in long hand and over a century and a half ago. A third problem was with the initials of the person three of the letters was addressed to, so I wasn't certain the initials were correct in my research. Added to that was the closing statement of the letter writer indicating he was the brother of the addressee yet his last name was the same as the addressee's husband.

I pondered these issues and I decided to take a break from my research. I then made a typed copy of the letters on my computer so I didn't have to unfold them each time I wanted to check a name or date. The letters were fragile and one was literally falling apart. There were no envelopes and two of the letters had wax seals. Then there was the issue of the small book which bore the author's name that I had decided was the woman I was researching –Wrong!

This is how the mystery played out. I found a child's baptismal certificate which listed my subject and her husband. The husband was known by his middle name but the certificate listed his first name also. That solved the mystery of the letters being addressed to my subject bearing those initials. The next revelation was the fact that the woman I was researching had the same maiden name as her married name. Thus the letters indeed were from her brother.

As for the problem with the author of the book, it turned out that the daughter-in-law had the same first and middle names of my research woman only they were reversed. In other words one was Alpha Beta and the other was Beta Alpha and the book was written by the daughter-in-law!

This was a great research project but it took me over half a century before I decided to try to solve it. Although a challenging research project, it was exciting and fun. I would encourage others to research their family mysteries. With covid upon us, this project has occupied many idle hours. Good luck, new history detective!

PAGES FROM BARBARA'S BOOK:



Trysting Steps, Melbourne, Florida



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Visit us on:

www.southbrevardhistory.org

youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8HAaqqBGAz_GHMC3TZe-Q