

Journal and Newsletter of the
Triangle Inn Association

Venice Area Journal

July 2011

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(Local Historical Organizations)

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Association Update

Board Member Resignation

With regret, the Board of Directors accepted the resignation of Julia Cousins Laning. The Board wishes to thank her for serving on the Board of Directors since September 2009 and her thoughtful input.

Governance Committee

At its May meeting, the Board of Directors voted to accept the revised Bylaws prepared by Governance Committee. A major change was the establishment of term limits for Directors. The Governance Committee is now working on a Policies and Procedures Manual for the Association.

Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice Sponsorship

The Association is pleased to announce the receipt of a generous sponsorship from the GCCF of Venice for the printing of the book *John Nolen Plan of Venice, Florida* that will be available this fall. The book will include the full text of the National Register

Nomination of the John Nolen Plan of Venice Historic District that was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 8, 2010. The book will also include drawings of plan features that were prepared by Nolen for the Venice development that have not previously been published. While not all the drawings represent features that were built, they illustrate the attention to detail in Nolen's work and the big plans the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers had for their Venice property.

Archives Announcements

Voices of Our Past – Practical Guide to Conducting Oral Histories

On July 20, 2011 from 1-3 p.m., the Archives is sponsoring a seminar on how to setup and interview, what equipment is needed, and the dos and don'ts of conducting an oral history. After June 30, 2011, the general public will be invited to attend. If you want to attend the seminar, email your RSVP to rrogers@ci.venice.fl.us as soon as possible. The seminar will be held at Venice City Hall in Community Hall located at the west end of building.

Progressive Dinner – A Taste of Culture

Save the date, **Saturday, October 1, 2011**, for a progressive dinner at Venice's Cultural Campus (Venice Archives, Venice Library, Venice Community Center, and Venice Art Center). Start with hors d'oeuvres at the Venice Archives, then to the Venice Library, the Venice Community Center, and end at the Venice Art Center. Tour each facility and learn about the exciting programs and activities each has to offer while tasting and sipping your way through a wonderful meal.

COV Historic Preservation Board Update

At its May 10, 2011 meeting, City Council presented the annual Legacy Awards honoring Dr. Fred Albee and Dr. Douglas Murphy. A summary of the award text for each doctor follows.

Dr. Fred H. Albee (1876 – 1945) was a world-renown orthopedic surgeon and a 1903 Harvard Medical School graduate who conducted work on bone grafting, winning him international recognition. In 1917, Dr. Albee and his wife, Luella, purchased land in Nokomis for their winter home.

In 1924, Dr. Albee purchased 1,468 acres from the Bertha Palmer estate to build a new city by the sea, Venice. He recruited and hired John Nolen, nationally known city planner, to develop a plan for his new city. In 1925, he sold the 1,468 acres to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) of Cleveland, Ohio, who retained Nolen and began the development of Nolen’s Plan for Venice. When the Florida real estate market crashed and the BLE discontinued their Venice development, much of the land reverted to Dr. Albee who held mortgages on it.

In 1933, in the depth of the Great Depression, Dr. Albee bought Venice’s Park View Hotel and established the Florida Medical Center. His continuing ties to the Venice area led to his donating land for schools, churches, and the first airport that bore his name. Dr. Albee was also a prolific writer authoring several books and well over 200 articles on his surgical procedures. He was decorated by dozens of countries for his medical contributions.

Dr. Douglas Murphy (1919 – 2004) was six years old when his family moved to Venice in 1925. His interest in medicine began while working in a medical laboratory at Dr. Fred Albee’s Florida Medical Center. Dr. Murphy graduated from the University of Louisville’s Medical School and married his college sweetheart, Kitty Newman. They had three children, two daughters and one son. He served two tours of duty in the U.S. Navy, one in World War II and one in Korea, and received numerous commendations.

In 1951, Dr. Murphy and three other Venice physicians—Samuel Kaplan, James Blades, and T. S. Thompson—founded the Venice Hospital. Dr. Murphy practiced as a general surgeon and

gynecologist for thirty-five years. He received the Florida Medical Association's highest honor, the Certificate of Merit, in 1989.

The hospital-building project was not his only foray in civic involvement. In one year alone he was President of the Rotary Club, the Sarasota County Medical Association, and on the Board of Directors of Venice Hospital. He sat on the Board of the Venice Chamber of Commerce, acted as Chief of Surgery and Chief of Staff of the Hospital, and found time to preside as the first Commodore of the Venice Yacht Club. He also spearheaded the drive to build the Venice Community Center.

Friends of the Lord-Higel House Announcements

Dining Out Fundraising Dates

The Friends will receive 10% of all customer receipts between 5 and 8 p.m. at the East Venice Avenue **Dairy Queen** on the following Wednesdays. NO flyer needed! Tell your friends.

July 13 – August 10 – September 14
October 12 – November 09 – December 14

Lord-Higel House merchandise

Wooden house miniatures of the Lord-Higel House are available for \$20.00 at Triangle Inn, Island Gift Nook, Altheas, and the Venice Depot.

T-shirts with an image of the Lord-Higel House are available for \$15.00 each - all sizes - by emailing jbauerx2@verizon.net or calling 941-488-1937.

Local History Articles

This issue of the Journal highlights the large 1920 era homes built along Venice Avenue West. The text is a reprint of material from the Association's popular trolley tours conducted during the winter season.



625 West Venice Avenue, May 2011, D. Korwek photographer

This house at **625** West Venice Avenue, is a fine example of the larger homes constructed during the BLE era. It was built by Nat Harrison and includes varied rooflines, a front patio, and an elaborate stucco “relief” on the front façade. The first owner was Edward LePelley, a retired engineer on the Rock Island Railroad, who lived at the Triangle Inn. He bought the house for his son, Franklin, chief teller for the 1st National Bank of Chicago, and his family. Franklin’s son, Guernsey, was the creator of political cartoons for the *Christian Science Monitor*. Mrs. Franklin LePelley organized the first Christian Science Church in Venice and held services in this house.



613 West Venice Avenue, May 2011, D. Korwek photographer

This house at **613** West Venice Avenue was first owned by Fitzhugh W. Haensel, a vice president of Columbia Concert Corporation and producer of musical reviews in New York City. In 1905, he founded and was president of a company that booked concerts for Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Opera House, and other nationally prominent concert halls. This home was constructed by Oran Ward of Tampa and has a tile and stone fireplace, intricately designed ceramic tile floor in the sunroom, a curved stairway with Italian-design wood banister, and a U-shaped garden with fountain. This was the first 1920 era home to sell for over \$1M.



605 West Venice Avenue, May 2011, D. Korwek photographer

This house at **605** West Venice Avenue is another Oran Ward-built home. His homes typically cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 to build. It was built for George T. Webb, a native of North Dakota and a banker who was president of The Venice Company. The Venice Company was organized by the BLE to sell their property in Venice. George T. Webb was not only president of The Venice Company, but was on the executive committee of the BLE Realty Corp. and vice president of the BLE Investment Company.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers established several layers of corporations to insulate itself from its Venice land investments. The Venice Company (that sold land) was a subsidiary of the BLE Realty Corporation (that owned the land). The Realty Corp. was a subsidiary of the BLE Investment Company (that held options to buy land). The Investment Company was a subsidiary of the Union itself.

Webb decorated the home in grand style, although he only lived in it a couple months out of the year. The house has 4 fireplaces and 20 rooms. It was constructed so that each of the second floor bedrooms had cross ventilation—a major consideration in the days before air conditioning. When the BLE left Venice, the contents of the house were sold at auction, and the house was vacant and vandalized during the Depression.

In 1947, it was purchased and restored by James Lambert. Mr. Lambert was an heir to the Lambert Pharmaceutical Co. fortune. Mr. Lambert's grandfather and Dr. Lister, developed the formula for Listerine. The Lambert family gave Charles Lindbergh the first \$1,000 check for his trans-Atlantic flight, which encouraged other St. Louis investors to contribute. As a result, Lindbergh named his plane the "Spirit of St. Louis." The St. Louis airport, Lambert Field, was also named for the family. The house is currently owned by Mr. Dee Deaterly.