

Horse and Chaise Gazette

VeniceHeritage
Florida

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President's Message

Thank you VHI members, volunteers, and Venice residents for being part of our very busy 25/26 Winter season. We have had such a great turnout and support for our events.

Several projects that VHI has been part of have been completed, i.e. Lord Higel House is now open as a wonderful coffee shop, the installation of an outdoor water fountain for humans and dogs near the Venice Museum, the reprinting of the book, Dr and I by Louella Albee, and partnering with Venice Nokomis Woman's Club to have a large mural painted on the back wall of the Old Betsy Museum by the end of 2026.

Next season, VHI will start our 2nd Friday Library Lectures in September with a special 911 lecture and continue through May 2027. We are setting up other 2027 events including our Venice Centennial event - Old Betsy Birthday Bash on Saturday, Nov 7, 2027, VHI annual meeting at the Historic 1927 Train Depot with depot tour, our Annual VHI Luncheon, an exciting Members Only Tour at a local landmark site, and the opening of a 10 Year Time Capsule for the Lord Higel House in May 2027. Don't forget to increase your fun time next season by volunteering!

Thank you for your support of VHI in the past and in the future. Our next newsletter will be in August 2026.



Teri Ostroviak, President



The new fountain and bench next to the Venice Museum

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About Venice

Pinecone Wars by Carol Ann Dempsey

It so happened that the Colonel Vincent Dixon family lived across the Big Park (Venezia Park) from us. Colonel Dixon and his wife Margaret had five children; three older girls-Margaret Ann, Hazel and Nancy, and two younger boys, Martin and Tommy. Martin was two years older than Rosie Hightower and myself and Tommy was the same age as Nancy Hightower. The Southeast side of the Big Park was right across the street from the Dixon house. Of course, the park was a great place for the Dixon boys to play with their male friends as well as a place for we girls to play. About mid-way between the Southeast side and the Northeast side of the park there was about a one-hundred-foot-wide opening with no Australian pine trees growing. This sandy stretch of land became known to us kids as "No Man's Land". The South side of "No Man's Land" was the boys' side of the park and the North side of this cleared stretch of sandy land was the girls' side of the park. A boy trying to cross "No Man's Land" to the girls' side was an immediate Declaration of War and vice-versa.

Many times, we girls would return to our carefully built straw houses to find them ripped apart. Sometimes Mother Nature was the culprit with her high winds or torrential rains, but most of the time they were torn apart on purpose by one or more of the boys who had obviously walked on the girl's side of the park. Sometimes the boys would gather and heckle us from their side of "No Man's Land" while we girls were peacefully trying to play. I can't remember which side first decided to retaliate by throwing pine cones at the other side, but that is how "The Pine Cone Wars" began. Fortunately, the wars were not too frequent, but frequent enough for we girls to get organized.

First, we got our hands on several tough burlap sacks. We brought them to the park and filled them with the hardest, most spiny dense pinecones we could find. Then we hid them in several locations on the girl's side of the park by covering them with straw and fallen tree branches. If the boys started appearing, we would retrieve a couple of sacks of hidden pinecones and drag them into our straw house, turning it into a "fort". We were now ready for an attack by the boys, if they tried to cross "No Man's Land." We were ready with our ammo. Our hard, carefully selected pinecones could be thrown a much greater distance than just any old pinecone found on the ground. Over the years we girls learned to be aggressive. We would push the boys back toward their side of the park on many occasions. No one wanted to get hit with those hard pinecones!

The Wars came to a sudden halt one day when Rosie and I were about 12 years old. We girls were quietly playing in the Small Park on the benches of the green bus stop right across Salerno Street and the Dempsey's front door. Suddenly a bunch of boys started yelling at us from the south end of the Small Park. We looked up to see a bunch of boys running toward us with handmade body shields being held in front of them. Obviously, they had really planned this attack. We had never been attacked in the Small Park before and we were defenseless. We decided not to back down and ran towards the boys. Martin Dixon was running right towards me. He was much bigger than me and held a 3/4 body shield in front of himself. He probably couldn't see how close I was and hit me full force with his shield. I fell to the ground knocked out for a few minutes. Everything stopped and all the kids came running to my side. My mother came running out of our front door. By the time she reached me I had revived. I wasn't hurt. She told everyone to go home and I got a real lecture that afternoon about how I was getting too old to play these rough games with the boys, etc. I am sure Martin Dixon got lectured when his parents found out what happened, too. The Pinecone Wars were over forever. (from **People, Places and Events: Venice Old Timers Stories** edited by Dorothy Korwek)



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VHI News

It's been a busy time for Venice Heritage. Our History @ the Library series continues to draw crowds. We had an especially popular presentation by Jean Trammell about the Venice Theatre. And the new year was kicked off with us sending off our three geocache trackables out into the world. John Nolen is currently in travel; whereabouts unknown. Bertha Palmer has made it to outside of Miakka—perhaps considering more land purchases there. Dr. Fred Albee loves Venice so much he hasn't left yet. We'll keep updating on their progress.

In January, we held our annual Members Only Open House. Special thanks to Kathie Klepper and her son Chris Klepper for hosting us at the Blalock House. For those that don't know, the home at 241 Harbor Drive South, it was first home to George Youngberg, but soon after James and Ethel Blalock settled in and lived there for decades. What a treat it was to see homeowner Kathie with the grandson of George Youngberg at the event.



February brought the hosting of our annual Heritage Luncheon at the Venice Yacht Club. Speaker John McCarty from Marie Selby at Historic Spanish Point gave a mouth-watering presentation on “Delicious History.” Thank you Fran Valencic for the nice write up about it in the *Venice Gondolier*. Monies raised will go toward acquiring additional compacting shelving for the city's archives and research facility. In addition, we learned VHI—along with the City of Venice and Black Gold Coffee Roasters—will receive an award for adaptive reuse of the Lord-Higel House from the Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation.

VHI didn't slowdown in March. A near-record number of authors came to the Venice Book Fair in West Blalock Park. Several authors published local history books for the City of Venice Centennial. Before catching our breath, VHI held the annual meeting, at the Lord-Higel House.

Also in March, we received \$15,000 from the Venice Nokomis Woman's Club to complete a mural on the back of the Old Betsy Museum. Kentucky Military Institute Alumni stepped up, too. They provided a \$20,000 matching grant toward compact shelving in the Archives. Shelving may not sound exciting, but preserving more of Venice's history is.

With all of these exciting things happening, we hope you will consider being part of the fun by joining us, supporting us, or getting involved with us. You'll be glad you did.

History @ Venice Library – 2nd Friday of the Month,

2025-2026 Season

Date	Topic	Speaker
May 8, 2026	Searching for Angola	DVD Presentation (3 pm)

Become a Champion of Vintage Venice- Join VHI Today

Support Venice Museums. Promote our rich history. Promote saving and restoring the historic

Volunteer Needs

Photographers	Document VHI Activities & Events
Event Helpers	Promote VHI and its merchandise at booths
Lecture Helpers	Prepare and breakdown room
Book Fair Helpers	Populate the VHI booth
Committee Members	Marketing/Membership
	Fund Raising, Governance, Finance
	Volunteer Coordinator
Graphic Designer	Create and distribute flyers to media outlets for VHI events

Membership

Become a Champion of Vintage Venice- Join VHI Today

Support Venice Museums. Promote our rich history. Promote saving and restoring the historic buildings in Venice. We are a volunteer organization that believes in what we do. Go to <https://veniceheritage.org/membership/> to learn more and join.

Coming Events

November 7, 2026 Old Betsy Birthday Bash

Volunteers needed for all Events

From the HRM

It has been a busy season for us at both the Venice Museum and at the Julia Cousins Laning and Dale Laning Archives & Research Center. I don't know if it was the lack of hurricanes last year or people getting into the centennial spirit, but we have seen an increase of over 1/3 in attendance compared to last year.

Thank you to Venice Heritage for helping us put on a wonderful Holiday Open House last December. With the lights in the park, the St. Mark's Choir in the gazebo, and the Venice Museum and Old Betsy Museum open, it was quite the wonderful event. You'll also see some new features outside the museum. Venice Heritage sponsored a new drinking fountain with a bottle filler and a spot for our four-legged friends to hydrate. Also, Peg and Irvin Lewin, members of Venice Heritage, donated a bench by the fountain.

This time of year also means going out to events. I recently participated in a Restoration Forum put on by the Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation. Along with Venice Heritage we had a booth at History Day in the Park. And, I also served as a judge for Sarasota County History Day. I was invigorated to see all those kids interested in history. Good luck to those that advance to the state level.

Finally, we say farewell to long-time administrative coordinator, Rhonda Rogers. She retired this February and we wish her much joy and beach time in her retirement.



Harry Klinkhamer, Venice Historical Resources Manager



Dorothy Kelwek, VHI Treasurer;; Josh Goodman, speaker; Teri Ostroviak, VHI President; Terry Potter, VHI Vice President pose for the camera after Josh spoke at the library about the Tamiami Trail.

More About Venice

Louella Albee by Dorothy Korwek

Louella Albee was described by friends as a “great women in her own right,” in spite of the fact that, by choice, she lived in the shadow of her famous husband, orthopedic surgeon Dr. Fred Albee.

In her book the *Doctor and I*, Louella relates much about her life before her marriage to Fred. Born and raised in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Louella describes her childhood with “fondest memories, . . . particularly those of early spring and summer, and wonderful picnics in the mountains.” Her mother developed tuberculosis and died when Louella was six years old after a long illness.

After Louella graduated from school in Williamsport and her father remarried, the family was living in Woodbury, New Jersey and Louella heard her stepmother tell her father that “it would be necessary for [Louella] to leave.” Her father replied: “If my child goes—I go too.” Not letting on that she heard this exchange she told her father that she “was going to get a job.”

Louella went to Philadelphia, PA, a short distance from Woodbury, and applied for a position at a wholesale millinery house, as a designer. She took a job as millinery designer in a store in Milton, Pennsylvania. Her first hat was “a dark blue straw sailor, with a bunch of African violets and an American beauty rosebud plunged right in the center of the violets.” After one season at Milton, Louella announced to her father that she was going to New York to further her career. She became an associate at *Johnson’s* one of the largest wholesale millinery houses in New York. For those who don’t know, *millinery* refers to the design and making of hats and headwear.

In his book *A Surgeon’s Fight To Rebuild Men*, Dr. Fred Albee states “my greatest and most enduring adventure began when I met Louella May Berry.” Louella and Fred were married in New York,” and since then we have worked together and seen much of the world together. A happy life, they say, has no history.”



Louella Albee with Dr. Albee (Venice Archives)

Louella worked with her husband to create his successful professional career and did whatever was required to promote their common goals. During their 38-year marriage, she took pride in her role as her husband’s “chief assistant.”

Another perk when you become a Member of VHI is our annual Members Only Event. That and other events are being planned for 26-27. The August Newsletter will highlight those events

Join now and enjoy our fall events, too. Venice Heritage will have its own events for the Venice Centennial. Go to Membership for more information.

And, don’t forget the Second Friday speaker series supported by Venice Heritage. Tht one is free to the public, so you can bring your friends.

This special tour is free with your annual membership!

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Photo Page



Venice Museum at Night



Harry and Jon from the Venice Museum, and President Teri and VP Terry from VHI



Harry talks to a listener after a library lecture

Did you know...

The **BLE** launched a major nationwide campaign during 1926-1927. The *Venice Voice* was created to promote Venice's activities, progress, culture, and potential to attract new investors from the North.



Old Betsy decked out for the holiday



Our volunteers come in all ages

Our Sponsors

Thank you to businesses who support VHI



VHI hopes you will consider joining us in support of our high priority projects. You may make a donation and specify which project you support by going to <https://veniceheritage.org/donate/>.