

# Preservation News

A Publication of the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation

• Fall 2006 •

Phone (239) 344-0100

## Saving The Exhibition Hall The Fight Isn't Over Yet!



In recent months, residents of Fort Myers and the greater Lee County have taken a great interest in the City's Downtown Redevelopment Plan. Faced with the challenges of revitalizing the downtown, the City of Fort Myers utilized the services of a consultant, Andre Duany, to create a plan that would integrate the old with the new; enhancing existing

features and designing some new ones. Duany came up with a plan that was accepted and steps were taken to begin the implementation. But then, something went awry. The City Officials, seduced by lucrative offers by developers, decided to modify the plan to permit high rise condominiums be built on the waterfront with heights far exceeding Duany's recommendations. These actions raised red flags among the citizens of Fort Myers, as well as the semi-natives, who were not born here but considered Fort Myers their adopted home. The result was a grass-roots movement of concerned citizens, dedicated to stopping further destruction of the downtown waterfront area.

On Saturday May 6th a rally protesting the destruction of another Fort Myers landmark was met with much participation, enthusiasm and support. Many residents and non residents joined the members of the Lee Trust for Historic Preservation protesting by holding signs and marching in front of the historic hall. Fort Myers has already lost too much of its architectural history and the removal of yet another building has to



be stopped. Fox News and The News press were there to lend their support.

In addition the protest included the phrase "Save our Waterfront." If the sale of the Exhibition Hall and surrounding property is sold to private developers then public access would be restricted to the waterfront... we cannot let this happen.

Please write or call the Mayor and City Council to continue to voice your support in helping us save the Exhibition Hall.

## CALL TO ACTION! FOR CAPE CORAL'S YACHT CLUB

After many meetings with many concerned citizens in the area, the consensus is to strongly disagree with the expansion project of the planning board of the city of Cape Coral. The changes that are currently being proposed would strongly and adversely affect the historic fabric of this neighborhood. We are opposed to making changes to the oldest neighborhood in Cape Coral which boasts to have the first 8 homes already deemed historic. Along with the first residences came the first meeting pavilion and the yacht club beach.

**Please help us advise the city leaders to improve the area thru beautification as opposed to demolition. VOICE your opinion by writing a letter to the mayor and city council of Cape Coral.**

*We appreciate your help*



LEE TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, INC.

The mission of Lee Trust is to preserve the sites and buildings of historical, archaeological and architectural significance to Lee County through both advocacy and acquisition.

## Lee Trust for Historic Preservation

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**2006**

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Lee Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc.  
was founded in 1993  
and is dedicated to preserving  
and developing  
the heritage of Lee County  
and its municipalities.

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Lee Trust publishes its newsletter,  
Preservation News,  
in April and October.

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Lee Trust is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit  
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## There are lots of things happening at the Mound House.

The Mound House is the oldest surviving structure on Fort Myers Beach. It is located atop a Calusa Mound where Connecticut meets the bay. Theresa Schober has been appointed by the Town of Fort Myers Beach to serve an additional year as the director. Conversion of a 1920's garage to office space, restroom and lab facilities has recently been completed. The



overall plan is to restore the Mound House to its circa 1920 configuration. The original structure was built in 1906 and was added to over the years. Funding from the Florida Department of State in the sum of \$265,000 is in place. Restoration will begin early in 2007. When the restoration is completed the structure will be adaptively reused as a cultural and environmental center. A large 1950's pool that was cut into the mound has been removed exposing centuries of occupation by the Calusa. The cavity left by the pool will become an archaeological exhibit. The space will be roofed and enclosed. Funding for this phase has been obtained. A grant application has been filed for \$350,000.00 to complete the interior space and to fabricate the exhibits.

Schober said the goal is to have three areas of interest on the site. The underground museum will exhibit the archaeological aspects, the house will portray the history and the grounds will be the primary environmental exhibit. The hope is to have the entire project completed by 2008.

## Koreshan Landscape Plan Completion

The Koreshan Unity Alliance, the citizen support organization for the Koreshan State Historic Site in Estero, has completed the first phase of an Historic Landscape Restoration Plan. David J. Driapsa, landscape architect, has presented the Alliance with his first report. Mr. Driapsa has extensively studied the written and photographic evidence relating to the historic site. A statement of significance reveals that the landscape is eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. He found that the urban design for the town is the first example of the City Beautiful Movement in the American subtropics. The site has elements of a Victorian Garden complex which is a very formal design. Also extant are elements of naturalistic landscape gardening that became popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century which is a very informal design. Early examples of arboreta and botanical collections were also identified. The site is associated with Cyrus Teed who carried the City Beautiful Movement to the American subtropic frontier. After Teed, Allen Andrews transformed the Koreshan publication, The American Eagle, into a leading horticultural journal. It was Andrews who introduced the naturalistic approach to landscaping the site.

Surviving elements of the historic landscape were identified as the Bamboo Landing complex (ca. 1903), the Victorian Gardens (ca. 1904) the Avenues (ca. 1905), the Canal (ca. 1905), Sunken Gardens (ca. 1905), Raised Mounds (ca. 1905), two Decorative Bridges (ca. 1905), recently replicated, the Petronian Fountain and numerous decorative concrete urns and other decorative elements.

The Driapsa report spells out recommendations and guidelines for the restoration and interpretation of this fascinating landscape.



LEE TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, INC.

**Save The Date!**



## **Annual Meeting**

**February 24th, 2007**

**at**

**The Tarpon Lodge**

Lunch at Noon

Followed by a 2:00 pm Tour  
of the Randell Research Center

Call 344-0100 for more information

Invitations are forthcoming

The Florida Historical Commission met September 18-20<sup>th</sup>. The task before the Commission was to review and rank 129 statewide applications for Special Category funding for preservation projects. The Special Category Grants program is designed to fund preservation projects, the cost of which exceeds \$50,000.00. This year the average application was in the \$300,000.00 range. During the procedure each applicant is allowed to appear before the Commission and answer questions regarding their projects.

This year there were three Lee County projects requesting funding. The Koreshan Unity Alliance requested \$315,000.00 for the restoration of the century old Bakery building at the Koreshan State Historic Site in Estero. Florida Arts, Inc asked for \$355,000.00 to fund the continuing restoration of the magnificent Post Office Building in downtown Fort Myers. The Town of Fort Myers Beach applied for \$350,000.00 to fund archaeological exhibits to be housed with the underground structure that is being constructed.

Upon completion of the review process the Commission ranked 53 out of the 129 applications for funding. If the Florida Legislature fully funds the 53 projects the total will be \$14.9 million.

The Mound House application was ranked number One. Needless to say, Mound House Director, Theresa Schober was pleased to be ranked the highest in the state. This level of ranking recognizes the statewide significance of the project, Schober said.

Unfortunately the Bakery and the Post Office were not ranked within the 53 funded projects. These projects will have to seek alternate financing or apply again next year.

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## Preservation Log

W/GCU continues to expand its "Untold Stories" series. The segments have dealt with many aspects of the history of Southwest Florida from Mina Edison to the Koreshan Unity and everything in between. In the planning stage is a program on the historic preservation movement in Lee County. This segment will deal with the successes and failures of the preservation movement in our community. Highlighted will be the economic and aesthetic values preservation adds to our community. Lee Trust has been at the forefront of this movement for many years. The Lee Trust board thinks the program will be a valuable tool in its efforts to promote historic preservation and has agreed to be a sponsor of the segment.

The projected date for the first showing will be late April of 2007. Stay tuned!

## Art Hall

The Koreshan Unity Alliance has begun Phase II of the restoration of the historic Art Hall located at the Koreshan State Historic Site in Estero. The work includes removal of a modern bathroom from the rear of the structure and repairing and replacing exterior siding. All the existing nonhistoric porches will be replaced with historically accurate porches. All windows will be repaired and the exterior painted. The project is being funded from a Special Category Grant from the Florida Department of State in the sum of \$261,000.00. The Art Hall housed an extensive art collection and was the site of many of the cultural activities of the Koreshan Unity. Upon completion the Art Hall it will reopen to the public.





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our newsletter via email  
please send your request to  
[LeePreservation@aol.com](mailto:LeePreservation@aol.com)



## On Hemingway: Three Views

The Florida Humanities Council, in conjunction with The Lee Trust for Historic Preservation, was proud to organize "On Hemingway: Three Views" presented by Betty Jean Steinhauer on July 30th. Held in the auditorium at the Imaginarium Hands On Museum in Fort Myers, that Sunday afternoon's performance was enjoyed by approximately 45 delighted attendees.

Ms. Steinhauer portrayed three authors, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Willa Cather, and Gertrude Stein, each character offering three unique perspectives on Ernest Hemingway. At the conclusion, she encouraged questions about Hemingway's years in Cuba and Key West. This segment could have lasted for hours because Ms. Steinhauer's comprehensive knowledge seemed limitless!

Special audience guests included local authors Robert N. Macomber & Kaydian Wehrle. They walked away with inspiration for future collaborative projects, celebrating the rich history of our region and state.



## Welcome Kara Sweeney

The mission of the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN), which was created by the state legislature in 2004, is to protect and preserve the archaeological record through coordination with the state, local governments, and the public. I am responsible for public outreach in the network's southwest region, which consists of a five county area (Charlotte, Lee, Collier, Hendry, and Glades counties). As you all know, this is a very rich region in terms of interesting archaeology and history. I am excited to partner with local governments, historical and archaeological societies, and museums, as well as schools, throughout this region. Through these partnerships, I hope to promote heritage tourism and education programs, focusing especially on local archaeology and history. I also am developing programs which will be delivered to the public at special events, so that locals can feel connected to archaeology, as well as to the history of the region in which they live. I hope to involve volunteers in my efforts throughout the region, and will be developing a web page, so please stay posted. The southwest regional office of the Florida Public Archaeology Network is at the Randell Research Center in Pineland. I can be reached at [karabsweeney@comcast.net](mailto:karabsweeney@comcast.net), or at (239) 283-2062.



Looking to the future with an eye to the past...

LEE TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, INC. P.O. Box 1035 • Fort Myers, Florida 33902-1035

# Annual Meeting

Feb. 24th, 2007 at  
The Tarpon Lodge  
Lunch at Noon  
Followed by a  
2:00 pm Tour  
of the Randell  
Research Center  
For More Info  
Call 344-0100



LEE TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, INC.

## Membership Application/ Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Save a stamp and email my meeting notices.

I am a:  New Member  Renewing Member

Level of Membership:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor - \$500 and up | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor - \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250              | <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$30      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$100             | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$20  |

In addition to my gift, a matching gift will be made by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Make checks payable to Lee Trust for Historic Preservation and send to:

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*Membership is for the calendar year. Dues are payable on January 1st  
and are considered delinquent after the annual meeting in February of each year.*

## 2007 Dues Are Due!

Tired of seeing our historic buildings torn down? Want to know more about historic preservation? Then join Lee Trust!

Lee Trust is a nonprofit organization formed to promote preservation and assist our community when historic resources are threatened. We have a Revolving Fund Program to buy threatened historic structures. We also provide assistance and seek to educate the public about our community heritage. Our primary sources of funding are membership dues, gifts and fundraising events organized by volunteers.

Please fill out this form and send it in with your check. In addition to selecting your membership level, you may elect to be notified of meetings and events via email, saving the Trust the cost of postage. Consider an additional donation as a Contributor or Sponsor and help increase our Revolving Fund. For more information about Membership contact Gina Taylor at (239) 344-0100 ■