

July 2011

Shorelines

A PUBLICATION OF THE INDIAN BEACH-SAPPHIRE SHORES ASSOCIATION

North Trail Historical Tour

By David Jennings

At a recent North Trail Redevelopment committee meeting someone asked the group “What do you want to see GONE from the North Trail?”

I was struck by the question. Besides the obvious answer of wanting visible vice and crime to go away, I could not think of anything I wanted to see gone. In fact, adaptive reuse of existing structures may be the most logical way to go given redevelopment challenges related to parcel size, water retention requirements, parking ratios, new construction set backs from property boundaries, etc.

But maybe that’s just my rationalization. I happen to like most of the buildings on the North Trail. As the meeting wore on and others talked about grand redevelopment ideas I became distracted with creating a Historical Tour of North Tamiami Trail.

1. The tour begins along the waterfront in Whitaker Gateway Park. There’s a perfectly positioned swing providing a view south of Yellow Bluffs. This is now the Sarasota Bay Club but you can still see an old stairway cascading down the steep bank to the remains of an old dock. Various pillars and an old entryway arch are visibly scattered among the Live Oaks. These are remnants of The Acacias, a home built by L. V. Honore, the wife of Bertha Potter Palmer’s uncle Benjamin in 1912. And we all know this to be the site of the Whitaker landing in the 1840’s.

You can still see the yellow, chalky limestone behind a newer retaining wall and it’s obvious this high ground provided protection to some of our early settlers. A historical marker in the park has a brief overview of the Whitaker family’s involvement in Sarasota.

2. From Whitaker Gateway Park, go south on Tamiami Trail and turn east on 11th St. To your left are Pioneer Park and the Hog Creek environmental restoration area. Hog Creek is where the Whitaker family let the hogs run. For me, this is the beginning of our North Trail as most properties to the north are now zoned NT.



3. Head north on Cocoanut and turn west on 12th Street. To your left and within the boundaries of Pioneer Park are the relocated Birdwell-Wood House and Crocker Memorial Church. These structures, now home to the Historical Society of Sarasota County, have been moved more than once. I believe their original locations are now home to a McDonalds at Mound and 41 (Bidwell-Wood House) and a tire repair shop on Bee Ridge (Crocker Memorial Church).

4. Adjacent to the Historical Society is long time park occupant, the Sara Desoto Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. They are caretakers of Pioneer Whitaker Cemetery established in 1879. A historical marker in this location honors Mary Wyatt Whitaker and has been in place since 1936.
5. Next stop north is 1770 Tamiami Trail. This is the historically designated Twin Motel built in 1950 and referred to as a “modern ranch style motel”. It was only the second historically designated motel in the State of Florida. It is now an example of adaptive reuse and houses a Chinese Restaurant, a Real Estate Company, a hair salon and a pet salon. North and across 18th Street you can see Panama Drive following the curvature of Whitaker Bayou as it winds through the Edgewater subdivision, now part of the Central Cocoanut National Historic District.
6. Cross over Whitaker Bayou and bear right on Old Bradenton Road. This is an early generation of US 41. To your immediate left are several repurposed buildings being used by Ringling College of Art and Design. I recall one being a gas station and the other a motel. Old Bradenton Road follows the banks of the bayou until you reach the lighted intersection with Martin Luther King Drive.
7. On the NW corner of MLK and OBR is the old Bay Haven Hotel. It’s a classic example of Mediterranean Revival

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Contact Cynthia Biggar (350-2265) with questions

News group - go to website for instructions on how to join and participate. Contact Gretchen Serrie (355-2560) with questions.

Newsletter - EDITOR - Donna Bauer (355-0427). Contact with feedback on articles or news of potential interest. Please contribute an article or volunteer to be a newsletter writer.

Writers July 2011 Newsletter

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architecture built by Walter V. Coleman, developer of the Bay Haven subdivision. The Bay Haven, rumored to be haunted, was purchased by the Ringling's School of Fine and Applied Arts in 1931 and has been used by RCAD as a dormitory ever since.

This side trip reminds us old highways have meandered like rivers and to experience the full history you need to leave the main stream and explore backwaters and ox bow lakes.

- Back on north Tamiami Trail; pull in to the parking lot of Carr's Corner Café. This is the center of the Bay Haven subdivision which is bounded by Indian Beach Drive on the South, Highland Drive on the North, the bay front to the west and Old Bradenton Road to the East. Distinctive features include Coleman's own home on the corner of Virginia Drive and Bay Shore Road, Bay Haven Elementary School and the previously mentioned Bay Haven Hotel.

The 1920's are referred to by some as a zenith in American urban planning and Bay Haven is a great example. It contains single family homes and multifamily, hospitality and commercially zoned properties. Sitting in Carr's parking lot puts you in a circle of commercial and multifamily properties within N. Tamiami Circle West and N. Tamiami Circle East. This early project provided for mixed use and transitional zoning more complimentary than we find today.

- Further north and at the intersection of Tamiami Trail and Myrtle you begin to see development from the 1950's designed exclusively for the automobile. Commercial buildings are set back and surrounded by huge parking lots. Little remains of architectural interest and some think we are still reeling from this design concept which obliterates streetscape and pedestrian environments.
- North of Myrtle there are many remaining "modern ranch style motels". These are not without some character like the Allamanda Motel at 4014 North Tamiami Trail built in 1949 and the Cadillac Motel across the Street. But my favorite is the Golden Host at 4675 North Tamiami Trail.

I have been told this property which includes the Bahai Hut and Melody Diner were designed by the Zimmerman's, lesser known players from the Sarasota School of Architecture. Someone put a Mediterranean facade on this motel but it cannot conceal Polynesian influences and inspired ranch elements like deep overhangs, exposed beams and vertically stacked cement block.

- On the Northeast corner of Tamiami Trail and 47th Street is Crossroads Church or what used to be called North United Methodist Church. Structures on this property date back to 1952 and 1958. I can imagine a full parking lot on Sunday morning when Sapphire Heights, one of the subdivisions to the west was coming out of the ground in the 1950's. While not quite as inspired as the work of Victor Lundy (St. Paul Lutheran Church) this sanctuary is still worth a look inside.
- Head East on 47th for a couple blocks to see another neighborhood platted in the 1920's. Broadway Heights of Indian Beach is two blocks long with a small traffic circle in

the middle. Another distinctive feature is the sidewalks lined with 90 year old Washingtonian palms like Bay Shore Road in Sapphire Shores which was landscaped at the same time. Only one house was built during the boom era of the 1920's with most of the others dating to the late 1940's and early 1950's. See if you can figure out which one was probably the "model".

13. The intersection of Mecca Drive and Tamiami Trail is worth a stop. Barnacle Bills on the SE corner used to be the popular Golden Buddha which sat adjacent to a development plat called Gardens of Allah, thus the street name Mecca Drive. You can still find old postcards of this Chinese restaurant with a kitschy onion dome removed along with the Buddha during the last renovation. This building dating to 1957 was originally a mid-eastern restaurant called The Mecca which explains the onion dome as an architectural element.
14. On the NW corner of Mecca is a collection of structures of various vintage. I've been told some were used as sales & marketing offices for The Meadows built out east off 17th Street in the 1970's. If true, this is a more recent reminder everyone driving to or through Sarasota came down this road until the 1980's.
15. The NE corner was home to Old Hickory, at one time one of the oldest continually operating family restaurants in Sarasota. The building, built in 1949 is still there but the steaks and salad bar have been gone since 2005.
16. Farther north and adjacent to University Parkway is the Classic Car Museum built in 1945. This renowned collection provided a less highbrow tourist attraction than the John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art across the street on Ringling Plaza and it remains a popular destination today.
17. Finally, travel a bit farther north and turn west on College Drive. The small triangular lot to the north was the location of the long gone "Sarasota Welcome Center" where arriving travelers could get a free glass of orange juice and a map of Sarasota. It was replaced with the fondly recalled Zinn's Restaurant and the property now belongs to New College of Florida.

I am sure many readers and long time residents could add to this tour and maybe even correct a few things. Your stories, photographs and memorabilia could be a great value to our community. If you have something you would like to share, please call or email. ■

David Jennings, 941-650-7354
David.Jennings@FloridaMoves.com



Reminders:

Don't speed! BE a safe driver and obey the 25 mph speed limit throughout our neighborhood and the 15 mph speed limit in all school zones.

Museum of Art and Whimsy to Expand

By Don Farr

The Marietta Museum of Art and Whimsy is a non-profit museum located in the Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores neighborhood at 2121 Tamiami Trail between Sylvan Drive and 22nd Street. The museum is owned and operated by Indian Beach resident, Marietta ("Mary") Lee, a graduate of Ringling College of Art and Design.

After a year-long process, Mary was recently granted approval by the city of Sarasota for Future Land Use and Zoning changes that will allow the combining of the residential property located at 1173 Sylvan Drive into the museum property to be used in a very limited and specific manner in connection with the operation of the museum. The requests for Future Land Use and Zoning changes were met with objections from many residents living in close proximity to the museum who expressed concerns that the changes could lead to the future encroachment of commercial development into our neighborhood at this location and that it could possibly set a precedent for other requests for the conversion of residential property to commercial use. The requests were supported by a number of neighborhood residents and the board of directors for the Indian Beach-Sapphire Shores Association. Those supporting the requests felt that the restrictions contained in the ordinance adopting the zoning changes would allow for the neighborhood-compatible expansion of the museum while precluding any chance of an encroachment of true commercial land uses into our residential neighborhood.

The museum plans to utilize the newly incorporated land area to expand the existing gardens, to house visiting artists and a caretaker, to serve as a demonstration area for artists whose work is on display in the museum, and to serve refreshments to museum visitors. Admission to the museum is free and it is currently open Thursday through Saturday from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Stop by for a visit and Mary will be happy to discuss with you her plans to expand and improve her museum property. ■

National Register of Historic Places: IBSSA Historic District Proposal

By David Morriss

The IBSSA Board was approached with a proposition to have portions of the IBSSA neighborhood placed on the National Register of Historic Places as a District (or perhaps Districts) as a follow up to a 2004 study showing that at least a portion of the neighborhood can qualify for this designation.

The Board has taken a first step to identify the potential benefits and liabilities (if any) associated with being in an Historic District. The first question is whether inclusion would adversely affect property rights. The fast answer is 'no'; the representative for the Department of State, who oversees the application and approvals for the US government made it crystal clear that property rights are the same after designation as they were before.

Some basics: a district is comprised of 'contributing structures' at a density of 65%. Consequently, the district is more likely to resemble a gerrymandered map than a clean geometric shape. In order to be considered a 'contributing structure', a house needs to be at least 50 years old (there are lots of those) and be basically

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unaltered on the exterior. The government website has the entire list of criteria. Not all houses within IBSSA will qualify or be included in the District.

A vetting process to determine the number and location of 'contributing structures' is part of the application process and follows a set of clearly prescribed standards. From that a district or perhaps multiple districts are created. Once the correct paperwork is complete, it ends up as an application to the Department of State (DOS) which oversees the National Register for consideration. Designation is a formal process.

The DOS's website has a lot of information about the background, process and conditions for Historic Districts. PDFs of basic information, including links to the DOS website, will be available on the IBSSA Website. Our basic questions are answered in this excerpt from the Federal website:

Listing and Ownership

- National Register listing places no obligations on private property owners. There are no restrictions on the use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property.
- National Register listing does not lead to public acquisition or require public access.
- A property will not be listed if, for individual properties, the owner objects, or for districts, a majority of property owners object.
- National Register listing does not automatically invoke local historic district zoning or local landmark designation.
- Federal Regulation 36 CFR 60 authorizes the National Register of Historic Places.
- Contact your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for any specific state rules or regulations The Laurel Park neighborhood of Sarasota is officially an Historic District. We spoke with one of their representative about their experiences with the process. Some basic points:
 - The process took a little over 2 years
 - The Laurel Park neighborhood was/is 'saturated' with eligible buildings (we may be a bit more spotty)
 - The neighborhood group did an initial survey of contributing structures for basic feasibility followed by the consultant's documentation in preparation for formal submission. (A basic feasibility study for the IBSSA has already been done and the consultant will flesh it out to determine the boundaries and extents of the proposed IBSSA Historic Districts)
 - General lack of restrictions from the Feds for the residents
 - The City appears to be more "sensitive" to architectural context.

The process has a cost associated with it that, for the Laurel Park Neighborhood was around \$20,000. IBSSA could similarly range from \$15,000-\$20,000 and as low as \$5000. Two funding avenues are available: the process is handled, funded and administered by the City or the IBSSA neighborhood does a grass roots effort and raises the money through a combination

of whatever grants are available and internal fundraising. Dr. Clifford Smith of the City of Sarasota mentioned that, in tapping the City to perform this effort, we start in a queue that could be several years to see results. A grass roots effort would likely be quicker as well as a more sensitive use of resources in a bad economy.

So, the inevitable question is how does this benefit us?

On the website is a scan of a publication outlining the positive effects of both being in and being adjacent to historic districts. Those in and near historic districts enjoy benefits though most are intangible. There is not enough space to list them all but please take a look at the website for much clearer and more detailed information.

At the least, a designation as a historic district communicates a sense of quality and value of a neighborhood; this 'bragging right' has translated into higher property values for those within and those near a historic district in a good number of communities throughout Florida and the rest of the country. Due to space limitations this article is only an overview of the topic; the IBSSA Website will soon have supplemental information as well as documents from the National Register of Historic Places with the full range of information available for your review. ■



News

By Debbie Muller

Eyes, Ears and Knows: As concerned residents we provide the best defense against criminal activity in our neighborhood. Being aware of and reporting unusual or suspicious activity as we go about our daily routines and taking notice of unfamiliar persons and vehicles in our area will enable the police to gain immediate, valuable information which may lead to the identification of a criminal. Alerting neighbors of the situation will reduce the chances for additional crime and will allow the resident to e on the lookout for possible suspects.

The key elements of an effective neighborhood watch are concern, awareness and communication. The potential for criminal activity will be greatly diminished if we: **See it! Hear it! Report it!**

Your participation in Neighborhood Watch is much needed and greatly appreciated! Report all crime and suspicious activity IMMEDIATELY!

- 1 Call the Police Dispatch @ 316-1199 or 316-1201. Emergency: 911.
- 2 Inform your block captain or coordinator.
- 3 Alert your neighbors

The narcotics hotline is 954-7050. Suspected illegal drug activity at a specified location can be reported anonymously.

Update: Representatives from several northside neighborhoods are meeting to discuss ways to improve conditions within these areas and most especially along North Tamiami Trail. Suggestions have included writing letters to business owners conveying the concerns of residents regarding illegal activity in and around their establishments (motels, convenience stores

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**Annual Picnic:
Sunday, November 6**

**December Semi-Annual Meeting:
Tuesday, Dec. 6**



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Neighborhood Watch News cont. from pg 5

etc.). Together we can begin to remedy some of the problems more quickly. Working with what we have available right now is crucial as we focus on what can be done. Everyone must be willing to observe and report crime and suspected criminals loitering in the area. Business owners, along with management and staff, need to be vigilant and dedicated to maintaining well-kept, safe establishments which attract law-abiding customers. We can only hope that businesses that provide a respectable environment for guests will succeed.

Several residents of the Bayou Oaks neighborhood (east of US 41) have started foot patrols along North Tamiami Trail as well as in areas of suspected criminal activity near the highway. The presence of concerned neighbors closely monitoring what's taking place in and around their neighborhoods will send a clear message that we are committed to protecting our homes and families and that we will do our utmost to stop the intrusion of criminal activity into our neighborhoods. Working together to rid the illicit criminal activity on the North Tamiami Trail will make Sarasota safer and even more enjoyable for everyone.

*If you are interested in attending future meetings or participating in foot patrols contact Debbie Muller at 355-5743 or your coordinator.

For Your Information:

Door-to-door solicitors must obtain a local business tax receipt from the City of Sarasota and also a solicitation permit from the county. In order to receive a business tax receipt from the city, the following requirements must be met:

- (1) Organization must be registered as a "not for profit" (501C3 organization).
- (2) Each individual solicitor must undergo a background check and fingerprinting at the Sarasota Police Department.
- (3) A county solicitation permit which displays a photo identification is to be obtained.

The City of Sarasota business tax receipts are printed in a different color each year and are valid from October 1st through September 30th. Solicitors should be in possession of the proper permits, receipts and identification when going door to door.

Reminder:

School's Out! Let's keep an extra watchful eye on the children in our neighborhood to ensure their safety and keep them out of trouble or dangerous situations.

Crime Report:

As of June 15th, there have been approximately 14 residential/structural burglaries: 12 auto/vehicular burglaries, 2 boats burglarized, 8 thefts, 1 motor vehicle theft and 2 motorcycles/dirt bikes stolen... (the car and two motorcycles were recovered). There was an arrest of a suspect in two of the burglaries. During the second week of June the Sarasota Police Department conducted special operations in the vicinity of North Tamiami Trail resulting in the arrest of 7 suspected prostitutes and 6 "johns" (customers of prostitutes). ■

The Red Chef

By Richard Clapp

Meet Red Chef, aka Wendell Price, one of three entrepreneurs/owners of the Red Chef restaurant on the North Trail - next to SunTrust. Red picked up this moniker as a youngster. He's a Sarasota native and first worked for Jack Anderson at Jack Graham's Marina. He worked as a cook and followed Jack Anderson to the Greenhouse (which eventually became the Summerhouse) on Siesta Key. Most recently he has been a cook at Plymouth Harbor. In between he also had stints at the Waffle House, Silver Star and other restaurants.



It was at Plymouth Harbor that he met Archie Kirby and Sam Zehr. These three friends decided to start their own restaurant, the Red Chef. Sam comes from a family heavily involved in cooking, some with star power. His aunt is a world class cook having cooked for the Duchess of York (Fergie), Randolph Hearst and as well he was the chef for a recent N J Governor. While Sam started as a utility surveyor, he eventually got back to cooking and still works at Plymouth Harbor. Archie's resume includes cooking at Bay Village, and ice cream and candy making at Kilwin's on St Armands, and work at various restaurants.

The Red Chef opened on May 13, Archie told me while chuckling and saying "Friday the 13th." The restaurant is open six days a week (closed Tuesday), serving breakfast and lunch. They also serve dinner on Friday and Saturday. Sandwiches, burgers, wraps, salads and soup are on the lunch menu. Typical breakfast items are also offered. I had an excellent ham and cheese omelet one recent morning that was almost too big to eat. For lunch on another day I had the Chicken Philly Wrap - also excellent. Archie says their Honey Stung Fried Chicken is a customer favorite. The Red Chef also serves beer and wine.

Check out the Red Chef and support all our local businesses on the Trail and nearby. ■

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Protection from Hurricanes???

You might not have heard this legend. It was written by Anna Scott for the Sarasota Herald Tribune and published on Monday, June 18, 2007.

“Sarasota County—Marcus Joel heard it from a co-worker. Bonni Fox, from a neighbor. Lisa Parker draws a blank when asked where she heard it, but she knows she did.

The story goes something like this, with the emphasis on “something.”

Sarasota is protected from hurricanes because the American Indians who once lived here knew it was a safe place, which is why they decided to live here. Or, the American Indians who once lived here blessed this place and made it safe from hurricanes. Or, the ancient American Indian burial grounds scattered throughout the county are keeping the storms at bay.

Sarasota has not been a bull’s-eye for a major hurricane since reliable records began in 1871. But it was damaged to varying degrees by hurricanes in 1926, 1944 and 1950, as well as Donna in 1960 and Charley in 2004. A number of other explanations for the relative safety have surfaced, most of them questionable. One gives credit to nature’s fortunate placement of dunes off the coast. Another, to the magic powers of Siesta Key’s white sand beaches and underwater crystals.

The most prominent story has to do with American Indians. Evidence to support the tale does not exist, however, according to everyone who studies either county history or American Indian beliefs. When asked about a myth spreading around town, county archaeologist Dan Hughes jumped in: “Let me guess. If it has anything to do with Indians and hurricanes, it’s not true.”

Hughes takes phone calls about the myth every year during hurricane season. “I’ve had Realtors call and ask if it’s true

so they can advertise it,” he said. “It gets passed down from neighbor to neighbor.”

In fact, historians have no idea which tribes even lived in Sarasota County. It is one of the few coastal places skipped over by Spanish explorers, the only people who wrote descriptions of early Florida. The explorers visited the Calusa tribe just south in Charlotte Harbor, and the Tocobaga just north in Tampa Bay, but they passed over the stretch of relatively linear coast in between. One of the nation’s largest fully excavated native burial grounds, at Historic Spanish Point in Osprey, offers few additional clues, only that people lived in the area as early as 3,000 B.C.

The third strike against the myth: If the American Indians did believe Sarasota was protected, more of them might have lived here. But the population was not unusually high. About 2,000 people lived in the county originally, historians estimate. “Technically speaking, Native Americans lived everywhere around the state,” said Anne McCudden, executive director of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. “We know they moved inland during certain seasons. It could have been because of storms or mosquito levels. We don’t know.”

The gap in knowledge is likely part of what keeps the myth in circulation, said Uzi Baram, associate professor of anthropology at New College in Sarasota.

“Folk tales give us comfort, so we use something we can’t disprove,” Baram said. “Native Americans to this particular region are a little past the shadow of history.”

Baram first heard the story at a dinner party several years ago.

“It’s like a lot of urban myths; there’s no origin, but somehow everyone knows it,” Baram said. “It really tells us two things. One, we are very worried about hurricanes. And two, we wonder why we’re lucky...”

Do you have a story that you would like to share? If so send or e-mail it to dbauer@sar.usf.edu and we’ll put it in the newsletter.



Indian Beach Sapphire Shores Association

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Annual Picnic: Sun, November 6
December Semi-Annual Meeting: Tue, Dec. 6

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The newsletter is even better in color.
Check it out on the IBSSA web site: www.ibssa.ws

Neighborhood Watch Coordinators:

- Sapphire I 58th Street - 47th Street**
Debbie Muller 355-5743
- Sapphire II 47th Street - Myrtle Street**
Barbara Cherry 351-7906, Barbara.Cherry@comcast.net
- Sapphire III Myrtle Street - Indian Beach Drive**
Fred and Joanne Gonet 358-8529
- Sapphire IV Indian Beach Drive - Whitaker Bayou**
Yvonne Lacey 365-7063, Lacey.Yvonne@yahoo.com

Helpful Numbers:

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 - Lt. Randy Boyd (N. Dist) 364-7360
 - SPD Website www.sarasotapd.org
 - Animal Services 861-9500
 - Boat Noise 316-1201
 - Citizen Volunteer & Project Lifesaver and Crime Prevention:** Officer Ford Snodgrass .. 954-7056
 - Gang & Graffiti** Kim Laster 364-7327
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