



Leesburg Heritage Society, Inc.

111 South 6th St., Leesburg, FL 34748

352-315-1800

Hi all,

We ended our season on another high note. Ken Bragg, Bo Wroten and City Commissioner Alan Reisman talked about the past, present and future of the Leesburg International Airport. It was a very interesting program. Sanna did a great job with programs this year, and we thank Beyers Funeral Homes for providing refreshments at every meeting.

Your 2023-24 Officers, Board Members and Liaisons are:

Officers: Jim Miller -President, Frank Stivender -Vice President, Sue Turner -Secretary, Frances Russek -Treasurer, Sanna Henderson -Past President

Board Members: Vi Pfahler, Joan Nyarady, Mary Jane Caldwell-Smith, Margaret Branham, Joe Branham, Gail Emerson, Rick Reed, Nicole Blevins, John O'Kelley, and Brenda Byers

Non-voting Mote Morris House Docent Liaisons: Larry Bailey and Laurie Bailey

Thanks to all who have agreed to serve.

One of our long-time board members, Jack Jones, passed away. He was a husband, father, architect and community leader. Please read his obituary at www.beyersfuneralhome.com

Have a great summer and we hope to see you again on Tuesday, October 2nd.

Jim Miller, President
352-250-2948 text/cell

Museum and Mote Morris House Director Frank Stivender's Report

Mote Morris House:

Attendance:

Saturday May 13th – 61

Saturday May 27th - closed

With our recent surge in activity, the city is getting more inquiries about renting the house, mostly clubs from the Villages, wanting to meet “outside the yellow lines”.

Museum:

April's attendance was 137, May's was 118.

The workers from the from the (Urban Seniors Jobs Program) will go back to 20 hours starting June 22. We should have our second worker by mid-July. We'll be enjoying full coverage again.

Lisa Clay, retired from the Daily Commercial is our newest volunteer at the Museum and she has donated a printer/scanner/copier. She volunteered before with Glorianne and is a great help.

The museum gave us four Beacon College CIP students to intern for two weeks. Nicole gave them projects which you can read about in her special report below. She is very special.

Special Report from Part-time Volunteer Curator/Teacher Nicole Blevins

Mr. Stivender was contacted by Melissa Bradley, the Director of the Center for Career Preparation at Beacon College. After a brief meeting with Melissa, The Leesburg Heritage Society Museum partnered with Beacon College's 2023 Career Immersion Program. According to their website the 2023 Career Immersion Program (CIP) is an 80-Hour internship and experiential learning program for students who learn differently. Four Beacon College interns were assigned to the museum and began their journey on Friday, May 12, 2023. On Friday, May 26, 2023, Beacon College celebrated the conclusion of the 2023 CIP by hosting a recognition ceremony located at the Student Center. Jim Miller, Frank Stivender, Nicole Blevins and Donivan Blevins attended the event, meeting numerous parents and celebrating the achievements of each intern.

Samuel, Kevin, Natanel, and Jacob eagerly started work on the morning of May 12, 2023. The four Beacon students worked under the direction of Frank Stivender, Jim Miller, Michele Mock, and Nicole Blevins for the duration of two weeks. While under the guidance of different leaders they experienced a wide range of perspectives and activities. The students were given a tour by Frank Stivender of the historic Mote Morris house on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. In addition, Frank took time to demonstrate the use of the museum's microfilm machine which deeply fascinated the interns. Each student dressed professionally and demonstrated eagerness and dedication to each task they undertook, all the while possessing outstanding character throughout their internship.

Natanel Wasserman worked the majority of his 80-hour internship programing the functionality and design of a new website for the Leesburg Heritage Museum. Jim Miller worked with Natanel to obtain the website prototype for review and future use. Natanel was also extremely efficient in breaking down and relocating the Museum's main computer from the library to the office.

Jacob O'Brien enthusiastically approached a range of tasks around the museum. He started by packing technology artifacts, clearing a path for the new Leesburg school room. He presented the museum with a thoroughly researched PowerPoint of Annie Oakley, highlighting key events in relation to Leesburg and promoting the book "The Life of Dave as Told by Himself" which is currently available for purchase at the museum. Jacob also took the lead on relocating the school yearbooks and class photos from the library to the school room organizing each in chronological order.

Samuel Schemmer focused on ideas to promote the Leesburg Heritage Museum. He envisioned greater community participation via tools such as social media, further explaining in detail suggestions for future post on the museum's Facebook page. Samuel spent a great deal of time doing an inventory of our popular scavenger hunt for children, making sure each item featured in the pamphlet was accurate and relevant. Lastly, Samuel researched the history of Beacon College and put together a presentation for the new school room.

Kevin Bassey diligently served the Leesburg Heritage Museum using an admirable focus on various projects. He started his internship by collecting school related items from around the museum and then arranged these artifacts in a glass display located in the new school room. Kevin researched and assembled facts regarding the historic Leesburg Watermelon Festival. He also excelled in alphabetizing the donation forms by last name and securing them in a binder.

Nicole Blevins

Leesburg Heritage Society

Minutes – Regular Meeting – May 2, 2023

The Leesburg Heritage Society assembled at the meeting room at Rogers Park. The 29 members and guests enjoyed the refreshments which were once again furnished by Beyers.

President Jim Miller called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. He thanked all those in attendance, and the Beyers crew, then asked Woody Wagner to lead the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Sanna Henderson's invocation. Gayle Emerson read a joke submitted by Vi Pfahler, and so we all learned how to correctly use the word "fascinate". Cute joke, ladies!

Sanna came forward to install the newly elected Board. In addition to the current officers and Board members who agreed to serve again, we added John O'Kelley, Nicole Blevins, and Brenda Byers to the Board. Woody made the motion to accept the proposed slate, the motion was seconded, and carried with no objection. Sanna proceeded with the swearing-in ceremony which was met with raucous applause.

Program Chairman Sanna introduced Ken Bragg, who introduced his guests. He had assembled a panel to speak about the history and present business of the Leesburg International Airport. Ken discussed the history of the airport. He told us the first airport here was started in 1928 at Tomato Hill. When Lake County was looking to establish an airport, local businessman Henry Pringle donated 410 acres of land in an effort to keep the new airport from going to Tavares. Pringle was a former Chicago stockbroker who moved to Florida in 1929. After losing his fortune in the stock market crash he went on to become an attorney and real estate developer. The runways were paved by the Federal government when they wanted to set up a military training camp, and later a P.O.W. Camp. As the airport grew, more land and businesses were added. Today the airport has international status and serves as a customs office. There are approximately 16 businesses on the now 800+ acres, and 8000 take-offs and landings per month!

Alan Reisman of Brainerd Helicopters, Inc. told us about this business with 110 employees around the U.S. It was so interesting to learn about their involvement with various movie productions, disaster relief, medical evacuations, and their Blackhawk helicopters/Firehawk helicopters used for fighting forest fires under the National Forest Service. What an exciting business!

Bo Wroten is on the Airport Advisory Board, and is involved with the Pilot's Association. He flies his own airplane to his businesses located in the Southeast, Texas, and the Northeast. He described the Experimental Aircraft Association, and told of his involvement with the Young Eagles program for youngsters interested in aviation. Bo hopes to see more rental hangers built to accommodate the growing need, and discussed other needs for future expansion.

Ken wrapped up the discussion with his vision for aviation education in the local schools.

We thank these men for their time and the interesting discussion. Everyone present learned a lot! Jim thanked the speakers and guests for attending. Our next meeting will be in October. Jim wished everyone a safe and happy summer. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Turner, Secretary