

Experience Southwest Florida Planner

Fall 2009

By Elaine L. Reed, Executive Director of the Naples Historical Society

(Headline)

Humble and Passionate Beginnings...Strength and Performance at Present

Naples Historical Society is the community's only donor-supported, member-based, Board-governed historical society. While it was established in 1962 as a 501c3 nonprofit organization, it has undergone substantial change and growth since its humble and passionate beginnings.

With prudent fiscal management, strong Board leadership, explosive growth in our volunteer and membership base, and generous support from our philanthropic friends and corporate partners, Naples Historical Society is poised for continued and deliberate growth.

(Subhead) What is the Naples Historical Society?

Naples Historical Society (NHS) is the community's caretaker of Naples history and heritage. Headquartered at historic Palm Cottage™, Naples oldest house (built in 1895) and treasured symbol of our area's history, we have made it our mission to educate the community and visitors alike about Naples past. We are able to accomplish this because of community belief and support, and for that we are deeply grateful.

In the early days of NHS, passion to save story and structure were major driving forces behind the decisions of the Board. Seven years ago, however, it became absolutely necessary for strength of leadership to lend a hand in the fiscal and prudent management of this little nonprofit. Under the direction of and reliance on Don Wingard, immediate past President of the Board of Directors, NHS has risen to the foreground as a well managed, debt-free, passionate steward of a substantial community landmark and of many facets surrounding preserving Naples history.

(Subhead) What does the organization do for the community?

Historic preservation is a noble cause. It may not compel the emotional reaction of charities that focus on humanity and survival. We respect our nonprofit colleagues with honorable social missions.

Naples Historical Society does have a compelling purpose: saving the past for the future. One way to describe how vital this is, is to imagine a grandmother who passes away without sharing stories of her life. Once gone, those stories may never be found.

The Naples Daily News published a Guest Commentary I authored earlier this year, and the notion presented was based on the aging demographic of our country. Among many things, what will that do to our balance of familial knowledge? Story-telling is an art. Capturing stories, whether for a family or a business or a community is an essential part of respecting the past and moving forward.

Given the serious nature of preserving the past for the future, and a strong, fiscally minded Board, Naples Historical Society has several preservation initiatives geared to educate our community on our rich and vibrant history as well as to capture community stories that tell about our past...all of which provide enjoyment for the community now and into the future.

NHS Preservation Initiatives

Educational Tours

Docent-guided tours of the Palm Cottage™ House Museum
Requested Donation: \$8/person, Members are FREE
May through October: Wednesday & Saturday, 1-4 p.m.
November through April: Tuesday – Saturday, 1-4 p.m.
Private Tours are available at group rates.

Docent-guided tours of The Norris Gardens at Palm Cottage
Requested Donation: \$8/person, Members are FREE
Every 1st and 3rd Thursday at 10 a.m. year-round

Docent-guided tours of the Naples Historic District
Requested Donation: \$15/person, \$10/Members
May through October: 1st Wednesday of the month, 9 a.m.
November through April: Every Wednesday, 10 a.m.

*Pupils at Palm Cottage*SM (our widely respected children's education program)
Collier County students become Pupils at Palm Cottage after they take what Jack Bovee (Collier County School District K-12 Social Studies Coordinator) says is, "...one of the best field trips *anywhere!*"

Naples Oral Histories: If These Walls Could Talk! (our anticipated oral history program)
The boldest preservation initiative yet, this project is an on-going initiative designed to capture "slices of life" from those who have contributed to the development of Naples (in the early years). NHS plans to create a theater in the house museum to showcase the oral histories! Projected completion is in Winter 2010.

Our warmly embraced holiday promotion, *Christmas at Palm Cottage*, gives the community a fun way to experience history during the December holiday season. With tens of thousands of twinkling lights in and around the Cottage and Gardens, it is a breathtaking display not to be missed. This year's event will run from November 11 to December 31st. Visit our website for specific hours of operations.

NHS has a well developed speaker's bureau called *Talk of the Town!* While the best way to learn about Naples history is to be in the oldest house, we will come to your organization and leave a bit of history with you.

We are fortunate to have dedicated and talented volunteers who express their passion by developing, refining and working with our *Archival Management & Sales* program. Led by a knowledgeable archivist, we have over 2,500 photographs and documents that illustrate our City's rich and vibrant past. If you are interested in reviewing and purchasing old Naples photos, please contact our office.

(Subhead) How can you get involved?

Our volunteer base totals well over 80 during season. Choose to volunteer at NHS and help make history come alive! We have many interesting and exciting opportunities from which to participate.

As a 501c3 nonprofit that relies solely on private donations from its membership and philanthropic generosity, NHS utilizes fundraisers to help meet its mission. The Annual Christmas Gala is our signature black-tie event, which is considered one of the best holiday parties in the area. Mingle with cocktails in the house museum and then enjoy an elegant seated dinner under a beautifully decorated tent in The Gardens! December 4, 2009. Tickets: \$300/person, \$500/Patron, \$5,000 for an Angel Table of 8.

Become a member of the Naples Historical Society. Your membership is the best gift of history. Consider also giving a membership to a friend or family member...there is no better way to introduce your loved ones to Naples.

Whatever you choose, it's time to stop by historic Palm Cottage and see this old house for yourself and learn about Naples past. We look forward to seeing you soon!