



# Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation, Inc.

**Fall 2006**

Chris Wenzel  
President

Lorrie Muldowney  
Vice President

Jeff LaHurd  
2nd Vice President

Martha Horton  
Secretary

Joyce Waterbury  
Treasurer

**Directors:**

Kafi Benz  
Debbie Bowis  
Nancy Eaton  
David Jennings  
Kittie Kelly  
Ellen McKeefe  
Betsy Meyer  
Don Smally  
Jesse White



## President's Message Chris Wenzel

This is my first newsletter message as President of the Alliance. I was surprisingly nominated and elected at the annual meeting and I first want to thank everyone for supporting me and extending me their confidence.

I came to the Alliance two years ago from the City of Sarasota's Historic Preservation Board after serving six years, three as chairman. However, my roots go further back to the Ringling Towers era and beyond. I was a volunteer with the Towers group and served on several of the fund raising events and clean-up days. During that period, I became involved with rehabilitating some of the buildings in the Rosemary Neighborhood / Overtown Historic area on Central Avenue. With the Historic Preservation Board, we designated the National Register neighborhood in hopes of preserving it's historic character.

My architectural education and background leave me with the desire to preserve "sense of place". I feel strongly that the attractive beauty of Sarasota is its "sense of place" and that the historic character is the major contributing factor to what makes Sarasota unique, beautiful and an attractive area to live. Without preservation of our historic past, we loose our unique identity of Sarasota.

The Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation is a strong group with much more than an active voice in the community. We offer events of historic celebration, support other preservation organizations, and have a program structure to allow us to participate in preservation efforts. Creating and implementing our "revolving fund" was instrumental in allowing us to become active participants in preservation. Years ago we struggled to find people and places to move buildings out of harm's way. Today, we have a mechanism in place to assist relocation and help coordinate the effort. I view this as significant and I want to continue building the program.

In our future, you will notice increased efforts to publicize our activities and our continued support of historic preservation in the community. I'm excited about the opportunities we have and our plans for the future. It will be a pleasure to work with the directors and members to continue our preservation efforts with new vigor and turn our efforts of the past to a promising future.

*Chris*

**SAVE—Riverview High School**



Riverview High School, designed by architect Paul Rudolph, is an important part of Sarasota’s built history and a significant part of the Architectural legacy of America.

Recently the Sarasota School Board voted to build a total new school on the site, which means demolition of the Historic Rudolph Riverview Buildings. The “facts” that the School Board voted on are contained in a May ‘06 Cost & Time Report (prepared by BMK Architects and their Estimator) which is inconsistent and flawed – this and continued world-wide support are our springboard for efforts to save Riverview.

The Save Riverview Group, includes educators, architects, planners, historic preservationists, community leaders including a former City Mayor and a former School Board Chairperson, has not given up.

A recent letter from Lord Norman Foster, London, is an example of world-wide support : “I am writing to lend my support for preserving Riverview High School designed by Paul Rudolph, undoubtedly one of the great American architects. It is a building that has served as an inspiration not only for me, but for generations of architects . . . Despite its present state of disrepair, the underlying structure of this strikingly innovative building is sound. It could easily be restored to its original condition and brought back to life as a focal point for the expanding school campus . . . new building technologies allow us now, more easily than ever, to adapt older structures to modern use.”

Save Riverview Update by Carl Abbott:

**At the July ‘06 Florida AIA State Convention, the Save Riverview Group was presented with the President’s Award for championing the rehabilitation of Riverview High School designed by Paul Rudolph. For further information visit the [www.saveriverview.blogspot.com](http://www.saveriverview.blogspot.com) and e-mail or write the members of the Sarasota County School Board.**

Picture courtesy of Carl Abbott, AIA

*Thank you Carl.....*

**IMPORTANT!  
Rosemary Cemetery Tour  
“The Day of the Dead”**

Join us November 1, 2006, for a tour of Rosemary Cemetery, Central Ave. between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets, and help celebrate “The Day of the Dead”. Starting at 7:30 P.M., local historian Jeff La Hurd will present a lively narrative about Sarasotans both famous and infamous who are buried in the cemetery.

A Potluck Dessert Reception across the street in the Rosemary Wellness Center will follow, where Jeff will regale us with more stories of local personalities. Please bring a dessert to share, if possible, and the Alliance will provide coffee and other beverages. Members of the Rosemary Neighborhood Association will also be joining us.

Mark your calendars now, as you won’t want to miss this fun-filled evening.



**DeMarcay  
and Roth Cigar  
Factory  
property**

During the May meeting of the Alliance Board, Matt Leiter of the Leiter Group made a presentation about plans for the development of the DeMarcay and Roth Cigar factory property on Palm Avenue. The presentation was quite informative, describing the construction of a high-rise condominium and retail structure on the properties of the historic buildings. Considering the idea that portions of the existing buildings would be incorporated in the new design and that the historic buildings would not be totally demolished, the presentation was refreshing and optimistic. The Leiter Group has a successful track record of historic property redevelopment that allows for portions of the original character to remain along with the development of the contemporary property potential.

Although we may consider this a stretch of the historic preservation concept, the plan to retain and restore portions of the original fabric is far better than what we have been used to. The original façade of the DeMarcay will be retained, the façade of the Roth Cigar factory will be relocated and used, and the new building will respect the building step setback from the street and sidewalk vista of Palm Avenue.

Mr. Leiter asked the Alliance for a letter of support for the project and information was presented to the City of Sarasota Planning Board concerning the position of the Alliance. Mr. Leiter has continued the dialog with the Alliance, asking for assistance in developing a historically accurate lobby interior for the new project. The Alliance is continuing to support the inclusion of a protective covenant for the two facades so that they may retain their original fabric in perpetuity. We have asked to be included in future presentations as the project continues forward.

## New Board Member Nancy Eaton



New board member **Nancy Eaton**, is a freelance writer living in Nokomis. She purchased her 1924 Mediterranean Revival home in December, 1997 after she moved here from the San Francisco Bay area. Nancy's family has a long-standing close relationship with Sarasota. Her maternal grandparents, Harold and Malvina Krumm, started buying homes in Sarasota beginning in 1951, ultimately owning properties on Bay Street, Madison Court, Arlington Street, Swift Road, in Indian Beach, and on Longboat Key. They moved from New Jersey to Coral Cove's Periwinkle Drive in 1964 and lived there until they both passed away in the early 1980s. Nancy's parents, Alice and the late Walter Leamy, have lived year-round in Osprey's SouthBay since 1978. Nancy's father served as the captain of the Sarasota Marine Patrol for several years.

Nancy fondly remembers spending most summers in Sarasota with her mother, grandmother, and sister as they maintained the family's rental properties in the off-season. She spent many happy days at the old Lido Casino (see attached picture), and learned to swim in its pool.

Nancy collects more things than can be efficiently listed on one sheet of paper, however one of her fondest loves is "Old Florida" memorabilia and tropical decorative items. Nancy also has a passion for old homes. In Houston, she owned a restored Craftsman-style bungalow built in the 1920s, and in Sunnyvale California, she owned a home built in 1949. Her home in Nokomis is part of the newly established East Nokomis Historic District.

Between 1996 and 1999, Nancy wrote, designed and published RETRO, an award-winning online magazine devoted to early to mid 20th Century popular culture and design. Called "A new kind of Martha Stewart," by The Philadelphia Inquirer, she and RETRO were featured on numerous major networks.

In 2003, Nancy bought and restored a 1950s home in Nokomis that was featured in January, 2005 on HGTV's "Before and After." In 2004, she moved one of the cottages and two out buildings from Venice's Eagle Point to a lot in Nokomis and is in the process of restoring them.

Nancy is an active member of the Nokomis Center Revitalization Advisory Committee. She worked closely with Sarasota County to help Nokomis establish its three historic districts in 2004 and is working hard to promote restoration in her neighborhood. In March 2006, she worked as a docent on the Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation's Annual Home Tour.

When asked why preservation matters Nancy responded, Sarasota had a unique character in decades past that is quite different from the one it has today. Those of us old enough to remember how special and magical it was tend to be committed to keeping that unique and special character alive for new generations to enjoy and learn from.

Vintage character can't be manufactured, and when it's gone, it disappears forever. We have to be vigilant to keep it all from disappearing under the guise of "progress." True progress, in my mind, is having the vision to cherish and preserve the old as well as to create the new.

## Join Us

### What's Happening? Take a Peek!

**NOVEMBER 1** – Rosemary Cemetery – 7:30 p.m.

A guided tour with Jeff La Hurd  
(Rosemary Cemetery is on Central Avenue  
between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets)

**NOVEMBER 4** – Sarasota Reading Festival

Visit our booth and support our alliance

**DECEMBER 1** – Holiday Party

Potluck gathering at the  
historic home of Kittie Kelly  
1205 N. Cocoanut Avenue, 6 – 9.

**JANUARY 14** – Arts Day

Visit our booth and support our alliance

**MARCH 4** – Historic home tour

Join us and make our 17th  
annual event a success!

**APRIL 12** – Annual members meeting

Jeff La Hurd will provide his unique perspective on life in  
Sarasota during the roaring 20's.

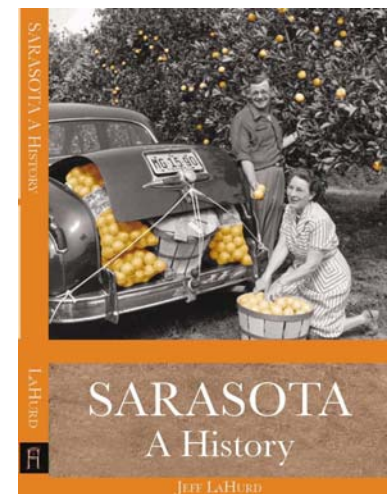
**MAY 17-19** – Florida Trust Annual Conference

Tours, workshops, and lectures to please all!

### Please Make Note.....

Join the Friends of the Sarasota County History Center at a book signing for **Jeff LaHurd's** latest local history book entitled "Sarasota, A History" Friday November 17, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 701 N. Tamiami Trail.

The Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation proudly co-sponsored this important text.



**Laurel Park Neighborhood  
By Kate Lowman, President  
Laurel Park Neighborhood Association**

The Laurel Park neighborhood is delighted to report that we are making good progress towards becoming a national historic district. Having received approval from the Sarasota City Commission to fund the project, city staff approved a contract with GAI Consulting to prepare the application. Matthew Hyland of GAI is currently spending two weeks in the neighborhood to conduct the necessary research.

In order to facilitate his work, neighborhood residents had already conducted a survey to identify properties which had been destroyed, significantly changed, or which may have been overlooked in earlier surveys. Additionally, residents listed income producing properties that might qualify for historic tax credits when the national historic district is established.

The neighborhood survey established that an overwhelming percentage of buildings in Laurel Park have historic integrity. Although many have been altered over the years, they retain original character to contribute to and form a large historic district. Since the 2003 historic survey was completed, demolitions and removal of houses have been on the rise, depleting the number of multi-family rental housing units and replacing them with single family residences, most with an accessory living unit.

However, 150 properties were identified as income producing, providing between 300 and 400 individual and/or family housing units. Of these, 104 would be eligible for federal tax credits to rehabilitate the building for continued use as an income producing property if Laurel Park becomes a national historic district.

In October a draft of the district nomination will be presented to the city's historic preservation board and the Laurel Park neighborhood for review. A final nomination application is expected to be ready for submittal to the state in December.

A national historic district is an honorary distinction. National districts provide no protection and impose no restrictions on owners unless they use federal or state funds to rehabilitate. Districts DO create awareness, educate, and help people appreciate the tremendous values of historic preservation. Laurel Park will be Sarasota's 5th national historic district and will join with 80,000 national historic properties, landmarks and districts across America listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



527 Madison  
C.1925



1668 Oak Street  
(this is the garage)

**Why Historic Preservation Matters to Me  
Ellen McKeefe, new board member**

Is architecture our most visible past? Well, if we're lucky, we live in old buildings, walk on old streets and imagine our ancestors in the hallways of preserved public buildings.

I've been very lucky. Growing up in two old homes; graduating from a college where Victorian mansions and carriage houses were dorms, classrooms and studios; living and working in Boston's Back Bay, Denver's Capitol Hill, Washington's Chevy Chase, Miami's Coconut Grove and for a glorious two years, Rome's Via Flaminia neighborhood on the edge of the Borgese Gardens.

Sarasota was small-scale and blessedly warm the first time I visited in the winter of 1968. Family friends lived near the Sara Bay Country Club; my parents soon purchased a nearby 1950's home. We went downtown to buy the New York newspapers at Charlie's News. We beach walked for miles on a high-rise free Longboat Key. I remember a wrought iron decorated bar in the John Ringling Towers. And Siesta Key was funky and arty and houses were hidden in the trees. People talked about the proposed new Interstate Highway and how it was being built too far east. Disney World was years away from opening.

For decades Sarasota was my destination for family holidays. It was small and quiet and did not change much from year to year. Eastern Airlines used trailers for arrivals and departures. There was a drive-in theatre just north of the Ringling Museum. Somehow I never thought of Sarasota as being in need of preservation.

Denver's Larimer Square was the first place where I applied my energies to historic building preservation. We restored a block of mid 1800's commercial buildings, applying "adaptive use" concepts to begin what is now a thriving Lower Downtown, LoDo. That led to an advisory board position with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Then a personal renovation of an 1861 brownstone on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.

In 1997, I became a Sarasota resident. Even then it took the threat to the Ringling Towers to open my eyes to Sarasota's vulnerability. I discovered Laurel Park, poured emotional and financial resources into restoring a humble bungalow and started attending community meetings and paying attention. The Ringling Towers were leveled. One morning soon after, the Bickel House was a cloud of dust as I drove south on Tamiami Trail. I'm ashamed to admit that it took so long to recognize that Sarasota, the Sarasota I grew up with, is worth saving.

As a new member of the SAHP, I'm trying to figure out exactly what I can do for what's left of Sarasota. Joining forces with this committed group of citizens is a start. Is it too late? Did people feel that way when Boston's Back Bay was filled in? Was there an outcry post World War II when Cape Cod houses replaced Victorians in Chevy Chase? Yes, it is too late for specific Sarasota buildings we loved. But there's still time for all that remains. We have work to do.



**Thank you Volunteers  
- by Kathy Vaughn -**

Thank you for making my first year on the Board of Directors as the Volunteer Coordinator so easy! On more than one occasion, I asked many of you to volunteer for our events. The response was always positive, and courteous in returning my calls. Others, who could not give of their time, offered another valuable gift which is the continued support of what is dear to all our hearts---the preservation of Sarasota!

As we enter our new season of events, I look forward to connecting with many of you again. Our first get-together is laced with history and humor, and it is the Day of the Dead on November 1<sup>st</sup>. if anyone would like to help by bringing a sweet treat, call 941 953-8727. The information will be passed on to me.

This coming May, Sarasota has been given the honor of hosting The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation's annual conference. Along with other organizations, we will have the opportunity to share our town's history. Volunteers will be needed----you guessed it----I'LL BE CALLING!!!



**Alliance  
Holiday  
Party**

The Alliance Holiday Party will be exciting and quite unique this year, as it will be held from 6pm to 9pm on December 1 in two different houses. Did I mention that they're right next door to each other?

The JJ & Maude Murphy house, originally at 1522 N. Trail, now sits at 1236 12<sup>th</sup> Street neighboring the Byrd & Katherine Kicklighter house at 1205 Cocoonut Avenue. Both houses are on the northwest corner of Cocoonut and 12<sup>th</sup> Street. There will be plenty of parking for all of your vehicles across 12<sup>th</sup> street at Pioneer Park.

Please bring your favorite dish to share to either house. Beverages, dishes, etc. will be provided by the Alliance. And most important, bring your cheer, good tidings, and holiday spirit.

See you with bells on!

Your host, Kittie Kelly

Sarasota Alliance  
for Historic Preservation, Inc.



**Sarasota Alliance  
For Historic Preservation, Inc.  
P. O. Box 1754  
Sarasota, FL 34230**