

The Palm Coast Historian

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<http://community-2.webtv.net/pchistorical/TheCityofPalmCoast/>

THE CITY OF PALM COAST IS LOSING ITS HISTORY

By Arthur E. Dycke, Co-Historian

Where is the first building constructed within Palm Coast city limits located? Does the City have a historic district? Is there a museum? These are valid questions for us and future residents in our rapidly growing community. Palm Coast history is not very long and yet it is already being forgotten and the landmarks that comprise it have been or are in danger of being obliterated.

Do not expect to actually see and touch the City of Palm Coast's first building anywhere today. You will only find it in photo books or Historical Society displays because it was torn down about 5 years ago and the land upon which it stood will be developed very soon.

The Welcome Center was the first building constructed by ITT/Levitt in Palm Coast, officially opening in October, 1970. The building was at the center of the first model area and was to serve as the hub of all of the corporations sales activities. It was a dramatic building with a variety of graphics and audio visual sales displays inside. The main feature was an elevator accessed 64 foot high observation tower affording visitors unobstructed views of their surroundings including the golf course, the model houses and the intracoastal waterway.

Most of the residents who bought property in Palm Coast during the 70s, 80s and early 90s viewed our community from atop the tower and the earliest "pioneers" remember choosing their lots from a platted map and looking over a vast area of sand and pines. They were often told by a sales person that their land "was out there somewhere".

Being the only building in town, the Welcome Center sometimes served as a church, synagogue and early resident gathering place until ITT opened the original Palm Coast Yacht Club in December of 1972 to become the civic, religious, social and cultural hub of our infant community. The Yacht Club was located on the main canal east of the Welcome Center where small boats brought passengers across the ICW from Route A1A before the opening of the Hammock Dunes Bridge. Its buildings, pool, tennis courts and marina were later remodeled and renamed the Sheraton. Thereafter it became the Harborside Inn, Palm Coast Golf Resort and is presently designated Ocean Hammock Resort: The Harborside Inn.

The first houses in the City of Palm Coast were built on Casper Drive off Club House Drive where there is an entrance to the original Palm Coast Golf Club which is presently named Palm Harbor Golf Club. The first residents of the community moved into their homes in the Casper Drive and Cooper Lane area in January of 1972. Along with the "C Section" canal lots, the places just described represent the core beginning of the City of Palm Coast history.

On the first of March in 2005, this author attended an early meeting of a Scenic Highway Corridor Advisory Group(CAG) formed for the purpose of proposing scenic and historic road loops for Flagler County. As historic sites such as Holden House in Bunnell, the Flagler Beach Museum, Princess Place and The State Agricultural Museum, Old Dixie Highway, Brick Road and Old Kings Road were mentioned, I pondered upon the future of our history in the City of Palm Coast. Where is our historic district? Where will our museum be?

Regarding the work of the CAG, I am suggesting a historic City of Palm Coast road loop that would tie into the Flagler County proposal. It begins at Route 100 in the south and follows Old Kings Road north until it comes to Palm Coast Parkway SE. On your right you will see a large white building with a blue roof marked Palm Coast Real Estate Center and a sales center. This was formerly ITT's second Welcome Center, built in 1987. A right turn taken just before the traffic light into Palm Coast Parkway SE will bring you past a wooded area on your right and eventually past our community's first church, St. Mark by the Sea on the left. Turn left at Clubhouse Drive and turn left again into the Palm Coast Community Center. Park there and enter the St. Joe Walkway across the street to stroll through the vegetation as far as you please. Upon return, I suggest continuing back along Palm Coast Parkway SE past DBCC college and Amphitheater until you see the Hammock Dunes Bridge in front of you. Turn right onto Palm Harbor Parkway before the toll. You will pass the historic Plavers Club which is now owned by the adjacent

European Village. Across the street under the bridge the St. Joe walkway will take you to ICW views. Continue on Palm Harbor Parkway to the 4 way stop sign and turn right into Ocean Hammock Resort. Returning to the stop sign, proceed straight ahead on Clubhouse Drive until you come to a small bridge. On the left side of the road is the site of our community's first building, the Welcome Center. There once stood a unique towered sales center that served as the first information source for many Palm Coast homeowners. There was a small model center "village" built around it and the original golf course in the background had been built at the same time. Hopefully there will be a significant historical designation given to this area of the City of Palm Coast beginnings. Proceed along Clubhouse Drive along the golf course and past the first home sites at Casper Drive and you will come to Palm Coast Parkway NW. The City's first fire station will be directly in front of you and the Palm Coast Office Park will be on your right. Our first non-ITT business center was located there. The pioneer residents arrived in the core area in 1971 and had to drive 13 miles to go shopping. It was not until October of 1973 that a convenience center/post office, a hairdresser, a doctor and an independent realtor were established at this Center. Turn right onto Palm Coast Parkway NW and continue to the Palm Harbor Shopping Center. Fully open in 1979, the gas station, food and drug chain stores and a variety of other shops located at the Center finally brought full service civilization to the residents of Palm Coast. Leave the shopping center by its western exit on Old Kings Road to avoid the traffic light in the center of town. Turn right to resume the Flagler loop on Old Kings Road heading north.

The City of Palm Coast's first and foremost historic area encompasses the former ITT Welcome Center, Golf Course, Yacht Club, Players Club and the area under the Bridge. The current owners of all of these are either completing or are in the advanced stages of planning changes that will alter our early historical landscape forever. Some change is inevitable and desirable but the unnecessary burial of our past is inexcusable. Our original ITT developers demonstrated vision in their planning and creation of a beautiful environmentally sound community. We need some vision today in planning a meaningful historic district. There is still some purchasable land available in the district but the window of opportunity is almost closed.

Could a place be found for a historical museum with replicas, exhibits and electronic viewing of what we were at our beginning? Would that museum house a Historical Society willing to preserve and keep our past in the public eye? Could the same building be used by the City as a Welcome Center for residents and visitors alike to get area information? The Parks and Recreation Dept. could provide trail maps and publicize their program. Theatre and Arts groups could display local talent and provide schedules of the areas cultural events. The Chamber of Commerce could provide literature regarding our business and other attractions. Would there even be space for a small park and connecting walkways?

The area developers should share in the planning and bear much of the cost of improvements in the historical district hoping to derive benefits from the designation and attractiveness of the site. With cooperative and visionary planning the creation of a historic district could preserve our history, please our residents, profit our businesses and enhance the beauty and reputation of our city.

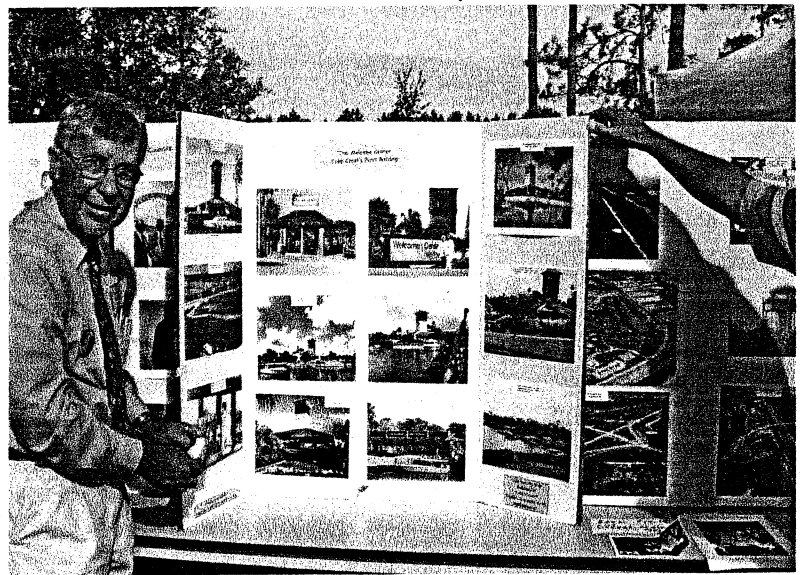
Email Art at: artedski@bellsouth.net

PALM COAST'S FIVE YEAR BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!



We participated on Saturday, January 8, 2005 with a WONDERFUL DISPLAY of story boards depicting Palm Coast's history. There was constant line of Palm Coasters viewing our story boards!

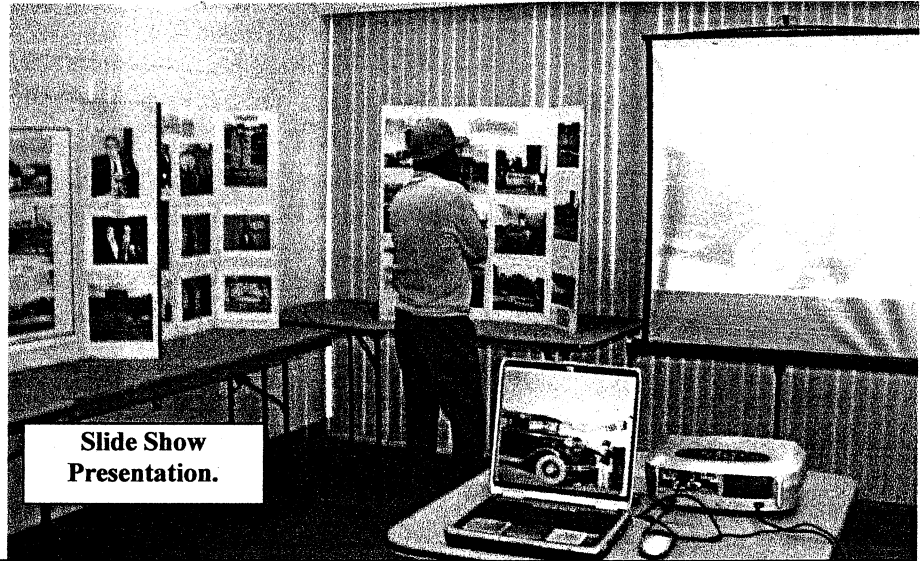
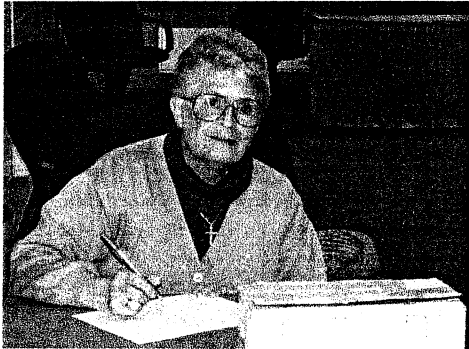
At left is Bob Crocetta, Palm Coast's Historical Society Treasurer. Thank you to our volunteers who "manned" the display! Pricilla Netts and her friend who worked extra hours, Jerry Full, Jack & Anne-Marie Pitman who spent most of their day helping, Art Dycke, and Debby Geyer. Special thank you to Art Dycke, Don DeVito, and Debby Geyer who created the Story Boards. Extra special thank you to Deb Heywood who put together the Bake Sale and every goody was sold!!



Art Dycke, C-Historian and Director of the Historical Society.

Art In The Park, March 5 & 6, 2005

We were there! Thank you to our volunteers for manning the exhibit! Don DeVito, Jack & Anne-Marie Pitman, Celia Pugliese, Art Dycke, Debby Geyer, and Kay Stafford, pictured below, Recording Secretary.



Getting to Know our Members

Jack Pitman, Vice President Palm Coast Historical Society

Jack and Anne-Marie moved to Palm Coast in 1995 from Danvers, Mass. Being Landowners since 1971 they were understandably interested in Flagler County's history as well as the future of the Palm Coast area and city to be. Coming from a historical region (greater Salem, Mass) where history is almost over-whelming, it has been exciting to be a part of Palm Coast's founding and dynamic growth almost from the start.

Jack and Anne-Marie (on the home and garden fronts) have been involved in civic efforts for almost ten years having served on several former Advisory Council committees, Civic Association, Visions 2020, and a member of St John's River Water Management District efforts in water supply planning, conservation; and field work. Until just recently he had served for 7 years as the only Flagler County member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) on the Northeast Florida Regional Council serving seven member counties.

Jack serves as a member of the Palm Coast Utility Advisory Committee which advises the City Council on utility matters of concern to Palm Coast. Jack and Anne-Marie are supporters of the Florida Agricultural Museum and the Friends of the Library. They enjoy travel, staying in shape, tennis and military association activities. They have two sons and two grandsons in New England.

They would like to encourage others to take a more active civic interest in the history as well as in the sustainable growth and development of our city, Palm Coast, Florida. After all, we seniors are getting more senior all the time!

License Plates are for Sale Once Again! Display the City Logo

Make a \$10.00 contribution to the Historical Society and receive a license plate displaying the city's logo for the front of your car. Plates are available at all of our events and may be purchased at the Palm Coast Community Center on Club House Drive.

Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG)

By Debby Geyer

The Bunnell Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) was formed February 15, 2005 by the Bunnell Chamber Historic Preservation Committee, in cooperation with the Flagler Chamber of Commerce, for the purpose of applying for Scenic Highway Designation under Heritage Classification for a number of historic and scenic roads primarily throughout Flagler County. The first meeting of CAG was March 1, 2005 and Art Dycke, Palm Coast Historical Society's Co-Historian and Director, attended the first meeting and became a member of CAG. I attended the May 3 meeting and became a member.

A Letter of Intent (LOT) was sent to Mr. Gary Balagh, Scenic Highway Coordinator, FDOT District 5 on March 31, 2005. This letter initiates the eligibility phase for Florida State designation of roughly 125 miles of roads spanning from the southwest portion of St. Johns County throughout Flagler County and to the northwest portion of Volusia County. Palm Coast Parkway, 7.26 miles, is on the list of Proposed Scenic Highway Corridors.

Art Dycke's article, pages one and two states: "Regarding the work of the CAG, I am suggesting a historic City of Palm Coast road loop that would tie into the Flagler County proposal." At the first CAG meeting Art requested a diversion to the route to run past the location of Palm Coast's first building, the Welcome Center. The Welcome Center had to be demolished due to infestation of termites. However, within the next two years, the Palm Coast Historical Society hopes to have two markers with a color picture of the Welcome Center and verbiage describing the history of the Welcome Center.

Officers - January 2004 - December 2005

Debby Geyer, President (446-9031); Jack Pitman, Vice President; Bob Crocetta, Treasurer; Kay Stafford, Recording Secretary; Debra Heywood, Corresponding Secretary.

Directors - January 2004 - December 2005

Ralph Carter, Don DeVito Webmaster, Art Dycke and Margaret Davie Co-Historians, Jack Holt, Connie Horvath, Publicity Chairman.

Visit our website for additional book and Palm Coast Historical Society information.

<http://community.webtv.net/pchistorical/TheCityofPalmCoast/>

Key in the website exactly as shown.
