

BIG BEND MARITIME CENTER

A Living Museum Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage

Volume 2-Issue 2 June 2007 Published by Florida Foresight, Inc.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Pam Portwood: President

Wow, I can hardly believe it's mid-year already. Most of our time and energy over the last few months was devoted to the Open House and Dedication Ceremony of the BBMC Mini-Museum. If you were unable to attend, you missed a great time. I want to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who worked to get the Mini-Museum ready for this event.

In preparation for the open house, a new interpretive display was designed and built giving an overview of the theme for the Museum (the maritime history and culture of the Big Bend Region). We were also very fortunate to obtain "In their Own Words", a Florida Humanities Foundation traveling exhibit, as well as a photo exhibit of folks from our local fishing community by Lori Pollgreen, a well known local photographer. Several beautifully-preserved artifacts were loaned to the museum by Mr. Bill Osborne, a local collector of maritime artifacts. Last, but certainly not least, was the DELICIOUS Grouper Chowder made by our own Ivanhoe Carroll, Vice-President of Florida Foresight and the punch prepared by Ginny Delaney.

Now that the Mini-Museum is "officially" dedicated we are to issuing a "CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!!" We would like to open the museum for limited hours on the weekends, but we need volunteers to greet visitors. Please get the word out to anyone who might be interested in helping for three hour shifts of Friday afternoon, Saturday, or Sunday afternoon.

Finally, I'd like to encourage everyone to get out and recruit new members to the Big Bend Maritime Center. As you know, no effort of this magnitude can be accomplished without funding. We've been fortunate to obtain some small grant funds for specific projects, but our membership is vital to the ongoing success of the BBMC. Our "Founding Members" board is on display and we need to add more names. So, grab a friend and bring them to the Mini-Museum for a "taste" of what's to come.

BBMC Mini-Museum

Bill Lowrie: Executive Director

While it isn't the Smithsonian by any means, our little museum is off to a great start. At this time we have two great photographic exhibits, a series of six interpretive panels which broadly describe the maritime heritage of the region, a replica of a mullet skiff, a few other artifacts, and a great reception desk. We will be adding more attractions in the near future.

The Mini-Museum project was very exciting. The kick-off was a one-day design workshop on February 15th assisted by a highly experienced consultant on museum design and development, Curt Bowman, and facilitated by Diane Delaney. The rest of the team included board members Pam Portwood, Ivanhoe Carroll, Don Lesh, KC Smith, Capt. Vic, and Mike Delaney, architect Andrew Welch, builder/fabricator Nelson Martin and myself. By the end of the day we produced a plan for the layout and initial content of the museum. Curt remarked that most groups he works with take weeks to accomplish what we did in one day. It just takes positive minded, creative and busy people to get things done! We set an aggressive schedule to complete everything in time for a dedication ceremony on April 26th.

Perhaps the most challenging task was the creation of our six interpretive panels. Capt. Vic took on the task of researching local maritime history and produced a document which Diane and Don used as background material for the panel text they wrote. This was sent along with a set of great photographs to Charity Wood at the Florida Museum of History who had volunteered to do the graphic design. KC Smith edited the text. Printing on Demand in Crawfordville gave us the lowest estimate by far to print and mount the panels. They had to buy a new printer for the job and the results were everything we hoped for.



Meanwhile, Andrew Welch and his staff produced a computer graphic of the layout and the center console which we contracted with Nelson to build. Nelson found someone to build the laminated counter top and used his creativity to build a very attractive reception console. We worked together to mount the panels using a technique used at the Florida Museum of History

We contracted with Clay Lovell to design the sign to mount on the roof. (Who more appropriate?)



We obtained a traveling photo exhibit with the help of KC, In Their Own Words, and arranged with Lori Pollgreen to mount a display of her photos of local fishermen. We also arranged with Pat Hodges to borrow his mullet skiff. Then, at the last minute, Bill Osborne came forward with an assortment of marine artifacts. Meanwhile, Mike Delaney arranged the publicity for the dedication and Bob Portwood constructed the piling clusters to accent the entrance.

Now, **WE NEED VOLUNTEERS** to greet visitors and answer questions late Friday afternoons, mid-day on Saturday, and Sunday afternoons. Please contact me if you are interested in being a docent. As we acquire more exhibits and become better known we will expand these hours. We will also open at most any time by appointment for school groups and others.

Officers

President: Pam Portwood

Wakulla County Special Projects Director; Coordinator, Panacea Waterfronts Florida Partnership

Vice President: Ivanhoe Carroll

Coastal Property Development; Realtor, The Naumann Group; Board Member, Panacea Waterfronts Florida Partnership

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KC Smith

Florida Heritage Education & Florida History Fair Coordinator, Museum of Florida History

Keith Wilkins

Director, Neighborhood & Environmental Services, Escambia County

Mary Wolfgang

Director, TCC Crawfordville Center

Staff

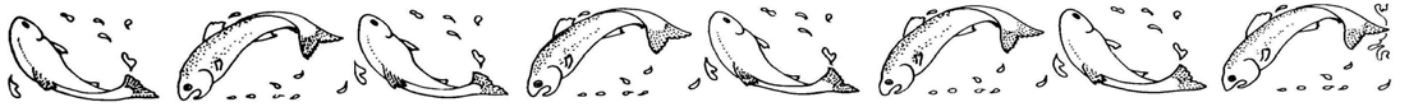
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The Bend Maritime Center newsletter is published quarterly by Florida Foresight, Inc., PO Box 896, Panacea, FL 32346
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Mission Statement

The Big Bend Maritime Center is dedicated to expanding public interest, understanding, and appreciation of the maritime heritage, culture, and natural resources of the Big Bend region of Florida through education, exhibition, collection, documentation, research, and publication.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Our fiscal year ends on June 30th and so we elected new board members at the June 26th Board Meeting. We would like to thank Michael Delaney, Michael Friedman, and Kurt Salsburg whose terms were completed and have chosen not to seek another term. Fortunately, Michael Delaney will continue to lead our publicity program. He did a terrific job last year on the Maritime Festival. Don Lesh also completed his term and offered to leave the board. He graciously submitted to our entreaties and will continue with a new term.

Don led the nominations process with great results. We have four terrific new board members. They are Russell Daws, Executive Director of the Tallahassee Museum; Representative Will Kendrick, Florida State Legislature; Belinda McElroy, Wakulla County school teacher and former Teacher of the Year; and Mary Wolfgang, Director of the TCC Crawfordville Center. Please join us in welcoming them to our board. They each bring needed skills to our project.

One last change to the board is that Paul Johnson has resigned as Secretary owing to other demands on his time but will continue serving on the board.

Financial Support

Bill Lowrie, Executive Director

As many of you know, we were awarded a fifteen month \$ 50K matching Florida Coastal Management grant by NOAA beginning on July 1, 2006. Our application was ranked at the top of its category in Florida. The objectives for this grant are:

- 1: Establish a Community Presence for the Big Bend Maritime Center.
- 2: Inaugurate a Media Campaign.
- 3: Organize Maritime Center Programs and Events
- 4: Collect and Display Maritime Artifacts
- 5: Identify sponsorship, collaboration and fundraising opportunities to support long-term management goals.

To accomplish these objectives we generated lots of local support through donations of cash, materials or volunteer labor. We easily met our match requirement after only eight months through to the huge number of hours contributed by volunteers at meetings, organizing and conducting the Maritime Festival, professional services plus material donations of cash and furniture. Thank you again to everyone.

We submitted a new Coastal Management Program application for 2007 – 2008 and once again were ranked number one in the state. Our objectives this year are:

Objective 1: Develop a research program through collaboration and/or contracted service

Objective 2: Develop the Mini-Museum

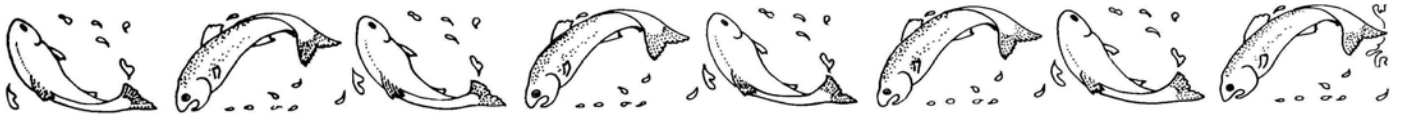
Objective 3: Create an Interpretive Plan for the Big Bend Maritime Center

Objective 4: Broaden partnerships and improve information exchange

Objective 5: Develop and implement public education programs

Once again, the objectives are challenging but within our capabilities as long as we continue to receive the generous support of time and money from volunteer, members, businesses, and other organizations. We also have to continue the initiatives from last year such as the Maritime Festival. I look forward to working with you for another exciting and eventful year.

We have also partnered with Wakulla County again this year on a Florida Communities Trust grant to purchase properties in Panacea for the museum. We will get the results of this request this fall. We will also be working on other grants for a curator and/or historian to accomplish this year's objectives. Memberships and sponsorships are also very important. Grants will not cover all of our expenses.



HELP!

The Mini-Museum is ready for visitors but we need a team of volunteers to be hosts to greet visitors and answer questions about the Maritime Center plans and activities. Our initial hours will be on Friday late afternoon, Saturday, and Sunday afternoon. Shifts will be only three hours. There will be interesting tasks to keep you occupied. For example, depending on your interests, you might research maritime history and industries on-line or in publications. This information will help us create museum exhibits such as a historic time line annotated with historic events or an exhibit on the climate and major weather events of the region such as hurricanes, storm surges, water spouts, tornados, etc.

Or you might help with office tasks, work on the membership campaign, help organize the Maritime Festival, or create museum exhibits. We will also be creating and maintaining exhibits and have set aside a work space for these tasks.

Or, if you prefer, use your time for personal activities. Bring a book or handle your email.

The Mini-Museum is in Panacea at 1327 Coastal Highway. This is one of the units in the Shops by the Bay where the Panacea Supermarket is located. Please call Bill Lowrie at 962-4138 if you can help us open our doors.



Thanks to Steven DAmato and the National Audubon Society for these images.



This newsletter is funded in part, through a grant agreement from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Coastal management Program, by a grant provided by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA06NOS4190129. The views, statements, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the State of Florida, NOAA or any of its subagencies." (01/15/07)



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