

The Whistlestop

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RESTORATION BEGINS AS FUND PASSES \$422,000

Campaign on Schedule Toward \$788,000 Goal

Newly-Appointed Committee Selects Robert Forsythe as Architect for Rebuilding

The extraordinary success of early fund raising has accelerated plans to transform the old Naples Depot into a beautiful civic and cultural center. Eager to begin the work of restoration, a committee was formed for the purpose of selecting an architect and formulating plans for the revision of the historic landmark.

Chairman of the Restoration Committee is Harry M. Cunningham. Other members are Mrs. Richard I. Brashear; Mrs. Paul G. Benedum; George R. Wallace III; David Ebersbach, President of the Naples Jaycees; and G. Gordon Biggar, President of Southwest Heritage, Inc.

The committee's first order of business was to select an architect, and they wasted no time in choosing Robert Forsythe. A native of Ohio, Mr. Forsythe is well-known in the Canton area where he designed such projects as the National Professional Football Hall of Fame, Canton City Hall, Bliss Tower, and Mothergoose Land Children's Park. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects.

The Restoration Committee is fortunate in having Douglas R. G. Williams as its special engineering adviser. Mr. Williams, a graduate of the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale, has held management positions in manufacturing and engineering companies. At the time of his retirement he was Vice President of the Echlin Manufacturing Company. He has been involved in the construction of many large industrial plants throughout the country.

"The task of the Restoration Committee at this time," said Harry Cunningham, "is to explore alternatives to the best advantage for the interior use of the Depot so that it will best serve as a center for the entire community.

"It is our committee's total intent," declared Mr. Cunningham, "to present to the Board of Directors of Southwest Heritage a plan that will preserve the past while providing for the future."

Under the terms of the National Historic Preservation Act, Southwest Heritage has guaranteed that the exterior of the Depot will maintain its historic decor. Early plans for the interior include a large gallery which will double as an auditorium, and several rooms of varying sizes to serve the many clubs and organizations in the community.

Office Moved to Depot

Early in Christmas week the offices of Southwest Heritage were moved from the Coast Federal Savings and Loan Building to the old Naples Depot.

When interviewed about the move, President G. Gordon Biggar said, "We very much appreciate the generosity of Coast Federal in providing Southwest Heritage with office space since last February. During that time we have grown into a healthy and vigorous organization making steady progress toward our projected goal of a civic and cultural center for Collier County.

"We have awaited the day when the Depot would become the center of our operations. Happily, that day has now arrived."

Naples Jaycees, who initiated the drive to save the old Depot, cleaned and painted the office, which space will now serve as headquarters. Some parts of the old Depot, including the platform area, are still occupied and will not be vacated until actual reconstruction begins.

The temporary entrance to the Heritage office is via the southernmost door on the east side of the railroad station. Office hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays.

PHASE FOUR STARTS IN EARLY FEBRUARY

With more than one half of the high goal of the Depot Fund already pledged, the winter phase of the campaign will be launched early in February. A team of sixty volunteers will seek to complete the major gift calls of the year-long venture.

The winter thrust will continue to center in the major-gifts level, where there are still many names to be contacted. It will introduce the project to the winter residents whose stay in Naples is confined to the few months of each new year. And finally, it will try to enlist support at the leadership level from several who have necessarily delayed until the year 1977.

The Campaign has moved steadily along since its introduction last April. Phase I included calls upon 150 long-time residents and friends close to the project, who pledged an encouraging \$154,000. Then in Phase II 100 business and civic organizations added nearly \$100,000 to the total. When combined with pre-campaign pledges, the level had reached \$294,710 when the fall drive began.

The recently-completed Phase III, again focusing on major-gifts, added a commendable \$128,000 to bring the current tabulation to \$422,000 at press time. Encouraged by the established success of these earlier efforts, Phase IV should add appreciably to the Fund.

The General Division has been delayed until spring. It is hoped that these combined efforts will send the project over its required goal of \$788,000.

GROUP MEETS WITH ARCHITECT TO STUDY REBUILDING OF DEPOT



Pictured above are Harry M. Cunningham, Architect Robert Forsythe, Mrs. Paul G. Benedum, and Mrs. Richard Brashear who met on the historic site to explore ways to transform the railroad station into a civic and cultural center.

SAVE THE DEPOT FUND 1976

A record of friends whose gifts of one or more shares will purchase and renovate this historic site

PLATINUM, GOLD AND SILVER SHARES

(Nota bene: These three share levels are combined into one listing to afford a second tax year for donors and will be divided in April. The platinum is for pledges of \$25,000 or more, the gold for \$15,000 or more, and the silver for \$5000 or more.)

Mr. and Mrs. G. Gordon Biggar
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Mr. and Mrs. James G. Brooks
Mr. and Mrs. Donald R. Clark
Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Deutschbein
Division of Archives & History,
State of Florida
Mr. and Mrs. Edward R. Godfrey

Mr. and Mrs. William L. Harrington
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Mrs. L. W. Mustard, Jr.
Naples Art Association
Naples Garden Club
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Lester Norris

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Mr. and Mrs. Charles G. Rodgers
Seaboard Coast Line Railroad
Tempel J. Smith
Mrs. Tempel J. Smith
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Mr. and Mrs. Richard P. Windisch

BRONZE SHARES (\$1,000 or more)

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Mr. and Mrs. Harold F. Grumhaus
Mr. and Mrs. William M. Gwynn

H Mr. and Mrs. Albert N. Halverstadt
Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Harrington
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K Mrs. Paul J. Keck
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Mr. and Mrs. J. Ward Allen
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B Barnett Bank of Naples
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph G. Beckett
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C Mr. and Mrs. Edward Callahan
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph H. Carlson
Mrs. Harold W. Cheel
Coast Federal Savings & Loan Assn.
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Mrs. R. E. Cooper, Jr.
Corbin-Lindabury Garden Center
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E Mr. and Mrs. J. Barkley Eakins

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Mr. and Mrs. H. Crowell Freeman

G Mr. and Mrs. Frederick C. Gartz
Gene's Fifth Avenue Florist

END OF THE LINE

News item No. 1 for this issue can only be the transfer of S.W. offices to the old Depot, for the move does symbolize the success of our venture. Our thanks again to the Jaycees, many of whose members get their exercise lending a helping hand to our work projects. . . . The takeover occurred just in time for the Holidays. So the Optimists placed a Christmas tree in front of the station to add a festive touch. Decorated by the Garden Club, the lights shone brightly for the Season. . . . And a final thanks to Coast Federal for housing our fledgling organization in these early months. . . . 'Tis the thought behind the gift which makes it meaningful. The maid of Alden and Rosemary Briggs, overhearing a discussion about the effort to restore the Depot, asked if S.W. would accept her small donation. "Of course," said Alden. So among the many receipts in the big report meeting in December was a crisp dollar bill from this friend, who remembered the station from bygone days. That widow's mite is both heartwarming and appreciated. . . . Our prexy's restraint is still serving the Depot. Having won his \$2000 wager for not smoking for six months, he has now been challenged for a like time and almost a like amount. Congratulations, Gordon, for the initial victory. Win again for the Seaboard team. . . . The two massive banyan trees to the west of the railroad station, now being designated as historic trees, will become the focal point of the landscaped garden which will beautify the environs of the Depot. . . . Our thanks to Mary Lou Strouse and Margaret Dodson and their team of office volunteers who have rendered yeomen service. Without this corps of workers the bottlenecks would have overwhelmed our diligent and knowledgeable secretary, Grace Reid. And an extra vote of thanks to the three typists who pounded out 100 letters each before the kick-off of Phase III. . . . Lou Carter, professional sculptor with offices near the Depot, has presented Southwest Heritage

The Old Depot, The Past Preserved*

Although Naples as a city is relatively young, not to be compared in age with vintage communities like St. Augustine and Boston, still it has acquired a certain aura all its own. It has character. And already it has history.

The trouble with things past is we allow them to become nothing but stories, legends retold and retold, passed from one generation to another with all too little written down, all too little actually preserved.

There is a movement going on now in Naples to save a very important part of our history—the old railroad depot—a building that was built marvelously well to begin with 50 years ago and even today, we are told, would pass any architectural test.

Through this depot over the years have moved some of the most prominent people in the world, and through this depot also have moved many of the pioneer citizens who settled here for good, sinking their roots, and giving the community their work and their love.

There is little we can add to what is being said to help raise the money needed to acquire and preserve the depot. Southwest Heritage, Inc., the official sponsors of the drive, have said it all very well. The building should be saved if only to let it stand there. But in fact, the depot with some refurbishing can become a very useful part of the community, providing an ideal cultural and civic center.

We see the depot as did the Naples Jaycees several years ago when they first aired the plea that the depot be saved. We see an old, very staunch and attractive building that stands proudly in the center of our city—and should remain there as long as time will allow.

As the save-the-depot drive moves along—and it will—there will be a growing awareness, we think, of the importance of saving our past. One day we will look at the old depot and know it's all ours—and we'll be proud.

*The above editorial, printed with permission, appeared in the *Naples Daily News*, Jan. 6, 1976.

with a sculpture of railroad spikes which will be on permanent display at the station. And Andrew Fastiggi has given a painting of the Depot which proudly hangs in the S.W. office. Our thanks for both gifts. . . . Southwest Heritage was the beneficiary of a special exhibit of the sculptures of internationally known sculptor Lindsay Daen on January 15-17. The large affair was held at the Gordon Drive estate of John Slater, who initiated the idea and hosted the party. A champagne preview by invitation preceded the public showing. . . . The Naples Junior Women's Club has chosen the Depot as the beneficiary of its Community Improvement Project for 1977.

Their big affair will be a preview of the gala opening of the new Maas Bros. store, when they sponsor a champagne and hors d'oeuvres benefit on January 31. . . . Words of gratitude to Howard Carswell for his "behind the scenes" work in public relations, and especially for the profiles in *The Daily News*, many of which featured friends of the Depot. . . . Most appropriately, the new telephone assigned Southwest Heritage is 262-1776. After all, our objective is to preserve and restore a small portion of the past. A venerable monument should have digits with historical connotations. So let the big Bicentennial help you remember the new number of Southwest Heritage: 262-1776.

