

# Friends

Of the Fairhope

Museum of History

Vol 9 Issue 2 April - May 2018



## History Survivor

Saturday, March 10 brought forth a beautiful day and some weird, fun activities for a remarkable and memorable *First* at our Museum of History – The *History Survivor* Game. Director Donnie Barrett conspicuously spent many hours contriving a series of fun games to bring out the courageous in history trivia. Seven teams of two, signed up to compete in games of history knowledge, general trivia, fun teamwork, skill and sheer luck, as the spinning wheel of fortune played its part.



Above, Director Barrett, explains the rules of the games, as Judge Catherine King listens in.

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The first game of the heptathlon began at 10 a.m. demanded skill; snatching a Barbie doll from a cold cauldron with a pole, hook and fast work, then handing her over to the team partner in the shortest time. No harm was done to the Barbie, but time was of the essence!



History Trivia Game in Process

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Next came a bout of trivia in world history, followed by U.S. and later, Fairhope facts. Each team worked to write the correct answer on a chalkboard and the team scoring highest, got placed on the spinning wheel for a place on the final spin-off that came later. The more places each team had on the spinning wheel, increased the odds of the team winning the *Survivor*.

The competing teams were:

- White Team – John Rezner & Trey Beau Rezner
- Red Team - Ralph Thayer & Elizabeth Rezner
- Gray Team – Jim and Carol Ann Gray
- Blue Team – Rosanne Gulisano & Bob Glennon
- Pink Team – Faye Earnest & Kris Lafferty
- Yellow Team – Wayne Miller & Blair Gorsuch
- Green Team – Scott Chapin & Karen Brian

**Survivor**, continued on page 3, column 1



## Director's Desk

I get an adrenaline rush this time of year with all the activities that come in the spring. Now that we are also responsible for the *Fairhope Welcome Center*, we just finished hosting over 300,000 visitors to our town for the **Annual Arts and Crafts Show**. While that is more “where are the bathrooms and where is my car,” kinds of questions, we continue to get hundreds of questions about our beautiful city and its history.

The **History Survivor Event** that we did in mid-March was a zany lot of fun and was a totally outside event. It was a gamble for a March day but worked well.

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate the **Tenth Anniversary** of our Museum of History and our annual **Satsuma Blossom Festival** combined. The Festival always attracts several hundred people, and offers a variety of family entertainment, plus demonstrations and shows that are favorites.

For the Anniversary, we will be creating and burying a **Time Capsule** containing items that reflect our history and express the current times in Fairhope and the Single Tax Colony in the 2018 time frame; art, written pieces, memorabilia and photos are a few of the ideas so far, to let our future generation see what life was like here.

Then we have the popular **Downtown Street Walking Tours** each weekend in April. These four walks attract about 75-80 people per Saturday to hear stories about the founding of main street, the buildings, the eclectic founders, the flowers, pier(s) and the Colony Cemetery.

While all of this is going on, we and our excellent group of *Friends of the Museum* are busy planning the Elderberry Festival, summertime History Bus Tours of Fairhope and the always-a-full-house Tuesday *Tea for Two* Speaker programs.

None of this could be done without the fantastic work of our docents and volunteers that are ever-ready and on-the-ball. I can't say enough wonderful things about all of you!

*Donnie Barrett*

## Director Barrett Receives Baldwin County Local History Award



At a televised Baldwin County Commissioners Meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, the County Department of Archives and History recognized Fairhope Museum Director Donnie Barrett for his ongoing commitment and dedicated service to local history. In a telephone interview with Felisha Anderson, Director of the Archives, she said, “Mr. Barrett has demonstrated an impressive commitment to promoting our county history. He deserves this recognition because he helps all over the county, guiding tours, serving as M.C. for the Fort Mims annual reenactment and assisting and advising in many ways.”

Harriet Outlaw, *Friend of the Fairhope Museum of History*, also received a similar award for her active preservation of countywide folklore, speaking and writing about county history, and her service at the County Bicentennial Park, portraying a turn of the century schoolmarm for students visiting the educational park.

The *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History* also received statewide attention early this year as a competitor in the Alabama Historical Association's *Ray Kuykendall Award* for the local non-profit entity best promoting local and State history.

*Helping Fairhope Tell its Story*



The competition also included challenges for a team-coordinated race carrying a raw egg in a shallow spoon down the driveway at high speed (sort of), and the teamwork of snatching a paper sheet from the hands of others if necessary, and quickly building a paper airplane and successfully landing it in a basket about 12 feet away, ... in the wind. Then there was the skill of knocking small cans off of a table 20 feet away with a golf ball (sounds easy, huh? Try it!); and running crab-style, sideways, holding a paper plate between partners, for the length of the courtyard driveway. Tossing raw eggs into a tiny basket about 20 feet away without breaking them, was a toughie too.

While skill and teamwork were needed, fate had its impact, as periodically, the "Grim Reaper" would call for a spin of the wheel and the team on which it stopped, lost a place on the wheel.

The *History Survivor* challenge continued for three hours, then came (drum-roll please!) the Spinning of the Wheel. The arrow stopped on the *Blue Team*, making the winners: Rosanne Gulisano and Bob Glennon!



The event was topped off with a late lunch of Pizza and sodas as competitors reminisced through each game with what we should have done - or not - and expressing how much fun everyone had.

# Satsuma Blossom Festival

## Tenth Anniversary of the Museum of History

April 14, 2018

Upcoming soon, the *Satsuma Blossom Festival* will be celebrated for the fifth year! This event annually includes live music, demonstrations, dancing acts and illusionist Mad Max, who is always a hit! The program begins at 10 a.m. and continues until 4 p.m.

And would ya' believe our Museum of History is ten years old? We will celebrate this "Decade of History" with a special ceremony, assembling and burying a *Time Capsule*. **The Museum is inviting your ideas on what to put into this *trip-back-to-2018* collection** for future historians to see. Send us an email, or talk directly to Director Barrett before Saturday, April 14. Our email address is: [fairhopemuseumnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:fairhopemuseumnewsletter@gmail.com).

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Survivor, continued from left column, this page -



The impressive "Jungle Scene" designed by Donnie Barrett and erected by volunteers Blair Gorsuch, Wayne Miller and Bill Fives for the *History Survivor*, made an enjoyable set for the event. The poles, rope rigging and colorful masks were left standing through the next weekend of March 16 - 18, for visitors to the Annual Arts and Crafts Show to see that something fun had happened at our Fairhope Museum. ~

# Nancy Lewis

## Historical Marker

Museum Director Donnie Barrett, with the support of the *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History*, is sponsoring a historical marker for Nancy Lewis, a remarkable pioneer in Fairhope. A historical marker is planned to be placed near the old Lewis home site.

Before Fairhope was founded, Former slaves John Lewis (1838-1891) and his wife Nancy Lewis (1841-1910) moved from Mississippi to enjoy their new-found freedom in Baldwin County. They built their homestead on an unused section of land owned by Mobile businessman John Bowen, near what would become the corner of Bancroft and Morphy Streets; now Coastal Alabama Community College.

In a verbal agreement with Bowen, the Lewis family was allowed to live on the acreage if they paid the county land taxes (about \$2.00 /year).

John and Nancy, their six children and extended family, cleared fifteen acres, built three houses, several outbuildings, and made orchards and gardens. They stocked their place with horses, cows, pigs and goats.

In 1894, a group of Iowa pioneers arrived to start the new ideal community they called Fairhope. They purchased two hundred acres for their colony; some of which was from John Bowen's descendants and including that land which contained the Lewis family homestead.

The colonists believed in equality and would have liked to have embraced the Lewis family, but they risked financial ruin soon after the Civil War, due to nearby ex-Confederates' attitudes. In just a few years, African American citizens began taking an important role in the development of Fairhope.

John died in 1891. Now a widow, Nancy Lewis agreed to sell her buildings to the Fairhope Industrial Association for one hundred dollars, which was considered a generous amount at the time.

She used a portion of this money to buy an adjoining forty acres for \$4.58. The area later became known as the Nancy Lewis Subdivision, where Thomas Hospital now stands.

In the years to come, Nancy Lewis would become a prominent Fairhope citizen. ~

## Archeological Treasure Brought Home by the *Friends*

### Alabama City Pottery Project

On January 16, 2018, the *Friends of the Fairhope Museum* acquired some treasures. Sixty 5-gallon buckets of washed and catalogued pot-shards and kiln furniture had been recovered from the Fairhope Yacht Club archaeological site, about 2 miles north of downtown. The diggings were gathered by the University of South Alabama (USA), with the participation of Director Donnie Barrett during his studies at the university, and were about to be discarded. The *Friends of the Fairhope Museum* paid for relocation of the pottery shards from the historic Mareschal Kiln at that site.



On February 1, 2018, USA graduate student Taylor Lawhon, a native of Fairhope and archaeological major, and a few *Friends* volunteers, began reconstruction of the pottery. The City of Fairhope provided a workspace at the Dog Toy Factory on Pecan Street. Under Ms. Lawhon's leadership, the project will produce a display for the Fairhope Museum of History. The exhibit will be designed with star-shaped cross shelves, with reconstructed pots sitting in position, as if being fired in the kiln.

The project will continue until the end of April when the results of Ms. Lawhon's and the volunteers' work will be assimilated for the exhibit. Director Barrett will evaluate the exhibit and her work to determine her class grade for the project. ~

# Curt Writes Home

Curt Cochran

It has been one year since I left Fairhope and I have accepted Bob Glennon's invitation to give my perspective of Fairhope from our new hometown of Ft. Collins, Colorado. I'm surprised and pleased, to enjoy both towns for many of the same reasons. They have interesting similarities.

Fort Collins has a population of 170,000+. While I don't quite get the same cozy art town feel of Fairhope, there are many artists and musicians here. There is a monthly Art Walk in Fort Collins, just as there is in Fairhope, albeit a bit spread out.



Old Town Fort Collins, CO; another Colony Experiment

A central part of Fort Collins' early history is its development as a Utopian colony following the guidelines of Charles Fourier, the famous French philosopher. Fourier's guidelines were used in the development of Utopian colonies in the U.S. including the 1894 Single Tax Colony in Fairhope, AL. The Fort Collins Colony had been developed and failed by the time the Henry George book, *Progress and Poverty*, was published in 1879. There were actually six such Utopian colonies developed on the front range of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado under the leadership of Nathan Meeker, a member of Trumbull Phalanx Colony in Ohio, another Fourier inspired colony. He also wanted to form a Fourier style commune similar to the Trumbull Phalanx Colony. He had the enthusiastic support and financial backing of Horace Greeley. The location where Meeker chose to establish The Union Colony was at the confluence of the Platte and Cache la Poudre rivers, about 20 miles east of Fort Collins. Mr. Meeker purchased about 2,000 acres using membership money from the \$50-\$150 fees to join the colony. The Union Colony, known for its strict adherence to temperance and insistence on high moral character, was

later incorporated as the city of Greeley, so named in honor of Horace Greeley, the financial backer. Although it no longer exists as a colony, Greeley remains a thriving city today.

One of Meeker's followers, Gen. Robert Cameron, helped form the Agricultural Colony in Fort Collins, based on the same principals as the Union Colony at Greeley. This colony got off to a great start claiming about 3000 acres adjoining the established town of Fort Collins at its southern border. A colony member, Mr. Franklin Avery, platted streets oriented to the north at an angle to the existing Fort Collins streets. Lots in the newly platted colony were given to colony members who were selected by a drawing. The fast growth of the colony soon resulted in conflict with the existing town. One of the major issues in contention was the high moral standards and temperance policies of the colony. At this time in 1870, Fort Collins was a small-unincorporated town of only 1200 people, but it had six saloons and two houses of ill repute. The people of the Agricultural Colony managed to raise the price of a liquor license every year for several years. But still, it wasn't able to control drinking. The conflicts between the town and the colony were serious to the point that the town citizens voted to incorporate as a city according to the new state constitution of 1876. The cost of a liquor license stabilized for a few years until about 1900, when the city became totally dry, and stayed dry until 1969. Within a few years, the Agricultural Colony, as well as the other Fourier inspired colonies on the Front Range, including the Union Colony (now Greeley), had all but passed into oblivion. Many buildings in Greeley still have the Union Colony name although there is no existing colony organization.

Nathan Meeker left the Union Colony in 1879 to become an Indian Agent for the Colorado Ute Indians at the White River Reservation. The Ute's didn't care much for his strict management practices in that he wanted them to become farmers and to give up their horses. He had even told them that some of their horses would have to be killed. And then he plowed up their horse-racing track. Apparently seeing no hope in the situation, the Indians attacked the Indian agency, killing Meeker and his entire staff.

We still go to the Art Walks, meet authors, photographers, musicians and artists, and hear talk of the way things were done in the colony. I guess the 1,485 miles from Fairhope to Ft. Collins isn't really that far after all. ~

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**Curt Cochran** was the webmaster and creator of our Museum *Friends* Facebook website, & *Friends* photographer 5 years, Board member and President of the *Friends* for two years. We miss 'im!



# Tea for Two

# Tea for Two - continued

**Each Tuesday 2 p.m. in the Museum Council Chamber**

**April 3 – Ron Wells**, Fairhope Police Investigator. Come meet another of Fairhope’s fine police officers! In our efforts to encourage everyone to meet the heroic women and men that make up our police force, we offer an opportunity to learn about life in law enforcement in our community and thank them for risking their lives daily to keep our town safe.

**April 10 – Jo Patton** – A signature member of the Southern Watercolor Society, Jo has won numerous awards and is represented by galleries in Mobile and Ocean Springs. A native, life-long resident of Fairhope, Jo will bring examples of her work and talk about her life as an artist.

**April 17 – Chris Ellis**, Fairhope’s Fire Chief, will tell us about what is going on in Fairhope’s Volunteer Fire Department. They are part of the city’s Emergency Response Team and he will tell us about how it works.

**April 24 – Donnie Barrett** – Donnie will do a tea demonstration, showing how the organic Fairhope tea we serve at the Museum each week is plucked and turned into the drink we all enjoy!

**May 1 – Mary Ann Ingersoll** – Mary Ann is a life-long native of Fairhope. Along with her late husband Charlie, they ran Ingersoll Dairy, Fairhope Dry Cleaners, and for many years was involved in the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation.

**May 8 - Paul Merchant** – Horticulture supervisor for the City of Fairhope’s Public Works department, Paul happens to be a native, life-long resident. He will tell us of his life growing up in Fairhope and the secrets of our beautiful, signature flower beds!

**May 15 – Lynn Donnelly Maser** – Come hear all about “Special Projects, Community Development” for the City of Fairhope from Lynn Maser, one of our city’s administrators. Lynn will talk about current projects including rehabilitating the marina and golf course.

**May 22 –Barbara Hayes Brown and Sara Johnston Cox** – Sara and Barbara will show off their book and film on the history of the Fairhope Yacht Club celebrating its 75th anniversary.

**May 29 – Marilyn Mannhard** - A native Fairhoper and Master Gardner, Marilyn will present her program *Food for Life: Selecting and growing food for optimal health.*



## April History

## Walking Tours of Fairhope

*Depart 10 a.m. Free!*

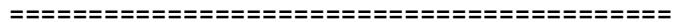
April 7 – Fairhope Ave. Tour: from Welcome Center

April 14 – Beachfront Tour: from Rose Garden at Pier

April 21 – Section St. Tour: from Welcome Center

April 28 – Colony Cemetery Tour: from Arched Front Gate of Cemetery. Park at Convention Ctr.

Tours are conducted by Museum Director Donnie Barrett



### Newsletter

This is the official Newsletter of the *Friends of the Fairhope Museum of History*, a 501 (c) 3 corporation in the state of Alabama. Inquiries and comments may be directed to email: [FairhopeMuseumNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:FairhopeMuseumNewsletter@gmail.com).

Robert Glennon, Editor

# Fairhope Museum of History

24 North Section Street (251) 929-1471

Hours: 9 – 5 Tuesday through Saturday Admission: Free!

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