

# The 'Old' Village Voice

Sanibel Historical Museum and Village

## ANNUAL VINTAGE QUILT SHOW OPENS FEBRUARY 9TH

The Sanibel Historical Museum and Village's annual Vintage Quilt Show, which begins on Wednesday, February 9th, dates back to when the Rutland House was the only building in the Historical Museum. In 1989, the Rutland House went from being open one day a week to five days a week for 10 months of the year. Over the Christmas holidays, there was a toy display. It was the height of the tourist season and Museum volunteers wanted to replace that exhibit with something equally colorful and interesting. A Quilt Show seemed just the thing.

Back in 1989, the Museum only had a couple of quilts in its collection. But several people generously donated family quilts to display. Barbara Jones and Laura Cope were among those who donated heirloom quilts that remain in the Museum's collection today. Barbara gave a baby quilt that had been made for her father. Laura donated the beautifully stitched grey quilt with the pleated boarder, as well as a Crazy Quilt with a fringed border. Jody Brown, Jackie Rauschart and Mardi Ponader have all been involved with the quilt show for many years. Stephanie Rahe has been more recently in charge of displaying and hanging close to 60 quilts, with the help of several volunteers.



For the past several years, accomplished quilter, June Ingraham, has set up her quilting frame at Morning Glories cottage and graciously talked about quilting with Museum visitors. In the past, lemonade and cookies were served in Miss Charlotta's Tea Room. . .something the Museum would like to revive this year.

The quilt raffle has been part of the show almost from the beginning. The first quilt raffled was made and donated by the Sanibel Quilters group; the Kelly Green Quilting Club donated for two years and Amish quilts made in Northern Indiana were raffled for several years. This year the Museum will raffle three wall hanging quilts instead of bed quilts. Two master quilters have produced these beautiful, hand-sewn, heirloom quality works of art.

The Museum is always looking for new quilts to display. The variety of quilts is amazing. . .This year's show will highlight quilts from all regions of the country, ranging in age from the 1830s to the 1990s.

See you at the Village!



## CASTOR BEANS... STILL POPPING UP ON THE ISLANDS AFTER 140 YEARS!

Sanibel and Captiva Islands were a lonely place on June 1, 1870. While we don't have a photograph of the islands on that particular day, we can imagine what it must have been like based on one very important record. Only two hearty souls lived on "Sinnabel Island." How do we know? The U.S. Census for Monroe County, Florida (Lee County had not yet been created) records that William S. Allen, an assistant marshal, and his 16 year old son, George W. Allen, were living and farming on Sanibel.

Karl Rodman, docent and keeper of our

Heritage Garden, says the pair were growing castor beans on land where the South Seas Plantation was built more than a century later.

According to Karl, castor beans were a lucrative crop. The United States government was the largest purchaser of castor beans from which castor oil was extracted to "cure just about anything that ailed you." Castor oil was a staple in doctors' medicine bags during the Civil War. Nobody has recorded how many soldiers' lives were saved by castor oil or how many lives were lost, for that matter. It

turns out that castor beans contain a very potent poison, rysine. The U.S. Army later extracted rysine from the castor bean. Rysine is a deadly toxin and was one of the first "chemicals" used in warfare. The Central Intelligence Agency is known to have rysine in its arsenal.

A strong hurricane put an end to the Allens' castor bean farm, and winds distributed the plants' seeds all over the islands. Today, you may see wild castor bean plants popping up on vacant land.

For old time's sake, there is one castor bean

plant growing at the Historical Village. Karl found the sprout on the west end of the island and planted it in the Heritage Garden. If you have wild castor bean plants on your property, don't brew the beans for medicinal purposes—they could be deadly poison!



### LOCAL ARTISTS WILL "PAINT THE VILLAGE" IN FEBRUARY

A favorite subject depicted by artists in Southwest Florida is our own Historical Village. What artist isn't charmed by our seven historic buildings encircling the Heritage Garden? Most of the artists in this area have discovered our little gem, and they return time and again to render it on canvas, paper and board.

The plein air artists from the Sanibel-Captiva Art League will once again be "Painting the Village" on Wednesdays during February. They will also display their work in bins, and any sales will result in a 10% donation to the Museum.

A special School House Artists' Exhibit, featuring oils, pastels, and watercolors, will be hung in the School House and run from March 9th until March 19th. All of the works will be for sale with the Museum receiving 10% of the sales price. Stop by to see some wonderful art.

A new acquisition is causing quite a buzz in the Museum's Rutland House parlor. An exquisite handcrafted, custom designed shell box with pull-out drawers showcases an outstanding collection of shells. Captiva resident, Bumpy Stevenson, collected shells from around the islands for years, culminating in the design of a beautiful wooden box to house the shells and protect them for posterity. Bumpy entered her treasure in the 1965 Sanibel Shell Fair. Not surprisingly, it garnered a first place blue ribbon.



It is believed that Bumpy arranged a pattern of shells in an intricate design on the lid of the box. As she grew older, Bumpy hired Gladys Lewis as a skilled nursing companion. Gladys worked for Bumpy for 20 years. When Gladys retired to Cape Coral, she was given the boxed shell collection, which she had admired, by her grateful employer. Now it's time to pass it along, and the Historical Museum and Village is delighted to receive it and display it for our visitors.

**Please Support our Business Partners!**

Several of our island businesses responded to our invitation last June to become a Sanibel Historical Museum and Village business partner. The roster of local businesses that are supporting the Museum by making a donation includes:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Allegra Printing and Imaging (Fort Myers)</b> | <b>Bailey's Packing House and General Store</b> |
| <b>Bank of the Islands</b>                       | <b>Big Red Q Quick Print</b>                    |
| <b>Captiva Cruises</b>                           | <b>Casa Ybel Resort</b>                         |
| <b>Gulf Breeze Cottages and Motel</b>            | <b>Island Inn</b>                               |
| <b>Island Sun Newspaper</b>                      | <b>John Grey Painting</b>                       |
| <b>Lighthouse Café of Sanibel</b>                | <b>Sanibel-Captiva Art League</b>               |
| <b>Tarpon Bay Explorers</b>                      | <b>The Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry</b>             |
| <b>The Sanctuary Golf Club</b>                   | <b>West Wind Inn</b>                            |

The Museum also belongs to the Sanibel-Captiva Chamber of Commerce which promotes businesses and non-profit organizations on the island. Most visitors, especially first-timers, will stop by the Chamber to find out "what's happening" on the islands. The Chamber passes out information about their members and promotional literature about the islands. A few of our Historical Museum docents also volunteer at the Chamber.

**CHECK OUT THE HISTORICAL VILLAGE FOR SOME GREAT VALENTINE'S GIFT IDEAS**

February brings thoughts of hearts and flowers. . . our gift shop is in full bloom! Our popular sailor valentines have new looks – hearts and stars, along with the traditional octagon shapes; plus they come in a larger size in addition to the mini. Come and see these beautiful works of art by Jim and Rose Prestigiacommo of Texas. Jim is a master woodworker – he has as many as 5 layers of wood (some as thin as 1/8 inch) in some of the hearts and stars. Rose does exquisite shell work. She has a shell business and collects from the Galveston and Corpus Christi areas. Don't miss Jim and Rose's new shell art mirrors! In February, we are giving the first 25 persons who buy a sailor valentine a small heart design organza gift bag.



February will also bring new pine needle baskets from Naples artist, Gisela Damandl.

Gisela recently spent 3 months traveling in Asia. While in Manila, she learned how to make fiber necklaces – we hope to have some for you to see by the middle of the month, in addition to new basket designs.



When you come to see the Village's quilt show you will have an opportunity to buy small quilted pieces by fiber artist, Carolyn Liebel Queisser of Indianapolis. Carolyn is the quilter of 2 of our 3 raffle quilts and has taught classes for a number of years.

We have lots of things to tempt you---see you in the Village Gift Shop!

–Paula Newton

SANIBEL HISTORICAL MUSEUM AND VILLAGE, INC.  
950 DUNLOP ROAD, SANIBEL, FL 33957  
(239) 472-4648 ~ FAX (239) 472-2277  
[www.sanibelmuseum.org](http://www.sanibelmuseum.org)

**2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Alex Werner - President  
Gayle Pence - Vice-President  
William Bachman - Treasurer  
Janet Halliday - Secretary  
Mary McLaughlin  
Manfred Strobel  
Paula Newton

**Mission: To preserve and share Sanibel history**

**STAFF**

Carol A. Zell - Museum Manager/Editor of The 'Old' Village Voice  
M.G. Whitaker - Business Manager  
Paula Newton - Gift Shop Manager

**A  
REMINDER!**

**Annual Membership Meeting**

**MARCH 15, 2011 — 10 a.m.**

**Sanibel Public Library, Rms. 1-3**

All members of the Sanibel Historical Museum and Village are invited to attend.  
We will be electing new directors to the SHMV Board of Directors.

COMING IN FEBRUARY...

**ANOTHER SELL-OUT!**

**FUNDRAISER FOR THE  
SANIBEL HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM AND VILLAGE**

**FEBRUARY 15, 2011**

Les  
Chapeaux



**HATS OFF** to Nancy McNeill and her "Les Chapeaux" committee members! This year's Luncheon, Vintage Style Show and Auction will celebrate 17 women who have made a difference in the history of Sanibel. Thanks to the Village Development Committee, our Gala Fundraiser is being underwritten by both private and business sponsors.

This year's fabulous fundraiser at the Sanctuary Golf Club will showcase vintage fashions, contemporary fashions, artwork by Myra Roberts, and **HATS, HATS, HATS!** A luncheon and live and silent auctions will complete the festivities.

The monies raised at last year's sell-out event paid for the Village's new audio/visual visitor enhancements and improvements to the managers' office in the Old Bailey Store. This year's receipts will be earmarked for the future expansion of the Museum.