



SARASOTA ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

QUARTERLY PRESERVATION NEWS FOR SARASOTA COUNTY

A GLIMPSE INSIDE



2022 Heritage Awards
& the Launch of the Hall
Preservation Campaign



A detailed look at the
2022 Sarasota's Six to
Save



Sarasota to a T

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Erin DiFazio, *President*

“Sense of place is a natural condition of human existence (dwelling = being), an invariant in a changing world.”

Maria Lewicka, Place Attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years, Journal of Environmental Psychology, 31 (2011) 207-230

Dear friends,

In this issue, we will share the successes and unrealized opportunities of preservation. The 2022 Heritage Awards celebrated the hard work and creative genius of the many branches of professionals working in preservation fields. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, we enjoyed a classy luncheon at the Locally and Nationally Designated Garden Club on the Bay, and got to raise a glass to honor the work of the late Gregory and Eleana Najmy Hall. You will learn about the recently launched Hall Preservation Campaign, which will support our new easement and revolving fund program. We will share the list of some of the most threatened historic structures in the County, which mark the path of our continued advocacy efforts. Structures, that for many of us, represent the scaffolding of our memories, the framework of the lives that brought us where we are today.

Our work centers around saving places, in fact this is the slogan for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Yet the locus of the intention is missing from this context. I think it is important to understand that **the relationship with buildings and places is not a static one, nor is it one sided**. Places save people too. They inspire us, challenge our expectations, and reflect back the qualities we most admire and fear within ourselves.

I believe that the spaces we inhabit, the buildings where we work, snuggle our children, and squabble with our partners, have as much of an impact on us as we do on them. The damp, wood paneled basement of a tract home in the suburban north east, with weak white light filtering through the high window smells of a mix of laundry detergent, old freezer funk and stained sagging sofa bed conveys a smothering sensation, a slight panic that this is all there is.

The feeling of independence I cultivated in my 20s was buttressed by the weathered wrought iron juliette balcony gazing out at the adjacent buildings' grid of ancient windows, the view from a hostel in the South of France where I traveled alone (thank you Grandma for knowing that sometimes the least practical assistance offers the deepest help), for the first time to Europe. The well worn blue wooden shutters framed a history so much larger than my own, many centuries of young adventurers just like myself, and this shift in perspective came as a sense of relief. I wasn't the first, the path was well worn, I wouldn't be the last, and this sense of freedom bestowed by the tired glamor of the room was a gift I have treasured for decades.

Recently I had the opportunity to tour Katherine and Brian Leaver's (award winning) home at 2525 Pleasant Place, a magnificently restored 1894 Victorian. As they led us up the black painted wood stairs into a small room looking out over arching oaks, the wood railing firm in my hand, I found my eyes stinging with tears. The wood frame double hung windows, the white plaster walls, the black rough plank floor held me. This kind family's craft room whispered to me of my glassed in second story rear porch that served as the entrance to my old home, an 1889 Victorian just off the Quinnipiac River in New Haven, CT. Leaning against their table strewn with the body parts of a knit bear, I had to fight back a grief that I didn't realize I had been carrying. That was the first house I ever purchased and I never really got to say goodbye. It was also the last place I felt at-home, some part of me fitting into the structure so that what was reflected back I recognized. I pulled myself together and (hopefully) managed to finish the tour without too much awkwardness. But leaving, I cried in my car. The space had touched me with a tenderness that I haven't felt in a long time.

My partner's home where I currently reside (with gratitude) is like a 34 year old that was too lazy to complete a degree and is happy to subsist on leftovers and channel surfing. Its unfinished bathroom sheetrock patches, awkward sloping dining room addition and cockeyed window openings, speak of a lack of motivation, low quality materials slapped together in a way that resembles a house but feels temporary. Because where would you begin? The work to overhaul is daunting and expensive, the mid-80s methodology so inherently generic .

“But a home is not just a problem to be solved, or a collection of products to be 'curated.' It's an idea about how we want to live that we are creating in the world.”

Ingrid Fetell Lee, The Aesthetics of Joy, 2/4/2022

I am so thankful to have a roof over my head and my loved ones around me, and of course that is what matters most, but all the data our minds receive leaves an impression. When I went to school,

a private prep school in upstate New York, the girls' campus was directly across the street from the boys'. Ours, a wood frame single story around a central courtyard, was built in the mid century with glazed red brick floors. The boys, a 4 story marble and stone mansion with gothic influences and a grand central staircase. There was no way to walk those halls and not internalize their message. Girls' education was an afterthought, a making do, a modest nod toward the generosity of families to bestow education upon their female offspring. Standing in the halls of the boys' school, you could taste it. This was where novelists learned prose, where mathematicians first scrawled a chalky equation, where men became great. For this reason, I think many of us girls tried ten times harder, strove to best the boys, to escape our low ceilings and prove ourselves worthy of marble stairs. Or maybe that was just me, a scholarship kid, acutely aware of the miles between their starting point and my own.

I think it is important to realize that buildings shape our experience just as much as we shape them. We need to think about how our sense of place is constructed, and in a town where there are so many transplants, consider how best to communicate the importance of our history. Preservation is not just about saving materials from the landfill, keeping smaller affordable homes on the roster, keeping the doors of the mansion open so that we can gawk at how the other half lived. It is also about reflecting on the experiences that shaped who we have become, the physical structures that molded our developing psyches. If eyes are the windows to the soul, then windows are the eyes through which we see all the potential versions of ourselves.

“Profound architecture does not merely beautify the settings of dwellings; great buildings articulate the experiences of our very existence...”

Juhani Pallasmaa, The Thinking Hand - Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture, p. 19.


Thank you all for reading, for your support of our mission and for standing up for the community even when it feels like the battle may already be lost. It isn't.

Fondly,



RECOMMENDED READING

For more information, click to visit websites



Dirt.com takes a look at the Sarasota School

DOCOMOMO
11 most threatened modern sites




Architectural Record: Taking Architecture Into the Future, by Cathleen McGuin

2022 HERITAGE AWARDS



Master Architect Carl Abbott & Anne-Marie Russell, Executive Director of Architecture Sarasota

The 2022 Annual Heritage Awards Luncheon was held at the Sarasota Garden Club on April 30, 2022.



Our host, Dr. Frank Cassell with many of the award winners, including the Centennial Steering Committee, Harry Klinkhamer, Renee DiPilato, Nicole Rissler, Brian and Katherine Leaver, Larry Humes, and Alexandra Vargas-Minor

In collaboration with the History & Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County (HPCOSC), the SAHP wishes to recognize individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the preservation and understanding of Sarasota County's prehistoric, historic and historical resources.

The 2022 award recipients include:

Gregory A. and Eleana Najmy Hall Historic Structure Preservation Award

Cunliff Residence, Brian and Katherine Leaver, 2525 Pleasant Place, Sarasota
Cottage at Point of Rocks, Donald and Terri Liebenritt, 7208 Point of Rock Road, Siesta Key
The Golden Host Resort and Bahi Tiki Hut, Bob Brown & Parth Shaha, 4674 N. Tamiami Tr.
Paul Rudolph's Umbrella House, Anne and Robert Essner, 1300 Westway Drive, Lido Key

Special Citation for Project of Merit

Vamo Drive Park, Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Department

Public Leadership Award

Dr. Renee DiPilato, Director of Libraries and Historical Resources for Sarasota County

Historical Research Award

Larry R. Humes, Venice Gondolier newspaper

Organizational Achievement Award

The Sarasota County Centennial 2021 Steering Committee

Historical Collections Preservation Award

Alexandra Vargas-Minor, Archivist, Ringling College of Art and Design

The Lillian Burns Award for Individual Achievement

Harry Klinkhamer, Historical Resources Manager, City of Venice



Parth Shaha, Golden Host Resort & Bahi Tiki Hut, with Dr. Frank Cassell and Erin DiFazio



Anne & Robert Essner, the Umbrella House, with Dr. Frank Cassell and Erin DiFazio



Donald & Terri Liebenritt, Cottage at Point of Rocks, with Dr. Frank Cassell and Erin DiFazio

HALL PRESERVATION CAMPAIGN

Benjamin and Samuel Hall were presented with citations in their parents' honor and Umbrella House prints by John Pirman provided by Anne and Robert Essner.



Louis and George Najmy, Suzanne Hall, Benjamin and Samuel Hall , Lorrie Muldowney and Erin DiFazio



Thank you! OUR SPONSORS

The Hall Family Trust
Janet Minker & Elliott Himelfarb
Paver Construction
Barry & Rebecca Preston






Along with naming the historic preservation award to honor Greg and Eleana Najmy Hall, the SAHP wished to further recognize this family's tremendous contributions to the field of preservation in a way that would meaningfully carry on their legacy.

LEARN About the Sarasota Preservation Fund

The Hall Preservation Campaign was launched during the Awards Ceremony to fund SAHP's new Sarasota Preservation Fund (SPF) [*a working title*] which will hold easements on historic properties, and offer low-cost loans to assist with stabilization, rehabilitation and maintenance of historic buildings. The Preservation Fund will also provide technical assistance to building owners, and guide them through the process of securing City and County-offered benefits. Check out the article on page 7, "What is an easement?"

SARASOTA SIX TO SAVE



Click to view presentation
(10 min)

MOD SQUAD T SHIRT

Long-time members (and frequent partners in preservation) Janet Minker and Elliott Himelfarb are selling this understated T-shirt featuring the architects of the Sarasota School in alphabetical order.



[**Want One?**](#)

LEAVE A LEGACY

The Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation is now offering Lifetime Legacy Memberships. You can also help preserve the past for the future by leaving a gift to the SAHP in your will. [Learn More](#)



WHAT IS A PRESERVATION EASEMENT?

and why would I want to donate one?

With the steady rise of land values in Florida, and development pressures building in cities across the country, owners of historic properties are seeking alternate routes to ensure preservation. It requires only simple math to illustrate that a developer can pay more than a 'homeowner' (end user) for a smaller, older house, when the potential to build an enormous "luxury" residence or multi-unit hotel house carries a multi-million dollar price tag. As developers wise to the sad truth that local designation can be overturned with a wave of the commission's mighty wand, the scales tip tearfully in their favor. Preservation easements accomplish two important goals: assurance that a property is protected in perpetuity, and the potential for some form of tax relief.

"A historic preservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement, ...which permanently protects a significant historic property. Since it is a perpetual easement, an owner is assured that the property's historic character will be preserved. In addition, an owner who donates a historic preservation easement may be eligible for one or more forms of tax benefits."

National Parks Service, Easements to Protect Historic Properties, 2010

While conservation easements for open space are familiar in Sarasota, (the work of the incredible Conservation Foundation), historic preservation easements are not currently common in Florida. However, in many other states across the nation, historic preservation easements are an essential legal tool widely engaged to the benefit of property owners and the communities where the historic resources are located.

For more information, check out these great resources:



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Saving Places That Matter to the Diverse People of North Carolina

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