

History Center becomes Team Punta Gorda spinoff

Can you remember when you studied local history in school? If you're like me it had nothing to do with Charlotte Harbor, Calusa Indians, the Peace River, Punta Gorda Hotel, summer houses, the long dock, fishing, cattle, pineapples, and steam ships traveling to and from New Orleans, Key West, and Havana. My upbringing was somewhere else and its history doesn't even remotely resemble where I now call home.

That's the problem. Many of us have relocated here to take advantage of a lifestyle and enjoy our slice of paradise. How do we transplants develop an appreciation for what the life of generations of local Floridians must



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and gives it the personality that differentiates us from other Florida locales.

Many efforts have been made to capture and document this rich history. The mission of the Charlotte County Historical Center, located at Bayshore Live Oak Park, is to offer a variety of programs and services to educate the community about the rich history of the Charlotte county area, and preserve and protect the County's historical

servicing historic buildings for more than 25 years.

The Punta Gorda Historic Preservation Advisory Board makes policy recommendations for the protection of historically significant structures and sites and promotes public awareness of historic archaeological preservation and its community benefits. The Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society documents our history through incredible murals that are true works of art.

Even with all of this activity, no archive of historic artifacts and documents exists in the South County area, a place where Punta Gorda area history could be researched and shared with resi-

committee of representatives from all of the above organizations as well as Main Street Punta Gorda, the city of Punta Gorda, the Punta Gorda Women's Club, Charlotte Harbor Visitor's Bureau and many interested residents. The group began investigating how to establish our own local, Punta Gorda-based archive. We found that just mentioning the idea brought collectors "out of the woodwork." It's amazing how much memorabilia is available and waiting to become part of a historic collection.

A mere nine months later, a new nonprofit organization is about to be launched, the Punta Gorda History Center. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit application

organization. We will hold strategic planning sessions in August to begin to establish a plan of action, priorities and timelines.

If you are interested in participating in the Punta Gorda History Center planning process, volunteering, or have a historic collection you would like for us to consider, please contact Gene Murtha, President of the Punta Gorda History Center, at 941-258-2080. You can also contact Team Punta Gorda at team@teampuntagorda.org or 941-637-TEAM. This effort will fulfill the missing link in preserving our fascinating and colorful local history.

We also welcome you to become a Team Punta Gorda volunteer!

From office volunteers to committee members, we'll find a rewarding opportunity just for you. We're also on Facebook. Keep tabs on Team Punta Gorda through Team Talk, our monthly e-newsletter, by signing up on our website at www.teampuntagorda.org.

Have you bought an inch, a foot, a yard, or more to help relocate the Quednau/Hindman House to the Punta Gorda History Park for a Youth Activity Museum? Don't miss this opportunity. Call the Punta Gorda Historical Society at 941-639-1887 for more information.

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