

The Florida Connection **Sandpaper**

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ALUMNI
connect ▼ travel ▼ serve

The mission of the YMCA Alumni is to enable members to promote a nurturing worldwide Christian fellowship that provides educational, social and charitable opportunities.

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The Florida Sandpaper is the newsletter of the C. B. Willis Chapter of YMCA Alumni and is published six times a year.

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FREE Chapter Membership for All YMCA Retirees

All YMCA retirees living in the C. B. Willis Chapter service area will receive a FREE chapter membership beginning in 2021.

It was an unanimous decision of the C. B. Willis Chapter leadership to grant a FREE chapter membership to the over 450 YMCA retirees residing in its service area that covers all of Florida except western parts of the panhandle.

The Willis chapter is returning to its prior practice of being funded through donations rather than through membership fees. It is opening its membership to all retirees who wish to remain connected to the Y and past colleagues without paying chapter membership fees and making annual renewals.

Those who are not currently registered as members and wish to activate their membership and receive postal issues of the *Florida Sandpaper* and other chapter communications simply need to fill out and submit a membership registration card and/or respond via email to the chapter Treasurer. That's it! Yes, we'd like for all to include a donation to help with chapter publication and operational expenses, but that is not necessary. Just respond and you'll activate your chapter membership!

But, even if you don't activate your membership you'll still be a part of the fellowship. Your chapter membership is automatic and you'll receive news releases, electronic issues of *The Florida Sandpaper* and other communications keeping you updated on friends, past colleagues, and other chapter and Y happenings. .

C. B. Willis Chapter - Connect-Travel-Serve

Messages and Reports

Co-Presidents' Message:



Obviously the COVID-19 Virus has affected all of us, with that said, we hope that you, your loved ones and friends have not contacted the virus,...and if so... that you have recovered and are well again.

Back on April 23rd, the Willis Chapter had our first Zoom Video Conference Meeting. For several of our members, it was their first experience being on a video conference call. The feedback that we received was positive...and some

expressed that we should take advantage of this technology in order to stay connected and conduct chapter business. Sooo...we intend to have some of our future meetings via video conferencing in addition to our regular chapter events. We think the next one may be in August.

During our April 23 meeting, it was decided that our C. B. Willis Chapter of YMCA Alumni, will be reaching out to all of the YMCA retirees living in Florida. According to the YMCA Retirement Fund, we have approximately 470 retirees residing in Florida. Beginning in 2021, our Willis Chapter will begin providing all YMCA retirees residing in Florida a **FREE** chapter membership.

The motivation to do this is obvious. Our chapter is experiencing a steady decline in membership numbers and activity participation...**we want to increase membership numbers in both the Chapter and National.** The second reason is our chapter is hoping that by **routinely** keeping Y Alumni in front of the retirees in Florida that we will be able to identify and motivate individuals to take on chapter leadership roles. Debbie and I want to thank all those who participated in the Zoom Conference Call.

A big special thank you goes out to Phil Wortman. Phil took the time to communicate and learn how the Allen-Stone Chapter of YMCA Alumni has operated and survived in the significant geographic challenge that they are responsible for. The Allen-Stone Chapter covers 6 states; Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska and Hawaii. We want to emphasize that our goal is to remove any burden that a YMCA retiree may have from joining YMCA Alumni. **We want retirees to be both Chapter and National Members.**

As we write, we are hoping to have a Willis Chapter Meeting in the Orlando Area sometime in October. During the Zoom Meeting it was suggested that when we do have gatherings, if possible, that we should do them in a central location. We are hoping to get a preferred hotel rate and invite the YMCA Retirement Fund as our primary program.

A **special thank you goes out to Bob Martin** of Port Orange Florida. Bob has volunteered to be the Willis Chapters' Representative to the newly formed YMCA Alumni National Service Project Task Force. The Task Force will be having their first meeting during the month of June. We look forward to learning more about the National Service Project.

Don't forget to plan forward for 2022 and the East Region YMCA Alumni Reunion in New Orleans!

Laissez Le Bon Temps Roulet

It will be a great time in the Big Easy!



Fitness: Get Outside!

Phil Wortman, Roberts-Gulick Award



Get outside ... spend time outside ... that's the advice from the experts. Here is some information.

Social distancing rules are really to protect you with brief exposures or outdoor exposures. In these situations there is not enough time to achieve the infectious viral load when you are standing 6 feet apart or where wind and the infinite outdoor space for viral dilution reduces viral load. The effects of sunlight, heat, and humidity on viral survival, all serve to minimize the risk to everyone when outside.

If you are outside, and walk past someone, "dose and time" is needed for infection. You would have to be in their airstream for 5+ minutes for a chance of infection. While joggers may be releasing more virus due to deep breathing, remember the exposure time is also less due to their speed. Do maintain physical distance, but the risk of infection in these scenarios are low.

Indoor spaces, with limited air exchange or recycled air and lots of people, are concerning from a transmission standpoint. We know that 60 people in a volleyball court-sized room results in massive infections. Same situation with a restaurant. Social distancing guidelines don't hold in indoor spaces where you spend a lot of time, as people on the opposite side of the room can be infected.

The principle is viral exposure (dose) over an extended period of time. In crowded areas and restaurants people are exposed to the virus in the air for a prolonged period (hours). Even if they are 50 feet away, even a low dose of the virus in the air over a sustained period, is enough to cause infection..

When assessing the risk of infection at the grocery store or mall, you need to consider the volume of the air space, the number of people, and how long people are spending in the store.

(Data from "The Risks—Know Them—Avoid Them" Erin S. Bromage, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.)

Columns

Food For Thought

(A recipe for living)

Reverent Joseph DeGroot



Gen 11: Acts 2;1-31

PENTECOST

We are now into the season of Pentecost. The season lasts for most of the summer (about 50 days).

In Genesis is the story of The Tower of Babel. The King of Babylonia, in order to become more famous, let his pride and independence from God lead him to begin to build a tower into the heavens. This caused God to confuse their language so they could not understand each other and could not complete the tower.

In the book of Acts is the story of the reversal of the Tower of Babel. It announces the third person of the Trinity – God the Father; God the Son, Jesus Christ; and, God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ, both Son of man and Son of God lets us know what God is like.

God the Spirit is the Comforter, God helping us to deal with suffering, grief, troubles and loss. Many of us are feeling the effects of the COVID -19. As YMCA alumni we are fortunate to have such a good pension, leaving us time and resources to help others.

The Disciples did not have Jesus with them any longer. Now we can have Jesus with us always.

God the Spirit is our Enabler. Enabling us to do Christ's work in his stead. "He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor." The Spirit empowers us to be his disciples.

Pentecost, is often considered the birthday of the Christian church. For on that day the Apostles and others were gathered in Jerusalem. The Spirit came down as of tongues of fire. They spoke and they understood each other even though they were speaking their countries language and everyone understood each other.

God has a way of bringing hope, of turning things around.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON US ... THAT'S ALL OF US.

Who Is Doing What

Dorothy Markell—Correspondent



Congratulations on surviving some of the weirdest times that have come our way. It's a big deal to go to the grocery ... hmmm, what shall I wear?

If I go to the pharmacy for my pills, I could pick up a bottle-or two-of wine. Yes, it's different.

If you ever wondered how you'd survive house arrest, now you know. And you've discovered that you really CAN be with that other person 24/7.

Two friends who have managed to be busy are **Janet and Fred Toot**. They report that Jan has been getting gel shots in her knees at the Sarasota Spine Institute while Fred has been extra friendly with his dermatologist (paying for all that sun during his youth!). Also, I'm guessing that Fred had a "teensy" car accident because he went to a class to get the 4 points off of his license. Driving at age 80 is a bit of a challenge but he manages to find "take out" dinners and Jan doesn't have to cook. They have two sons and a grandson all of whom are impacted in their jobs by the virus. They are looking toward freedom.

From **Alice Gaites'** wonderful iPad: She writes that they have cabin fever but have been out to dinner on Mother's day to Waterfront in Nokomis. Tables 6 feet apart and half capacity. Because **Carl** and Alice have a waterfront view, they also have a scene of the love bugs by their lanai, that is when they're not watching the depressing news on TV. Alice wrote to me because apparently Carl has perfected the art of napping!

Bill Ryan writes that they had to quit using their motor home after 30 years and visiting all the states as well as most of the National Parks.

Seems Bill broke his leg while they were in Iowa and recently he lost vi-

sion suddenly in his left eye. He's still seeing doctors to find the cause but it's dangerous to drive a 36 foot RV with only one eye. On the other hand **Marcy** is getting a lot of experience at nursing.

For Willis members of years ago, I found out that **Shirley Pead**, who was married to **Charlie** for 64 years, died in March at 91 years of age in Bradenton. I texted **Don and Margie Dome's** son, **Bill**, and found out that Margie (Don died last year) is just fine in the assisted living facility in Sudbury, Mass. Her phone is 978-261-5894 and since all residents are COVID-19 stuck in their rooms, you can be sure she will answer!

Joe and Tonia DeGroot have been attacked by what Tonia calls a "poltergeist" over the past several months. Besides COVID 19, medical issues and other problems such as a total brown out of half their house from an incoming line, Joe has been in assisted living since February (thank goodness no one in the complex has gotten the virus) and has fallen and broken his humerus. Joe's comment was his typical play on words "... and it wasn't funny."

Carol Leiving writes: We get excited every time we decide we need to go to Sam's! We have learned how to ZOOM and have enjoyed seeing our children's faces and catching up on their news. Biggest news...our oldest grandson is going to do his Medical residency at University of Florida at Gainesville! We will get to see him more often and I'll probably have more laundry! That's okay, cause we just had to buy a new washer and dryer! Shortly after we purchased those two costly items, our refrigerator went on the fritz! Now, I'm hoping our stove breaks so we can have all silver appliances, even if I have to put **Larry** up for rent! Actually, we are both fine and being careful to wear our masks when we go out. Hope this finds everyone hale and hearty and not too bored!

We'd love to hear what's going on with YOU ... email me, okay?

Membership Levels, Process, Benefits

Basic Information, Levels, Process, and Benefits

Levels

There are over 450 Y retirees living in the C. B. Willis Chapter's service area. We know statistically that half of them wish to maintain some level of contact with the Y and their past colleagues.

Sixty-three are registered as Willis chapter members, but not all Y retirees wish to participate in chapter activities. Some just want to receive a newsletter to be "in touch."

The new FREE Willis chapter membership policy lets the chapter serve all Y retirees regardless of their interest levels.

There are three chapter membership levels:

- Inactive Willis Chapter Member – For those who only receive the electronic chapter newsletter and other chapter communications, but do not register with the chapter and are not contributors.
- Registered Willis Chapter Member – For those who register with the chapter, receive the postal chapter newsletter (*The Florida Sandpaper*) and other chapter electronic communications and may or may not be contributors or participate in chapter events.
- Willis Chapter National YMCA Alumni Member – For those who register with the chapter and national organiza-

tion and pay the national membership fee, receive the postal chapter (*The Florida Sandpaper*) and national (*The Connection*) newsletters and electronic communications, and may or may not be contributors or participants in chapter and/or national events. Eligible for all chapter and national benefits.

Process

How will all this work? It is a simple 1-2-3 process:

1. In September all existing and new Y retirees living in the Willis Chapter service area will receive an electronic notification of the new FREE chapter membership policy and copy of *The Florida Sandpaper* inviting all to register as a chapter member. Existing chapter members would be automatically registered.
2. In November an electronic Membership Issue of *The Florida Sandpaper* will be sent promoting opportunities for chapter involvement, invitation to register as a chapter member and to join or renew a national membership, provide a summary of chapter and national membership benefits, and a solicitation for chapter and national operating donations.
3. In January an electronic "reminder" notification will be sent encouraging chapter registration and joining/renewing the national membership, and solicitation for chapter and national operating donations.

Benefits

All chapter membership levels have full chapter benefits. Inactive chapter members only receive chapter electronic communications. Registered Chapter Members receive all chapter postal and electronic communications. All chapter members may participate in any and all chapter meetings and activities, and have full voting privileges.

Willis Chapter and National YMCA Alumni Members have full chapter and national benefits. This includes all chapter and national postal and electronic publications, participation in all chapter and national meetings and activities, and has full chapter and national voting privileges. National YMCA Alumni Members are eligible for EAF grants should an untoward event occur in their life.

Additional benefits include maintaining a connection with the world's greatest human services organization, and continue your YMCA friendships with past colleagues, fellowship and interests into retirement, and the opportunity to travel and enjoy being with past colleagues and friends with the YMCA Alumni Travel Club.

YMCA Alumni retains a representation on the YMCA Retirement Fund and meets quarterly with the Board of Trustees to present issues and keep you informed on important policies and actions impacting you and other Y retirees.

ymcaalumni.org

Membership Info

YMCA Alumni Membership and Chapter Structure

The YMCA Alumni organization is composed of two interdependent component: the national organization and the chapters. Both have a membership function.

National:

Prior to 2007 all Y retirees listed in the Official YMCA Roster were provided a free life membership in the national organization. During that year the policy changed requiring the Y retiree to send in a "response card" to obtain the free life national membership. That practice continued until 2009 when the organization's national board instituted a \$25 renewable national membership fee.

Between 2014 and 2016 two additional national membership policies were enacted. The first was the requirement that all chapter members had to join and pay the national membership dues in addition to their chapter dues.

In a reaction to the negative feedback from the chapters the second policy was enacted to require all national only members to become a chapter member and pay the chapter membership dues.

Chapters;

There are currently 17 existing chapters. Chapters are free to determine their own membership policies and funding structure within the general guidelines stated within the organization's bylaws. Some are funded through a donation system while others have membership dues at various levels. There isn't a national standard for chapter membership dues or chapter membership.

Some chapters extend a free life chapter membership to all Y retirees living in the chapter's service area. *(The C. B. Willis Chapter will be providing a free life membership to all Y retirees in its service area beginning in 2021. This is a return to the free life membership the chapter had embraced prior to 2009 when it initiated membership dues to conform to the national organization's implementation of a membership fee.)*

Only those chapter members that choose to pay the national membership fee as national YMCA Alumni members are eligible for YMCA Alumni membership benefits such as receiving national communications, "The Connection," and EAF grants.

Membership Data:

According to data received from a 2017 YMCA Retirement Fund survey about 50% of those responding indicated an interest in maintaining a connection with the Y and past colleagues; and, only about 20% have an annual annuity of more than \$25,000 per year. This would extrapolate to new member market availability of between 80 and 100 new Y retirees a year.

Current year (March) national membership data shows a 53 unit drop from 1,076 to 1,023 total membership units reducing revenues from national membership dues by \$1,325. National membership dues comprise about 32% of the national budget.

(The C. B. Willis Chapter reported a decline of 9 chapter memberships from 72 to 63 units for the same time period. Beginning in 2021 the chapter will discontinue having a chapter membership fee and designate all Y retirees living in the chapter service as free life chapter members, and return to being funded through annual donations as was done prior to 2007. The change is projected to widen the membership base, increase revenue and position the chapter to involve more Y retirees by utilizing electronic modes of communication.)

National memberships constitute considerably less than 10% of the membership market at large indicating that the present scope of operation is not reaching or meeting the needs of the Y retirees. Organization surveys conducted in 2019 indicated that 42% of the membership would not recommend membership to their friends and were not satisfied with chapter meetings, and 42% of those who did not renew indicated that distance to chapter events were the reason for not renewing their membership.

The rapidly changing socio-demographics have a direct effect on membership. Y retiree's spouses have had significant careers and may not be interested in participating. Two family incomes provides increased expendable retirement funds and options for recreation. Due to the male/female composition of the workforce the collegial relationships developed during employment have been altered.

To survive as an organization, both the national and the chapter paradigm must be changed. The "new normal" may not be centered around membership dues and chapter activities, but rather congregate around a wider support base utilizing electronic communication chains to maintain the Y and past collegial connections.

Editorials and Comments

Editorial: Three Blind Mice

Phil Wortman, Sandpaper Editor, Stahl Award

Three blind mice. That may describe how some may look at the current state of our national organization. No debate, everyone is totally committed to the organization! It is just that some may be “blind” to the data, trends and socio-demographic changes now impacting the future of YMCA Alumni.

Some may be “blind” to the indication that nationally almost 50% do not renew their membership due to distance to chapter activities and/or lack of interest in chapter participation ... and “blind” to the fact that just 17 chapters can’t serve the thousands of our past colleagues living all across our vast nation.

Only a little over a third of those who joined with a free first year membership renewed, meaning that the national organization lost touch with about two thirds of those Y retirees who had shown an interest in the organization.

Some may be “blind” to the obvious fact that the national organization’s existing business model of charging an annual membership fee will not financially sustain the organization without significant contributions that far exceed membership dues revenues, meaning that we must vastly expand the scope of the membership market and cultivate potential donors.

“See how they run” and not seeing how the national organization needs to change its mode of marketing its membership may have dire results. Doing something the same way again and again and expecting to get different results just doesn’t happen.

The current membership model is not serving the organization or the membership well in today’s ever changing socio-demographics. March 2020 membership units showed a 44 unit decline in memberships from March 2019.

It would appear that “the farmer’s wife” is poised to “cut off their tails with a carving knife” unless something miraculously restores their sight. (Read as: It would appear we are going to lose our tails nationally unless some innovative changes are made.)

The Willis Chapter has “opened its eyes” and is embarking on a new membership paradigm and providing a free chapter membership to serve all YMCA retirees regardless of where they live in the service area, or their lack of ability/desire for chapter involvement.

The national organization must not be “blind” to the need to significantly widen its scope of YMCA Alumni membership while cultivating additional organizational interests and financial support. However, some remain “blind” to such a need and task and prefer to retry failing practices to new challenges ... which hasn’t worked.

What About Finances?

What about finances? That’s a good question. Can the Willis Chapter survive financially since it has made its chapter membership free to all Y retirees living in its service area?

We are counting on YOU! We’re not trying to be coy in our request for donations to fund the chapter’s operations. The chapter’s budget is about \$2,500 a year. **Since chapter membership is now FREE, we need your generosity to make ends meet!**

Before changing over to an annual membership fee in 2009, the Willis Chapter had flourished since 1936 through annual donations—**that’s 73 years**. We’re sure that the return to free chapter memberships being funded by donations will provide the necessary monies to continue and grow the chapter.

The chapter’s annual new membership and renewal campaign is held during the last couple of months of the year. That’s when we’ll conduct the **C. B. Willis Member’s Donor Campaign**.

The first donor request will be emailed to all Y retirees in the chapter’s service area and be announced in the *Sandpaper* in **September**. There will be a follow-up in **November** and then the final donor request in **January**.

When the **C. B. Willis Member’s Donor Campaign** request comes, please take a moment and fill out the form and make a donation. The chapter membership fee between 2009 and 2020 was \$25 ... prior to 2009 the chapter had suggested progressive donor levels such as:

- \$25—Partner Level
- \$50—Donor Level
- \$75—Sponsor Level
- \$100+—Entrepreneur Level

It is highly recommended that chapter members also secure a national YMCA Alumni membership by paying the national membership fee of \$25 and making a donation to the national organization.

The **C. B. Willis Member’s Donor Campaign** will provide the opportunity to register and make a donation to the Willis Chapter, and join/renew and make a donation to the national organization.

Remember, Willis Chapter membership is now FREE— we’ll need your donation for 2021!

Lagniappe

What Is Love?

In her autobiography, “The Story of My Life” Helen Keller tells how as a deaf and blind child she learned from Anne Sullivan the meaning of love.

“I remember the morning I first asked the meaning of the word ‘love.’ This was before I knew many words. I had found a few early violets in the garden and brought them to my teacher. She tried to kiss me, but at that time I didn’t like anyone to kiss me except my mother. Miss Sullivan gently put her arm around me and spelled into my hand, ‘I love Helen.’

“What is love?” I asked.

She drew me closer to her and said, ‘It is here, pointing to my heart.’ Her words puzzled me very much because I did not then understand anything unless I touched it.

“I smelled the violets in her hand and asked, half in words and half in signs, a question which meant, ‘Is love the sweetness of flowers?’

“No,” said my teacher.

“Again I thought. The warm sun was shining on us.

“Is this love?” I asked, pointing in the direction from which the heat came ... a day or two afterward ... the sun had been under a cloud all day, and there had been brief showers, but suddenly the sun broke forth in all its southern splendor. Again I asked my teacher, ‘Is this not love?’

“Love is something like the clouds that were in the sky before the sun came out,” she replied. Then in simpler words than these ... she explained: ‘You cannot touch the clouds, you know, but you can feel the rain and know how glad the flowers and the thirsty earth are to have it after a hot day. You can not touch love either, but you can feel the sweetness that it pours into everything. Without love you would not be happy or want to play.

“The beautiful truth burst upon my mind—I felt that there were invisible lines stretched between my spirit and the spirit of others.”

August Willis Chapter ZOOM Meeting

We invite you and all Willis Chapter members to participate in an August ZOOM meeting—date and time to be determined. If you are interested in participating, please email Willis Chapter President, Larry Garvin, at lgarvin@me.com to put your name and email address on the attendance list for notification of time and date and ZOOM meeting electronic address.

Agenda will include (1) discussion of new free chapter membership process and implications on programs and finances; (2) planning for future chapter meetings for the current program year; (3) planning and role of the Willis Chapter in the January 2022 East Region YMCA Alumni Reunion to be held in New Orleans; and, (4) other new and old business items. Please contact Larry Garvin if you have items to add to the agenda. 724.355.2875.

YMCA CEO Seeks \$60 Billion for Non-Profits and Aid for Youth Sports

From YMCA.net

Fearing organizations will suffer irreparable financial shortfalls due to Covid-19, **Y-USA CEO Kevin Washington** is calling on federal lawmakers to provide additional funds to save nonprofits.

The YMCA and more than 100 politicians, including U.S. representatives including Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Seth Moulton (D-MA), support the Save Organizations that Serve (SOS) America Act. The legislation asks for emergency funding for nonprofits and inclusion to qualify for new Small Business Administration (SBA) loans.

Washington is seeking \$60 billion to save non-profit organizations, including the YMCA, which has already laid off more than 75% of its employees.

Washington said the YMCA lost \$400 million in April due to forced closures which “devastated” the organization as a result of coronavirus.

“We want them to understand how we are suffering and how their

support is needed,” Washington said of lawmakers. If funding isn’t approved, some YMCAs may only be able to stay open for 3 months.

The YMCA will lose roughly \$2.5 billion if operations are suspended throughout the summer. With insufficient revenue, YMCA across the country will not afford to fund youth programs.

“It’s going to be an evolution,” said Joshua Jacobs, the CEO of TGA Premier Sports. “It’s going to be a multistep process to see what the youth sports landscape looks like. The YMCA – what do they look like at the end of this? What programs step up and figure out both online and in-person resources are needed?”

Note: Just as I finished typing this column from the YMCA web site, Dana Perino began interviewing Kevin Washington on her Fox News program. Kevin did an outstanding job in the interview.





Your YMCA Alumni Organization

History



The C. B. Willis Chapter of YMCA Alumni

From "Fellowship in Florida" compiled by H. Douglas McLeod, February 2011

Clarence Bacus Willis was born in Rockville, CT, September 12, 1849. He passed away in St. Petersburg, FL, June 23, 1937. As a young man he was in the lumber business and began his YMCA involvement as a volunteer. In 1878 he was induced to become the General Secretary of the New Haven YMCA. Five years later he went to Milwaukee where he served until his retirement in 1918.

Willis and his wife Ida and daughter Grace moved to St. Petersburg to make it their home. At that time St. Petersburg had a population of 14,000. He would send friends and past colleagues Chamber of Commerce materials extolling the virtues of the community and Florida living.

For several years prior to the desire to form a formal group in 1936, visiting YMCA retirees got together for an annual luncheon. There were already four chapters in existence of the "Veterans International Secretarial Fellowship" formed in 1922: The Henry J. McCoy in San Francisco (1928); the McBurney-Morse in New York (1930); the George W. Mahaffey in New England (1930; and, the L. Wilbur Messer in Chicago (1931).

On February 12, 1936 twelve retired Secretaries met to form an organization and drew up a constitution and elected officers. Willis was elected "Honorary President for Life." In December of that year the new chapter was named the C. B. Willis Chapter of Retired YMCA Secretaries of Florida with headquarters in St. Petersburg, FL. For the first 30 years average attendance at the annual luncheon was 116.

The frequency and content of the chapter meetings remained much the same from 1936 and into the 1960s. Lunch is served, the group breaks into song led by a member, guests are introduced, news is given and the speaker is introduced. Between the meetings a picnic was held at Maximo Park on the Boca Ciega Bay on the Gulf of Mexico.