The next Zephyrhills Historical Association meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 1st at the Zephyrhills Depot Museum, 39110 South Avenue. The business meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. Refreshments are always served. There will be no scheduled meeting in December. Our Christmas get-together is set for Monday, December 3rd, 6 p.m., at the Wedgewood Manor Community Clubhouse, 37420 Wedgewood Drive (off Geiger Road).

**Speakers**

Our speaker for the November meeting was Harriet Morton Weicht, assisted by member Elaine McKendree Benjamin. Both these ladies grew up in the historic Hercules Powder Company Camp. They spoke mostly about the family atmosphere of the entire camp, and how families looked after one another. Those in attendance enjoyed the presentation and discussion very much.

![Image of Harriet Morton Weicht and family](image_url)

Little Lady, Harriet Morton Weicht – 1st Prize Easter Float

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**Jeff Miller**  
Pasco County Historian  
For a walk down memory lane visit [website](http://www.fivay.org)  
Please consider contributing old photos for the website.  
My email address is on the opening page

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**ZHA Mission Statement**  
The mission of the Zephyrhills Historical Association is to research, gather, and share local historical information with all generations, through our literature, programs, and scholarships, and to volunteer assistance to the Zephyrhills Depot Museum and WWII Barracks Museum.
### Executive Board

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<td>President</td>
<td>Cris White</td>
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<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Jerry Pricher</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Margie Partain</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Jo White</td>
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<td>Alternate</td>
<td>Patty Thompson</td>
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### Board Members

- Nathan Geiger
- Bill Kustes
- Bob Porter
- Penny Porter

### Committees

- **Ads for Tracks**: Patty Thompson, Vera Chenkin
- **Hospitality**: Rose McKell
- **Refreshments**: Gail Geiger
- **Newsletter**: Jerry Pricher, Irene Dobson
- **Programs**: Irene Dobson, Clereen Brunty
- **Scholarship**: Margie Partain, Jerry Pricher

### Current Members

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<td>Carolyn Dean</td>
<td>Betty Hall</td>
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<td>Irene Dobson</td>
<td>Rex Hiatt</td>
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<td>Elaine Edenfield</td>
<td>Val Hiatt</td>
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<td>Vicki Elkins</td>
<td>Maurice Humphries</td>
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<td>Dusty Perkins</td>
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<td>Sue Green</td>
<td>Jackie Lindsey</td>
<td>Nancy Perkins</td>
<td>Ed Woodstuff</td>
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### Boardwalk Boosters

- Dick Tucker
- Greg First
- Bill Kustes
- James McElwee
- George Boone
- Mary Helen Clague
- Jim Satterfield
- Roselyn McKell
- Clereen Brunty
- Terry & Jackie Lindsey
- Maurice Humphries
- Polly Humphries
- Vicki Elkins
- Gina King Granger
- Margie Partain

### Scholarship Boosters

- Jay & Kathleen Burnside
- James & Jean Kaylor
- Rick Moore, MD
- Jerry Pricher
- George Boone
- Betty Hall

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**Editor:** Jerry Pricher, 5138 20th Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542  
**Phone:** 813-788-2547  
**email:** jerry@pricher.net
Member Spotlight

Vera Chenkin
By Clereen Brunty

When I asked Vera Chenkin to jot down a few things about her, I received a wonderful story with a little help from her daughter and son-in-law. Vera has always done so much for others in her beautiful art work, that I felt it was time to recognize her.

Vera has been a Zephyrhills Historical Association member for many years and held several positions including membership and advertisement committee. She is the daughter of Joseph and Mira Maturo of Teaneck, New Jersey. Her father was a professional illustrator of magazines and movie posters and her mother was a registered nurse. Vera has been a working artist all her life and a Zephyrhills businesswoman for most of it. Over the years she has done her best to bring the visual arts to Zephyrhills.

Her husband, Alan, is practically a Zephyrhills native. In 1924, when he was a small child his parents, Herman and Rose Chenkin, moved their family to Zephyrhills to start a natural foods business. He was mostly homeschooled but he did graduate from Zephyrhills High School in 1940. Alan is a World War II (D-Day and Battle of the Bulge) and Korean War veteran. He was a salesman and truck mechanic for his parent's business, Zephyr Brand Natural Foods Company, until it was sold in 1958. He then ran his own business, Alan Chenkin Service and Sales (an International Harvester distributorship), until he retired.
Vera met Alan in Miami. She had gone to Miami in 1946 and was sharing an apartment with a friend, Jeanie Duncan. Jeanie's boyfriend was an auto mechanic. One day she arranged a beach picnic double date for Vera with a young man who was waylaid waiting on a part for his Studebaker at her boyfriend's shop. That young man was Alan.

Alan remembers, “I was trying to get my new 1948 gray four door Studebaker fixed. The warranty provided for an entire new rear end free of charge. But it would take several days for the parts to arrive. So the shop foreman took me to his mother's apartment to stay the weekend. He took me along when he went to see his girlfriend, and to a picnic at the beach.”

Vera continues, “We went swimming. There were rough waves. There was lots of seaweed piled up on the shore. He enjoyed eating my homemade hot German potato salad, and deviled eggs.”

Alan thinks back saying, “She had beautiful brown, wavy, waist length hair.” Vera says, “Two weeks later I got a call and we went out. Each time he came to town we went out. After seeing a movie, he would sing or sit at the piano and play songs.”

Their courtship lasted one year and they got married. They moved to Zephyrhills in 1950. Vera and Alan had three children: Gail, Joe and Jimmy. All three went to college. Gail became an artist and librarian. Joe worked for the aerospace industry and the U.S. Postal Service. Jimmy worked as a construction inspector and later took over running The Gallery from Vera.

As a business woman, Vera sold art and custom made frames through The Gallery, last located on south US 301. She is a member of the local chapter of the American Business Women’s Association and was chosen Pasco County Business Woman of the Year for 1992. She was a member of the Zephyrhills Women’s Club and helped with the local Girl Scout chapter.
As an artist Vera studied drawing and painting at the National Academy of Design and at the Art Students League in New York City. In Zephyrhills, she taught drawing to all eight grades at St. Anthony's School in San Antonio and taught after-school art classes at Cox Elementary School in Dade City. She has taught private art lessons to all ages. She was one of the founders of the Zephyrhills Art Club. She has done quick portrait sketches for numerous fundraisers and festivals throughout the years including Founders Day. She did drawings of local historic buildings that were reproduced as note cards by the Zephyrhills Historical Association. Many locals have had their portraits painted by Vera.

In 1960 she was asked to paint a portrait of Samuel Pasco, our county’s namesake, which now hangs in the Tallahassee Capitol as a gift from the outgoing delegate to the incoming delegate from Pasco County. The 16x24 portrait was painted from a small tin-type photo and is the same famous pose you see today of a bust side view of Mr. Pasco with his long white beard. Also her portrait of Merriel Miller, a resident of Zephyrhills, hangs in the Zephyrhills Depot Museum. She has also painted many other self-owned portraits of Zephyrhills residents including siblings, Sam & Judy Surratt, when they were teens per Raybelle Surratt as well as Marlene Mann to name a few.
She is a member of the Miniature Art Society of Florida and has won several awards for her tiny oil paintings. In an article of the St. Pete Times on January 12, 2007, one of her miniatures was selected for their permanent collection, a display that travels worldwide. The article stated that two Pasco County residents were among the winners of the 32nd annual Miniature Art Society of Florida competition for 2007. More than 1,300 entries came from the United States and many foreign countries. Of those, 860 were on exhibit at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art in Tarpon Springs.

Of those, only 10 artists from Florida won awards. First Place went to our very own Vera Chenkin of Zephyrhills in the Human Figure Division for her tiny painting “How High” which depicts a small boy climbing on a rope. It is 2½ inches wide and 5¾ inches tall.

Miniature art measures no more than 5 inches square or 4 inches by 6 inches, with many being smaller than that. The museum provided magnifiers so that patrons can view the meticulous workmanship and jewel-like colors that go into every painting, sculpture, scrimshaw or piece of calligraphy. When looking at the miniatures, you would think you were looking at photographs as the details are so accurate to scale.

The prize-winning artists divided about $20,000 in prize money. The awards were presented at a private brunch. The local show was considered among the finest in the Southeast. To see several of the paintings visit: www.miniatureartsocietyofflorida.com/2007awards.pdf

Today, Vera still enjoys painting miniatures and on January 15, 2012 she again was presented the Permanent Collection Purchase Award by the Miniature Art Society of Florida in its international art competition for her portrait of “Hot Shot Cousin Henry”, a 2 ¾ inch x 4 ¾ inch size art work.

In Memory of
Ryals Furniture Exchange
And Great Parents
Powell & Maude Ryals
From son James
God Bless America
Vera also enjoys working picture puzzles, her cats and Zephyrhills history. Over the years she has collected music boxes of all kinds from dolls to Christmas trees that play music as well as her bells and angel collection. Her favorite restaurant is the Golden Corral and her favorite color is blue.

**From the Desk of the Editor**

You’ll notice that I included a membership form on page 8 of this month’s newsletter for those of you who would like to make use of it. I’m not sure I’ll have room for it again in December. Actually if you are simply renewing your membership or advertising, and nothing has changed, you can simply send a check. The form is not necessary. If you are making additional contributions you can simply note it in the memo portion of the check.

Your editor – Founders Day (I’m guessing 1955)
You are invited to join the Zephyrhills Historical Association for a journey down the "Tracks of Time".

Name: ____________________________
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(Please include business card if advertising)
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Phone: ( )
Email: ____________________________
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_____Boardwalk Booster  ($ 5 add'l with Annual)
_____Advertisement  ($15 for Members)  ($25 for Non-Members)
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Fiscal year - Jan thru Dec