### 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.

| Volume 21 – Number 11 | November 2019 |

There will be **no scheduled meeting in December**. Our Christmas get-together is set for Thursday, December 5th, 5 p.m., at the Wedgewood Manor Community Clubhouse, 37420 Wedgewood Drive (off Geiger Road). *Also remember that Members will be decorating the Arizona Christmas tree at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills on Sunday, December 8th at 3 pm.*

#### Speakers

Julia Richards, owner and operator of The Gentlemen’s Quarters on fifth avenue, who was originally scheduled to speak in September, was our speaker for the November meeting. As I mentioned before, she is a former student of mine, and I am extremely proud of her. Julia talked about her family’s long history in Zephyrhills and about those things which make her proud to be from here. She conveyed a genuine love of history in our community and her commitment to giving back to a place in which she was brought up. Although she is unaccustomed to speaking in front of people, she held her own and gave a fine presentation. All those in attendance were impressed.

#### From the Desk of the Editor

It’s time again to ask for your monetary support in regard to our organization and this newsletter. Dues are $15 per year, advertising for members is $15 (non-members is $25), Boardwalk Booster is $5, and contributions to the scholarship fund are welcome in any amount. Please mail your checks to **Andrew Nagy, 5548 23rd Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542**, or bring them to a meeting or get-together. Thanks in advance.

#### Tuesday, December 17th, is our next Give-Back Scholarship Fundraiser

at **Sergio’s Italian Restaurant** on Hwy. 54 West in Zephyrhills. We are meeting at 4 p.m. Contact Patty Thompson (813-780-8559 – pattycakeclown1@aol.com) for information.

---

**Jeff Miller**  
**Pasco County Historian**  
For a walk down memory lane visit [www.fivay.org](http://www.fivay.org)  
Please consider contributing old photos for the website.  
My email address is on the opening page.
Volume 21 – Number 11

Tracks of Time

November 2019

Executive Board

President ................. Jerry Pricher
Vice President .......... Rod Rehrig
Secretary ............... Anna Boone
Treasurer ............... Andrew Nagy

Board Members

Clereen Brunty
Polly Gill
Beverly Holmes
Patty Thompson

Committees

Hospitality ............... Clereen Brunty
Refreshments ............ Polly Gill
Newsletter ............... Jerry Pricher
Programs ............... Clereen Brunty
Scholarship ............ Louie Holt
Archivist ............... Louie Holt
Depot Museum .......... Carolyn Dean
Jeffries House .......... Clereen Brunty
Fundraisers .............. Patty Thompson

Boardwalk Boosters

Carolyn Dean
Maryhelen Clague
Greg First
Bill Kustes
Jackie & Terry Lindsey
Andrew Nagy
Rod & Carol Rehrig
Margaret Seppanen
James Shultz

Scholarship Boosters

Ray Alvarez
Elise Burgess
Maryhelen Clague
Carolyn Dean
Greg First
Polly Gill
Thea Johnson
Bill Kustes
Dr. Richard Moore
Andrew Nagy
Anna Poe
Jerry Pricher
Linda Sante
Margaret Seppanen
James Shultz

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Raymond Alvarez   Duke Chadwell   Beverly Holmes   Andrew Nagy   Mary Ann Sanders
Darlene Bamberger  Vera Chenkin    Louie Holt       Margie Partain  Tim Sanders
Beverly Barnett    Margaret Cherry Thea Johnson    Hal Perdew    Linda Sante
Elaine Benjamin    Maryhelen Clague James Kaylor    Shirley Pillow Margaret Seppanen
Art Besinger       Jeffrey Cook    Jean Kaylor      Anna Poe     James Shultz
John Bolender      Carolyn Dean   Connie Kirkland  Bob & Penny Porter Steve Spina
Anna Boone         Irene Dobson    Bill Kustes      Jerry Pricher Al Stone
George Boone       Vicki Elkins    Jackie Lindsey  Carol Rehrig  Patty Thompson
Lori Brightwell    Greg First     Terry Lindsey    Rodney Rehrig Steve Turner
Clereen Brunty     Gail Geiger     Anne Mester     Sharon Reisman Terry Turner
Elsie Burgess      Nathan Geiger   Jeff Miller     Jim Ryals     Dave Walters
Kathy Burnside     Polly Gill      Barb & Rick Moore Tammy Kay Ryman Ernie Wise
Rosemary Carrigg   Betty Hall     Dr. Rick Moore  Kim Sanders  Madonna Wise

Editor: Jerry Pricher, 5138 20th Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542
Phone: 813-788-2547  email: jerry@pricher.net
I was born in the little sawmill town of Lacoochee, Florida on April 28, 1933 and left there kicking and screaming in 1949. I moved away then only because a series of strokes left my father unable to continue his responsibilities with Cummer Sons Cypress Company, and my parents decided that it would be best for us to move back to north Florida. Even then I had a little reprieve due to the generosity of my best friend’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Claud Andrews. They invited me to stay with their family in Lacoochee to finish out the tenth grade at Pasco High School delaying my move for several months.

My father was Jim Mahaffey, sawmill foreman, and, after Mr. Pope’s death, superintendent of the entire sawmill operation. According to Clifford Couey, who ran the Cummer commissary, I grew up on “Silk Stocking Street,” the street where mostly mill foremen and superintendents lived. We resided first in a house at the end of the street across from the Ferrells, and later we moved up the street to what was known as “the Pope house.”

My childhood in Lacoochee was idyllic, so much so that in later years I convinced my young daughters that it was a town where the streets were paved with gold and money hung from the trees. It was an exaggeration to say the least, but it gives you an idea of how much growing up in Lacoochee meant to me. The years I spent there, the many memorable events, and the people of those times shaped my life and remain extremely important to me to this day.
My father grew up in northern Florida's rural Gadsden County where my grandfather, John W. Mahaffey, farmed, operated a saw mill, and was the proprietor of a store in Gretna, Florida. He was one of nine children. Each of the brothers was responsible to help run various aspects of my grandfather's businesses. My father was the saw mill man. After spending two years as a “Wagoneer” in the American Army in France during World War I, he returned to Gretna to help with the saw mill. In 1922 he married my mother, Wilma Fletcher, who was also from rural Gadsden County.

It was not long after their marriage that my parents decided that my father should take advantage of a job opportunity with the Cummer Sons Cypress Company in Sumner, Florida. It was there that the first two of their children, Jeanette and Mary Louise, were born. After the mill in Sumner burned, the Mahaffeys followed the Cummer Company to the new operation in Lacoochee. There the couple was blessed with three more children, Jimmy, born in 1929, Billy (me) born in 1933, and the baby, Harriet Ann, born in 1935. During the Depression when Cummer shut the mill down and had to lay off workers, my father was retained as a watchman enabling the family to get by.

I was two years old when Harriet was born. Events of that time changed our lives and, I am sure, were instrumental in my being “adopted” by the entire Lacoochee community. During my mother’s pregnancy she was diagnosed with cancer. Several doctors told her that they would have to “take the baby,” for they feared that she could not survive the pregnancy. My mother and father prayed about it and decided to leave it in the hands of God.

Thankfully, both Mama and the baby survived. After that, however, Mama’s health was precarious, and as a result, family members from Quincy volunteered to take Harriet and raise her. From that time forward the youngest member of our family spent the school year with her Quincy family and the summers and Christmas vacations with us in Lacoochee.

As I look back now, I am certain that for the next sixteen years the loving Lacoochee community made a determined effort to help take care of the youngest Mahaffey boy, a little red head with a lot of mischief in his heart. They opened their hearts and homes to me and along with my parents and siblings gave me the best childhood a boy could have. For that I am extremely grateful. It is the stories from those special years that I want to share.