



The Jekyll Journal

WINTER 2026

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FOHJI Calendar

Board Meetings - 2nd Tuesday of the month - 3:00 PM at Villa Ospo	Feb.— May
Programs - 3rd Thursday of the month at Mosaic (unless noted) - 6:00 PM	Feb., March, May
Annual Meeting	April

The President's Corner...

Ruthmary Williams

Happy New Year and Welcome to 2026!

I hope the new year is off to a good start for all of you.

College of Coastal Georgia Associate Professor Tyler E. Bagwell kicked off our 2025-2026 program season with his documentary, *The Wanderer*. *The Wanderer*, which Tyler directed and produced, is 27 minutes in length and is the winner of three Telly Awards.

In October, Bill Giles, site manager of Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site, spoke about the rise of the coastal Georgia's rice culture, the enslaved labor required for it to thrive, and the factors that led to its demise.

The November program featured Dr. Hector Montford, assistant professor at College of Coastal Georgia, who presented a history of entertainment on Jekyll in the Early State Era. His presentation provided a lot of memories and laughter for the audience.

See Jim McKenna's report on upcoming programs.

The Members-Only Holiday Party was lovely; please read the detailed report that appears in the journal. A summary of the Annual Gala Dinner, held on January 27, is also in this edition.

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As you know, the By-Laws Committee has been working diligently on updating not only the By-laws, but also the Standing Rules. Please plan to attend the members-only annual meeting in April when we'll take a final vote on the proposed By-laws; if you're unable to attend in person, you can vote by proxy. Details about the meeting will be sent closer to the date.

We are seeking new Board members, who serve for three years. New Board members will serve from September 2026 through May 2029; we do not meet in the summer. If you are interested, please contact me or any current Board member.

Our primary fundraiser, the online auction, will be March 6 – 15 this year.

We are pleased to welcome many new members to the Friends of Historic Jekyll Island, and we are always thankful for our loyal, continual members. Thank you all for your support. We look forward to seeing you at future programs and events.

Respectfully, Ruthmary

Membership Report

Pamela Harris, Membership Chair

The Friends of Historic Jekyll Island currently has 136 total memberships including 17 new members.

This represents 220 individuals. We appreciate your continued support of FOHJI by maintaining your yearly membership. The money goes into our budget to fund the projects in which we are involved. I encourage the Gift of Membership as a great way to get others involved with FOHJI.

Your membership card for this year expires on June 30, 2026. An email reminder will be sent in May to renew for the next year. A new membership program is being developed and more details will be sent once it's in place.

The Board appreciates your support. Contact Pamela at jekyllfriends@outlook.com for any questions. Brochures are available as needed. See us at the Art Show on Friday, March 6th and the Riverside Live show on Saturday, March 7th.

Financial Report

Tim Kinsey, Treasurer

With our two major fundraisers occurring in the first quarter of 2026, the annual gala dinner and online auction, FOHJI is in its best position ever to fulfill its mission to preserve and interpret Jekyll Island's natural and historical heritage.

Our present cash position is \$327,536.04, which funds four grants:

1. Gould Casino Exterior Renovation Grant: \$100,000.00
2. Diefenderfer Internship Grant: \$8,192.84
3. Hollybourne Historic Rifle Grant: \$3,230.02
4. Baker/Crane Carriage House Phase 2 Renovation Grant: \$50,000.00 At present, progress on all four of the grants is being made by the Jekyll Island Authority.

The remaining uncommitted funds amount to \$167,113.18.

Please contact Tim Kinsey, Treasurer, with any questions you might have concerning the FOHJI financials: 773trk@gmail.com or **912-319-8036**.

Future Programs

Jim Mckenna, Programs Chair

The Friends of Historic Jekyll Island has three interesting programs planned for the second half of the season.

On February 19, Jennifer Rooks of the Harrington School will speak about the history and impact of the school. Located on St. Simons Island, the Harrington School is the last African American one-room schoolhouse on the Georgia Coast; constructed in 1924, it served grades 1 – 7 until desegregation in the 1960s.

To celebrate Women's History Month, Museum Curator Andrea Marroquin will present "Herstory: The Women of the Jekyll Island Club" on March 19. Andrea will explore their unique stories as revealed by the rare photographs, artifacts, manuscripts, memoirs, and oral history accounts that bring their experiences to life.

Our last program of the season will be a field trip to Temple Beth Tefilloh, one of the oldest synagogue structures in America still in continuous use since its construction in 1890. On May 21, local author and historian, Mason Stewart, will present the temple's history, Details to follow closer to the date.

Programs are the third Thursday of the month, starting at 6:00 at the Mosaic Tack Room, unless otherwise noted.

Annual Gala Dinner

Pamela Harris, Dinner Committee Chair

A lovely event in the Grand Dining Room was well attended on a cold wintery night on Tuesday, January 27. It was a grand night to welcome Mrs. Sarah Gould, the Mistress of Chicota Cottage, as our special guest. Sarah, known as Sally to her friends, spoke of her and Edwin's love for their island home and the many happy memories made during their time here with their two sons. She was very excited and happy that the proceeds from this evening will benefit the Gould Casino, which will make it another highlight of the Historic District. She voiced her appreciation to FOHJI for our support of many historic projects throughout the island. Thank you to Cindy Lubbers who brought our new friend Sally to life.

Guests received a postcard representing an historic stage of the Gould Casino and a Chicota lion's head token. Thank you to Mosaic, Jekyll Island's Museum, for the historic photographs, and thank you to Mary Perkins who created the tokens.

Thank you to the very enthusiastic Raffle team who sold a record number of tickets! \$895 was raised by their hard work and salesmanship. The winners were Maureen Lennon with the Chicota Lion coasters, Tom Fiske with the Chicota Lion vase by Mary Perkins, and Megan Jefferies who was the night's big winner taking home the Rotary Club memorial brick and the Millionaire's Car tour. We thank Mary Perkins, the Rotary Club, Historic Resources and FOHJI for the raffle items this year.

Thank you to the Dining Room staff and Chef. The Board thanks all who attended and those who supported us with donations towards the evening. Hope to see you next year!



**Dinner Committee with
Sarah Gould**



Sarah "Sally" Gould

2025 Holiday Party

Shelly Gardner, Hospitality Committee Chair

The 2025 Members Only Holiday Party was a festive success!

This year we gathered inside the main room of Villa Ospso to enjoy delicious and scrumptious foods such as hearty chicken salad croissants, delightful fruit tarts, and a wonderful chocolate raspberry cream cheese ball as well as other delectable treats. Committee member Tracy Perkins made a refreshing punch which was a nice addition to our festive food selections. The afternoon was beautiful and sunny which allowed the French doors to be opened for our guests to enjoy the tranquil view of the Jekyll River. And, we had a surprise visitor - the Jolly Old Man himself! Guests participated in a holiday trivia game this year, and the winning team was awarded a fun, holiday prize. The hospitality committee (me, Tracy Perkins, and Susan Rodgers) had fun preparing, decorating, and hosting this year, and we appreciated the help from our member volunteers: Susan Williams, Natalie Wilbur, and Jane Walters. The party was a tremendous success, and fun was enjoyed by all in the beautifully decorated Villa Ospso!



**Beautiful, festive decorations
graced Villa Ospso**



**Tim Kinsey and Santa,
aka Sims Harris**



**Cathy Miller, Linda Diefenderfer,
Dell Palazzolo**



**The winning Holiday Trivia
Team**



**Susan and Merle Zoerb with
Mark Williams**

-LEGACY PROGRAM-

FOHJI now has a LEGACY PROGRAM for planned giving that makes it possible for you to donate through your will, investment portfolio, charitable trust or other beneficiary designations. We encourage you to support FOHJI's mission of preserving the historical nature of Jekyll Island through these tax deductible avenues.

One of the easiest ways to give is a one-time donation of a specified amount that may be provided through a single or multi-payment structure. Donors have the flexibility of providing contributions as a recurring monthly automatic disbursement to FOHJI.

Additional avenues of giving include:

- Designating FOHJI as a beneficiary in your will or life insurance policy;
- Providing for a distribution to FOHJI from your charitable trust;
- Transferring stocks, bonds and other securities to FOHJI for sale and the benefit of FOHJI's projects;
- Providing a restricted contribution to a specific FOHJI project that you would like to see move forward;
- Designating FOHJI to benefit from the sale of real estate or specified personal property.

Thank you in advance for considering these avenues of supporting FOHJI's mission. If you are interested in one of these methods of providing support, please consult your financial planner and/or tax consultant, if needed. Then contact FOHJI's Treasurer, Tim Kinsey at 912-319-8036 or e-mail Tim at 773trk@gmail.com.

2026 ONLINE AUCTION NEWS

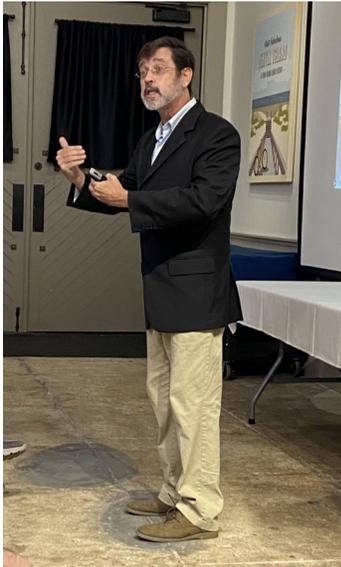
Ron Franke, Auction Chair

I am sure all of you reading this article have been anticipating the Friends of Historical Jekyll Island's Online Auction (FOHJI-OA).

The 2026 FOHJI-OA is March 6 – March 15. There are over 100 items in the auction catalog, including accommodations, sports activities, food & beverages, family fun, and adventures. In addition to the usual items, there will be some new, exciting items. The catalog will be available for viewing on March 1 at <https://2026fohji.charityauction.bid/> and bidding starts March 6; you must be registered to bid. The auction monies this year will go towards renovating the exterior of the Gould Casino located in Jekyll Island's Historic District. You may also scan this QR code to view the catalog



FALL PROGRAMS 2025



Tyler Bagwell started our season in September with a presentation and discussion of his documentary *The Wanderer*.



In October, Bill Giles discussed the rice culture of Coastal Georgia.



Hector Montford, in November, presented an entertaining program on Jekyll's early attractions.

REMEMBER YOUR RENEWAL.....

The FOHJI Board has changed our membership year to the fiscal year starting July 1. All of our money goes toward historic preservation endeavors and we need your continued participation. You might consider increasing your level of membership. The various levels are:

Membership Levels

- ☑ Supporting Partner \$ 50.00
- ☑ Preservation Partner \$ 150.00
- ☑ Business /Sponsor \$ 250.00
- ☑ Patron \$ 500.00
- ☑ Benefactor \$ 1,000.00

There would be a tax advantage to upping your membership. If you are not now a member of FOHJI, we welcome you to become a part of our group. Make checks payable to FOHJI and mail to P.O. Box 13031, Jekyll Island, GA, 31527 and you will receive membership information by return mail.

2025-2026 Board of Directors

President Ruthmary Williams
 Vice-President Justin Wilbur
 Secretary Debbie Boyd
 Treasurer Tim Kinsey

Members

Term 2026: Ronald Franke, Shelly Gardner, Bradley Hoyt, Tim Kinsey, Ruthmary Williams

Term 2027: Larsen Anderson, Debbie Boyd, Jim McKenna

Term 2028: Tom Alexander, Pamela Harris, David Lodge, Tracy Perkins, Susan Rodgers, Ellen Rothstein, Tom Stark, Justin Wilbur

Jekyll Journal

Editor - Ruthmary Williams

Graphic Designer - Joan Samuelson