



The Jekyll Journal

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

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FOHJI Calendar

Board Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month - 3:00 PM at Villa Ospo

Programs are the 3rd Thursdays at 6:00 PM at Mosaic, unless noted

Ongoing

The President's Corner...

Ruthmary Williams

As the Friends of Historic Jekyll Island begins its summer hiatus, I want to thank you, our members, for another successful season. Because of your support and generosity, we were able to contribute \$100,000 to the renovation of the Gould Casino's exterior façade.

This past year the Program Committee hosted a diverse array of programs that included early entertainment on Jekyll Island (which many of you remembered fondly), *The Wanderer* slave ship documentary, the influential women of the Jekyll Island Club, the history of Temple Beth Tefilloh, and more. I know next season's programs will be just as diverse and interesting.

Now is the time to say goodbye to several Board members. Tim Kinsey, Bradley Hoyt, and I are terming off the Board after six years. Debbie Boyd, Shelly Gardner, Ron Franke, and Ellen Rothstein are also leaving. I want to thank Tim for the amazing job he did as FOHJI treasurer for five years. Debbie was an extraordinary secretary for seven years; even though there were some tough meetings, her Minutes were outstanding. Thanks to Bradley who served as FOHJI's photographer not only for our *Self-Guided Walking Tour* guidebook of the Historic District, but also for many of our events. Shelly was a fabulous **Continued on Page 2...**

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Hospitality Chair, and Ron, as Auction Chair, guided FOHJI to two successful online auctions. Thank you to Ellen for her contributions to the new By-Laws; her insights were appreciated.

We welcome Sarah Tallu Schuyler back to the Board. We greatly appreciate her return and her accepting the secretary position.

This is my last message as president of the Friends of Historic Jekyll Island. It has not only been an honor, but a joy to serve as your president the last three years. We've seen many accomplishments in those years. FOHJI has contributed significantly to the restoration of the Tiffany Window, the fumigation and stabilization of the Baker-Crane Carriage House, and the renovation of the Gould Casino's exterior façade in addition to several other projects. Through diligent research, we discovered in 2024 that FOHJI has contributed **over one million dollars** to various projects, large and small; our contributions to Historic Resources continue to increase as evidenced by the Gould Casino Project. Our programs have not only been historical lectures and book signings, but also field trips to Sapelo Island and the Horton House, and on one occasion we met "Jack Morgan" at Indian Mound Cottage. Our annual Gala Dinners have featured our own Tom Alexander and Taylor Davis who discussed the Tiffany Window restoration, reinstallation, and rededication; Major Horton (aka Jim McKenna) who told us about his life on Jekyll and all the changes that have occurred since he was a resident; and most recently Sally Gould (aka Cindy Lubbers) regaled us with stories of her life on Jekyll – some happy, some tragic. And we continue to support preservation interns through the Chuck Diefenderfer Internship Program.

I not only want to thank the FOHJI Board for its support over the years, but I also want to thank past presidents Barbara Stevenson and Rita Thompson for always being available to share their wisdom and advice.

I am confident that Justin Wilbur, your new president, will continue the important work of the Friends of Historic Jekyll Island.

Thank you again for your support over the last three years.

Respectfully,
Ruthmary

Membership Report

Pamela Harris, Membership Chair

Thank you to all who have supported FOHJI for the 2025-2026 season. We are so grateful to you for continuing to be members of this organization.

The emails have been sent to all who are up for renewal for the 2026-2027 year. FOHJI currently has 143 memberships representing 228 individual members. There have been 23 new memberships added this year and that is very exciting.

FOHJI is in the process of having a new membership platform developed. A separate email will go out when it is ready and online. We are trying to streamline the process and save some funds by emailing the response letter and, hopefully, the membership card. FOHJI members will still receive a 10 % discount on Mosaic Landmark Trolley Tours, the Millionaire car tour, giftshop purchases, and Mosaic events like the Gould concert.

Thank you again for supporting FOHJI . Your membership dues go to continued projects on Jekyll Island as well as educational programs and special events. Reach out to family, friends, and neighbors and have them join us!

A FOHJI membership makes a great gift!

Treasurer's Report

Tim Kinsey, Treasurer

As of May 31st, our General Account has a balance of \$78,405.43 and our Money Market \$197,149.44 for a total of \$275,554.87. Committed funds include the Chuck Diefenderfer Internship program, continued renovations to Baker-Crane Carriage House, and the future purchase of an 1894 Winchester rifle for the Hollybourne Gun Room for a total of \$82,672.86. That leaves \$191,115.74 uncommitted funds. The FOHJI Board approved \$75,000 to \$100,000 for a future Mistletoe Cottage project, but at this time those funds are still uncommitted as the project is in the planning stage. We want our members to be aware that we do have another large Historical Resources project in the works; more information to come.

And a final THANK YOU for allowing me to serve as your Treasurer for the past five years. It has truly been a pleasure.

Online Auction Report

Ron Franke, Chair

The 2026 Friends of Historical Jekyll Island Online Auction was another success, adding approximately \$37,500 to the funds for continuing the restoration and preservation work of Jekyll Island's history. Since the online auction began in 2021, the net total of funds is \$264,444.20. This accomplishment came through the combination of work by the auction committee, our volunteer solicitors who obtained auction items from generous donors, and all the people who participated in the auction. Thank you to everyone for this impressive result.

Programs Report

Jim McKenna, Program Chair



Our February 19th speaker was Jennifer Rooks, Core Organizer and Program Coordinator for the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition. Jennifer spoke about the history and cultural significance of the Harrington School on St. Simons Island. The Harrington school is a fully restored 1920's one-room schoolhouse and is the last remaining African American schoolhouse on the island. Today it serves as a significant historical and cultural center highlighting the Gullah Geechee Heritage on the Georgia Coast.

In honor of Women's History Month, the March program featured Andrea Marroquin, Curator of Jekyll Island's Museum (Mosaic), who presented "The Women of the Millionaires Club on Jekyll Island". Her presentation highlighted the accomplishments and contributions of the women of the Jekyll Island Club and included rare photographs, artifacts, manuscripts, memoirs, and oral history accounts that brought their experiences to life.

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FOHJI's Members-Only Annual Meeting was held in April. The highlights of the annual meeting included the approval of the new by-laws, which go into effect in September. Will Wagner, Historic Resources Director, thanked the membership for another great year as many projects were brought to fruition with FOHJI's assistance. The Gould Casino's exterior façade was the most visible, with everyone excited to have the project completed. He also thanked FOHJI for its continued support of the internship program. Sarah Tallu Schuyler's appointment to the Board was approved; her tenure starts in September. President Williams recognized and presented gifts to Joan Samuelson, the FOHJI Journal's graphic designer; Tim Kinsey, FOHJI's Treasurer for the past six years; and Debbie Boyd, who served as Secretary for seven years. Following the business meeting, attendees enjoyed refreshments provided by the Hospitality Committee.

Our final program was on May 21. Mason Stewart, local historian and author, introduced us to Temple Beth Tefilloh, the reformed synagogue in Brunswick. The Temple, dedicated in 1890, is one of only ten synagogues in the country to be in continuous operation since its inception. He shared the chartering and building of the temple along with the contribution of the Jewish Community to the development of Brunswick following the Civil War.

**Tentative Program Schedule for 2026-2027**

Subject to change so stay tuned

- ♦ September 17, 2026: Meet and Greet Event at Hollybourne 3-5 PM
- ♦ October 15, 2026: Photographer Ben Galland at Mosaic's Tack Room 6 PM
- ♦ November 19, 2026: Field trip to Temple Beth Tefilloh Time to be announced
- ♦ February 18, 2027: Chef Matthew Raiford at Mosaic's Tack Room 6 PM
- ♦ March 18, 2027: Linda Olsen presents "Dora Lasserre Peckham at Mosaic's Tack Room 6 PM
- ♦ May 20, 2027: Patrick Carmody will present "True Crimes During the Millionaire Club Era" at Mosaic's Tack Room 6 PM

Preservation Report

Taylor Davis, Preservationist



During the first part of the year, the Jekyll Island Authority (JIA) was able to undertake an exterior rehabilitation of the Gould Casino, bringing the façade back to its original extensive 1913 appearance. This was made possible through generous contributions from FOHJI (\$100,000) and the Jekyll Island Foundation. Though structurally sound, this building was in need of preservation efforts. The project consisted of multiple specific preservation projects that were undertaken by a mix of contractors, JIA staff, and volunteers. north end of the Historic District.

As we roll into the summer months, we have been able to continue the tradition of hosting Historic Preservation interns via the Diefenderfer Intern Scholarship Program provided by FOHJI. This is an important program that benefits the Jekyll Island Historic District as well as providing hands-on preservation experience to the next generations of professionals in the field. This year we have two students joining us: Ashlyn, who is currently completing her course work for her Master's of Historic Preservation at the University of Georgia, and Ashlee, an Arizona State University student who is in the middle of a Bachelor's program for Architectural Studies with minors in Construction Management and Art History.

The projects we will concentrate on this summer include the final steps in the Hollybourne interpretation, Mistletoe Cottage's second floor preservation and interpretation, Villa Ospo's fountain rehabilitation, Baker-Crane interior stabilization, and some masonry and carpentry work at the 1957 Causeway Towers..

Historical Resources

Will Wagner, Director

Greetings, Friends!

It has been another great spring in the Historic District. The beginning of the year saw the launch of two new programs, *District After Dark* and *Riverview Live*, as well as the return of our still-growing *Landmark Loop Hop-On/Hop-Off Trolley Tour*. All three enjoyed excellent attendance, with one attracting nearly more guests than we could handle! Thank you to everyone who joined us and to the many FOHJI volunteers who helped by setting up tents and supporting these events. **Continued on Page 7...**

Historic Resources Report continued from Page 6...

District After Dark was an inaugural series held on the third Saturday of January, February, and March. The after-hours event transformed Pier Road with live music, food trucks, shopping, dining, and local vendors. Of course, the star of the show was the DuBignon Cottage at the end of Pier Road. Visitors were invited to enjoy a complimentary open house tour of the cottage by “candlelight.” After receiving an electronic candle, guests stepped inside and back in time as a period character highlighted unique features of the Historic District’s oldest structure. Visitors could also step aboard our electric trolley for an abbreviated Landmark Tour along the Jekyll River at sunset.

In March, the Historic District hosted its first stand-alone concert outside of the Shrimp & Grits Festival: the inaugural *Riverview Live*. This event brought the spirit of Southern Rock back to the Island with a tribute to the Allman Brothers Band, commemorating their appearance in the Gould Auditorium more than 50 years ago during a Glynn Academy graduation celebration. The Restless Natives performed before a sold-out crowd of more than 400 guests, with the freshly restored Gould Casino façade providing a stunning backdrop. Thank you FOHJI for your generous \$100,000 contribution to the Gould restoration. It truly dazzled that evening.



April brought our second annual *Hop-On/Hop-Off Trolley Tour*. Guests visiting the Jekyll Island Museum were able to board one of our continuously operating trolleys and explore the Historic District at their own pace, hopping off at any of our cottage museums. DuBignon, Moss, Mistletoe, Indian Mound, Hollybourne, and Faith Chapel were staffed throughout the day by knowledgeable guides eager to share their stories. Goodyear Cottage and Furness Cottage (31-81) were also open for shopping and tours. Beautiful weather, enthusiastic visitors, and opportunities to dine at Founder’s Social made for a wonderful day spent exploring the Historic District.

Looking ahead, we invite you to join us on **Saturday, June 27, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** as we celebrate America’s 250th anniversary with our special event, **Life & Liberty**, at the Horton House. The program will feature a variety of interactive exhibits, including quill making, tabby construction, tea tasting, and even an opportunity to “join the Revolution.” Hootenanny’s BBQ will be on site serving turkey legs, and a live Fife and Drum Corps will perform throughout the day. Thank you, FOHJI, for your support in bringing this musical experience to life this year, and that is exciting. <https://www.jekyllisland.com/history/tours/life-liberty/>

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. You may then contact a FOHJI Board member at jekyllfriends@outlook.com.

FOHJI BOARD

Effective July 1, 2026

2026-2027 Board

President: Justin Wilbur

Vice President:

Co-Treasurers: Susan Rodgers and Tom Stark

Secretary: Sarah Tallu Schuyler

Term 2027: Larsen Anderson, Jackie Folsom, Jim McKenna

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

Term 2029: Sarah Tallu Schuyler

REMEMBER YOUR RENEWAL.....

The FOHJI membership year starts July 1, which is the start of the fiscal year. 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