

BIG DIAMOND

Official Newsletter of the
Hillsboro
Lighthouse
Preservation
Society



Fifth Year of Publication

May 2003

HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE VISIT JUNE 14, 2003

On June 14, 2003, members of the Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society will be visiting the Lighthouse. Members and prospective members will gather starting at 9 AM in the City Parking Lot opposite the Sands Hotel. DIRECTIONS...Drive east on Atlantic Boulevard in Pompano Beach. Drive over the Intracoastal Waterway bridge, and turn LEFT at the first light. Park in the city parking lot and go to the Lighthouse Society tables in the city lot close to the Sands Hotel.

The Coast Guard has not allowed the Lighthouse Society to use the USCG dock at the Lighthouse, and this has prevented any winter tours of the grounds. This tour will travel by small bus shuttling between the parking lot and the Lighthouse.

HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE is truly a beautiful place, with the ocean on one side, and the Hillsboro Inlet on the other. There is always a breeze, and the tall Australian Pines provide shade. Boat traffic through the inlet is frequent. From the Observation room at the 100-foot level you can see all the way to Port Everglades to the south, and Boca Raton Inlet to the north, so bring a camera. There are 175 steps to get to the octagonal observation room with its four large windows, and the views are worth several photos from this high vantage point.

Only members of the Society may visit the Lighthouse, and only children over 48 inches tall may climb the 175 steps in the tower according to the USCG regulations.

Cost to join the Society is \$ 25.00 for single members, and \$ 35.00 for families. The Hillsboro Club will be providing lemonade and iced tea on the grounds.

HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE STAMP.

In June, the Post Office will honor Hillsboro Lighthouse as one of five commemorative lighthouse stamps. Stamps will go on sale June 14 at US Post Offices throughout the country. Special commemorative envelopes with a special design by Paul Bradley will be available at the lighthouse tour, June 14. T-shirts with a large, full color, postal stamp of Hillsboro Lighthouse screen-printed, will also be available at the tour. After that date, they will both be available on our website gift shop (www.hillsboroLighthouse.org)



ART EXHIBIT AND LECTURE SERIES

by Martha Casselberry

On the evening of February 11th, HLPS held its first art exhibit and lecture series at the Pompano Beach Civic Center. In the lobby a beautiful, large, framed lighthouse painting done by our own Pat Anderson greeted our members and the general public. One large room was devoted to over 150 photographs and paintings portraying the Hillsboro Inlet, the Lighthouse Station, or the lighthouse itself. The artists and photographers were not obliged to be members of our society. The works came from all parts of Broward and Palm Beach Counties.

Across the hall, six speakers shared their knowledge of history and marine science around our lighthouse. Todd Grabitt, a graduate student at FAU recently made a lovely 20 minute video of Hillsboro Lighthouse. It is called *Big Diamond* and was shown as the evening guests gathered. David Butler, VP of HLPS, then told us why the government felt the necessity of a lighthouse at this spot. He showed a short video he produced a few years ago telling of the many wrecks of cargo ships off the Hillsboro shore. Byron Engskow of Fort Lauderdale came to learn more about the history of our area. He said, "I was fascinated by the wreck of the *Copenhagen* in 1900, just two miles off the coast. The facts that this steam engine with a burn rate of one ton of material being moved one mile burning one ounce of fuel, was carrying 100 tons of coal to deliver somewhere in Cuba or South America, indicated to me that this was the primitive start of the leading edge of the Industrial Revolution".

Coast Guard Auxiliary man, Arthur Makenian, with the help of an interesting silent video, explained how he and other retired engineers and including a retired surgeon, came up with a method to repair the gears and other operational parts, making it possible for our famous light to rotate smoothly for many more decades. This "team" of loving volunteers worked every weekday for months to make what seemed the impossible, a reality. Our light shines without fail each night over 25 miles to sea, the strongest lighthouse beam in the WORLD! At the end of this segment, there was wild clapping and many in the audience stood to applaud.

Sheldon Voss spoke about the life of his ancestors in Florida - two being head lighthouse keepers (Tom Knight at Hillsboro) and two others part of the courageous team of Barefoot Mailmen. Sheldon presents programs of these ancestors to second through fourth graders in Broward Schools. His young son, David, was there to proudly show the work he did for his school class about these fearless men.

Steven Attis, a member of the HLPS Board, an environmentalist, and diver, spoke of the beautiful coral reefs just out from the lighthouse. His video shots of these reefs and abundant marine life assured us these reefs have the same majesty (on a smaller scale) as those in the Keys. He stressed that much has to be done to educate our citizens about them. In the back of the room he had professional maps of these Broward County reefs laid out for everyone to examine.

Dr. Ray McAllister, well-known ocean engineer and diver, gave a talk on fishing and treasure hunting the SE Florida Coast in the 1910s and '20s.

One of the artists who submitted a lovely pen and ink framed drawing that evening was Anne Sauve. She commented, "Altogether I think the whole presentation was well done. I'll be more interested in the work of the Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society from now on".

It will be hard to outdo this evening's entertainment and education in years to come.



NEW MEMBERS & RENEWALS SINCE H.L.P.S.'s JAN.'03 NEWSLETTER

C:\md\HLP'S\Newsltr\03-Spring-BigD\New&Renew-Jan-03.wpd

Ammann, Michelle
Anderson, Dick
Anderson, Margaret (Peggy)
Bailey, James
Bailey, Patrick & Patricia
Bettner, Steven & Jean
Brent, Bonnie / Tad Yoder
Brill, Jack & Rosemary
Brooks, Sue
Bugin, Ruth
Burrie, Jack
Cogan, Kenneth & Allyce
Conklin, Kevin & family

Criscuolo, Frank & Claire
Daher, Joy
Dean, Jim & Randy
Dobre, Jonathon & Susan
Dockswell, Barry & Robbie
Eaton, Les
Firth, Louise
Fitch, Kate
Flathe, John B.
Foglesong, John & Kim
Foss, Alice
Frost, Jack & Kathy
Gruneisen, Donald

Hamilton, Phil & Susanne
Healy, Pat
Hennessy, David & Marie
Levy, Dr. & Mrs Jean Pierre
Lighthouse Yachts *
Lippincott, John & Mary Jane
McCullar, George & Muriel
Mowry, Dick & Mary
Murphy, John & Claire
Neil, Joe & Carol
Norman, Marcia / Wm Worley
O'Connell, Bob & Terry
Pease, David

Rasbach, Scott & Yvonne
Scherlacher, Dennis & Kathy
Shelley, Robert & Patricia
Sorren, Vincent & Nona
Steigelman, David
Villa, Harvey & Alyce
Wilson, Ray & Susan
Winchell, Larry & Eileen
Yarbrough, Capt. Larry & Annette
Zubero, Sally

* = Business Membership

VOLUNTEER HELPERS H.L.P.S. Inc.

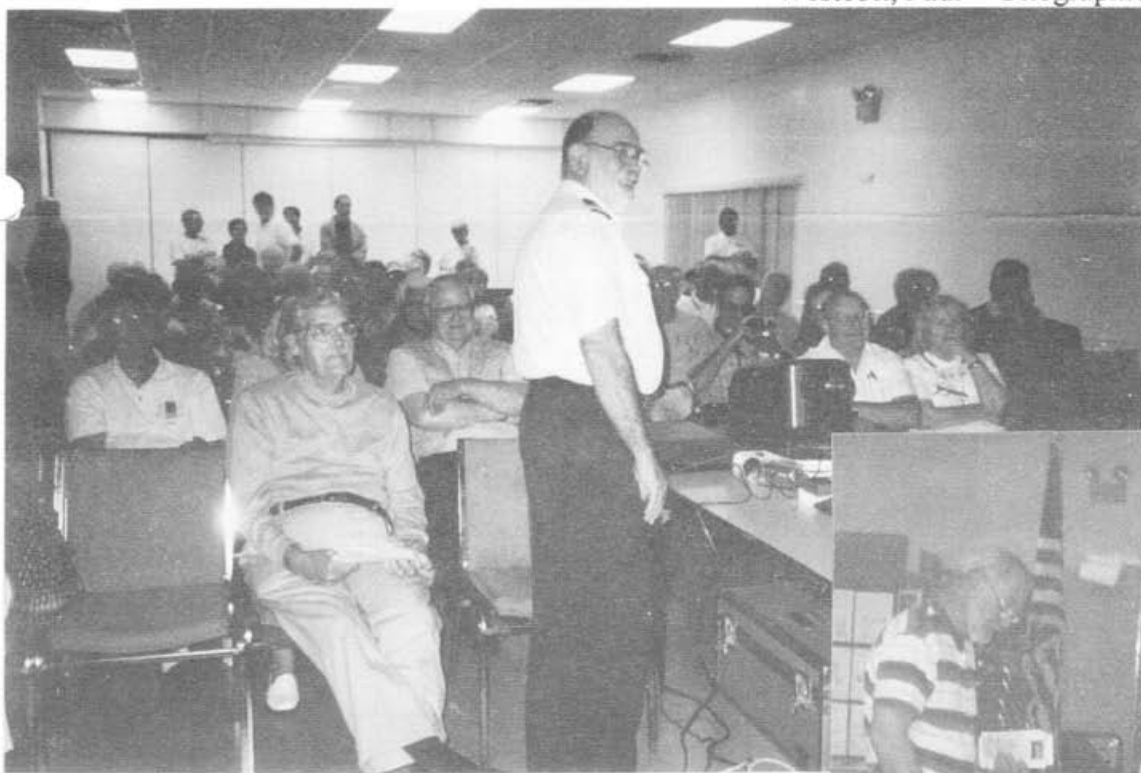
Art Display & Lecture Series - Feb. 11, '03 =

Steven Attis, Beacon Lighthouse Jewelers, Paul Bradley, Jack Burrie, Dave & Lee Butler, Hib & Martha Casselberry, Mike & Joyce Hager, Marcia Hirschy, Art Makenian, Ray McAllister, Linda Peck, Sheldon & David Voss

Artists' Visit - April 30, '03 = Jeanne Amato, Jack Burrie, David Butler, Hib & Martha Casselberry, Dr. Ray McAllister, Arthur Makenian, and from USCG, Group MiamiSN Jeremy McGibbony & SA Bill Mason.

DONATIONS:

Lamprecht, Bob & Anne; McCullar, George & Muriel Westcott, Paul = Ottographics



LECTURE SERIES (above)

David Butler, seated and Arthur Makenian, USCG-Aux



ART and PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAY (right)

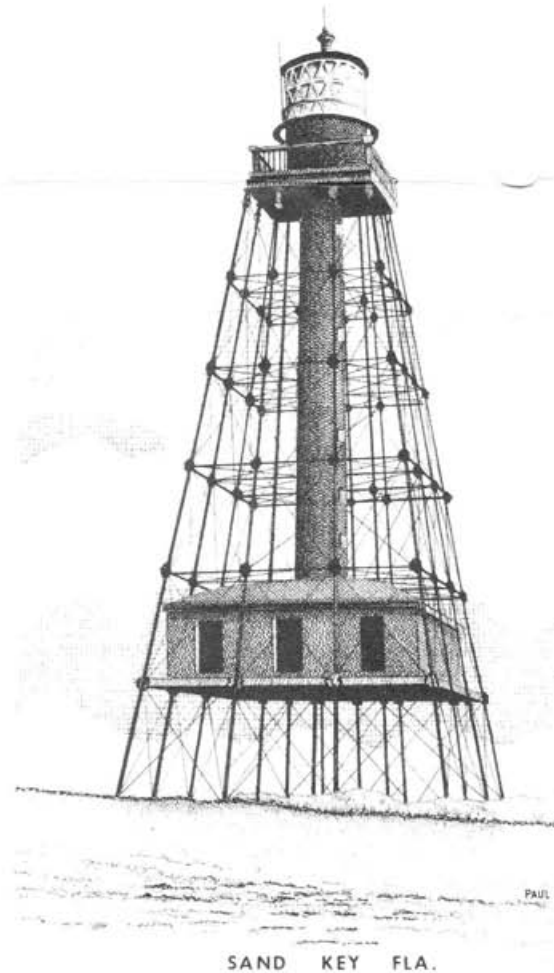
Over 150 were on display February 11, 2003.

HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE A CENTURY AGO

A century ago Hillsboro Lighthouse existed only as a drawing at the US Lighthouse design headquarters in Mobile, Alabama, and a dream for the mariners working their way past the three dangerous reefs off Pompano Beach. Hillsboro was the next to last coastal Lighthouse built in Florida and was designed after fifty years of hard experience. Early Florida lighthouses were built of brick and stone. Three of them collapsed between 1825 and 1850. One, on the south side of Ponce Inlet, lasted only 18 months before toppling into the ocean. Another tragic lighthouse was located on Sand Key, nine miles south of Key West, some 200 miles south of Hillsboro Lighthouse. A monster hurricane in 1846 toppled the Sand Key brick lighthouse and also the brick lighthouse in Key West.

One answer was to build the lighthouse out of iron instead of brick. The first was on a rocky reef off Boston Harbor known as "Minot's Ledge" It lasted only 18 months before a winter storm broke the connection between the lighthouse and the rock, and everyone at the lighthouse was lost.

A lighthouse was desperately needed at Sand Key, for it marked the channel to the busiest port in Florida...Key West. Finally, a design was developed using sixteen vertical legs with large screws on the bottom of each leg which were literally screwed into holes drilled into the coral reef. This lighthouse was erected in 1853, and while it looks strange, it is still in position 150 years later. Meanwhile numerous keeper's quarters, warehouses, scientific stations and boat houses have all been destroyed by the ferocious storms in the area. The only thing that could stand the storm was the "screw-pile" lighthouse, locked to the underlying reef. Other tubular cast iron and steel lighthouses were built off the Florida Keys. Fowey Rock Lighthouse is off Miami, and when this was lit in the 1870's, The Miami (Key Biscayne) lighthouse was turned off.



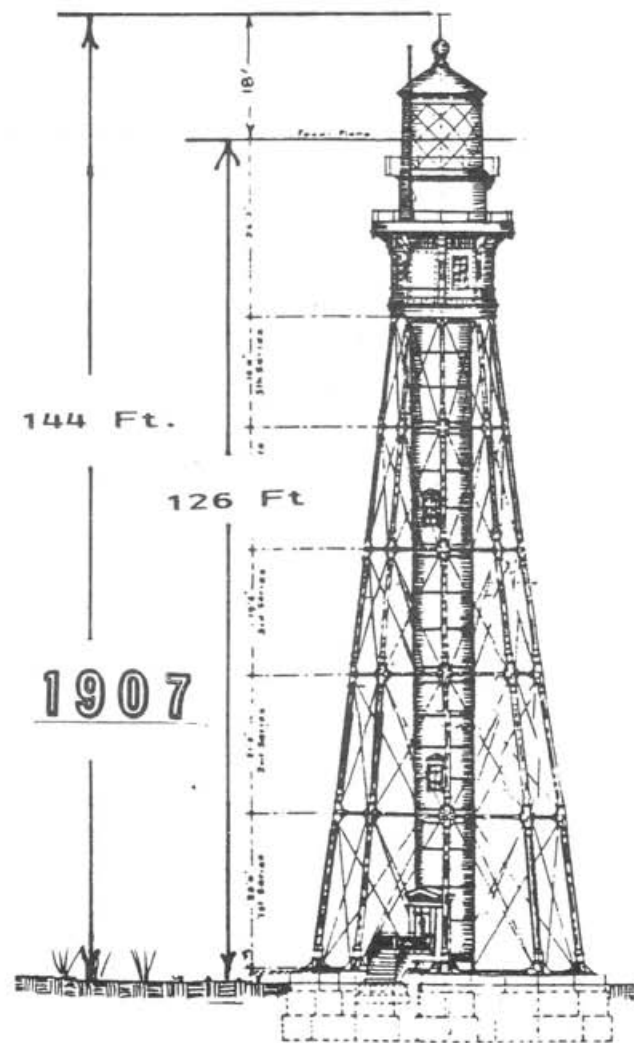
DESIGNING THE HILLSBORO LIGHTHOUSE

The Hillsboro Lighthouse followed the design of the Cape Charles Lighthouse. This light was erected in 1895, marking the south entrance to Chesapeake Bay. The design had the same octagonal pattern, used very similar castings, and the same diagonal tension rods as Hillsboro. It was a tough light for keepers, for it had two additional vertical sections and was 190 feet high. Hillsboro is 144 feet high. A vaporized kerosene lantern at Cape Charles Lighthouse providing a range of 14 miles.

Funds were finally allocated for Hillsboro starting in 1901. Land was purchased for \$300. Very detailed site surveys were done giving precise elevations and horizontal distances. Hillsboro tower was designed in 1903, and by then the Lighthouse design team had refined the process so that both Hillsboro and Cape Charles lighthouses used many common design elements. The engineering work was very carefully done, even including hurricane wind calculations to determine the forces on the lighthouse from the fierce storms which sweep the Florida coast.

The lighthouse was erected in 1906, and first lit with a vaporized kerosene lantern equivalent to about a 130-watt electric bulb. A superb French built "clamshell" Fresnel lens focused the light, and the calculated range was about 14 miles. In 1932-1933 Hillsboro was electrified with three 250-watt electric bulbs. Power was from a 6-Kilowatt gasoline generator. In 1966 power was increased with two 1,000-watt electric bulbs. Only one was on at a time, but a mechanism automatically brought a new bulb in place if the bulb in use burned out. Range is 28 miles, and it is the most powerful lighthouse on the American coast.

Any iron Lighthouse requires a lot of maintenance from the salt air, and the Coast Guard has given the tower excellent care.



BAREFOOT MAILMAN WALKS AGAIN

by Martha Casselberry

Why did South Florida need Barefoot Mailmen to walk for three days to deliver mail from Palm Beach to Miami, then turn around and repeat the course for another three days back to Palm Beach for the grand sum of \$600 per year? Well, the answer is that before 1885, it took about two months for a letter to travel that distance. Talk about a "run-around"! Here is a quote from HLPS member, Carmen McGarry's book, *Magnificent Mile*.

"A letter from Palm Beach to Miami began its trip at the lighthouse community of Jupiter, 22 miles north, then by an Indian River steamboat to the rail head at Titusville. By train it continued to New York's port and from there by steamer to Havana. From Cuba, a trading schooner took the letter to Miami, a voyage of 3000 miles".

The weekend of February 28 - March 2, Michael Bornstein, the City Manager of Lantana, reenacted the walk of these brave barefoot mailmen who carried that mail from 1885 - 1892. Michael is a Florida history enthusiast who feels only a small percent of us are aware of our short, but colorful heritage and history.

By practice walking for months about 5 miles daily at about 4 miles per hour on Palm Beach County beaches, he prepared for his 68 mile barefoot walk in memory of Ed Hamilton, the mailman who lost his life crossing our Hillsboro Inlet in October 1887 and in honor of his fellow walkers.

Because of the great publicity arranged by Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society, he had a fine reception in our county. At Town Hall in Hillsboro Beach he met our Board of Directors and received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Society. He continued down to the lighthouse and had a box lunch courtesy of the Hillsboro Club at the gazebo with some of the Board members, then was sent forward with another box of goodies. Art Makenian used his inflatable motorboat to get him safely across the Inlet.

Because of wonderful front page coverage of the event that morning in *The Sun Sentinel*, he was greeted all along the way by beach goers in S. Pompano and Fort Lauderdale who flashed the morning paper with his color photo. Many of them who could keep up with his 3.5 mph pace in the sand walked a short ways with him and became truly interested in this piece of unique Florida history.

Michael plans to repeat his reenactment in 2004. We'll keep you all posted!



Sheldon & son David Voss, "Barefoot Mailman", Michael Bornstain, Pres. Hib Casselberry, and Dan Dodge of the Hillsboro Club and new commissioner, Town of Hillsboro Beach, standing by the monument "In Memory of James E. Hamilton, United States Mail Carrier Who Lost His Life Here In Line of Duty" His stone statue will soon be on Station..

HILLSBORO'S EARLY KEEPERS

Third in a series

by Martha Casselberry

In our last newsletter we highlighted Hillsboro's second head keeper, Thomas Knight, and spoke of his direct descendants still living in Broward County and active in HLPS. Another keeper, Assistant Keeper, Judge Becton Isler, known as J.B., served under both Thomas Knight and the next head keeper, Benjamin Stone. J.B. also loved Broward County and lived either at the Hillsboro Lighthouse Station or in Pompano Beach for over 35 years.

J.B. Isler was born in Morgan, Calhoun County, Georgia on June 6, 1870. He came to Broward County January 1, 1920 to become an assistant keeper of our light and stayed in that position for 19 years – until 1939 when the U.S. Coast Guard took over the station.

In his early years at the light, there was a great deal of heavy labor to accomplish each day. The light was illuminated by a kerosine lamp and the lens operated manually by twisting heavy weights suspended from a long cable. He lived in a lighthouse cottage with his wife and five children. Three of the children were born at the lighthouse station.

Four of the youngsters, with other lighthouse kids, all attended a four-month-per-year school financed by the U.S. Government, right there on the property. The youngest girl, Ruth (Hedden) went through all 12 grades at one school in Pompano. The surrounding area was infested with wildcats, snakes, alligators, shark and barracuda. All of the families had to be ever watchful for these predators. Daughters, Ruth and Zora (Saxon) were interviewed at the lighthouse in 1976 by my husband, Hib. The girls said that the lighthouse was a "somewhat risky, but delightful place to bring up children".

After retirement, J.B. was interviewed by the *Fort Lauderdale News*. He was quoted as saying, "Nothing exciting ever happened to me". Had he forgotten the disastrous hurricanes of 1926 and '28? In the earlier one, he spent the day in the lamp room, 136 feet above ground with heavy seas and winds hammering away and swaying the tower. He recalled seeing the roof of a boat house sail across the inlet. He and the other keepers spent months repairing and replacing buildings on the property.

His retirement years were spent in Pompano

Beach, making daily trips on foot to downtown from his civilian home a half mile away. He enjoyed hours each day sitting on park benches chatting with friends.

His failing health led to a stroke in the mid 1950's

After spending weeks in a Miami hospital, he was moved to another in Savannah, Georgia where he died on October 24, 1957, at age 87.

Mrs. Isler was a long-time employee of The Hillsboro Club – over 35 years. Son, Luther, lived in the shadow of the Hillsboro Lighthouse most of his life. For over 30 years he maintained the buildings and grounds at The Hillsboro Club with as many as 15 men under his supervision during "the season". He died at age 50. Son, George became a commercial artist in Miami. He died tragically at age 39 after capsizing his sailboat off Key Biscayne in 1966.

Daughter, Irene Lang, who now lives in Longwood, Florida, is a HLPS honorary member. She was delighted several years ago to revisit the Hillsboro Lighthouse Station and see the cottage where she was born and spent many happy years.

(In the next Big Diamond, we will meet Benjamin Stone, who served our lighthouse longer than any other keeper.)



J. B. Isler dismantling the old brick oil house in 1938 after electricity came to the Station.

Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society, Inc.

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Membership: Martha Casselberry,

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Grants: Jack Burrie, Paul Bradley

Tour Info: J. Hager, J. Amato, J. Mueller
B. Nickerson, Kay McGinn, Sheldon Voss

Art Collection: P. Bradley, Joan Aletto,
Margaret Delp, Martha Wilder, Lee Butler

Education: H. Casselberry, Bob Smith,
Dale Allen, Sheldon Voss, C. Branigan

History: Butler, Casselberry, D. Nickerson

THE PRESIDENT'S NOTE : by *Hib Casselberry*

As noted in this newsletter, we have done a lot during the last four months. December's **Big Diamond** announced our winter lecture and Art-Photograph Display. A few of the newspapers picked it up and published the information. It took a little while before the press got excited about the Barefoot Mailman reenactment and the U.S. Postal Service's new Hillsboro Inlet stamp.

Our membership is still up, despite the fact that we were denied the use of the lighthouse dock by the Coast Guard and so were forced to cancel HLPS's January & April boat tours to the Lighthouse. The Hillsboro Club is allowing us to go through their property by chartered bus for the June.14th tour now that their "season" is over. WE STILL NEED MEMBERS TO HELP with the upcoming events. With the stamp coming out next month, there will be many activities where YOU can help, especially at the long running Art Show (June 15- August 31) sponsored by the Ft. Lauderdale Historical Society, the Broward County Commission, and HLPS. The show will **exclusively** feature art pieces depicting scenes from our lighthouse station. (Over forty artists and photographers were present to sketch and photograph their entries on April 30). Call 954-942-2102 and leave a message with your name, phone number, and what you are willing to do. I will be in Texas May 8-28, so expect a call-back after that date.