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President's Message

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

From a philosophical standpoint, the Tampa Historical Society’s mission is to bring together those people interested in history, especially in the history of Tampa and Florida. Understanding the history of our community is basic to our democratic way of life, and gives us a better appreciation of our American heritage.

But I cannot help but fear that our heritage to be passed on is rapidly changing locally and nationally. Preservation and appreciation of historical places, people and things are locked in a seeming struggle against expansion and growth which would do away with the “old” and establish the “new.” Look around our community. Small businesses are being replaced both locally and nationwide by officers of major national businesses. Small “Mom and Pop” restaurants close because they cannot compete with nationwide restaurant chains. Local businesses that have existed for decades are bought, closed, and bulldozed in order to be replaced with yet another nationwide chain location for either overpriced coffee, faceless and impersonal banking, apartment housing, or parking. What does this have to do with the Tampa Historical Society? Arguably, everything.

Preserving local history starts with organizations like ours raising public consciousness of historical buildings, people, locations, and events which are more than just Tampa’s history – they make up our cultural fiber and legacy.

It is our duty to help preserve and pass on this legacy of Tampa’s past while also safeguarding against expansion which would, unintentionally or otherwise, turn all towns and cities in America into a uniform landscape lacking the unique characteristics that are passed on through the preservation of local history. Let us hope that all of us who care about Tampa’s history will continue to support the Tampa Historical Society and all other local organizations dedicated to preserving the individuality and history of Tampa. Tampa has such a unique and rich history of different cultures melding into a vibrant city with a remarkable past and future. Your continued support will ensure that Tampa’s history will not go unpreserved or unappreciated in this struggle against factors which would have it erased, rewritten or forgotten.

Our schedule for the upcoming year calls for more events than ever for the Tampa Historical Society. Renew your support for Tampa’s history by joining us at these events. As always, we will host the annual Oaklawn Ramble and plan other fun and informative events of interest to our membership and the entire community. The first event of the year will be a social to be held at the Society’s headquarters, the Knight House, in January. I look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you,

William A. Knight