

1969... Where Were You?

Part 1
By Helen Vogt Greene

Since its very beginnings in 1912, Lake Worth, now Lake Worth Beach, has been known for its interesting, unique and some call it 'quirky' politics. Fifty years ago, in 1969 was a time for change.

The headlines of the the January 2, 1969 "Lake Worth Herald" announced that Mayor Robert C. Johnson, after being elected as the new county commissioner, would step down, as indicated by law, as mayor of the City of Lake Worth effective January 6. On January 9, he was elected vice chair of the Palm Beach County Commission.

When Johnson stepped down, it left three vacant seats to be filled in the March election. It opened the door to possible change.

Before the March election, there were issues that faced the residents. Issues that seem to appear and reappear, as if left unanswered or solved temporarily. On January 9, 1969 Tom Nagel, Lake Worth Police Chief, congratulated Detective Bill Openshaw for working with the Palm Beach County Sheriff Department in successful 'gang bust'.

Seven members of a drug

and prostitution gang had been arrested and Nagel vowed to "wipe out the drug traffic." A promise that continues to be on the front pages today.

Banking and the people in charge have always played an important part in Lake Worth history. In 1969, two major 'financial giants' retired.

Today, the names of R.E. Branch and Ron Finch continue to be mentioned. Both were associated with First Federal Savings and Loan Association, Lake Worth's largest financial institution. On January 16 R.E. Branch earned a well deserved retirement. Ron Finch, a Lake Worth 'favorite son' graduate from Lake Worth High School and FSU graduate, became the new executive vice president.

Equally important, on February 20, Roy Garnett, after 32 years with the First National Bank and Trust, retired. Jerry Thomas, his successor and new 'financial rising star' presented Garnett with a 1969 Chevrolet Capri, a gift from the board of directors.

Jerry Thomas (1929-1980) not only became associated with banking but also was also elected to the Florida State House of Representatives and as

a Florida Senator.

It would take pages to identify the approximately 50 organizations, their officers and members that were giving back to their Lake Worth community. Many of these fine organizations are no longer active, but many are 'alive and well'. Such organizations as Rotary, Kiwanis, American Legion, Lions, Women's Club, PEO Sisterhood, and Town and Country Garden Club are still very active.

Each organization has their own special way of giving back. Who could ever forget the Lion's Easter Pancake Breakfasts with Chief Chefs Clifford Taylor, now 93 1/2, the late Leo Fain, principal of Barton Elementary School and the late William Ritcey, master builder and friend. No one ever went away hungry.

The March election was for the time appeared to be a 'game changer'. The election issue was the support for the City-owned power plant and its expansion.

F. Kenneth Bradley, elected mayor and George Ingersoll were both elected without a runoff. The March 20th "Lake Worth Herald" headline read "Power Plant Now Safe" with the election of new

commissioner Max P. Kleinlein by 831 votes over Philip E. Melcher.

The voters also voted down a second issue, that of a landfill for a marina.

The Lake Worth High School Trojans and Warriors were always making the sports news. They were at the time one of the best in sports. Winning in football and basketball was the norm.

Of special interest, in April, the Lake Worth Trojan Girls Golfers came home with the state championship. C.H. McKinnon was the coach for four skilled players: Pattie Hill, Janet Lester, Barbara Boltin and Cathy McKinnon.

After 20 years as the municipal judge, Judge Ira Van Bullock, retired on April 15. Bullock, who was one of the most respected lawyers, remained in private practice with his partner Richard Castor. On April 24, with a unanimous vote, Richard E. Castor, became the new municipal judge.

No matter what year, 1969 or 2019, time has taught us how to work together and to remember those who made the past 'stepping stones' to brighter and better tomorrows. Some of us were there to make it happen. We remember.

Kiwanis

"volunteers dedicated to improving the world, one child and one community at a time."



Observer

"We're in your corner, in your community."

This week's "Words of Wisdom" from your friends at Lake Worth Kiwanis: "Believe in yourself and there will come a day when others will have no choice but to believe with you". ~Mufasa from the Lion King

The Lake Worth Kiwanis has connected up with the Lantana/Hypoluxo Kiwanis to work on some social nights with each other. Will also be adding some of their local events here as well. This gives each club the ability to have interclub connections. This gives our local community even better resources!

Brian Kirsch is leaving Lake Worth for an undetermined amount of time. Tom Ramiccio will be the interim Secretary for Lake Worth Kiwanis until September. Thank you Tom for all you do.



Tom Ramiccio

Next week at this time, Kathy McHale and Jack Byrnes will be up in Orlando at the International Kiwanis Convention. They will be bringing back some great knowledge and ideas for our community.

Kiwanis is working closely with the City of Lake Worth so we are able to be on the same page for this year's Holiday Fest/Holiday Parade/Bicycle Give-A-Way/Scavenger Hunt. There are plenty of sponsorship opportunities so start putting together your season's marketing strategies!

Stay up to date on our Fanpage: <http://bit.ly/LWKiwanis> or contact: 561.246.0148

Town & Country Garden Club of Lake Worth Installs New Officers

LAKE WORTH – The Town & Country Garden Club closed its 2018-2019 season in May with a luncheon buffet put together by the monthly hosts and hostesses. Afterwards was the installation of the 2019-2020 officers. The Club

welcomes new members. Annual dues are \$30. Meetings include lunch and a guest speaker. There are also several organized field trips throughout the season.

The Town & Country Garden Club of Lake Worth, a non-profit whose mission

is to promote an interest in gardens, their design and management, and to cooperate in the protection of wildflowers, birds, native trees and shrubs, to encourage civic planning and to fund and award scholarships, meets the second

Monday of every month October through May 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 1416 North K Street, Lake Worth. For more information contact Erin Allen at 561-312-5925 or erinallen.realtor@gmail.com.

FCCLW Award Scholarships

By Helen Vogt Greene

For longer than can be remembered, the 106 year old, First Congregational Church, located at 1414 North "K" Street, has awarded scholarships to deserving young, qualified and deserving members.

The scholarship funds come from donations made by past, generous members, who established a specified educational fund. These members realized that an education is the cornerstone to a better future.

Bobbie Marsh and Nancy Lydon, co-chairs for the FCCLW Scholarship Committee presented the 2019 scholarships to Karen Lewis and Alyssa Lilly. Both young women are qualified, outstanding,

dedicated students and long-time members of the church.

Karen Lewis is a very special fourth grade teacher of math and science. She is attending Florida Atlantic University. She is working on her Master's degree in Educational Leadership.

Alyssa Lilly is a full-time second year student at Palm Beach State College. This lovely young lady, when she completes her degree in Education, plans to enter the field of Special Education.

Following the morning service, both young ladies were congratulated by well-wishers at a reception in Studebaker Hall hosted by the Scholarship Committee.



Left to Right: Marlene Glass, Gael Hahn, Jeanne Madoch and Diane Merson

