



NAPLES ART
ASSOCIATION

THE FIRST
60 YEARS

1954-2014

GRACE H. L.

1950s

SEEDS PLANTED BY A FLORIST

It all began in 1954. In Washington, a man everyone knew as Ike was in his second year as the 34th President of the United States.

In Hollywood, a low budget black and white movie filmed entirely on location in Hoboken, New Jersey came out of nowhere to win eight Oscars including Best Picture.

The movie was *On The Waterfront* and it won Best Actor for its hot young star Marlon Brando, in a role that one critic described as "the greatest single performance ever" by a male actor. He was to be remembered as one of the greatest actors of the 20th century. On the same stage that evening, a beautiful young woman named Grace Kelly won Best Actress and captured the heart of a prince.



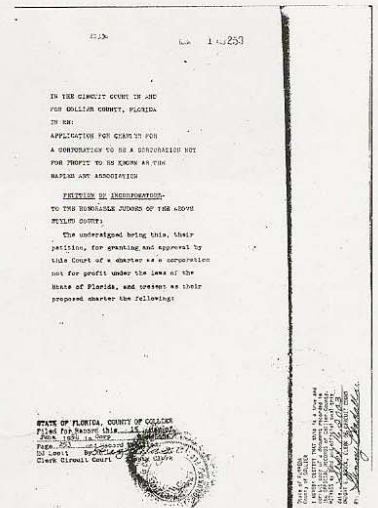
In sports, Roger Bannister ran into the history books when he became the first sub-four minute miler while baseball legend Joe DiMaggio also made world headlines by marrying 28-year old Norma Jean Mortenson, better known as the quintessential American pin-up Marilyn Monroe.

In music, the release of *Rock Around The Clock* by Bill Haley

and His Comets first spun us into a craze that's still circling the globe today.

On Wall Street, the Dow had climbed back to top 350 for the first time in 25 years.

The year was 1954. The population of Naples had just passed 1,465. But, as small a town as we were then, we were already an arts community. Although the Naples Art Association was incorporated in 1954 for the princely sum of \$5.80, one of the seeds that was to blossom into the Naples Art Association was actually sown years earlier and, appropriately, by a florist. Her name was Grace Lake.

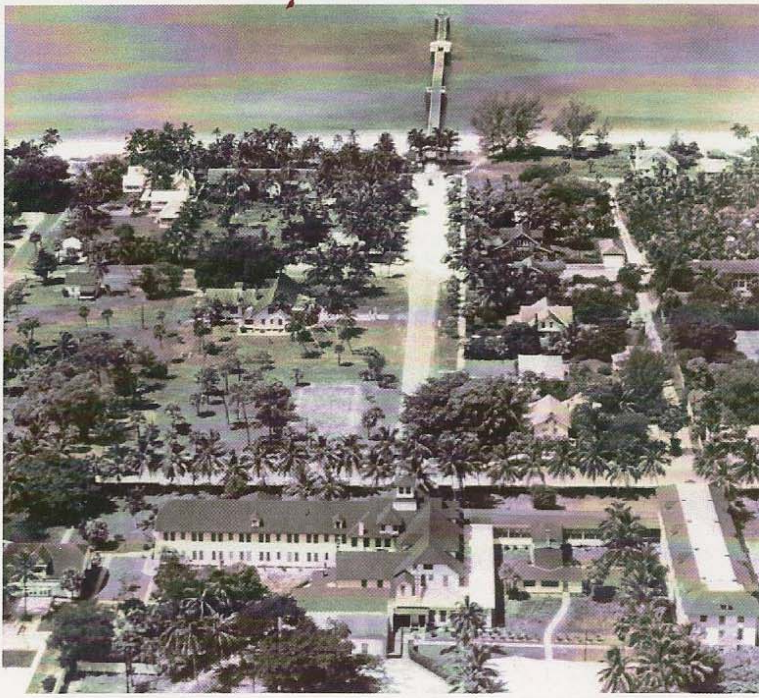


George and Grace Lake arrived in Naples in 1949. George, a former WWII pilot, started a flight service out of Naples airport. Grace began Grace Lake Florist, which she managed for the next 25 years.

Already an accomplished artist, Grace began painting local landscapes almost immediately. Within a few months, in March 1950, an exhibition of 20 of her oils was held at the original Naples Beach Hotel that was then closer to the pier and was the center of Naples social life in the early days.

Meanwhile, two other newcomers to Naples with a similar passion for art were about to find each other and begin a lifelong friendship. They were George Rogers and Elsie Upham.

ON THE WATERFRONT • ROGER BANNISTER • POPULATION - 1465 • GRACE LAKE



In 1954, George placed an ad in the *Collier County News* calling artists to a meeting at the Naples' Woman's Club. Several artists responded, including Grace Lake. Within a few months the trio had filed a petition to charter the Naples Art Association. Grace Lake was named its first President. Over the next few years, each of this dynamic, energetic and visionary trio served as President.

Back then, NAA membership was a little over 30 men and women. Members met regularly and in 1956 began to exhibit their work in collective shows at Grace Lake's flower shop on Third Street South or sometimes on the grounds of the old hotel.

In the 1950s, art instruction wasn't available in Collier County Schools. So, from the very beginning, in addition to exhibiting their own work, members volunteered their time, energy and resources to encourage art in others and began an outreach program that continues to this day.

The twin foundations of art appreciation and art education had been laid. Upon this solid base, the oldest cultural institution in Naples began to take shape.



***Yellow Still Life by Elsie Dorie Upham
Elsie Upham served as President
three times between 1956 and 1964
rotating with George Rogers.***

NAA PRESIDENTS:	
Grace Lake	1954-55
George Rogers	1955-56
Elsie Upham	1956-57
George Rogers	1957-58
Helen Brand	1958-59
Elsie Upham	1959-61

ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK • NAPLES ART ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED - 1954

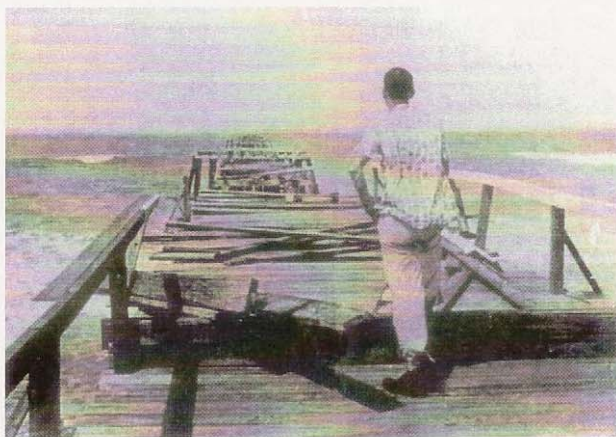
1960s

THE LONGEST DAYS OF OUR LIVES

The decade began with massive devastation. Donna, a huge storm that still holds the record for retaining major hurricane status for the longest period of time, made landfall first at Marathon in the Florida Keys then Naples as a force four hurricane.

For nine days in September, Donna pounded the eastern seaboard causing extensive damage from the Lesser Antilles to New England. At least 364 people were killed and over \$900 million in damage was caused.

Naples was crippled. Many homes and businesses were destroyed. At the Naples Beach Hotel wind and water smashed through windows, rushed into the dining room sucking tables and chairs out to the Gulf and dumped tons of sand into the rooms near the shore.



Mary Watkins, a member of the family that still owns the hotel today, wrote to her mother, "The Beach Club is a shell. The storm has left us with no furniture in the dining rooms, lobby, bar, anywhere." Local historian Doris Reynolds remembers that her office was destroyed along with many of the belongings in her home. "Those were the longest days of our lives," she said.

The pier was badly damaged and rebuilt in 1961 with a donation from Lester and Dellora Norris. Naples High School suffered \$75,000 in damage to the roof. Furniture from the Vanderbilt Beach Motel littered Naples Park Road a half-mile away.

Every cloud has a silver lining. The country had been in

HURRICANE DONNA • 9 DAYS IN SEPTEMBER • NAPLES WAS CRIPPLED • \$900 M



recession during the late 50s. But after the storm, Naples saw an infusion of millions in insurance claims. A building boom began with the development of Park Shore, Marco Island and Pelican Bay. People were back at work and a newer, stronger Naples was born. Longtime resident Sue Smith said, Naples came back "like a phoenix out of the ashes."

As the city rebounded, the population grew over the next ten years and with it the Naples Art Association. By the end of the decade, the Naples population had tripled to over 12,000. NAA's reputation was growing. Small, intimate art shows that had begun in a florist shop were now becoming art festivals that attracted headlines.

In February 1967, the *Collier County News* reported the opening of a Naples Art Association "gala weekend", a two-day art festival with a Saturday evening program built around the theme "Neapolitan Nights."

Central to the planned event was a sidewalk exhibition of members' works displayed on Third Street South that on Saturday evening was to be closed for two hours "creating a mall like atmosphere." Background music was to be provided and "a mood of gay informality will be set by some unusual decorations".

It must have been quite a success because just two months later NAA hosted a second event that this time was reported by the mighty *Miami Herald*. The reporter wrote, "Artists from Naples and surrounding areas displayed their talents in a potpourri of color and shapes. Beneath whispering fronds of coconut palms along Broad Ave., the painters, sculptors and ceramicists spread their works and sold to admiring residents who crowded the showing. The artists received nearly \$1,000 from sales."

These were the first of many exhibitions, galas and art shows that were to become a permanent part of the Naples winter art scene.

Untitled by George Rogers

George Rogers served as President three times between 1955 and 1963 rotating with Elsie Upham.

NAA

PRESIDENTS:

George Rogers	1961-63
Elsie Upham	1963-64
Donald Nick	1964-66
Marguerite Roberts	1966-68
Shirley Gage	1968-70

LION IN DAMAGES • PIER WAS REBUILT IN 1961 • NAPLES POPULATION 12,000

1970s

PET ROCKS AND MOOD RINGS

The 1970s was a decade owned by the Bee Gees, Charlie's Angels and Saturday Night Fever. These were the years Concorde first took to the skies. The beginning of the decade saw the first VCRs, video games and word processors. By the end, cell phones were already here.

This was the era of pet rocks, mood rings and lava lamps. No wonder creativity was rampant at NAA! Outdoor art shows, an important part of NAA's annual life since the very start, were already getting serious legs as the 1970's debuted.

The first open air art show in what were then "the open gardens of Gulfshore Square shopping mall," attracted 283 entries. The second attracted over 700 entries.

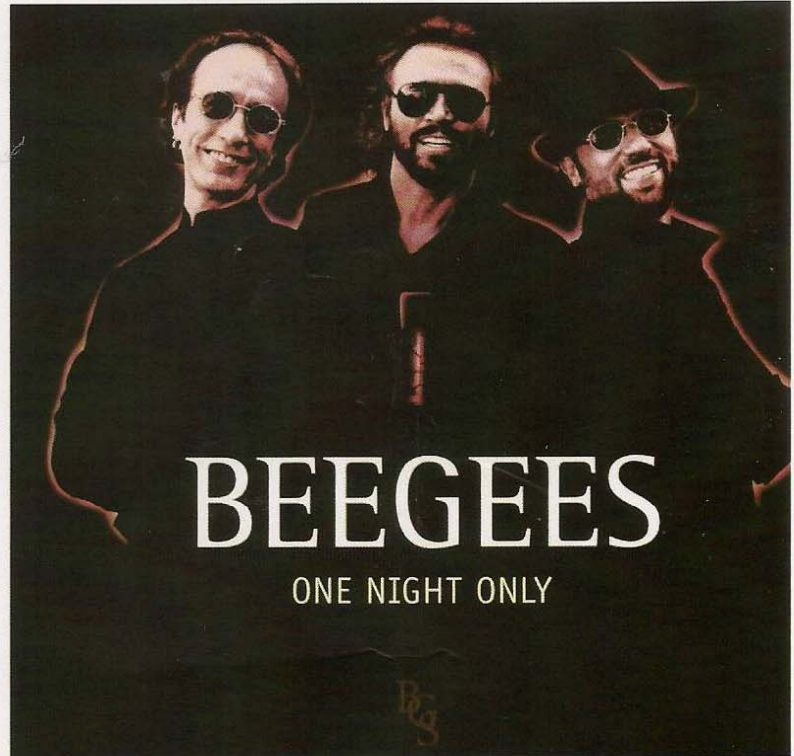
In the 1970s, the population of Naples almost tripled to just over 12,000, an astonishing period of growth, helped along by the opening of Alligator Alley in 1968 and Naples Airlines operating a regular service for snowbirds from Boston and Provincetown.

Parking had already become an issue. A bank on 5th Avenue South (now the site of the Inn on Fifth) used easy parking as a reason to do business there!



This was a decade of many firsts for NAA.

The first annual Sponsors Show opened in March 1971 featuring 61 works, many of which were floral and landscape oil



paintings. Several of the shows sponsors were also exhibitors but even then Citizens National Bank, Youth Haven and NCH were exemplary members of the community helping to underwrite operations.

A 1971 Art Fair at Citizens National Bank featured 49 works, including masterpieces by Renoir, Dali, Goya, Rembrandt and Picasso.

In 1972, the First National Bank and Trust Company of Naples held a contest open to all NAA's members. The bank offered \$400 in prizes for the best artistic interpretations of their new headquarters.



In those days, classes and educational lectures were often held in members' studios. In 1971, John Groth a noted

BEE GEES • CHARLIE'S ANGELS • SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER • VCRS • PET ROCKS

ART at **UPHAMS.**
 261 AQUA CT.
 SUNDAY APR. 11.
 COCKTAILS 5-7.

by

- JANE BRIGHAM
- CLYDE HAGERTY
- J. JAFFEE-KUX
- GRACE REID
- MARJORIE REINERS
- ANN STEPHENS
- E. DOREY UPHAM
- IRMA WILLIAMS

Presents
THE FIRST ANNUAL
 SPONSORS SHOW
 March 7 through March 26, 1971
 at
 THE GALLERY - 984 Fourth Avenue, South

SPONSORS SHOW COMMITTEE

Show Chairman	Mrs. R. Adam Johnstone
Artists	Mrs. John Upham, Mrs. J. D. Gage
Publicity	Mrs. Walter Howe
Display	Mr. W. F. Richardson
Hanging	Mrs. Robert Ahrons, Mr. E. H. Albee
Hostesses	Mrs. L. Robbins
Hospitality	Mrs. Ida Hinkle



The Weed Girl by Lucille Howe

Lucille Howe served as President from 1975-80

NAA PRESIDENTS:

Peggy Richmond	1970-72
Irma Heinicke	1972-74
Marion Waterfall	1974-75
Lucille Howe	1975-80

local artist and book illustrator, demonstrated his professional techniques to several students at Elsie Upham's studio. But by the end of the decade, the NAA began its first official education program at the historic Naples Depot.

Built in 1927 by the Seaboard Air Line and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Depot played an important role in the development of the city until its closure in 1971. Eight years after that, it became equally important to NAA. In 1979, NAA held classes there for the first time and continued to do so for the next 20 years.

MOOD RINGS • NAPLES POPULATION 12,000 • FIRST ANNUAL SPONSOR SHOWS