

CORAL GABLES MUSEUM

EVENTS CALENDAR
JUNE 2018

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENTS:

- DOWN TOWN
WALKING TOUR
EVERY
SATURDAY, 11 A.M.
June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2018
- "CREATING THE
DREAM" TOUR
EVERY
SUNDAY, 1 P.M.
June 10, 17, 2018
- MERCEDES-BENZ
OF CORAL GABLES
GALLERY NIGHT
FIRST FRIDAY,
June 1, 2018 6-10 PM
- FAMILY DAY
ON ARAGON EVERY
SECOND SATURDAY
June 9, 2018
- To Schedule, Contact:
Jude Alexander
Adult Volunteer Liaison
Email:
Jude.Alex@Live.Com

The Volunteer Voice

Relationships ○ Service ○ Accomplishment

Volume I

Issue 11

CG MUSEUM LAUNCHES NEW HISTORICAL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT WITH LECTURE BASED ON ORIGINAL SOURCES



Joan Keller, the *Sculptress Forgotten*, came to life on April 25, 2018.

Based largely on original research by the museum's resident historian, Orestes Gonzalez, the "Art, Times and Mysterious life of Joan Keller," was the inaugural subject generated from the museum's newly established Historical Research Department. The presentation, before a full house, was conducted by the Museum's Executive Director, John Allen, and Mr. Gonzalez.

The Museum's new Historic Research Department has many projects in the works, with upcoming lectures, books and oral and video presentations about people, buildings and events that form the history of Coral Gables. A website devoted to the department will appear soon. Joan Keller's story will be an important feature.

See Page 2 for additional information related to Joan Keller.

CONGRATULATIONS!



We are so happy to say, "Congratulations!" to **Orestes Gonzalez** who has been accepted to attend the University of Florida at Gainesville, FL. He will be a Junior majoring in History in the up-coming Winter semester. We couldn't be prouder. **Go Gators!**



JOHN ALLEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JUDE ALEXANDER, ADULT VOLUNTEER LIAISON
285 ARAGON AVENUE, CORAL GABLES, FL 33134

WWW.CORALGABLESMUSEUM.ORG

Phone: 305 603-8067

Joan Keller, Sculptress Forgotten

Joan Keller, born in 1916 in Cleveland, Ohio, during WWI, was given the name, Theresa Ida Keller. She changed her name several times but was known as Joan Keller in 1938. At age 19 (1935) she, her family and their friend, Cyril Brickman, came to Miami seeking better employment opportunities as the Great Depression (1929-39) had devastated the U.S economy.

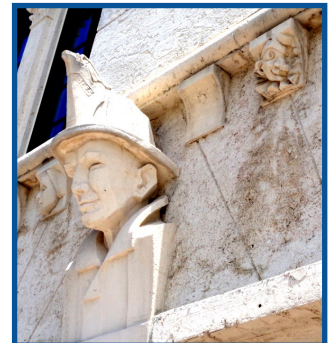
At this point, having already begun expressing her abilities as a artist, she was one of the most noted sculptresses of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This was a program instituted by the government to create jobs during this period of extremely high unemployment. In 1935, Keller won a competition, open to artists younger than 20 years of age, sponsored by the Miami Daily News. The following year she enrolled at the Miami Federal Galleries and took classes at the Studio Guild. Her mentor was the painter and sculptor, Lampert Bemelmans. At some point during this time she became acquainted with Richard Merrick, brother of George Merrick and Denman Fink, the uncle of George and Richard. By 1938 she was nationally known as an artist and at age 21 she received the commission to create the busts of the firemen and other figures for the Coral Gables Municipal Building, which was later to become the Coral Gables Museum.

In 1938-39 WWII explodes in Europe with Hitler's invasion of Poland. However, for Joan Keller, then only 22, it was a very good year. At this time she has the great joy of seeing two of her works displayed at the New York World's Fair. In 1942, Keller decides to move to New York. While there, she embarks on a new career as a model using the name Jon Keller. Other life changes occur during this period when she marries and has a daughter. On returning to Miami she has a second child, a son, Kenneth. Again, she becomes active as an artist. However, even with her work being

displayed at the Eve Tucker Gallery on Alton Road in Miami Beach, this time begins a downturn in her career and from the *Miami Herald*, she receives her first negative review.

Our researchers, Allen and Gonzalez, are about to run out of leads when on-line technology rejuvenates the hunt for more information. Among other sources, *Ancestry.Com*, led them to the Brickman family. Cyril Brickman married Joan Keller's sister. This connection revealed many pictures and stories about the artist.

The last few years of the sculptress's life were fraught with tragedy. Her husband is killed in a car accident in 1961. Her eyesight begins to deteriorate. She subsequently abandons her 12 year old son who will live with Joan's sister, Julia, until his early death at about age 40. Having married a second time, Keller moves to Rhode Island. On August 13, 1963 she is found dead of undisclosed causes. Her obituary mentions that, at the time of her death, two of her sculptures were displayed at the Miami Beach Resort & Spa. It was further noted that the Bass Museum had owned four of her figures but was no longer in possession of them.



However fortunate for Coral Gables, it appears that, sadly, it is only the charmingly beautiful and some what whimsical busts of the firemen, children, animals and even a harlequin, on the frieze of the Coral Gables Museum which can now attest to the artistry-in-stone of sculptress, Joan Keller.

This synopsis of the presentation was provided by Museum Volunteer, Laura Ondarza with input from Mr. Allen and Mr. Gonzalez

A B C s of VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

○ VOLUNTEERS PLEASE SEE DETAILS ○

CONTACT: Jude.Alex@Live.Com to schedule a time.

ON-GOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SPECIAL VOLUNTEER INFO!

A

✓CASH COMPENSATION: \$9 PER HOUR FOR HOSTING
THE INFORMATION BOOTH AT
THE ACTOR'S PLAYHOUSE AT THE MIRACLE THEATER !
FREE PARKING AND 2 TICKETS FOR A WEEK-DAY PERFORMANCE!

Please contact Jude if you are interested. Jude.Alex@Live.Com

B

✓GALLERY NIGHT: *FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH*

June 1, 2017 / SHIFTS: 5:30 - 8PM AND 8-10 PM

Four (4) volunteers needed for each shift. Number of volunteers needed may change to adjust to situations on the particular evening. Please be flexible when choosing a shift as we must cover the entire evening.

✓FAMILY DAY: *EVERY SECOND SATURDAY: June 9, 2018*

Ten (10) volunteers needed. Contact: Angela@CoralGablesMuseum.Org

TOURS

C

✓DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR: *EACH SATURDAY, 11 AM*

June 2, 9 16, 23, 30, 2018

One (1) volunteer needed for each date to guide groups to locations near the museum, explaining the history and architecture of significant sites. Training required.

✓CREATING THE DREAM: *EACH SUNDAY, 1 PM*

June 10, 17, 2018

One (1) volunteer needed, inside the museum, for each date, to interpret City Founder, George E. Merrick's vision and ultimate achievement of creating Coral Gables, The City Beautiful. Training required.

**Encourage your family and friends
to join the C&M!**

Important Info: Volunteer Notes

- ❑ PLEASE TAKE THE INITIATIVE. EMAIL JUDE AND TELL HER THE EVENTS/TOURS FOR WHICH YOU WISH TO VOLUNTEER.
- ❑ Volunteer Manual: *In a pink folder at the front desk you will soon find the new Volunteers Manual. It was created to help volunteers understand the various positions at the museum. It also contains museum staff job descriptions and phone extensions.*
- ❑ The Coral Gables House (Merrick House) remains closed for extensive renovation.
- ❑ Don't Forget...there's a 15% discount for museum volunteers at the museum gift shop!
- ❑ Have fun but be professional, friendly, helpful and know your "stuff!"
- ❑ *The Volunteer Voice* welcomes your suggestions re: tours, the newsletter or any other helpful hints. Send to: Janebond@Comcast.Net, your humble newsletter editor or Jude.Alex@Live.Com.



EXHIBIT PREMIERS & HIGHLIGHTS

Caribee Club Artist Series Features Gerald Obregon June 1 through July 31, 2018

Obregon says, "I enjoy the process of painting. Each piece I paint is a visual problem to solve. Sometimes the problem is color, sometimes it's value, sometimes it's using just the right touch on the brush to apply the paint. With each piece I complete I find the answer is a small piece of a larger puzzle that will never be solved.

I am fascinated by the work of the Impressionists, how they worked in a fast and loose manner. The simplest stroke of a brush on canvas can convey so much with so little, be it a landscape, still life or portrait. For the last few years I have been producing more landscapes than portraits or still life paintings. At first I kept to traditional subjects with greenery and bodies of water. I have since expanded my choices to include the glass, metal and concrete found in more urban setting. In each case I try to capture the play of light and color on forms."



Coral Gables Museum 2018 Student Visual Arts Juried Competition presented by the William J. & Tina Rosenberg Foundation June 1 through June 7, 2018

In an annual contest open to high school students, young artists compete to have their art work featured in a special Museum exhibition. Hosted by The Museum Project, CGM's teen mentorship and volunteer program, this visual arts contest is judged by a qualified independent panel and awards three top prizes.

Finalists will be notified and show their submitted visual arts pieces at an exhibition held Friday, June 1. The Closing Night Reception will take place the evening of Thursday, June 7, at which time top-prize recipients will be announced. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three artists with Honorable Mentions to several other participants.

**EXHIBIT
BULLETIN!**

**All long term
exhibitions
are
on hold for
building repairs
&
maintenance.**

CGM Volunteer's Get-Together

...And get together they did, at the second monthly volunteers social gathering. Held at the Seasons 52 restaurant on the newly completed, strollable Miracle Mile, the vols enjoyed adult beverages and complimentary flatbreads while sharing stories of travels, classes and day jobs.

Attending were some new volunteers, Ana Maria Rodriguez and Patrick Mapp, who had to leave a little early. One of our regulars, Laura Ondarza also had to leave before the picture was snapped.

In the picture: Left to Right: Nina Kennedy, Patricia Suastegui, Jude Alexander, Hendrick Woods, Celia Suarez, Maria Fleites, Sandra Wisham and Celita Lamar.



Our Featured Volunteer...



As one of 11 children, all born and raised in Coral Gables, Nina Kennedy, really gets your attention with that bit of information. Nina graduated from Coral Gables Senior High. After college she lived in Kendall and was employed by the Dade County School System.

After raising her family, Kennedy found she had more time to visit with her mother who still lived in the Coral Gables house where Nina and her siblings grew up. Each visit would bring back forgotten memories of her times in Coral Gables. Those memories urged Nina to get back in touch with her Gables roots.

The Museum was the perfect fit. "The ambience," said Kennedy, "is both historical and soothing at the same time. But, more importantly, the dedicated, energetic and compassionate vibe I get from the staff and volunteers speaks volumes. It's a nice feeling to be home again."

Our Featured Staffer...



Say Hello, to Orestes Hernandez, Vice-President for Business Development at the Museum. He was born and raised in South Florida and is recently married. After a number of years in the business of fund raising and guiding the growth of several organizations, Orestes joined the CGM in February 2017.

Hernandez says what he most loves about working at the Museum are the people he has met and with whom he has interacted. "The ability to be creative alongside this group of such exceptional people who create, produce and execute over 200 events, exhibits, programs and tours every year is unbelievably satisfying. It is so exciting to know that we are elevating the Coral Gables Museum to its rightful place-the cultural center of the City Beautiful!" Thanks, Orestes, for all you do.