



Reflections of Manatee
Winter Update



The President's Corner



March is the month we celebrate Manatee Heritage Days and we have a great line-up of new events, which you can find below. But first, an important message.

Small museums are in great peril, especially ones like ours, committed to historic integrity and acknowledging the complexity of the past. Funding that we used to rely on has been slashed or eliminated altogether as both government agencies and corporations shy away from any projects that celebrate diversity or acknowledge the painful parts of our past.

Have you dreamed of making history? Of course, we all have. Now we have a chance to protect the stories we value by participating in a region-wide 24 hours of online giving. To be successful, we need to connect to a larger community of people who care about preserving our past.

We need your help! Please join our campaign and help us reach our goal of \$20,000 and 300 donors! We need you to tell your friends and family members about the important work we do and ask them to join us in helping to make a difference.

Get ready to give! Save the Date and on April 15-16, 2026, visit GivingChallenge.org and make a donation to help us preserve our buildings, preserve our stories, and continue to impact our community.

Multiply your gift! The Patterson Foundation will generously contribute a 1:1 match for donations, up to \$100 per donor, per nonprofit, made online during the Giving Challenge!

Questions? If you would like more information, let us know. Contact us at director@reflectionsofmanatee.org. Thank you in advance for your generosity to our organization!

[JOIN OR DONATE NOW - Click here](#)

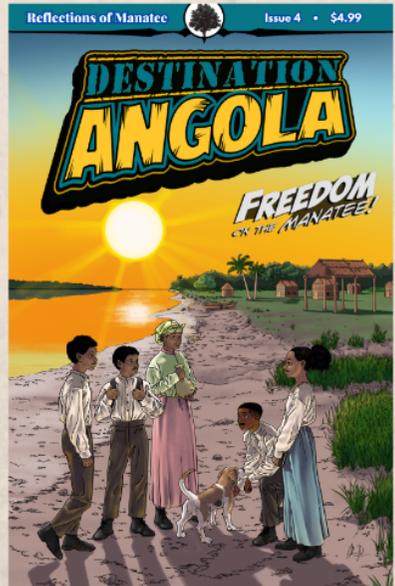
Angola Comic Con Event



To launch our new Destination Angola comic series, we decided to nerd out by having a historical comic con. In the true comic con tradition, we will kick off the event with a panel discussion with the people involved in bringing the story of Angola into comic form.

The true fun of a comic con though is being able to meet and greet with our comic creators. After the panel, tour our “Artist Alley” where you will be able to meet the illustrators of our comics, get your free Destination Angola comics signed, as well as enjoy and buy other art by our illustrators. Plus, you get a chance to meet legendary Garfield illustrator Gary Barker. You can also meet and talk with our comic writer Shannon

Live, our comic letterer and logo artist Matt Live, and archaeologists on the Angola excavation Sherry Robinson Svekis and Jean Louise Lammie, Ph.D. Bat City Comic Professionals, who have collaborated with us to make the comic come to life, will also be there with fun comic related activities.



Get your own Destination Angola T-Shirt

Coinciding with the release of the Angola comic books, we are announcing a new limited time item. We are selling these amazing T shirts! Just follow the link through the QR code.

The proceeds help us with future events for you our wonderful patrons!



The comic project is funded by a grant from the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), with funding from the National Park Service, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.



Meet the Board

Ariana Saldoriga is our Treasurer and oversees mission sustainability through monitoring cash flow, reporting financial status, and reconciling discrepancies – and chasing down our Executive Director for receipts. She holds a B.A. in Applied Anthropology from the University of South Florida (USF) where she collaborated with USF medical anthropologist Dr. Roberta Baer on the published work "American Stories 2", which features refugees' oral histories rewritten for young readers. This has been used as an English as a Second Language learning material for refugees under the CARIBE Refugee program, which is affiliated with the Hillsborough County School Board.

You may have met Ariana at one of our past events, where she was volunteering as a greeter, handing out information, or running one of our activities. She is currently utilizing her writing and research skills to collaborate with Sherry on grant writing, supporting future initiatives, and assisting with the required board signatures.



Meet the Deputy Director

Reflections of Manatee is excited to introduce our new Deputy Director, Gabriel Castaldi. We first met Gabriel during the Angola Freedom Seeker archaeological excavations in January 2020 when he joined the team. Gabriel spent the next five years employed by the City of Tarpon Springs to work as a docent and museum technician at the Safford House and Heritage Museum. There he offered guided tours, assisted in the development of programming, and provided general operating support for the director. Currently, he is serving on the board of directors for the Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society and completing his M.A. in Applied Anthropology at the University of South Florida.

Gabriel will be working on a variety of programming with Jean and Sherry as well as maintaining our normal operating hours. Please stop in and say hi! Friday and Saturday 10AM-3PM.



Touring History



During the chilly winter months of January and February Reflections hosted several private tours. We would like to thank the Daughters of the American Revolution and Greater Sarasota Meet Up for wonderful discussions and questions. Would you like to schedule a private tour for your group? Contact us at info@reflectionsofmanatee.org



Workshop Opportunity



Join studio potter and independent researcher Osa for an immersive three-hour program exploring the deep history of clay and ceramics in our region—from Indigenous technologies to later traditions shaped by geology, trade, creative inspiration and survival. Then take part in a guided, hands-on coil-building workshop, learning one of humanity’s oldest ceramic techniques while creating your own vessel. Materials are provided, and finished pieces will be fired after the program for later pickup. No prior experience is required. \$70 fee in advance



Artist Bio

Osa Atoe is a ceramic artist based in Sarasota, Florida, who makes functional pottery meant to be used and lived with. Her studio practice began in New Orleans in 2015 and has since grown into a solar-powered studio in Florida, where she works with traditional handbuilding and wheel-throwing methods, close attention to form and surface, and a long commitment to coil building and carved forms. Her work is informed by years of independent research into historic pottery techniques, regional clay, and traditional surface treatments. She is also the founder of Kaabo Clay, a nonprofit network supporting Black ceramic artists worldwide through advocacy, resources, and cultural exchange..



Use the QR code to sign up.



JOIN REFLECTIONS OF MANATEE
AND BAT CITY COMIC PROFESSIONALS FOR...

Angola Comic Con

AND THE LAUNCH OF OUR
SIX-PART HISTORIC COMIC SERIES

DESTINATION ANGOLA

FREE
COMIC BOOKS

ARTIST ALLEY
MEET & GREET

COMIC CREATOR
PANEL

MEET GARFIELD
ILLUSTRATOR
GARY BARKER

FRIDAY MARCH 6TH
5:00 - 7:00 PM

REFLECTIONS OF MANATEE
1302 4TH AVE. E
BRADENTON, FL 34208

Upcoming Events

March 6



5-7PM Angola Comicon - Join us for a panel discussion with the creators, writer, and descendants of the Angola Freedom Seekers, and meet the artists that drew, colorized, and lettered the Destination Angola comic series. Also featuring Gary Barker, legendary Garfield illustrator. Free comics available. Event is free, donations are appreciated, Destination Angola tshirts for sale through Custom Ink (QR code).

Location: Reflections of Manatee

March 7

1-6PM Back to Angola Festival - "The Cousins Is Coming!" Join us for the annual Back to Angola Festival featuring Bahamian seafood, artists, music, keynote speaker, and Junkanoo rushout. Admission Free. Individual vendors and food are fee based. Presented by Oaktree Community Outreach.

Location: Manatee Mineral Spring Park

March 14



11AM-2PM Pottery Studio - Join studio potter and independent researcher Osa Atoe for an immersive three-hour program exploring the deep history of clay and ceramics in our region, and take part in a guided, hands-on coil-building workshop, learning one of humanity's oldest ceramic techniques while creating your own vessel. Materials are provided, and finished pieces will be fired after the program for later pickup. No prior experience is required. Location: Reflections of Manatee, Fee: \$70 in advance, tickets available on Facebook.

March 21

10AM -1PM Free Museum Family Day - Join us for a fun day of activities for the whole family. Check out our hands-on archaeology exhibit and try to solve the pottery jigsaw puzzle, conquer the scavenger hunt, or use Archaic technologies to see if you would be a hunter or gatherer, and more! Location: Reflections of Manatee, Free.

March 28

11AM - 4PM Bradenton Art & Music Fest - We will be tabling our new comic book series "Destination Angola" at the Bradenton Art & Music Festival with Bat City Comics. Come join us at Riverwalk West for fun activities. Free.



1305 4th Ave. E
Bradenton, FL 34208
info@reflectionsofmanatee.org

EXPLORE REFLECTIONS OF MANATEE



Discover the rich
tapestry of
Manatee's history!

Our docent-led tours traverse the three historic homes of our museum and invite you to take part in the rich histories of the Ranchos, Seminoles, Freedom Seekers, and Settlers that helped shape the Manatee of today.

Scheduled Tours
available on
Thursday, Friday,
and Saturday
mornings and
afternoons



\$10/person*

**Members tour
free!**

**Join now for \$25
come back all
year!**



BOOK YOUR TOUR TODAY

1302 4th Ave. E Bradenton FL 34208

Email: reflectionsofmanatee@msn.com

Phone: 941-201-5435

www.reflectionsofmanatee.org



Reflections of Manatee is a 501(c)3 corporation and your donations are tax deductible.



Reflections of Manatee

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