

FOR INFORMATION:  
Emilie Alfino, Museum Manager  
472-4648; cell 357-1644

## PIONEER FAMILY MEMBER TALKS TO SOLD-OUT CROWD AT HISTORICAL VILLAGE

January 15, 2015 – Ty Symroski, grandson of Ross and Daisy Mayer, spoke to a sold-out crowd last week in the first of four Twilight Talks scheduled to take place at the village this season. The Mayer family built Shore Haven and Morning Glories (the Sears kit homes now in the village), as well as the Caretakers' Cottage, also in the village and scheduled to open soon.

Symroski worked in the Sanibel Planning Department from 1977 to 1980, co-compiling the city's Ecozones Map. He was involved in nearly every project during the city's formative years after the adoption of the Sanibel Plan. He recounted his early years on Sanibel before the causeway.

"You think of bridges as bringing people together, but in effect, the causeway has really changed the island," Symroski said. "At that time, if you worked on the island, you basically had to live on the island. There were only about 400 or 500 people at that time. Now people can live off the island and come here to work, and it's really changed our community. I don't think people anticipated that at the time."

Symroski also described how dark the island was at night. "Sometimes you'd have nights with an incredible amount of stars overhead and you could really see the Milky Way," he said. "And then you'd have a full-moon night and you could virtually read a book out there, it was so bright from that full moon. Then it would be overcast without a full moon, and it would be completely black; you could not see your hand in front of your face. That would make for a scary run between houses – if you hit the house, you knew you were in the right place."

It was a quieter island, too. "Sanibel was really a very quiet place, Symroski said. "We didn't have a lot of power boats -- there were a few, but none like I saw the other day with about a 900 horsepower engine. We didn't have yard work going on, so it was really much quieter on Sanibel."

The next Twilight Talk at the village is February 12 at 7 p.m. in Shore Haven, the village's new welcome center (and Symroski's grandparents' house). Mike Billheimer, long-time islander, former planning commission member, and owner of the Lighthouse Café, will be the speaker. Tickets are \$5 each; call museum manager Emilie Alfino at 472-4648. Tickets must be paid for and picked up in advance.

The historical village is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays. The village is located at 950 Dunlop Road (next to BIG ARTS). Admission is \$10 for adults 18 and older; those under 18 and members are free. Docent-guided tours are available at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at no extra charge, based upon docent availability. There is handicap access to all buildings. Admission for entrance to go only to the Museum Store is free. For information, call 472-4648 during business hours or visit [www.sanibelmuseum.org](http://www.sanibelmuseum.org).



*Islander Ty Symroski speaks to a sold-out crowd in the old School House at the Sanibel Historical Village*