December 2013

St. Augustine Beaches News Journal

NEWS FOR AND ABOUT RESIDENTS OF THE ST. AUGUSTINE BEACHES AREA

Welcome to Beach Blast Off 2014!

This year we are doing things a little different. Beach Blast Off has turned into a 2-day Block Party complete with a takeover of A1A Beach Blvd. Throw in a Regional Chili Cook-off World Championship Qualifier, live music, kids zone, fireworks and you have fun for the whole family. Special 2-day wristbands can be purchased for a discounted rate at St. Augustine Beach City Hall from December 2nd through December 20th.

On the 30th, the International Chili Society will hold a Regional Homestyle Chili Cook-off Competition to include local and regional challengers. The winner will qualify for the World Chili Cook-off Championships in 2014 and a chance at $25,000 in prizes. Tastes are available to the general public if you dare.

On the 31st, enjoy a full day of live music and activities leading up to the big FIREWORKS DISPLAY at 8:30pm. Visit BeachBlastOff.com for updated information and local specials.

On December 30th and 31st from 2-10pm each day Beach Blast Off (see page 9)

The Beach Arts Group (BAG) Art & Merchant Walk

The Beach Arts Group (BAG) Art & Merchant Walk is getting bigger and better each month with more participating shops, restaurants and artists. The next event is Monday, December 16th from 5:00pm to 7:00 just in time for Holiday Shopping to get that one of a kind gift. Starting at LYMI Oddities Boutique at 305 A1A Beach Blvd. and continuing South to the Sunshine Shop, with the plazas and parklets in between filled with artists and craftspeople. Enjoy music, food and performances with a courtesy shuttle sponsored by The Civic Association looping up and down the boulevard.

A Tribute To John Lennon will be performed by Paul & Caren Umberger, The Island Duet at The Art Studio on Friday, December 6th at 5:00pm. The Art Studio will be celebrating First Friday Art Walk and kicking off their Holiday Art Show & Sale. Snack and Beverages will be available. Admission is Free! For more information visit: www.beachartstudio.com.

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City Hall Update

At its November 4, 2013 regular meeting, the St. Augustine Beach City Commission took the following actions:

1, Made the following appointments to the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Board: Ms. Margaret England as regular member; Mr. Lennet Daigle and Ms. Jane West as alternates.

2. Approved providing $5,000 to the Friends of A1A to help the organization market the segment of the A1A Scenic Highway, which goes through city as A1A Beach Boulevard.

3. Heard an update report by city's event coordinator, Mr. Michael Cunningham, on preparations for the Veterans Day event, November 11th, and Beach Blast Off, which will take place on December 30th and 31st at the county pier park.

4. Passed three ordinances on final reading: a. to revise the Land Development Regulations concerning building height and setbacks; b. to change the regulations regarding fences and retaining walls; c. to change the regulations governing the sale of vehicles on private property.

5. Passed two resolutions: a. to adopt the position description for the city's Information Technology Specialist and for the Information Technology Support Specialist; b. to oppose changes to the state's chart of accounts.

6. Approved an agreement with the Anastasia Baptist Church for use of the Church's parking lot for satellite parking for persons attending the Beach Blast Off event on December 30 and 31, 2013.

7. Discussed with the building official his proposed changes to the city's alcoholic beverage regulations, and decided to have the city attorney work with the building official on further changes. (see page 4)

What's Inside The *News Journal* This Month

- ***City Manager:*** **Parking**
- ***Financial Focus:*** **Assumptions Can be Dangerous to Investors**
- ***Spiritually Speaking:*** **"Father Christmas"**
- ***St. Augustine Beautification Committee:*** **A Gift for the Birds**
- ***Sheriff's Corner:*** **Holiday Crime Prevention**
- ***Health Focus:*** **Crooked Feet**
- ***Chief's Dish:*** **Salmond Steaks with Saffron-Onion Sauce**
- **Final Message from the Mayor**
- **Safety Tips for this Holiday Season**

St. Augustine Beach Civic Association
Presents

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Saturday, December 7th
4 pm to 7 pm

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Tourist Development Council

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BEST VIEW IN THE COMMUNITY. 1602 Windjammer Ln. 4BR/3.5B all concrete home w/direct view of the ICW. Approx 3500 sq ft of luxury living. Shows like a model w/amazing living spaces—FL room, sunroom & sitting rm off MBR. Elevator to all 3 floors of this magnificent home. Chef's kitchen w/42" white raised panel cabinets & solid surface countertops. Security system and hurricane shutters. **$499,900**

CUSTOM HOME IN SEA COLONY. 240 N. Forest Dune Dr. This 3BR/4BA beautiful home has everything you desire--plantation shutters, custom pool, two gas fps for the cool winter evenings, upscale moulding, and wood floors. Lg MBR with gorgeous bath & large walk in closets. Central vac sys w/hardware for each floor & kit sweep. Three porches to listen to the Ocean sounds as you enjoy the peace and quiet on the preserves. **$925,000**

PRIVATE SETTING IN SEA COLONY. 916 Ocean Palm Way. This pristine 5BR/5.5BA home will impress and inspire the most discerning buyer. This gorgeous home's floor plan w/first-class finishes and picturesque vistas from each deck and every room create a sense of tranquility and calm. Gourmet kitchen, Bonus Room, patio with pool and spa--everything you need to relax and entertain. **$1,395,000**

PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE OCEAN! 716 Ocean Palm Way. 4 BR/5 BA European style home w/upgrades--great architectural features, high end windows & doors, coquina shell concrete walkway, privacy wall and driveway. Premium lighting. Quality cabinets w/stone countertops and Viking appliances. Tumbled travertine stone floors. **$1,997,000**

The WOW House!!! 312 S Forest Dune Dr. Spacious 5BR/4.5BA home in the gated community of Sea Colony. Chef's kitchen with all the bells and whistles & large bkfst room. Elevator takes you to all 3 levels of this magnificently appointed home. Maintenance-free decking on front porch, Anderson wndws, wd flrs, granite counters, stainless steel appliances, much more to see. **$1,365,000**

REMARKABLE ISLAND ESTATE! 413 Night Hawk Ln. Beautiful custom home w/new roof, boasts 4,950 sf of living area w/5BR/5.5BA, multiple decks & 4 car garage-- A/C & wkshp. Screened Patio and Pool. Separate guest qtrs perfect for visitors, 25x20 bonus/ media room, 2 full kitchens (Stainless applcs), fireplace—all this, only a short stroll to St. Aug beach! **$739,000**

ADORABLE HOME IN OAK GROVE. 4225 A1A South, #106A. This tidy 1/BR/1BA mobile home has 94 yrs left on the lease. Brand new carpet, refrigerator and range. New roof in 2009. Located in lovely gated community with large pool and lots of outdoor spaces. Low HOA fees include water, cable, internet, security, clubhouse, pool and dock. **$125,000**

SALT RUN ESTATE. 953 Lew Blvd. 5BR/4BA waterfront estate with private entry. Old World Charm with all the amenities—Chef's kitchen, distressed hard pine floors, wood burning fp, beveled glass French doors, pool and Jacuzzi, patio w/beadboard ceiling and balcony views from 2 floors. 35' deep water access with floating dock. Dusk to dawn lighting lets you truly enjoy this paradise estate. **$1,975,000**

BEAUTIFUL DEEP WATER LOT ON THE INTRACOASTAL. 120 Grand Oaks Dr. Amazing water views with a shared dock and private boat slip. Located in a small exclusive enclave of custom homes. Just a few minutes' walk to the beach, shopping, restaurants, and endless water activities. Bring your plans and build your prefect dream home. **$535,000**

DIRECT OCEAN FRONT CONDO! 8550 A1A South, Unit 259. Recently remodeled 2BR/2.5BA—new Lennox 2 Ton A/C and air handler with 10 year warranty. New paint, carpet, balcony and much more. Completely furnished and located in a complex with 4 heated pools, tennis, racquetball, playground, and boat storage. Great investment property for the discriminating condo buyer! **$369,900**

New Home. 353 Ocean Forest Drive. Open living spaces in this 4BR/3.5BA home in Anastasia Dunes. Gourmet kitchen features large island and is open to the Dining Room. Large storage space under the house—great for boat or beach toys. Oversized porch w/ fireplace and patio. Side entry garage with extra storage to help keep your dream home organized. **$749,900**

SEA COLONY GORGEOUS! 464 Ocean Grove Circle. 4BR/4.5BA open floor plan home built with the finest maintenance-free materials. Windows are hurricane resistant to 125 MPH. Kitchen w/ granite, SS appliances and more. In beautiful gated community with pool, clubhouse and private access to the ocean. Perfect upscale beach house! **$1,190,000**

ADORABLE COTTAGE IN SEAGROVE. 488 High Tide Drive. Lovely 3BR/2BA cottage w/Chef's kitchen—granite and 42" upper cabinets w/crown moulding. Two covered patios—one is screened in. Seagrove community has Clubhouse, pool, boat ramp, Town Center with restaurants, banks, Post Office and City Library. Just minutes from the Ocean. **$289,000**

GREAT INVESTMENT CONDO. 880 A1A Beach Blvd #2306. Beautiful Tommy Bahama look in this furnished unit. Steps from the ocean in a well-maintained complex w/great amenities--Jacuzzi, 2 pools (including a heated pool), tennis courts, clubhouse, racquetball courts, private ocean walk-over, and on-site rental program. This 2BR/2BA condo is on the income-producing program. A great buy for beach lovers. **$167,000**

GREAT LOTS FOR SALE

- **225 Dondanville Road Williamson Manor $111,000**
- **136 Spoonbill Court Pelican Reef $117,000**
- **109 Grand Oaks Drive Grand Oaks $149,000**
- **887 Ocean Palm Way Sea Colony $249,000**
- **117 Spoonbill Pt Ct Pelican Reef $59,900**
- **883 Ocean Palm Way Sea Colony $299,000**

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News From Around The Beaches

City Hall Update

8. Authorized an appraisal not to exceed $800 of two lots on the north side of 8th Street, east of A1A Beach Boulevard. The owner has said she's willing to negotiate with the city on possibly selling the lots, which are adjacent to a plaza and could be used for off-beach parking.

9. Reviewed suggested provisions for a social media policy, and asked the city attorney to make changes for review by the commission at its next meeting.

10. Passed on first reading an ordinance for the ticketing of abandoned vehicles on the right-of-way by either the code enforcement officer or the building official.

11. Discussed the building of a board walk to the beach at the east end of Versaggi Drive. Mayor Snodgrass is to ask the Tourist Development Council for money for this project.

12. Approved an interlocal agreement with the county for the construction of an off-beach parking lot at the east end of Pope Road. The city's share of the cost will be $59,500.

13. Decided to take no action on regulating the parking of vehicles in the city hall parking lot.

14. Agreed to support the 13-mile Diva Run, which is scheduled to be held in the city on December 7, 2014.

15. Approved Commissioner Samuels's request to consult with a local expert regarding funding options to continue renovations to the city's former city hall, which is adjacent to the county pier park.

The commission's next meeting will be held on Monday, December 2, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the city hall at 2200 A1A South. The public is invited to attend.

CITY CHARTER REVIEW UPDATE

The St. Augustine Beach charter review committee held its fourth meeting on Wednesday, October 30, 2013, and did the following: a. reaffirmed that the hiring and firing of the city manager should be done by a simple majority (three of five votes) of the city commission, instead of the current mandate in the charter that requires four out of five votes to hire and fire the manager; 2. agreed to include in the charter a provision concerning the appointment of an acting city manager in the event the manager becomes temporarily ill or incapacitated; 3. agreed by consensus to add to the charter a section regarding the city clerk, with the clerk being hired by and reporting to the city manager. At this time, the city has a deputy city clerk while the city manager is considered to be the city clerk; 4. agreed to include in the charter a provision concerning the hiring by the city commission of the city attorney; 5. discussed at length whether the police chief should be a department head appointed by and reporting to the city manager. At this time, the police chief is hired by the city commission, as is the city manager and the city attorney. The charter review committee agreed that the police chief should be hired by the city manager and be a department head under the manager with the provision that the hiring or firing of the chief by the manager be subject to confirmation by the city commission; 6. discussed whether the requirement that the police chief and city manager should be evaluated annually by the city commission.

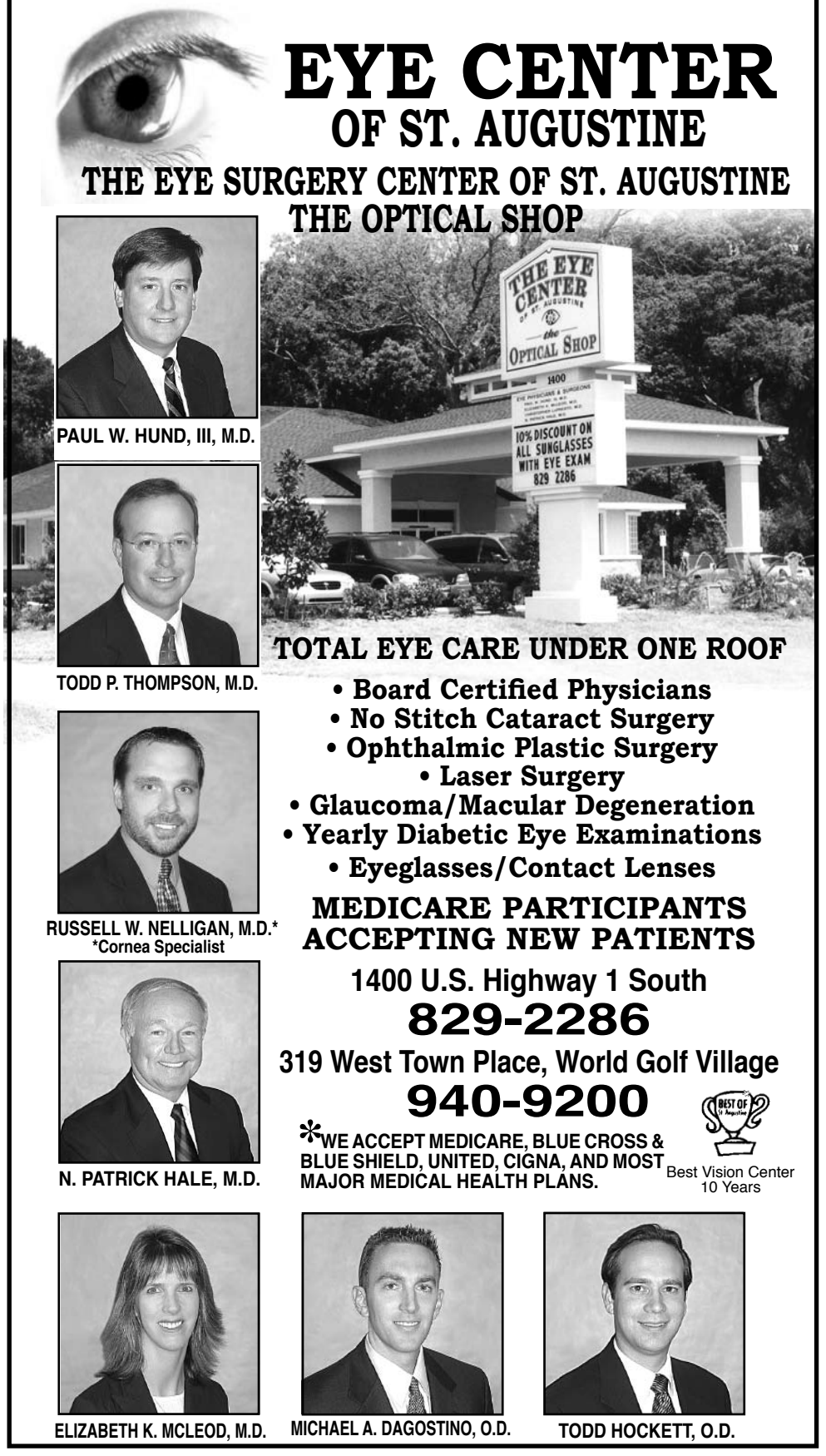
The committee's facilitator, Ms. Marilyn Crotty, will bring suggested language to the committee's next meeting, which will be held early because of the Thanksgiving Day holiday: 7 p.m. in the city hall, 2200 A1A South, on Wednesday, November 20th. The committee's December meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. The public is invited to attend. Citizens can submit suggestions for changes to the charter to the deputy city clerk, Ms. Cathy Benson, at cbenson@cityofsab.org; by telephone (471-2122); or by regular mail, 2200 A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080.

Volunteers Needed for 2014 Beach Blast Off

Beach Blast Off for 2014 will be a two-day event again at St. Augustine Pier Park, Monday, December 30th & Tuesday, December 31st from 2:00pm to 10:00pm.

Volunteers are needed for both days to sell tickets, beer, and Novelties.

If can help, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Verna Brown @ vjbrown@bellsouth.net if you would like to help.



Update on Drugs at South Beaches Council

by St. Augustine Beach Police Chief Robert Hardwick

There are three areas of concern that have recently been keeping Law Enforcement busy, both at the local and National levels.

Because of the increase in the use and manufacturing of methamphetamines, two of my officers have joined the St. Johns County Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Team. This Specialized Team is made up of members from the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, the St. Augustine Police Department and the St. Augustine Beach Police Department. Our officers have received extensive training from local, state and federal experts. In 2011 and 2012 over 30 meth labs were reported to Law Enforcement in St. Johns County. The numbers have continued to rise across the state; 2008 - 180, 2011 - 676 and in 2012 - 930 labs were discovered by Law Enforcement. Most of these labs were what the experts call "one potter", meaning the user is making amounts for personal use. These small labs have been found in hotel rooms, cars, back packs and homes with children. We have continued to see a steady rise in 2013 in reference to this dangerous drug. Some of the ingredients used to make meth are; ephedrine, cold tablets, acetone, brake cleaner, engine starter, drain cleaner, rock salt, lithium batteries, farm fertilizer, muriatic acid, iodine, and all other sorts of dangerous chemicals. These chemicals cooked in make shift labs form a crystalized substance that is injected, smoked and snorted. The inhalation by first responders and innocent victims can be extremely harmful and cause serious injury. Methamphetamine increases criminal activity and effects surrounding communities. We're encouraging our citizens to call Law Enforcement if they believe methamphetamines are being manufactured in their area.

I also discussed a popular new drug that is being used primarily by our youth called; synthetic marijuana or spices. These products contain dried shredded plant material and chemical additives that alter the brain similar to potent marijuana. As the DEA identifies the chemicals used in this drug and declare them illegal, the manufactures change the ingredients continuing to push the legal definition. In St. Johns County we have discovered these illegal products at gas stations and head shops, making numerous arrests in an attempt to deter the criminal use. These chemicals are normally smoked or absorbed into a tea.

Chief Hardwick with Memory Hopkins, President of the Chamber of Commerce South Beaches Council at the Elks Club regular monthly meeting.

Farewell Message from the Mayor

S. Gary Snodgrass, Mayor
City of St. Augustine Beach, FL
comsgsnodgrass@cityofsab.org

Dear Citizens and Friends of St. Augustine Beach:

There is an old English proverb that states, "All good things must come to an end." This truly captures my feelings as my second and final term as your Mayor concludes at year-end. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to work with an extremely dedicated, competent City staff, talented and hard-working City Commissioners and dozens of volunteers on the various boards.

Working together, we have made considerable progress on many fronts:

• Budget – Approval of balanced budgets for fiscal years 2012, 2013 and 2014, keeping the property tax millage at 2.3992 mills for each year, while providing sufficient funds to ensure public safety, infrastructure improvements, needed purchases such as Public Works equipment, police patrol cars and technology updates; at the same time maintaining a strong balance sheet with significant financial reserves for storm events, other emergencies and special opportunities.

• Police Department Matters – A restructuring of the City's Police Department including employment of a Police Chief, adoption of revised policies, practices and procedures and establishment/ implementation of plan to ensure the Department becomes a fully accredited law enforcement agency in 2014, the first time in the City's history to achieve this level of recognition and professionalism.

• Strategic Plan - Development/implementation of a first-ever long-term strategic plan focusing on identified issues incorporated into seven broad goals for the City. Specific, measurable objectives were established under each goal. Several objectives have been achieved and progress is being made on others.

• Public Works Projects – Numerous projects have been completed including renovations of Splash Park , construction of new restrooms and rebuilding of existing restrooms at Pier Park, drainage improvements at Woodland Estates, updating of the master drainage plan, erection of pedestrian safety signal at Pope Road/A1A Beach Boulevard, construction of a bulkhead along the City's drainage canal in Marsh Creek, lighting for several City sidewalks, 2nd Avenue drainage project and other significant initiatives.

• Charter Review Committee – Approved the forming of a citizen's committee to conduct the ten-year review of the City's Charter under the guidance of a facilitator from the University of Central Florida's Institute of Government.

• Pay Study/ Performance Appraisal System – Conducted a comprehensive compensation study comparing salary and benefit levels for City employees to data covering employees in Florida cities with 10,000 or less in population and less than 100 employees. Based on the formal survey results, proposed and implemented a compensation philosophy designed to ensure that pay and benefit levels for City employees are pegged at the competitive market range. Performance Appraisal System - A review was conducted to determine best practices within the Florida League of Cities and other Florida municipalities. Adopted and implemented a new performance review and evaluation process for the City Manager, Police Chief and City Department Heads. The new approach will focus on achievement of on-going position responsibilities, assigned objectives and specific leadership and ethical performance standards.

• Community Garden – Established and relocated, in cooperation with St. Johns County, the community garden from two City plazas to a larger area on the east side of Ron Parker Park. Both gardeners and the vegetables they grow are thriving in the new location.

• Miscellaneous – Passed a comprehensive ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identification; approved annexation of various businesses and properties broadening the City's tax base; established part-time City positions to enhance events planning efforts and code enforcement; approved measures to enhance the City's web site and improve technology capabilities; approved an ordinance prohibiting telecommunication towers east of A1A Beach Boulevard; extended for two years the deadline for when construction is to begin of the 204 room Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, which is to be located west of A1A Beach Boulevard between 5th and 7th Streets.

We have not just marked time the past two years but have moved the City forward. We have done this with a disciplined, business-like management at City Hall while ensuring public safety, keeping taxes low, balancing the budget, addressing short term and longer range challenges and opportunities, improving infrastructure and enhancing the quality of life of citizens.

We've done this by working together, not always in perfect harmony, but with a commitment to making our City a better community.

It has been a privilege to serve as your Mayor. My heartfelt thanks are extended to our engaged citizens, a dedicated City staff and knowledgeable City Commissioners. Finally, I thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement, with a special thanks to Patsy T. Snodgrass, my wife of nearly 44 years for her patience and wise counsel.

In the spirit of the Season, I wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Happy Holidays!

Best regards,S. Gary Snodgrass

St. Augustine Beach Civic Association

by Bill Jones, President
www.thecivicassociation.com

The 3rd Monday of each month will be very special at St Augustine Beach as the Beach Art Group (BAG) presents the Monday Art & Merchant Walk. Paul Slava of BAG hopes this is the start of a great tradition on A1A Beach Boulevard. "We've got live music in some of the parklets and stores", Slava said. "We have the work of many local artists on display and retail merchants and restaurants are running specials in support of the event."

The 3rd Monday Art & Merchant Walk kicked off last month and was big hit for merchants and shoppers! This coming Monday will have even more merchant participation. Shoppers can enjoy this shopping and cultural experience that runs from FA Cafe at the north end of A1A Beach Boulevard to the Sunshine Shop at the intersection of A1A Beach Boulevard and 3rd Street. Shoppers and diners can park anywhere on the Boulevard and either walk or ride the free trolley provided by the St Augustine Beach Civic Association. "The 3rd Monday Art & Merchant Walk will attract locals and visitors alike to our business district at the beach", says Bill Jones President of the St Augustine Beach Civic Association. "We wanted to provide a free trolly to allow shoppers to get to as many places on the Boulevard as possible".

The next 3rd Monday Art & Merchant Walk will take place next Monday November 18th from 5 until 7 pm. The event is produced by the Beach Art Group and sponsored by the St Augustine Beach Civic Association.

The Art Studio

of St. Augustine Beach

by Jan Heusdens
heusdensjan@yahoo.com
www.beachartstudio.com

Holiday Art Show on First Friday Art Walk

THE ART STUDIO in the Cultural Arts Center Building at St. John's County Pier Park will host a Holiday Art Show during First Friday's Art Walk on December 6th. New works of art will be featured with local artists present. As a new member of AGOSA, the Art Galleries Of St. Augustine, TAS has become a destination to experience and enjoy art at the beach.

The Halloween fundraiser held on October 25th was a success with great costumes, delicious small bites of food, beautiful music and wine. Thank you to all attending and to Mary Pritchard of Culinary Outfitters who donated a platter of outstanding house smoked salmon and other items, the talented Island Duet for great, live music and to Tim's Wine Market, tending bar with a great selection of wines---- first glass was included in the price of admission. This party will become an annual event.

TAS Board of Directors is preparing a presentation for the renovation of the small coquina outbuilding located next to The Art Studio. The renovated space will be used as a clay and sculpture studio with outdoor sculpture garden. The TAS presentation is listed as an agenda item at the December 2nd meeting of the St.Augustine City Beach Commission at 7:00PM. Citizen support has been positive. All are encouraged to attend and become informed on this unique project which increases cultural opportunities/ activities at the beach.

Please visit www.beachartstudio.com for studio/gallery open hours, class schedules, and membership information. Membership in The Art Studio is open to everyone.

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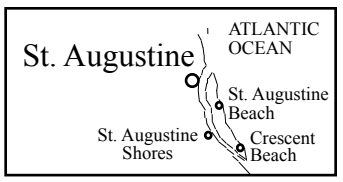

News From Around St. Johns County

St. Johns County County Community Outreach Workshop December 4th

by Rachael Bennett
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioner, District 5

Communities are often measured by their natural amenities, job markets, or purchasing power. St. Johns County gets top ratings on so many things: our school system, our natural environment, and our visitor amenities receive high praise. Our economic development efforts are paying off with new jobs coming to the County. In my mind, the reason that St. Johns County is so great is that the people who live here are amazing. I consider our residents to be the greatest asset the County has.

During my time on the St. Johns County Commission, I have been fortunate enough to meet and spend time with residents from all areas of the County. These conversations have provided valuable feedback from the community regarding County programs and services, and the fact that there are many who are unaware of the programs that are in place that can be of benefit to them and their families and community. I believe that government close to the people best serves those people.

To that end, I (with the consensus of the Board) have initiated a series of community outreach presentations and workshops that are designed to provide St. Johns County residents with information regarding services and programs that exist in our community for our senior, underserved, and fixed income population. The St. Johns County Health and Human Services Department hosts meetings for residents to learn more about Amendment 11 (Senior Exemptions), Fair Housing, Social Services, and Healthcare Reform. The last scheduled meeting is December 10 a.m. on December 4 at 10 am at the Solomon Calhoun Community Center in the Multi-Purpose room.

The St. Johns Property Appraiser's Office discusses the Senior Exemptions Summary and presents information regarding how Amendment 11 allows counties and municipalities to grant an additional homestead tax exemption for qualifying low-income seniors. In addition, St. Johns County Social Services staff members discusses various services tailored to low-income families and uninsured or underinsured residents, including assistance available for doctor's visits and limited prescription assistance. The St. Johns County Housing and Community Development Division presents a workshop on fair housing, and the Bailey Group will presents information on healthcare reform and how it affects individuals.

This workshop will feature a services presentation from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., and many Community partners will have booths open until 1 p.m. to showcase their programs. Providers scheduled to attend include Legal Aide, the Supervisor of Elections, County Social Services, Council on Aging, Home Again St. Johns, Community Hospice, Wildflower Clinic, West Augustine CRA/Weed & Seed, SHINE, and the St. Johns County Planning Department.

In today's world, we are bombarded with so much information that it is often challenging to determine what is accurate or specifically relevant to our individual needs or situations. The goal is to demystify and humanize the government process. The program ensures the segments of our community who are most in need of assistance are aware that it exists and have access to the information that will help them receive those services.

The St. Johns County Employees who help facilitate these programs are compassionate, caring, and more than willing to go the extra mile to help our citizens. I encourage you to attend one of these workshops to become more informed. If you know somebody who would benefit from these services, please let them know about this wonderful opportunity to obtain more information. The people who call St. Johns County home are our community's most valuable asset. Helping our family members, friends, and neighbors benefit from the many services and programs that are available to them will preserve a high quality of life for all St. Johns County residents and ensure our community remains one of the most desirable in which to live, work, and raise a family. For additional information, please contact the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Department at 904.209.6064.

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St. Augustine Travel Club

Please join us for our FREE St. Augustine Travel Club get together on Wednesday, December 11, at 3pm at the Southeast Branch Public Library on U. S. 1 when we will present on Bavaria and the Black Forest. The video is 80 min. so we will have a brief introduction , then get right to the video. It is an excellent video and hope you will be able to stay for its entirety; however, you will still get much out of the video even if not through its entirety. I have been in the travel industry for 40 years and retired with a love of travel, and volunteer at the library to share my extensive background in the field. The Travel Club is intended to be educational and fun. We hope you will be able to come. The club is open to all St. Augustine residents and friends. For any questions, please call Peter at 904 797-3736.

St. Augustine Travel Club Cruise March 2014

The St. Augustine Travel Club will again be sailing the seas on Saturday, March 15 to 23, 2014, on the beautiful Carnival Breeze out of Miami to the Southern Caribbean ports of Turks & Caicos, Dominican Republic , Aruba and Curacao for an 8-day cruise. Prices start from $863.00 per person, double occupancy, for inside cabin, inclusive of all port fees and taxes. Book now with a $300 deposit and receive $100 per stateroom On Board Credit. Call Peter, St. Augustine Travel Club at (904) 797-3736 for more information and reservations.

8th Annual Christmas Show "It's Christmas Time Again"

The VFW, Bryan Tutten Memorial Post 2391 located at 6184 US Hwy 1 South in St. Augustine will be hosting its 8th annual Christmas USO style show on December 7th. A ham dinner with all the trimmings and Christmas Cookies for dessert will start at 5 p.m. with the show to follow around 6:30. Tickets are $15.00 and proceeds will go to help our Veterans have a Merry Christmas. For tickets and information please contact Debbie Tilley @ 460-9345 or Sue Hunter @ 767-5267.

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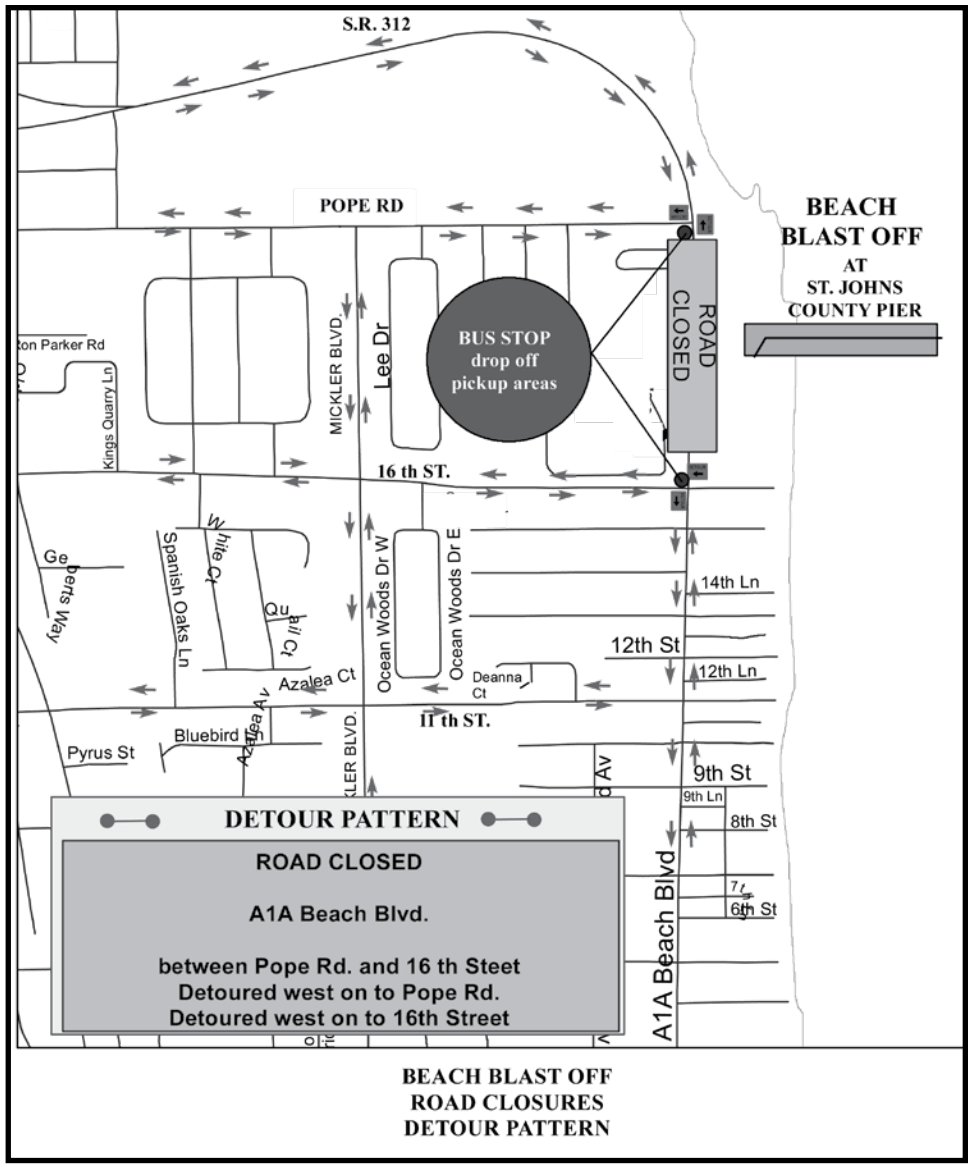
See page 8 for shuttles and road closing.



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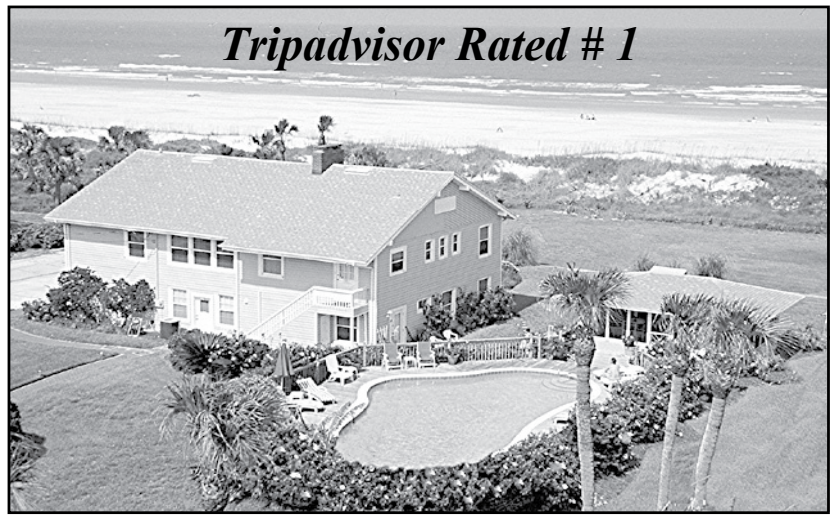

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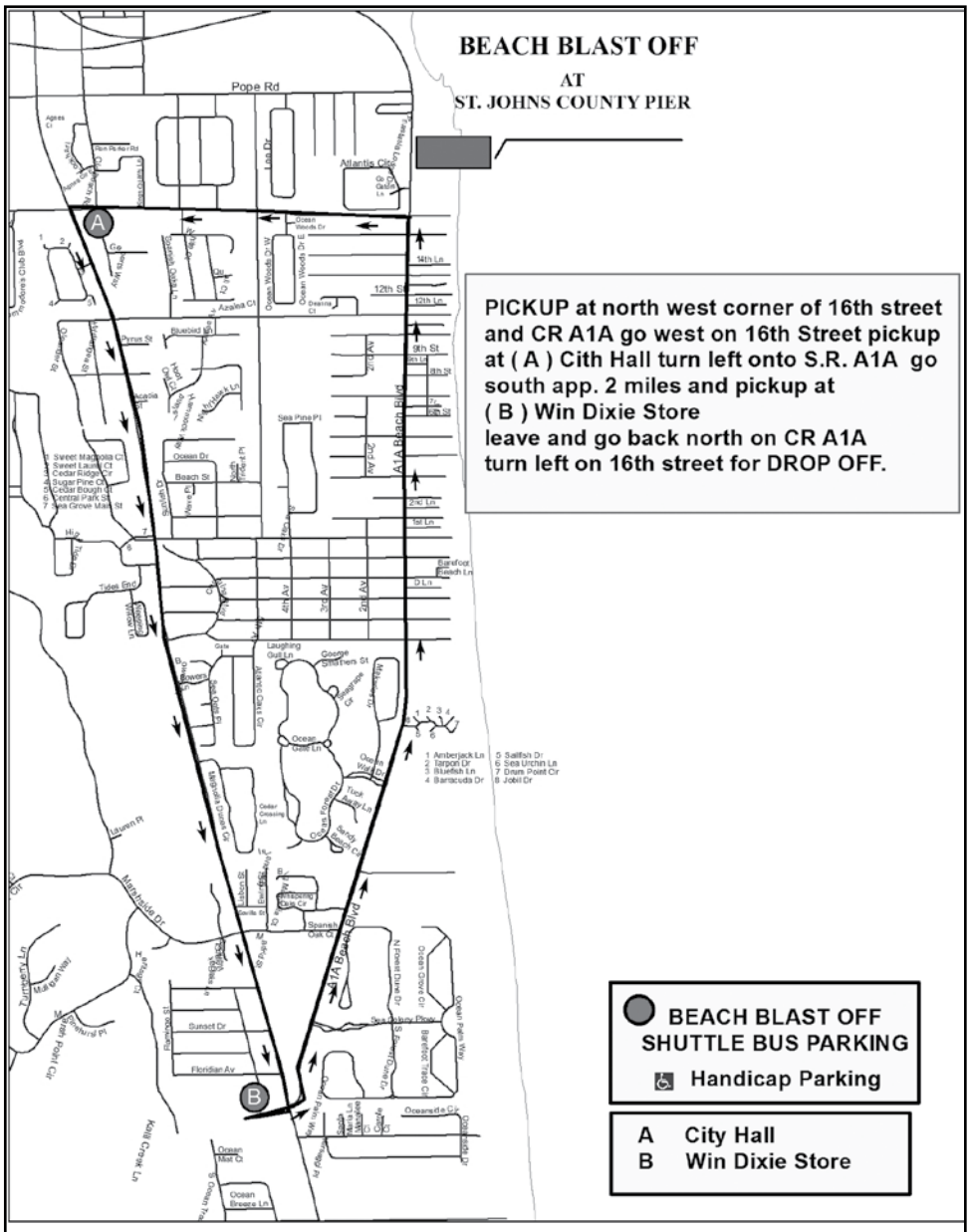

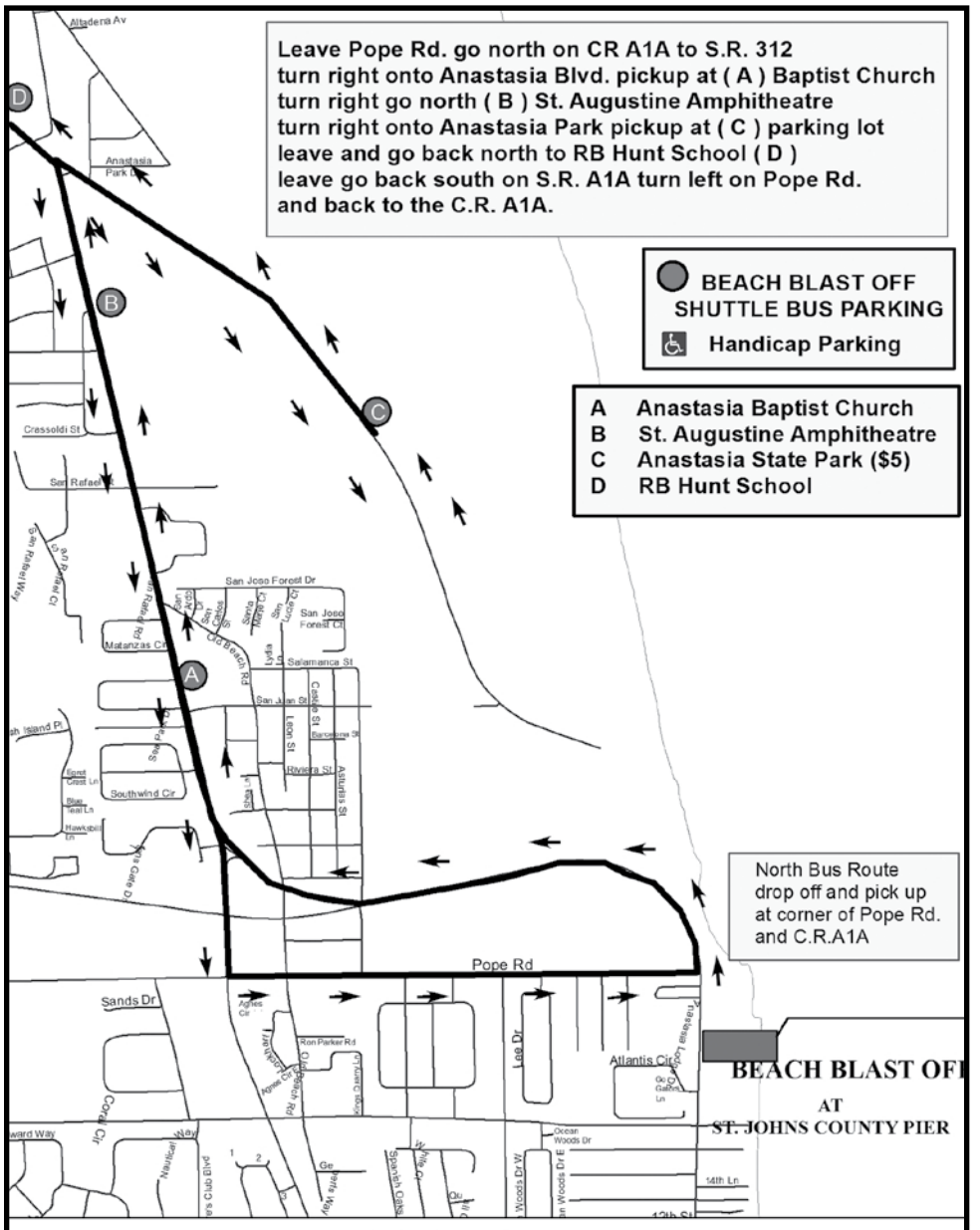

Parking

By Max Royle
St. Augustine Beach City Manager

In an essay that I wrote for the August issue of this fine newspaper, I described the county's recently completed off-beach parking study, and commented that an entire essay could be devoted to two questions concerning parking: First, whether it's possible for a small barrier island city to have enough off-beach parking spaces for most of the persons who want to spend a day at the beach; and second, whether the city alone should be responsible for paying the costs to construct parking lots when the beach is a recreational magnet that attracts visitors from areas far beyond the city's borders. Time now for that essay devoted to parking.

This is about two Florida coastal cities, both similar in size (2 ½ square miles) and the limited land area each has for beach visitor parking; each dissimilar in a key way I'll describe here; and both similar and dissimilar to dozens of other Florida barrier island cities that face the same question: How to provide a "reasonable" amount of public parking without changing for the worse the cities' character?

For 11 years, I worked for a Florida west coast city, St. Pete Beach. It occupies an entire seven-mile long, thin barrier island located a short distance from St. Petersburg. At the island's widest part, there's perhaps less than 1500 feet of land separating the Gulf of Mexico from the Intracoastal Waterway. Though there are other barrier island cities north of it that attract their share of beach visitors, St. Pete Beach has what the other cities lack: the shortest, most direct connection to I-275, which acts as a funnel on summer weekends for the hundreds of Tampa and St. Petersburg residents who want their day in the sun on the hot sand.

St. Pete Beach, unlike St. Augustine Beach, doesn't allow driving/parking on its six-mile long beach. To compensate, St. Pete Beach has what our city lacks: road frontage next to the beach where visitors can park. There's a mile long road adjacent to the beach at the city's southern end, and a large, paved parking area that's part of the city's street network next to the beach at its northern end. And everywhere, it seems, there are or were parking meters, over 1,200 of them. At $1 an hour to park, they provided $300,000 annually to the city, if my recollection is correct. This money helped pay the costs of beach cleaning and trash removal parking enforcement, collecting the money from the meters, maintaining the meters in the salt air environment and when they were vandalized, and replacing them when they were stolen. A method favored by thieves was to cut off the meter heads in the dead of night.

Did the residents on the adjacent side streets object to meters in front of their homes? No, because the residents for a modest, annual fee of $5 per sticker could purchase a sticker for each of the vehicles registered at a particular address. The sticker allowed the resident to park at any metered space in the city without having to feed quarters to a voracious meter. It also helped that in the city's southern section there were alleys that the residents used for access to garages, or to parking spaces behind their homes. And it helped businesses near the beach that from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. the next morning, the meters were "off," meaning patrons could park at them for free.

In contrast, St. Augustine Beach doesn't have a street that's adjacent and parallel to its beach where visitors can park. It does have numerous residential streets from Pope Road to Versaggi Road that are perpendicular to the beach and dead end at it. Beach visitors can park along many of these streets. Better still, from the visitors' point of view, for a fee they can drive and park on the beach from A Street to the city's southern limit and beyond. The money from the fee is collected by the county under an interlocal agreement with the city and is used for such beach-related services as lifeguards, police patrols, portable sanitary facilities, trash collection and the costs of collecting the fee itself at the A Street and Ocean Trace Road vehicle access ramps. Nowhere in the city are there parking meters.

Between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. on the Sunday before Memorial Day 2013, I counted the vehicles parked on the beach between A Street and Ocean Trace Road. The total was 450. As there were vacant spaces here and there, let's say that a total of 500 vehicles could be parked on that section of beach. After my count, I had to wonder: If our city were like St. Pete Beach (no on-beach parking), where could those 500 vehicles have been parked on that Sunday afternoon? The answer was: nowhere in the city. The pier parking lot was filled; ditto the city's small parking lots at 10th, 8th and A streets, as well as all the side streets where parking is allowed. The city had reached its "stuffed saturation point," meaning there was no more—nada, zip, zero—legal parking spaces for beach visitors, unless they parked on residential streets west of A1A Beach Boulevard and hoofed the distance to the beach with their tent, chairs, cooler(s), food, sun tan oil, radio, play toys, children and the family dog.

The county's off-beach parking study, which I referred to earlier here, listed and ranked the existing lots or parking areas within the city owned by the county and the city: east end of Pope Road, the pier park, the lots on 10th, 8th and A streets, and the east end of Versaggi Road in the Linda Mar subdivision, which is on the south side of Sea Colony. The only new area the study proposed for parking is the 8th Street plaza and unopened section of 8th Street west of the Boulevard. The study also suggested improvements for both drivers and pedestrians to certain streets, such as 16th east of the Boulevard. The study didn't address using some of the mini-parks or plazas along the Boulevard and along 2nd Avenue for off-beach parking. The commission reviewed the study at its May 6, 2013 meeting, and agreed with the Linda Mar residents not to make a parking lot at the east end of Versaggi Road.

The county could have a hundred more parking studies done, yet two basic questions would remain: Is providing parking for beach visitors solely the city's responsibility? And how much land can be made into parking lots without detrimentally affecting the city's quality of life and residential character?

The answer to the first question is easy: Speaking or writing only for myself, it's not the city's taxpayers who should be responsible for providing off-beach parking. As the beach is a recreational magnet that attracts visitors from beyond the city's and even the county's borders, the money to buy land for parking should come from either the state, the local bed tax, or both.

The answer to the second question is a political one and is therefore far more complicated to answer. The citizens and the city commission together will have to decide how much of the city they want to be used for public parking. Is it to be every side street to the beach? More of the mini-parks? Buy and convert valuable commercial land to parking lots? Should 10, 20, 25 percent of the city's land area be devoted to public parking? What does having more parking lots do to city's quality of life and largely residential character? It's possible that even if all of the area east of the Boulevard were converted to public parking, this still wouldn't provide enough space to meet the demand. Some folks have suggested that the answer is to have parking lots west of the city or even on the mainland. Shuttle buses would take visitors to and from the beach. How realistic is it to expect a family to tote on and off a bus and then to and from the beach the tent, chairs, cooler, refreshments, toys and the family dog—all the modern necessities for a day at the beach? Would families have to hire porters, as if they were on a safari, to help them carry all their "stuff"? Even if on-beach parking is allowed for the next 50 years, parking for beach visitors will continue to be a complex problem with no easy, inexpensive solutions that will satisfy everyone.

You'll notice that I've not discussed here whether the city should have parking meters. That's a whole other can of creepy, crawly creatures that will have to remain unopened for the time being.

Code Red System

by Sergeant Catherine Payne
Community Affairs Section

During today's Child Abduction Response Team table top exercise, there was discussion about Code Red. The CODE RED system gives county and city officials the ability to deliver pre-recorded emergency telephone notification/information messages to the entire county or to targeted areas at a rate of up to 60,000 calls an hour. Once the call is launched, it will target specified land lines in an area. In order to receive calls to cell phones or text messages, users must register at the Code Red website https://cne.coderedweb.com/Default.aspx?groupid=b4aY2NaIe%2faTlWsk14pzVw%3d%3d. It would be a great idea for everyone in the agency, who has a cellphone to take the time and register on the website. This helps you to stay informed during a critical incident. We typically push this information out to the public once a month through social media.

Officials from the Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management, St. Johns County Fire Rescue, St. Augustine Police, and St. Augustine Beach Police Department have been trained on the system to ensure all citizens can be informed of any public safety issues.

The system can be used on a variety of events to include, but not limited to, hazardous weather conditions, fires, bomb threats, gas leaks, missing children or adults, escaped prisoners, hazardous material emergencies, and sexual offender or predator notifications.

If you have any specific questions about Code Red, please feel free to contact us directly if you have any questions. Thanks and be safe. Office: (904) 810-6647.

Beach Blast Off 2014

(Continued from page 1)

will be held at St. Augustine Beach Pier Park. Free parking and shuttle service is available both days from 3-11pm; check www.BeachBlastOff.com for parking and shuttle information. Celtic Rock band Seven Nations will headline the event that will include Mojo Roux, Those Guys, Falling Bones, Man of Color, Mid Life Crisis, The Big Picture and Girl on Fire.

As in the past, a very large crowd is expected and special parking and shuttles will be provided to help regulate traffic around the Pier Park events. Please see page 8 for maps of Shuttles and street closures.

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Ask Mow?

Answering Questions About Homeowner Lawn Equipment.
Featuring "Mow", St. Augustine Power House Spokesperson.

The Holidays are approaching and it's time to be with family and friends to celebrate the Holidays and another year coming to an end. Thanks, to all of our customers it has been a great year and all of us here at St. Augustine Power House want to wish everyone Happy Holidays! We look forward to serving you in the New Year.

Mow, with the Holidays coming do you have any suggestion for holiday gifts?

Good question, with winter upon us and the leaves are gathered in our yards. Leaf Blowers are an idea as a gift for the person who is raking and removing the falling leaves. There are different types from Hand Held Blowers to Back Pack Blowers that can meet anyone's price range or needs. Chain Saws are another idea for the person who is trimming the dead limbs on the trees or gathering fire wood for the wood burning fireplaces and fire pits. There are many different types of chain saws from top handle saws good for trimming limbs to rear handle saws for log cutting, they priced for anyone's price range and needs.

Mow, what is the best way to prepare our outdoor power equipment for winter storage?

Great question, with all the fuel issues we are seeing with equipment if possible drain your fuel tanks and run all the fuel out of your equipment. If that's not possible use a fuel treatment that works to slow the effects of Ethanol. An example is premixed fuel i.e. True Fuel which has stabilizers and additives already in it and has a shelf life of 2 years, which regular fuel only has a shelf life of 30 days. Winter is also a good time to bring your lawn equipment to the Power House for annual service so it will be ready for spring.

That's all the time we have for now, come by and check out all of our Holiday Specials on Chain Saws, Leaf Blowers and many other items that would be great for Holiday gifts. Come visit us at 125 Pope Rd. or at www.staugpowerhouse.com and if you have any questions for Mow email him at askmow@stsugpowerhouse.com.

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Financial Focus

Information Provided By
Edward Jones

Assumptions Can Be Dangerous to Investors

Every day of our lives, we make assumptions. We assume that the people we encounter regularly will behave in the manner to which we are accustomed. We assume that if we take care of our cars, they will get us to where we want to go. In fact, we need to make assumptions to bring order to our world. But in some parts of our life — such as investing — assumptions can prove dangerous.

Of course, not all investment-related assumptions are bad. But here are a few that, at the least, may prove to be counter-productive:

• "Real estate will always increase in value." Up until the 2008 financial crisis, which was caused, at least partially, by the "housing bubble," most people would probably have said that real estate is always a good investment. But since then, we're all more painfully aware that housing prices can rise and fall. That isn't to say that real estate is always a bad investment — as a relatively small part of a diversified portfolio, it can be appropriate, depending on your goals and risk tolerance. But don't expect endless gains, with no setbacks.

• "Gold will always glitter." During periods of market volatility, investors often flee to gold, thereby driving its price up. But gold prices will fluctuate, sometimes greatly, and there are risks in all types of gold ownership, whether you're investing in actual bars of gold or gold "futures" or the stocks of gold-mining companies.

• "I can avoid all risks by sticking with CDs." It's true that Certificates of Deposit (CDs) offer a degree of preservation of principal. But they're not risk-free; their rates of return may be so low that they don't even keep up with inflation, which means you could incur purchasing-power risk. Again, having CDs in your portfolio is not a bad thing, but you'll only want to own those amounts that are suitable for your objectives.

"The price of my investment has gone up — I must have made the right decision."

This assumption could also be made in reverse — that is, you might think that, since the price of your investment has dropped, you must have made the wrong choice. This type of thinking causes investors to hold on to some investments too long, in the hopes of recapturing early gains, or selling promising investments too soon, just to "cut their losses." Don't judge investments based on short-term performance; instead, look at fundamentals and long-term potential.

• "If I need long-term care, Medicare will cover it." You may never need any type of long-term care, but if you do, be prepared for some big expenses. The national average per year for a private room in a nursing home is nearly $84,000, according to a recent survey by Genworth, a financial security company. This cost, repeated over a period of years, could prove catastrophic to your financial security during your retirement. And, contrary to many people's assumptions, Medicare may only pay a small percentage of long-term care costs. You can help yourself by consulting with a financial professional, who can provide you with strategies designed to help cope with long-term care costs.

You can't avoid all assumptions when you're investing. But by staying away from questionable ones, you may avoid being tripped up on the road toward your financial goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Merry Christmas
During this holiday season and every day of the year, we wish you all the best.

Connie Reep
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Ben Reep
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Beaches Bistro

By Paolo Pece, Cafe Atlantico

cafeatlantico@comcast.net

Salmon Steaks with Saffron-Onion Sauce

Salmon and bacon are high in fat and very rich in flavor, demanding a big, full bodied Chardonnay with equal richness. Serves four to six.

- 1 lb. onions, peeled, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup of Chardonnay
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 2 1/4 cups unsalted chicken stock
- 1/8 tsp. ground saffron
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste
- 4 to 6 salmon steaks
- 4 to 6 strips of lean bacon
- chervil leaves for garnish

For the sauce, combine the onions, wine and vinegar in a saucepan. Cook over high heat until most of the liquid has evaporated. Add 2 cups of the chicken stock and the saffron. Simmer, covered, until the onions are very tender.

Process in a food processor and return to the saucepan. Add the butter and the remaining 1/4 cup chicken stock if needed for the desired consistency. Season with salt and white pepper. Heat to serving temperature and keep warm.

For the salmon, cut the steaks away from the bones in 2 pieces, discarding the skin. Fit the 2 pieces together ying/yang style to form a circle. Wrap the circumference with the bacon and secure with skewers.

Grill or pan-sear the steaks for 3 to 4 minutes on each side or until cooked through. Place on a flat surface and remove the skewers carefully.

Spoon the sauce onto serving plates. Place the steaks in the sauce and garnish with chervil leaves.

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Safety Tips For This Holiday Season

By Jane Tucker, First Florida Insurance

The holiday season is an exciting time of year for all families. To help ensure you and your family have a safe holiday, here are a few tips.

Look for and eliminate potential dangers from holiday lights and decorations that could lead to fires and injuries.

Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat more than 8,000 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. In addition, Christmas trees are involved in about 400 fires annually, resulting in deaths, injuries and an average of more than $15 million in property loss.

Make sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base so children, elderly persons or family pets cannot pull it over on themselves.

Check the wiring of Christmas lights on your tree to ensure the wiring is not damaged or frayed. Many fires are caused by frayed or damaged wiring.

If you have a live, fresh cut Christmas tree in your home, place it in water or wet sand to keep it green.

When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.

More than 10,000 candle-related fires occur each year. Discourage burning candles in your home and keep matches, lighters and candles away from children.

Do not burn wrapping papers in your fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

We know crime is everywhere. To help you be more careful, prepared and aware during this holiday season, the LAPD Crime Prevention Unit has prepared a list of do's and don't's:

Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, go with a friend or family member.

Dress casually and comfortably. Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.

Do not carry a purse or wallet, if possible. Keep cash in your front pocket.

Theft is most often a crime of opportunity - if your car looks easy to break into or steal, thieves will be drawn to it. Park your car in an area that is well-lit and near lots of people. Keep the windows rolled up and the car locked, even if it's parked at your own house. Hide valuables and recently purchased packages in your trunk.

We want to extend Best Wishes from our staff for a Happy Holiday Season.

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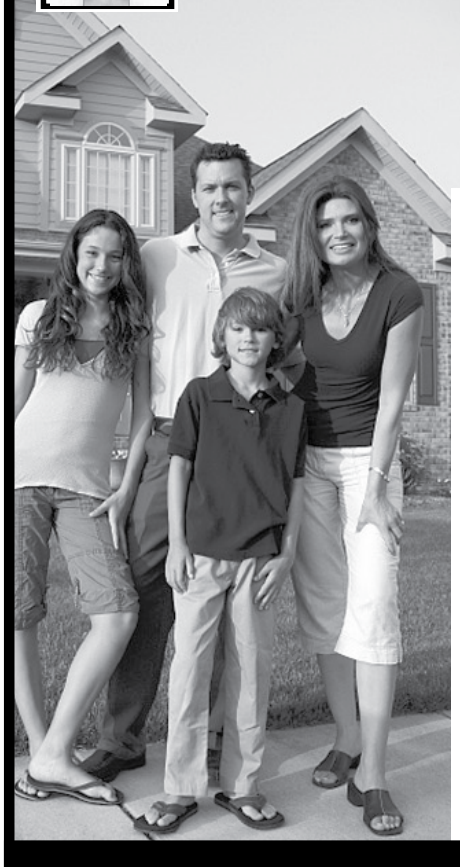

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A Gift Fit for the Birds

The City of St. Augustine Beach has a story to tell during this season of light, and telling the story is like unwrapping a gift. The gift is our pristine beaches, an environment where a salt breeze invites relaxation and promotes good health. Even before the Flagler era — before our city was a city — visitors seeking to restore fragile health and escape harsh winters found the warmth of sunshine, an unspoiled environment, rich biodiversity, maritime history dating back to the 16th century and some of the freshest seafood available, a tonic for good health. As a native Floridian I find that my state continues to offer gifts, and in turn receive many the riches and diverse partners for life, or, as the T-shirt proclaims, "Almost a Native."

"Shine the Light on a Green Holiday!" is the goal of BAC and member Nana Royer. The City of St. Augustine Beach is hosting its annual holiday lighting competition to encourage homeowners and businesses to light up our fair city. Three categories include: Community Entrance, Residential and Commercial. Judging will be based on: originality, energy efficiency (LED lighting) and use of environmental elements (recycling and/or nature themes). Dazzle your neighborhood with LED lighting, which uses 70 to 90 percent less energy and lasts 10 times longer. This is a gift you can give your grandchildren and the planet, so be creative and surprise us! Displays need to be in place by Dec. 1, with judging between Dec. 1 and 9. Residents are encouraged to nominate themselves to ensure that Beautification Advisory Committee members view your homes first and are aware of your type of lighting. Submit your name and address, list how you met the three criteria, and email that information to sabadmin@cityofsab.org, or snail mail to City of St. Augustine Beach, 2200 SR A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080. "Help light up our town with pizazz!" Royer said. The old question: How many people does it take to change a light bulb? The answer is at the end of this column.*

Developing ideas to promote tree projects to be funded by urban forestry grants is a goal of the Tree Board and the BAC, chairman Eric Chaconas said. Public Works director Mr. Howell said in 2007 that the City worked with arborist Chuck Lippi to develop a master urban tree plan which provided a layout of trees, including crepe myrtles, live oaks, Sabal palms, and southern magnolias, for six project areas. Of those six, the City has so far completed parts of two, Mr. Howell explained. The Master Urban Forest Plan and the Master Tree Plan is a cooperative project of the City of St. Augustine Beach, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Division of Forestry (DOF) Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program. The City works directly through its Beautification Advisory Committee and Tree Board. City staff and the BAC were instrumental in obtaining the Master Tree Plan Grant in 2006. Trees in an urban forest provide adequate food and protection for many species of migrating birds; however, there is a riddle: Is a bird in hand better than two in the bush? The answer is at end of this column.*

For well over one hundred years there has been a Christmas Bird Count. This year's, the 114th CBC, will take place from Dec. 14, 2013, through Jan. 5, 2014. Diana Reed, member of Audubon, said Dec. 14 is the day set for St. Johns County because this is a dedicated count. Persons interested should contact Reed at 904-829-9854 for additional details. What started with a few volunteers now has tens of thousands and has become a family tradition. At the turn of the century, many Americans took part in another tradition known as a Christmas "Side Hunt," competing to see how many birds they could kill, disregarding the beneficial beauty or rarity of the bird. Frank Chapman, an American ornithologist and officer in the then recently formed National Audubon Society, proposed counting and identifying birds instead of killing them. A desire to make a difference and experience the beauty of nature has feathered this event during the holidays. A good case can be made for the role birding plays in ecotourism, destination travel and conservation efforts, making these more than just buzz words and slogans. As a little bird would tweet, "You can't fool Mother Nature."

With more than 46 million — a little over one in five people — calling themselves birders, protecting birds, trees and the environment is, to borrow horse-racing lingo, a trifecta where the bettor must predict the finish: first, second and third in exact order. This winning formula, driven by the birds, yields a positive economic impact because many birders follow the coastal migratory routes of birds. See www.fs.fed.us.

The vision shared by the late Robin Nadeau, former BAC member, community and environmental activist, will live on through an endowment created in her honor, to extend her conservation vision for generations. Robin loved this city, worked tirelessly to promote environmental concerns and always encouraged the city to reach its higher purpose. Light as a feather or as loud as a whisper, Robin's spirit continues to grace the most beautiful city by the sea.* Answer: Light bulb riddle: Only one, but the bulb must want to change, last longer and shine LED-brighter. Answer: Bird in the hand riddle: If there is an urban forest with trees hosting a flock and there is a Robin in the flock, then everyone wins.*

A gift to the community, for all to share, is The Second Sunday Music in the Park concert on Dec. 9 from 2–4 p.m. in the Sculpture Garden at Lakeside Park, 2300 SR A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, 824-4493, www.st-augustine-sculture-garden.org. Happy holidays to all and to all a good light.

Spiritually Speaking

By Fr. Nicholas A. Marziani, Jr. D. Min.
askfrnicholas@aol.com
Pastor, St. James Church, a Catholic Community of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter

"Father Christmas"

I've always enjoyed the traditional depiction of "Father Christmas', something of a blend of St. Nicholas (better known in his German language incarnation as Santa Claus), as well as other vague and sentimental non-religious entities associated with the holiday. One might even add that from a Christian Trinitarian perspective, the "Father" in Christmas is the real gift-giver, the One who bestows his Son to the world for its ultimate peace and salvation.

Now what I find VERY interesting is that a new book by a former atheist and one-time professor of psychology at New York University, Dr. Paul Vitz, argues vigorously the very Freudian notion that disappointment with one's earthly father predisposes a person to choose atheism as their personal spiritual M.O. (it's ironic that Freud was essentially an atheist himself). It is now a documented fact that nearly one-third of the collegians in this country adhere to no belief system that includes a Supreme Being, or even a vague notion of "spirituality". There is even a new word that has been coined to designate this cohort – the "nones". Not as in nuns, of course, but none as in no belief in God or a realm of the spirit. Having taught as a part-time adjunct instructor and as an observer of the general population at Flagler College some years ago, I can tell you that that statistic is accurate. (I hasten to add that the students in my Major World Religions elective course were atypical in this regard, nearly all of them displaying some interest and concern for the religio-spiritual universe).

Dr. Vitz cites some famous examples of men whose abusive, negligent or in some cases simply deceased fathers produced (maybe reproduced?) atheistic sons, in addition to Freud: Nietzche, promulgator of nihilism; Stalin, destroyer of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in Russia and throughout central and eastern Europe and central Asia; Hitler, whose infamy will endure forever; and modern academic atheists such as Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. By contrast Vitz argues that among men or women who profess some kind of religion or spiritual tradition there are relatively few examples of a flawed paternal relationship.

The Religion News Service cites Vitz as articulating the idea that "the crisis of fatherhood in our culture has us in the midst of a 500-year period of adolescence that glorifies aggression and sexual exploitation." It also quotes cultural commentator Mary Eberstadt, who opines "In deploying Freudian theory against atheism itself, Paul Vitz has proven beyond a doubt what's missing from secular accounts of secularization, namely, actual human beings. His thesis is intellectual jujutsu of the first order."

Well, Vitz' theory may not be "beyond a doubt" for everyone, and the book is admittedly controversial. But as the old ungrammatical but pointed saying goes, "pays your money and takes your choice." As for me and my house – a quote from the Book of Joshua – I'll bet on the importance of dedicated and even sacrificial fathering any time. Father Christmas should become every dad's patron saint, and it is my hope and prayer in this special season that more men will come to regard their biological reproductive capacity as only the start of the art of parenting.

Merry Christmas to one and all,
Fr. Nick

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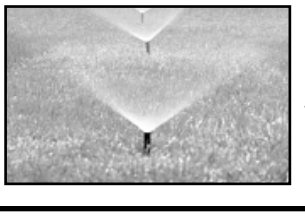

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Crooked Feet

By Rob Stanborough
PT, DPT, MHSc, MTC, CMTPT, FAAOMPT
First Coast Rehabilitation
(904) 829-3411

With the holidays approaching many of us will increase our walking. We will pound the terrazzo floors at the mall and the paved streets downtown. It's an enjoyable time for most unless you have painful feet. If so, it's just one more thing that can make this season a challenge. People experience foot pain for a number of reasons. We have people come for therapy due to plantar fasciitis, stress fractures, overuse injuries and bunions. It's the latter I'd like to focus on.

My grandmother had bunions and blamed it on her tight shoes but this is only partially correct. Believe it or not bunions form to protect the feet. As pressure is place against the big toe (hallux), a bony protrusion or bunion develops in an effort to protect the joint and counter the pressure. It could be from ill-fitted shoes but also often occurs when the arches have fallen.

The arch we usually see in people's feet is called the "longitudinal arch." It runs from the inside of the heel to the big toe. Sometimes it does not develop and other times it just falls, forming "flat feet." When this happens the longest bone in the arch moves closer to the ground and rolls in, toward the arch. This puts the tendon on the underside of the foot on great tension which in turn pulls the tip of the big toe toward the other toes, called a "valgus" position. Sometimes it pulls so hard it causes the big toes to cross over the others. If this is you, you have what's called a "hallux valgus."

When a hallux valgus is formed the joint of the big toe presses and rubs against the inside of the shoe. Such constant or regular pressure will produce thickening of the tissues and the development of bony prominences – like a bunion. It doesn't hurt much initially but as time goes on the pressure builds, the tendon gets sore and the joint does not function properly. It can become extremely painful as the bunion just keeps growing and growing.

So how is it treated? Well, first and foremost, prevention is best. If you have a family medical history of hallux valgus and your arches have or are falling, make sure you have proper footwear, with adequate arch supports. If you have already started to develop a bunion, it will not resolve itself but conservative treatment such as manual therapy, exercise and proper footwear may prevent further damage. However, if the bunion has grown too large and has become too painful, many folks chose surgery and have the bunion removed. Surgery is usually followed-up with physical therapy to assist in proper movement and healing.

I've helped many individuals recover following surgery and they've done very well – the surgery was a success. But, the one thing that is imperative is to treat that fallen arch, even after the bunion is gone. It can come back, especially if the arch does not get support it needs. So, if you have a bunion, get support. If you've had surgery and your arches are still flat, get support. But if your shoes are too tight, just loosen them up a little and enjoy the season. Happy Holidays from all of us at First Coast Rehabilitation.

Rob Stanborough is a physical therapists, president and co-owner of First Coast Rehabilitation (St. Augustine 904-829-3411 or Palatka 386-325-2721). He is co-author of Myofascial Manipulation: Theory & Application, 3rd ed by Proed Inc. He's certified in manual therapy and a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Therapists. Read previous columns posted on www.firstcoastrehab.com.

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The function of the Beaches News Journal is to serve the Neighborhoods of the St. Augustine Beaches area.

First priority will be given to reporting news and activities of beaches residents and organizations, as well as news and events that directly affect the St. Augustine Beaches community. Second priority will be given to articles of general interest as space permits.

Articles or information may be sent to the Beaches News Journal, 1965 A1A South #180, St. Augustine Beach, Florida 32080-6509. Information may also be e-mailed to beachesnewsjournal@yahoo.com or the editor at clogsdon1@yahoo.com.

All **articles, news, ads, or other information submitted** to the News Journal are subject to editing. Publishing of submitted letters and information is at the discretion of the publisher. Views and opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not express the viewpoint of the publisher or editorial staff of the News Journal.

All **ads submitted** for publication in the Beaches News Journal should be received by the 15th of the month in order to appear in the following month's issue.

Matters concerning **advertising** should be referred to the General Manager or mailed to 1965 A1A South #180, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080-6509.

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The Beaches News Journal is published by an independent publisher and is not affiliated with any St. Augustine Beach community development, management company or Homeowners Association.

ST. AUGUSTINE WINTER SPECTACULAR TO DEBUT

You're invited to come experience the magic and excitement of the holidays at the St. Augustine Winter Spectacular! Directed by Stephanie Burkhardt, Executive Artistic Director of The Dance Company, this new production will be debuting Thanksgiving weekend and will kick-off the holiday season in the nation's oldest city.

A family entertainment production, the show will feature different scenes that comprise a storyline with dances choreographed by local and guest artists in ballet, tap, modern, musical theatre, jazz and acrobatics. The show will star The Dance Company's elite Performance Ensemble as well as other dancers who auditioned for roles.

Brittany Marcin, an alumna of The Dance Company who is a former Radio City Rockette, and currently performing in various roles on Broadway, choreographed a Broadway-style jazz number featuring high-kick dancers for the production. Carey Stomkin, former choreographer for the Hungarian National Dance Academy and instructor for Brooklyn Ballet, choreographed a pointe piece for the advanced ballet students set to traditional holiday music.

The Dance Company, located in the Cultural Arts Center in St. Augustine Beach, is a non-profit dance studio that has been providing strong technical and artistic dance training for the past 20 years. The studio has four state of the art dance rooms with premium sprung floors to prevent injury for dancers in training, with a beautiful ballet room overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and St. Augustine Beach pier.

"Our goal is to help kick-off the holiday season in the nation's oldest city by providing high-quality entertainment during a weekend with family and friends," says director Stephanie Burkhardt. Two performances of St. Augustine Winter Spectacular will be held in the Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada Street, on Saturday, November 30 at 7:00pm and on Sunday, December 1 at 2:00pm, in downtown St. Augustine. Tickets will be available for purchase in early November. Visit The Dance Company website at www.thedanceco.com or call the studio at 904-471-4946 for more information. An event website will be available soon.

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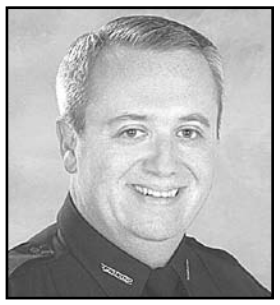


St. Johns County Sheriff's Corner

By David Shoar, St. Johns County Sheriff

Holiday Crime Prevention

We are coming up on one of the most festive times of the year for families with the celebration of several holidays. However, joy and fun can quickly turn to disappointment and sorrow when someone becomes a victim of a scam, burglary or online fraudulent holiday shopping scheme.

At a time of year when most people are filled with goodwill there are criminals who relish taking advantage of it. Crime statistics always rise during the holiday season and I wish to pass along a few tips to help you avoid becoming a victim. Business experts tell us that again this year the number of people who shop online for gifts will increase dramatically and therefore so do the opportunities for those who use new technology to take advantage of unsuspecting victims. The cyber-crimes that become more popular during the holiday shopping season include fraudulent auction sites, resale of stolen or counterfeit gift cards and reshipping merchandise purchased with stolen credit cards. One of the most common internet scams involves using an auction site or classified pages to advertise an item at a bargain price. If you place an order the crook will charge your legitimate credit card for the order then use a separate stolen credit card to purchase the product and have it shipped. This could make you liable for receiving stolen goods. I recommend if you wish to purchase a gift through an auction or classified site insist on paying with PayPal or some other reputable third party payment service. That way your credit card number and personal information is not shared with the seller.

Most of you already know the safety tips for traditional retail shopping: take your purchases to your vehicle frequently and lock them in the trunk or out-of-site; carry purses with the strap going over one shoulder and the purse against your body on the opposite side; carry billfolds in a side pants pocket; pay by credit card or check if at all possible: and if you must use an ATM always shield the keypad when entering your PIN and put cash away promptly in your purse or wallet.

Home burglaries are more common during the holidays and sadly the thieves target the gifts under the tree. If you are going to be away from home, leave some lights on and a radio or television to make it appear and sound as if someone is home. After the celebration do not put the boxes of expensive gifts out for street garbage pickup without first breaking them down and folding them so only plain cardboard shows so they don't become an unintended billboard for what you have in your home.

Holiday parties can be wonderful fun but please remember to celebrate safely and if alcoholic beverages are served, moderation is the best practice. The concept of "friends don't let friends drive drunk" becomes even more significant. We will have impaired driver patrols out in full force to help keep your family safe during the holidays.

Whether you will be celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza or a holiday of another faith on behalf of all of us at the St. Johns County Sheriff's office I wish you a merry, happy, joyous and safe celebration and best wishes for the New Year. For any issue regarding law enforcement and/or public safety you can always contact me by email at dshoar@sjso.org. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Habitat for Humanity Dedicated 2 New Homes November 9, 2013

Habitat dedicated two new homes on 1019 Scheidel Way, St. Augustine, FL 32084 on Saturday, November 9, 2013 at 11 AM. These homes were built with funds provided by the 92 current homeowners' mortgage payments. Mortgage payments are collected monthly from the homeowners, and the principal is placed into a Building Fund that supports the building of 2-3 homes per year. The local Habitat for Humanity Affiliate was established in 1993 in St. Johns County; currently the local affiliate has built 115 homes in the area. Several of the homeowners have completely paid off their mortgages and several are very close to that pay off date.

Habitat for Humanity was established to provide safe, decent, affordable housing to families that are in need. Habitat homeowners must meet income guidelines to be able to pay an interest free mortgage, attend credit counseling, and be willing to partner with Habitat to build their home and their neighbor's homes. The homeownership program from application to move in date can take from one to three years to complete all the necessary requirements. Families complete an application, are interviewed by the Family Selection Committee, and approved by the Board of Director for homeownership. They are required to donate at least 150 "sweat equity" hours on the worksite building homes. Prior to beginning their "sweat equity," families are required to participate in credit counseling, first time homebuyer classes, homeownership workshops, and make a small down payment on their homes.

Homeowners and their children have an incredible opportunity to participate in the Scheidel Scholarship Program. This program, created by a generous benefactor, enables homeowners and their children to receive a full college scholarship to the University of North Florida, Florida State College of Jacksonville, or St. Johns River State College.

Christmas in Old St. Augustine

On Saturday, December 21st, the second, annual Navidad en el Viejo San Agustín (Christmas in Old St. Augustine) heritage Event will take place in St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest, continually occupied European city, port, and parish in the continental United States!

Featuring the Christmas customs and music of 16th-century Florida, circa 1580, Navidad en el Viejo San Agustín is hosted by Florida Living History, Inc. (FLH - www.floridalivinghistory.org) and the Diocese of St. Augustine/ Mission Nombre de Dios (www.missionandshrine.org). Presented by FLH's member groups – Alondra: Interpreting the Music of Colonial Florida (c. 1565 - 1821); La Compañía de Santiago (c. 1565); Los Compañeros de la Cocina (c. 1513-1704); and Theater with a Mission – this living-history Event will take place at Mission Nombre de Dios – 27 Ocean Avenue, St. Augustine, FL 32084. This holiday, heritage celebration will include:

• living historians in period garb, representing the citizens of 16th-century San Agustín de la Florida, circa 1580;

• Las Posadas – a 500-year-old colonial Spanish Christmas tradition, this procession for children of all ages reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for lodgings in Bethlehem on the first Christmas Eve;

• colonial Spanish musical entertainment;

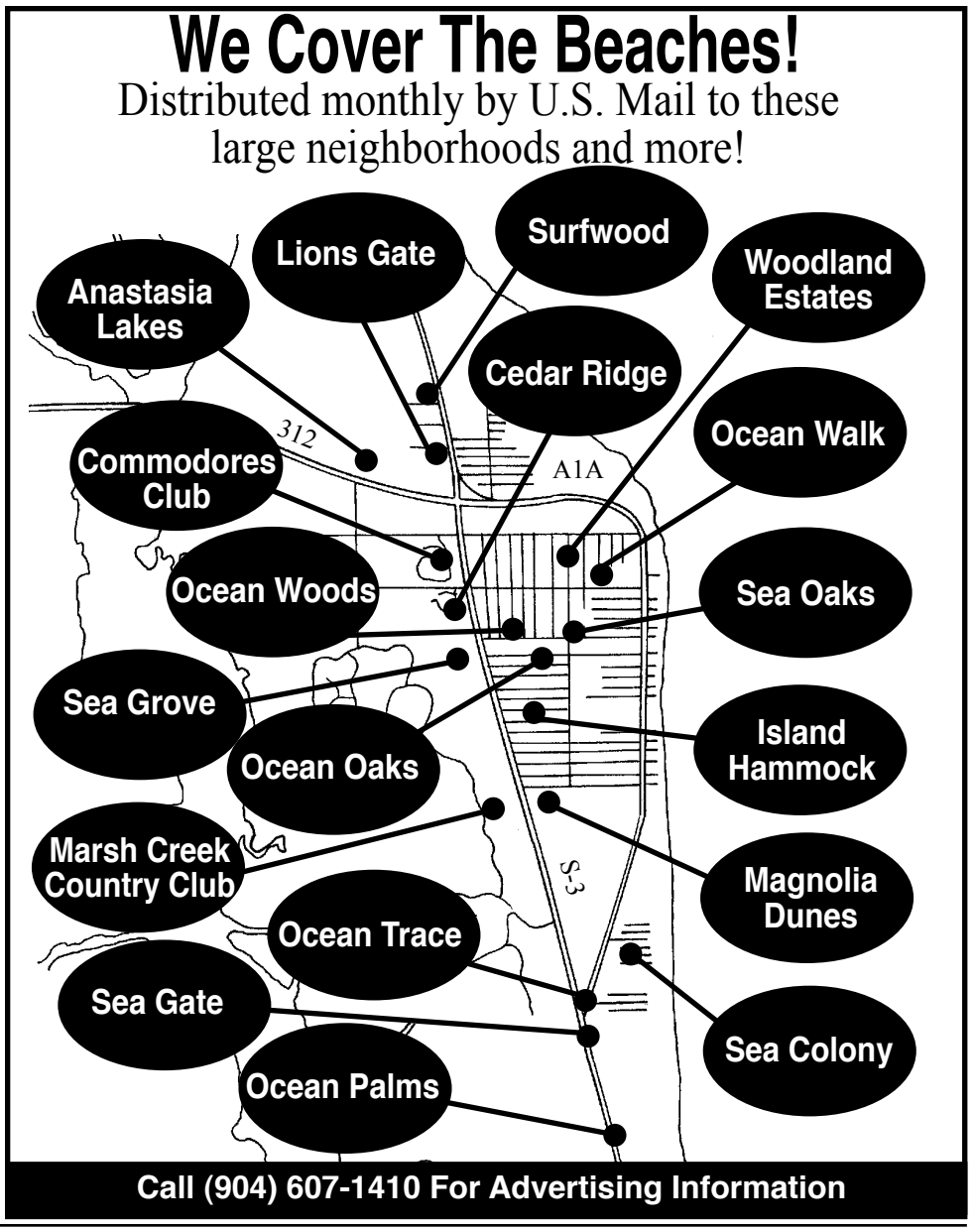
• a performance of El Auto de los Reyes Magos ("The Play of the Three Wise Kings"), the oldest-known Spanish play, which follows the Magi on their journey to Bethlehem, to welcome the new-born Messiah;

• samples of colonial Spanish holiday treats (available for purchase);

• a traditional Spanish belén, or Nativity scene, constructed by Elizabeth Duran Gessner, featuring hand-made scenery and structures, as well as over 200 figures, all imported from Spain;

• all presented by torch and candlelight on the grounds of historic Mission of Nombre de Dios and Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche, on the shores of beautiful Matanzas Bay.

Navidad will take place from 6PM to 9PM. Admission to this Event is free of charge to the public.



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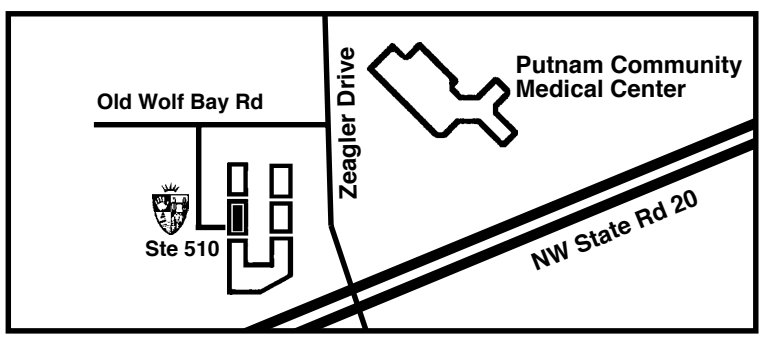

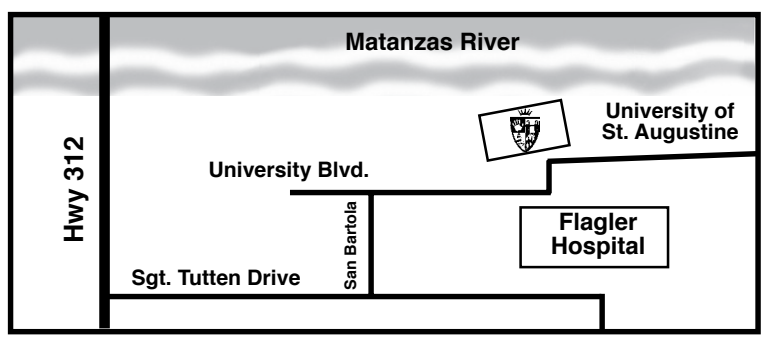

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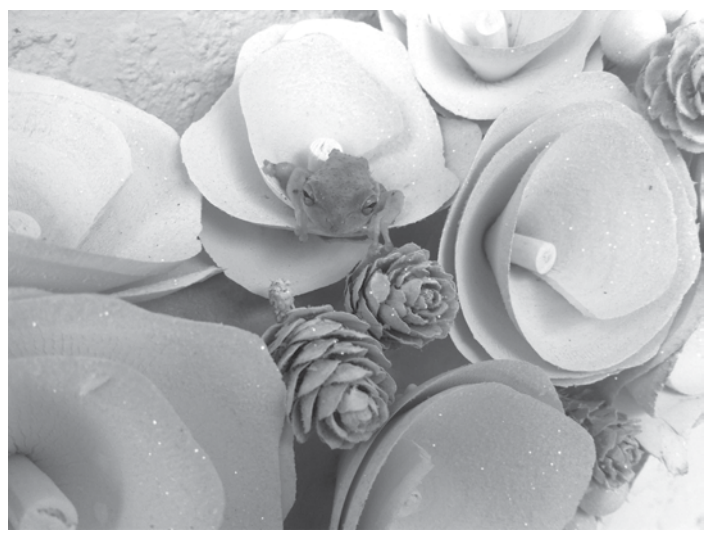
These four creatures were captured with an iPhone in the same island garden, all within a 24 hour period. Wildlife requires three key ingredients in order to survive and thrive: water, a place to hide from predators, and food. The easiest way to accomplish this in your own backyard: eliminate and/or reduce the use of chemicals and resist the temptation to over groom grass, shrubbery & leaf litter.

A legless lizard - yes, NOT a snake - licks ants off a warm concrete driveway while a green anole hides in plain view among the cacti it calls home



A blue-tailed skink escapes a cocktail glass. A tree frog pretends to be a pine cone on holiday wreath