

February
2021



St. Augustine Observer

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NEWS INFORMATION FOR & ABOUT RESIDENTS OF SOUTHERN ST. JOHNS COUNTY FL

Robert Hardwick St. Johns County Sheriff



Robert A. Hardwick was officially sworn in January 5th, 2021 as St. Johns County Sheriff.

"This morning, with my family by my side, I officially took the oath of office as your Sheriff of St. Johns County. As we embark on the 200th anniversary of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, I am honored to have the opportunity to lead this agency. The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office is full of great men and women who put the safety and well-being of our citizens and visitors first," said Sheriff Hardwick.

"I am excited to get to work as your Sheriff and continue to serve our great county. It is my #1 priority to ensure St. Johns County remains the best place to live, work, play and raise a family," added Sheriff Hardwick.

(continued page 5)

St Augustine South Reflections

by Ruth Hope, SASIA

With the cold weather over the holidays and again in January, it is pleasing that some neighbors are keeping on their holiday lights for an extended period this year. We need that cheerfulness as well as fleece and old blankets to protect our frost tender plants. I used to find it strange to see plants and shrubs draped in quilts and rugs, but once I began gardening in St Augustine South, I understood and joined the 'plant protection club'!! We also needed the cheerfulness of the SASIA Holiday Tree Lighting and Santa's visit. After months of trying to avoid coronavirus infection, this was a treat for our younger neighbors, the joy in their eyes when they met Santa made it all worthwhile. Because many families had reduced mall visits, the St Augustine South Santa was the only Santa some children had seen in 2020. Notionally organized as a fund raiser, what was an outdoor, socially distanced event will become a regular on our social calendar – hopefully, moved indoors and without the need for masks in future.

Slowly the coronavirus vaccination program is being rolled out to frontline health workers and those age 65 years and older in Florida. The process for getting vaccinated is very frustrating to folks dialing in to the County hotline and finding the circuits perpetually busy; or repeatedly refreshing the county

coronavirus vaccination on-line page in the hopes of getting an appointment. We must remember that 16% of St Johns County's 260,000 residents are aged 65 years and older. That is 41,600 senior residents, as well as thousands (continued on page 5)



United Way of St. Johns County Empty Stocking gets Grant from Trinity Endowment



Trinity Parish of St. Augustine awarded a \$4,000 grant to United Way of St. Johns County's Empty Stocking Fund in December. The grant, funded through the Trinity Endowment Fund, was a significant contribution that was combined with other community donations that allowed United Way-SJC to assist nearly 600 families in need over the holiday season.

Florida's first Protestant church, established in 1821, Trinity Parish made sixteen grants and distributed over \$67,000 through the Trinity Endowment Fund since the first quarter of 2020. The Endowment Fund allows the Parish to more completely fulfill its mission – "To love God faithfully; to know Christ fully; and to make Him better known through the Holy Spirit's power."

With increased need during 2020, United Way-SJC welcomed the grant for the Empty Stocking Fund distribution. Partnering with multiple organizations including the Salvation Army, St. Johns County Fire Rescue and the Council on Aging, United Way-SJC was able to expand the breadth of the program assisting nearly 100 more families this year.

Pictured left to right: Marty Mariner - Trinity Endowment Fund Board Chair, Melissa Nelson - United Way of St. Johns County President/CEO and Father Matt Marino - Trinity Parish of St. Augustine Rector

Serving both Putnam and St. Johns Counties, United Way of St. Johns County is the only organization that brings together agencies, businesses, organizations, faith-based groups, government and individuals to focus on the community problems that matter most. Partners share the vision and have the energy, passion, expertise and resources to get the work done. For over 60 years, United Way-SJC has improved lives and built a strong, healthy community by strategically investing in quality programs, building partnerships, advocating for better policies, engaging the community and leveraging resources. Success is measured not by dollars raised, but by lives improved and changed. Visit unitedway-sjc.org or call 904-829-9721 for more information.

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St. Augustine Observer

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The purpose of the St. Augustine Observer is to serve residents of St. Augustine area Communities.

First priority will be given to reporting news and activities of the residents of the St. Augustine local communities, and other news and events that directly affects the St. Augustine area. Second priority will be given to articles of general interest as space permits.

Information should be received by the 15th of the month in order to appear in the following
"Follow us on Instagram and Facebook: @staugustineobserver"

month's issue. Articles or information may be sent to the St. Augustine Observer, 1965 A1A South #120, St. Augustine Florida 32080-6509. Information may also be e-mailed to clifflogsdon@att.net.

All materials submitted to the Observer is 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 Observer.

Information, articles and other materials published are believed to be accurate at time of publishing. Acceptance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement or approval of any product or services by the Observer or its staff. It is agreed that the Observer and its staff will not be held liable for information provided herein by submitters/advertisers, including pictures, graphics, websites dates, times and/or emails listed, that may have the potential to constitute fraud or other violation of law including copywriting infringements. The publisher reserves the right to refuse materials that does not meet the publication's standards.

St. Augustine Shores Community Calendar

The Shores Service Corporation
Shores Homeowners Association
(904) 794-2000
www.staugshores.org

Shores Monthly Meetings

- Shores Service Corporation monthly meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. Virtual Meetings are at 6 p.m. at the Riverview Club due to the COVID-19 virus until further notice.
- Conquistador Condominium Board meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month at 6

- p.m. at the Riverview Club.
- Fairview Condominium Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every other month at 4 p.m. at the Fairview Condo club house.
- Greens Condominium Board meetings will vary. Contact Jeff Edwards at Sovereign-Jacobs at 904-461-5556.
- Casa Bella Condominium 2020 Board Meetings: March 16th- 6pm (Annual Meeting), April 20th- 6pm, May 4th- 6pm, June 15th- 6pm, July 20th- 6pm, August 17th- 6pm, September 21st- 6pm, October 19th- 6pm, November 9th- 6pm, December 21st- 6pm. For Information contact Ellen Lumpkin at 904-461-5556.

St. Augustine South Community Calendar

St. Augustine South Improvement Assoc.
709 Royal Rd. St Augustine, 32086
email: staugsouthimpassoc@gmail.com
www.staugsouth.com
(904) 794-4214.

SASIA Meeting 3rd wed at 7:00 PM
Please join us and bring your ideas on how to improve our wonderful neighborhood! Connect with us on our Facebook.com and NextDoor.com pages: St. Augustine South Improvement Association.

Residents interested in joining SASIA please see for application below:
https://www.joinit.org/o/st-augustine-south-improvement-association

Monthly Meetings at Clubhouse

Yoga - Join Registered Yoga Teacher Emily Flagler for Gentle Flow Yoga on Thursdays 5:30 - 6:30! Just bring your yoga mat, towel, and water. Try your first class for free!

Tai Chi - Join Instructor Katie Monaghan for a donation based Tai Chi class on Tuesday's at 6:00PM. For more information please contact Katie at (904) 377-3390 or email at KatieMonahanTaiChi@gmail.com

SASIA Board Members

- President - Alan Chappell
- 1st V.P. - Robert Kennedy
- 2nd V.P. - Josh Silcox
- Secretary - Kate Anreise
- Treasurer - Jerri Sue Dawson
- Board Member - Ruth Hope
- Board Member - Cindy Zimmerman
- Board Member - Nicolette Soucy

Community Classifieds

The Observer offers *free community classified listings for USPS selected addresses in Southern St. Johns County and paid subscriptions.* Classified ads will not be printed without a name, address and phone number included with the request. Free listings of 5 items or less should be sent. **Free ads Are Not for Business or Personal Service ads.**

Business, Service, seeking work, etc. may be placed in the classified section: (1-4 lines) \$5, (5-8 lines) \$10, (9-12 lines) \$15, (13-16 lines) \$20. These Ads should be paid in advance before placed. Send your listing and payment, if required, to Observer, 1965 A1A South #120, St. Augustine, 32080-6509. You may email your ad to clifflogsdon@att.net. Deadline for all listings or ads is the 15th of every month for the next monthly issue.

FOR SALE: House Full Furniture! Household furniture & various item in storage for about 2 years: Black cherry dining room table & chairs, Bedroom queen complete, dresser, tables, lamps: Living room couch, chairs, TV, Consoles, Kitchen: microwave, toaster, pot & pans etc. Sale together. Value over \$10,000. Make Offer! Call 904-797-5662 or 904-687-3362.

FOR SALE: Decorative ceramic Tea Kettle's, ornamental use only, 11 different designs. \$8 each or 11 for \$75 firm. Call 904-797-6182.

FOR SALE: (1) 48" Round glass table top purchased from Haverty's - like new \$100 (2) King size box springs (set of two) in like new condition \$200 obo (3)

Kurzwell digital piano with bench and music (needs pedal work) \$150 obo Call 904-342-0579.

FOR SALE: 2008 Volkswagen EOS hardtop convertible. 140,000 miles. Very Good condition, garage kept. \$4,000 or best offer. Call 904-687-3362 or 797-5662.

FOR SALE: Buying & selling vintage and recent G I Joe. Call Kev 904-794-5740.

WANTED: Silver Coins, Gold and Jewelry at great prices. Call Mike at 904-501-1449.

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What's Inside The Observer This Month...

- **St. Augustine Shores:** All events and meetings cancelled Board regular meeting will be held at 6 pm monthly Virtually
- **St. Augustine South:** SASIA Meetings Continue Club House Rental Continues
- **Computer Corner:** Do I need a VPN
- **Financial Focus:** How to Respond When Risk Tolerance is Tested
- **Health Focus:** COVID is a Pain
- **Diaries of a Shores Grand-Dad**
- **Wildflower Meadow**
- **Ancient City Poets**
- **Friends of A1A 2020 Volunteer**



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St. Augustine Shores & South News & Events

Shores Service Corp Monthly Meeting Change

Due to CDC guidelines and Covid-19, the Shores Service Corporation Board will meet virtually until further notice. The virtual meeting will be at 6 pm on the second Thursday of each month. Please go to our website <https://www.staugshores.org/calendar> for updates. If you have any questions, please call 904-794-2000.

SASIA General Meeting 3rd Wednesday of each Month

SASIA reminds residents to pay up their dues. Dues are only \$24 per household per year! Checks made payable to SASIA with "membership dues" in the memo line, mailed to St Augustine Improvement Society, P.O. Box 860277, St Augustine FL 32096. You can also pay your annual dues at the community meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7pm.

Please join us and bring your ideas on activities and events that will add to the quality of life of everyone living in St Augustine South. Connect with us on our Facebook.com and our NextDoor.com pages: St Augustine South Improvement Association.

Monthly Meetings at the Clubhouse

Yoga, Tai Chi, and Bingo are suspended during the coronavirus pandemic as social distancing indoors is not possible for these activities. These will restart as soon as it is safe to do so.

Clubhouse Rentals

The SASIA Clubhouse at 709 Royal Road is available for private hire subject to any restrictions on numbers of participants and the percentage occupation of the building as decreed by the Florida Governor and State Department of Health. Renters are responsible for ensuring the surfaces are sanitized with Lysol or bleach before their event, and for ensuring current guidelines on numbers of participants and social distancing are maintained.

First Coast Card & Newcomers Club

provided by Leanne Dally

FEBRUARY

1) First Coast Florida Lifestyles Newcomers Card/Games Club Events:

Saturday, Feb. 13th-Valentines Holiday Party. Kookaburra Coffee-Australian Coffee Cafe, St. Augustine. Arrival: 2:00P. We must buy at least 1 item here. Masks Worn.

Saturday, Feb. 21st. Farmhand Coffee Cafe, St. Augustine. Arrival: 2:00 PM. We must buy at least 1 Item here. Masks Worn.

Sunday, Feb. 28th. Dunkins Cafe, St. Augustine. Arrival: 2:00P. We Must Buy at least 1 item here. Masks Worn.

Please Contact Our Club Organizers To RSVP Yes In Advance and to receive the Venues & Addresses To: 904-829-0643. Days/Evenings. Phone Calls Only. Open To Both Men/Women. Smoke/Drug Free Club.

2) First Coast Florida Lifestyles Newcomers Recreation & Activity Club Events:

Sunday February 7th. Super Bowl Party. WGV Restaurant, St. Augustine. Arrival: 5:30P. Masks Worn Social Distancing.

Tuesday, February 16th. Mardi Gras Party. Restaurant, St. Johns Co. Arrival: 5:30P. Masks Worn.

Friday, February 26th. Top Rock N Roll Band/Dancing. Classic Diner, Orange Park-Clay Co. Arrival: 7P. Social Distancing. Masks Worn.

Saturday, February 27th. Outdoors. Bird Watch Walk @ Clay Co. Sanctuary. Orange Park. Arrival: 10A. Social Distancing. Masks Worn. FREE.



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2020 Holiday Gift Bags for 16 Seniors

St Augustine South Improvement Association

by Ruth Hope

Each year SASIA organizes 'neighbor-to-neighbor' gifts for our senior and housebound neighbors living in St Augustine South. In 2020, because of the coronavirus pandemic, we organized the gifts for our senior neighbors differently from prior years to reduce the risk to those most vulnerable to infection. Instead of collecting donations of baskets and gifts from neighbors, we collected cash donations and purchased gifts. Doing this eliminated the need to sort donated gifts to ensure everyone received comparable items, and thus reduced the handling of the gifts. Sadly, Santa was unable to deliver as he is also of "at risk" age. We delivered the parcels to our seniors' doorsteps, without entering any homes. When we learnt that two of the seniors had been admitted to nursing homes, we delivered one parcel to Riverside Cottages, and the other to our senior neighbor's daughter who lives in St Augustine South.

Each Holiday parcel contained stationery and toiletries from Dollar Tree; candy, cookies and organic holiday fare from Aldi; and warm clothes from Walmart. Each gift bag also contained a knee quilt, and a cotton face mask with cheerful out-side pattern and white cotton lining. A thoughtful neighbor and a second neighbor's kind mother sewed the knee quilts and masks.

In total, SASIA collected \$541 that included \$61 raised from the sale of cookies and hot cider at the SASIA Holiday Tree Lighting as well as generous cash donations from neighbors. We spent \$471 on gifts for our 16 seniors, and also purchased a \$20 duffel bag with wheels to store the SASIA Holiday tree. Thus, there is \$50 in hand for the 2021 Holiday Season that will allow us to start purchasing a little earlier – many items were sold out at Dollar Tree and Walmart by the time we had collected money to start purchasing in 2020. We look forward to having Santa join the distribution this year but will continue the new practice of purchasing gifts as it greatly reduces the effort required to equitably distribute gifts for everyone!



GriefShare

Crescent Beach Baptist Church

GriefShare is a weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life after losing a loved one.

- Wednesday, 6pm-7:30pm, February 3- April 28, 2021
- Crescent Beach Baptist Church, St. Augustine, FL 32086

Contact Melanie at 904-759-1054 or email rscoggn@gmail.com or GriefShare.org under Find a group to register. You are welcome to join any time during the 13 week period.

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St. Augustine 2021 Arbor Day Ceremony Held at Francis Field



A socially distanced Arbor Day ceremony took place on Friday, January 15, 2021 at Francis Field. This year's ceremony included remarks by Vice Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline, the presentation of the Arbor Day flag by Gina Burrell, Street Tree Advisory Committee Member, an original poetry reading by Paul Williamson, Former Public Affairs Director, as well as the planting of two large, blooming magnolia trees along the events field.

Florida has celebrated Arbor Day since 1886 and has one of the first Arbor Day celebrations in the nation, on the third Friday in January. Over 200 communities in Florida celebrate Arbor Day including St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach, either as a stand-alone event or in conjunction with some other occasion. Both are designated as a "Tree CityUSA"

National Arbor Day in the USA for 2021 is April 24. The United States was one of the first countries in the world to celebrate Arbor Day, a holiday dedicated to tree planting. Besides, each state celebrates its own state tree planting holiday. Arbor Day was founded by Julius Sterling Morton, a Nebraska newspaper editor, agriculturalist and statesman. Morton was a respected agriculturalist fascinated with trees, he planted numerous trees on his estate.

Currently, his former mansion and estate serve as Arbor Lodge State Historical Park. Morton came up with the idea of celebrating Arbor Day in the early 1870s. The first celebration was held in Nebraska on April 10, 1872.

Its participants planted an estimated one million trees throughout the state. By the 1920s, each state had passed laws that stipulated a certain day to be state Arbor Day. In some states, the holiday was named Arbor and Bird Day. In Nebraska, Arbor Day is a civic holiday. National Arbor Day in the United States was established as a state holiday in 1885.

It was moved from April 10 (its original date proposed by Morton) to April 22 (Morton's birthday). In 1989, the holiday was moved to the last Friday in April. On this day, Americans are encouraged to plant trees, bushes and plants (if weather conditions allow) and care for their national environment.

Robert Hardwick St. Johns County Sheriff

(continued from page 1)

Robert A. Hardwick's law enforcement career expands 26 years and most recently has served as the St. Augustine Beach Chief of Police since 2013. Prior to this, he served in the 7th Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office, the St. Augustine Police Department, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Corrections. In addition to his law enforcement career, Rob Hardwick is a combat veteran with 25 years of service in the U.S. Army and Florida Army National Guard. Rob Hardwick has been married to his wife, Kendell, for 29 years, and they have two adult sons. They worship at St. John Paul II Catholic Church.



St Augustine South Reflections

(continued from page 1)

more frontline and key workers needing vaccination. Yet the County has received only a few hundred doses at a time since mid-December 2020. Nearly 15,000 residents had received at least one dose of vaccine by mid-January. Once vaccine supplies are increased, pressure will be taken off the County Emergency Preparedness team and their phone lines and website, by Publix. All 14 Publix pharmacies in St Johns County will administer vaccinations, using their own website appointment systems. Our need for vaccination was brought home to us by the sad news of two St Augustine South residents who passed away from complications of COVID-19. Roger Colee died December 23 and Betty Colee died December 28. They are greatly missed.

Meanwhile, SASIA has new Officers and Board members as well as some who have returned for another year. We are looking at social events both in the coming 6 months and the latter half of the year when should all have had opportunity to be vaccinated with accompanying dramatic drop in transmission in the community. For the time being only outside events are being considered, where neighbors can socially distance. Watch out for signs advertising 'Food Truck Fridays'. In the second quarter, we will hold a plant and seed swap at the clubhouse, a 'St Augustine in Bloom', spring garden tour and an arts and crafts fair where artists and crafters in our community can have a table to show and sell their work. But we need volunteers from the community to help with the organization of these events – the board cannot do it all!!! We encourage volunteers to come with additional ideas for opportunities for neighbors to safely enjoy community life in St Augustine South. With the new year we also need members, old and new alike, to pay their dues; at \$24 per annum these are not excessive!!! We are hopeful that by the Fourth of July, it might be possible to again have a community event on the waterfront. It was not possible in 2020 and the planned event had to be canceled in 2019 as the day was a total washout, weather wise. With this long cold and excessively wet winter, I personally am hoping for a long dry summer! I think we deserve it but, alas, I do not control our weather!

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Before the coronavirus pandemic, poets and poetry lovers would gather to share their words. In March they moved the once a month event to Zoom. Photo by: Chris Bodor

Ancient City Poets February Reading: The Good, the BED and the Ugly

by Chris Bodor

Spoken Word is alive in the Nation's Oldest City in the Zoom room. Shores resident Chris Bodor has been hosting poetry readings on the last Sunday of the month, since August of 2009. Known as the Ancient City Poets, the group migrated to an online event last March when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Saint Augustine and the world. The live feed is streamed to the groups Facebook page at 3:00 pm so that the world can chat or cheer them on. A polished edited version of the readings is uploaded to their YouTube channel. Got a poem to share at an upcoming reading? Email the group from the "contact us" section of their official website: www.bodor.org

The Ancient City Poets will present their February reading in the Zoom room on the last Sunday of the month (February 28th) online for social distancing. The theme will be "The Good, the BED, and the Ugly", in observation of Valentine's Day. Cohosts for the reading will be Ancient City Poets Loretta Leto and Christy Sheffield Sanford. Videos featuring poetry work can be found on the website: www.pam-jam.com and well as the Ancient City Poets YouTube Channel. Under the direction of Chris Bodor and Robert Waldner, poets and poetry lovers have been gathering on the last Sunday of every month since August, 2009, and since march of last year on line through Zoom and Facebook Live.

Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway Announce 2020 Volunteer of the Year

The Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway, Inc. are pleased to announce their 2020 Volunteer of the Year, Captain Adam Morley. Currently serving as vice president of the organization, Morley was recognized for his service to the Friends of A1A and presented with the annual volunteer service award, at the Coastal Policy Center in Marineland, Florida on December 16, 2020.

Presenting the award, Friends of A1A President Marge Rooyakkers commended Morley, co-owner of Genung's Fish Camp in Crescent Beach and co-chair of the organization's International Coastal Cleanup efforts each year, for his volunteerism as well as his out-of-the-box thinking, leading to the creation of projects like the "A1A Scenic Byway Litter Removal" pilot program, set to launch in spring of 2021.

"Adam was selected as our Volunteer of the Year for 2020 because he constantly steps up to get the job done," said Rooyakkers.

"From the International Coastal Cleanup to moving top soil to make a memorial garden, he's always at the ready. Whether it's helping truck display boards, distribute A1A Scenic Byway maps or running The Litter Gitter boat to collect debris from the Intracoastal Waterway, he's a good man with a big heart."

Morley, a professional boat captain and staunch voice for environmental causes across the region, joined the Friends of A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway in 2015, helping spearhead the organization's efforts to include environmentally-conscious messaging, especially at educational events like the annual A1A Kids Ocean Day Florida event.

"It's been a wonderful and rewarding experience being a part of the Friends," said Morley. "Their mission statement and my personal goals for our community align in a way that makes volunteering an easy and enjoyable task."

The Friends of A1A are preparing to celebrate the 20th anniversary of their designation as Florida Scenic Highways in 2021, followed by the 20th anniversary of the A1A Scenic & Historic Byway's National Scenic Byway designation in 2022. Visit www.scenic1a.org for more information.

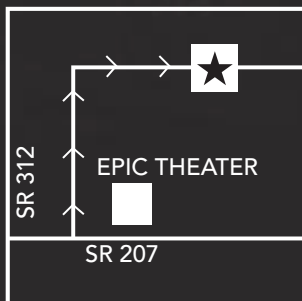


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Shores Wildflower Meadow

by Cindy Taylor

The bushy aster didn't bloom across the meadow late this fall the way it usually does, probably because weather conditions weren't right. Nature does what it does; and though we were disappointed about one thing, we focused on what was there and appreciated all the colors. . the range of darks and lights, of browns, tans, golds, and soft whites. Just because what you want to see isn't there doesn't mean nothing is.

Paul, with Baker and Co., did the annual mowing again this year and we thank him for carefully following our directions. We asked him not to mow the muhly grasses, fakahatchee, and fennel so pollinators, other beneficial insects, and small critters (continued on page 11)




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ONLY YOU KNOW & I KNOW

There are approximately 7,300+ Residents that get the Observer in their mailboxes once a month. There's also an abundance of ads, junk mail and discount magazines that make it to the mailbox but only a few of these make it past the Recycle Bin. The OBSERVER does have great information and useful content and I've heard from a few people that they put theirs in the recyclables which is their loss. For example; you will not get LOCAL statistical real estate DATA like in "ONLY YOU KNOW" anywhere else – not the Internet, not in any magazine, not in The Record (unless they've called me for quotes) and not on Social Media either. Unless someone buys the DATA like I have since 1991 then they don't have it!

SURPRISE ST. JOHNS COUNTY – you did it again in November (December stats are not available yet). You set new records in almost all categories of real estate sales in November 2020. Here's a taste of the DATA:

- Single Family Resales: Nov. 2019 - 369 Units valued at \$143.7 Million versus Nov. 2020 – 590 units (up 60%) valued at \$282.2 Million (up 96%) – WOW! Where else can you get that?

- Condo Resales: Nov. 2019 – 84 Units valued at \$19.9 Million versus Nov. 2020 – 142 Units (up 69%) valued at \$37.8 Million (up 90%) – totally unexpected for November!

- Lots: Nov. 2019 – 312 Unit (quite a lot, no pun intended) valued at \$34.8 Million versus Nov. 2020 – 387 Units (up 24%) valued at \$38.5 Million (up 10.5%). Increase YTD is 35.4%!

- Commercial & Other Improved: Nov. 2019 – 26 Units valued at \$44 Million versus Nov. 2020 – 32 Units (up 23%) valued at \$55.8 Million (up 26%)

- Total Sales for Nov. 2019 – 1,196 Units valued \$429.8 Million versus Nov. 2020 – 1,565 Units (up 30%) valued at \$579.2 Million (up 35%)

- Now here's the STAGGERING STAT – YTD Sales (Jan-Nov 2020) 15,412 Closed sales (up 16% over YTD 2019) at \$5,667,137,660 (up 24%). Don't tell me the State and County are cashing in!

ANOTHER SURPRISE for all that don't render The Observer a recyclable before reading it first. Those readers located in the LARGE LOT SUBDIVISIONS like Prairie Creek, Governors Plantation, Wildwood Creek, Stonegate, Oak Bluff, Vaill Point, Moultrie Foreside and others will receive the INAUGURAL ISSUE of ESTATE LIFE of St. Augustine MAGAZINE (you may have it by now). This is a QUARTERLY PUBLICATION and is loaded with great information too! Whenever you think "LOCAL REAL ESTATE EXPERTS" – THINK DIRK SCHROEDER at Century 21, St. Augustine Properties! 904-540-2360



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"Diaries of a Shores Grand-Dad"

by Dirk Schroeder

Christmastime 2019 was so enjoyable when we were able to get together with all of our family members, especially to be with our two granddaughters. Christmastime 2020 was spent in quarantine as I got the Coronavirus a few days before Christmas. Fortunately, my experience was not extreme; I didn't get the whole lung and breathing issue that is so troublesome to so many. It lasted about a week although it took a little longer for me to regain my full sense of smell. The upside of the virus is that I lost at least 5 pounds and I now have the antibody in my blood which I intend to donate to our local blood bank in the form of plasma. The other upside is that I will not be worried about getting the vaccine anytime soon.

I was thinking about my late brother the other day. For some time, he imported certain goods (strollers mostly) from China into Europe and it was so interesting to learn from him his takeaways from his trips to the Orient on his return.

For example, he told me that, the typical backpacks that you might see being offered at local retailers for \$19.95, if you were to buy a container-load of these backpacks, you could get them for \$1.00/piece. The ball caps that you see offered at stores here in the US for \$14.95 to \$19.95, you could also get by the container for \$1.00/piece. That is this month's segway into the hats that we all have to wear in our lives.

It's a good thing that you may not have to wear a container-load of hats yet you know what I'm talking about. For example, I have a husband hat, a father hat, a grandfather hat and a son-in-law hat. But the husband hat comes with other hats – the repairman, landscaper, lawn man, furniture mover and so on. Let's not forget that our wives have even more hats than that and also keep in mind that these hats are interchangeable within the household like the cook, dishwasher, launderer (not money, lol), cleaner, duster and the list goes on. Spouses are not defaulted to wear any of these hats and they may be shared.

Then there are your work hats. I have a bunch of hats there and you probably do too. I have my broker hat, contracts adviser hat,

trainer hat, troubleshooter hat, accountant hat (although my wife wears that one 90% of the time), the maintenance man hat, the sign installer hat, the marketing hat, the website admin hat, tech support hat and those are my everyday hats. Occasionally, I have to have the psychiatrist hat as well. These hats are a light load of responsibilities compared to moms; there's a whole other level of respect that we should have for the hat collection that they have whether stay-at-home or working moms. The moms will outpace the hat collection of most people. I don't even know where to begin, but suffice it to say that it is an unfair balance.

What about our friend hats, our social interaction hats (you get no credit with me for your social media hat, sorry), our hobby hats and our physical hats; sports, hiking, sailing, fishing hats and the like. These are just a small sampling of the recreational hats you might wear and these are what I would classify as the "Sanity Hats" that lower the blood pressure of the other hats we wear. Maybe you're a car collector, a biker or an RV'er or you love charitable work for a church or a local club. Hats, hats and more hats.

Hats by the container load and only a dollar a piece. It's a good thing that we have some choice about which extra hats we want or are willing to wear. And as we get to moving from Mom and Dad to Grandparent, we have a tendency to take off some of the old hats and put back on some that we used to wear daily; like friend, spouse and lover. We have to keep those hats from gathering too much dust.

There are a few hats that I really want to take with me when my time is up; husband, father, grandfather, friend and servant of our creator. Lastly, the number of hats is not a competition between people either – it's simply what keeps our heads underneath them unique. On that note, early wishes for an enjoyable Valentine's Day and I hope that you're wearing the right hat for the occasion. Until the next issue of The Observer, I wish you, a Sunshine State of Mind!



Shores Wildflower Meadow

(continued from page 8)

would have places of refuge during what frosts may still come. When the mowing was done, we removed most of the red flags that marked the plants we didn't want mowed, but left a few. Why? So we can find and protect those plants from lawn grasses that would grow over and suffocate them this spring and summer. Some flowers in the meadow need protection from "invasives" in order to grow and bloom and that's what we try to do. No more and no less.

Why do we have the meadow mowed once a year? If we didn't, it would turn into a woods and mowing it is like a reset, to start over again.

Early in January our group hiked in Pellicer Creek West Preserve, a little known park off Highway 204, just south of where Highway 95 crosses over Highway 1. Thanks to Marlene and Kay Wells for their photos of the hike and to Marlene for her photos of the mowing in the meadow. Some of the photos are mine too.

And thanks to the man who gives us an annual donation in appreciation of the meadow.

We meet at the meadow near the Riverview clubhouse at about 8:30 AM the first Saturday of each month and usually work for a couple of hours. We also try to have a hike once a month. We're an informal group without officers or dues and hope you will join us. You can join us for hikes only, work in the meadow only, or both.

Call Cindy at 904-797-3931 for more information.



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7 Publishes Quarterly Newsletter

by David Patrick, Publication Officer

The latest quarterly newsletter of 2020, the Saint Augustine Buoy has been published for members online and on Facebook for timely articles for our boating community. It is located at these sites for free viewing and/or download: On the web: <http://buoy.mysafeboating.com>, and On Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/US-Coast-Guard-Auxiliary-Flotilla-14-7-St-Augustine-Florida-347926478569291>

"We are rightly proud of our publication and the support it provides for members' activity, our public contributions. Our publication is available at some Marine Dealers within our area and shared with the US Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville," says Mr. Patrick continuing, "The Buoy this quarter features articles about our Auxiliary Flotilla by Carmen Gautille, and Sean Flynn, our newly re-elected Bridge Officers. There are articles on Navigation Safety by Lyn McClelland, the history of the Compass Rose and its appearance on navigation charts by Don Hurry and my article on developing boating skills for the general public looking to go on the water. Anyone with an interest in boating should have a look."

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all its service missions. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. For information about Flotilla 14-7 see, www.mysafeboating.com. For more information about the US Coast Guard, please visit www.cgaux.org.

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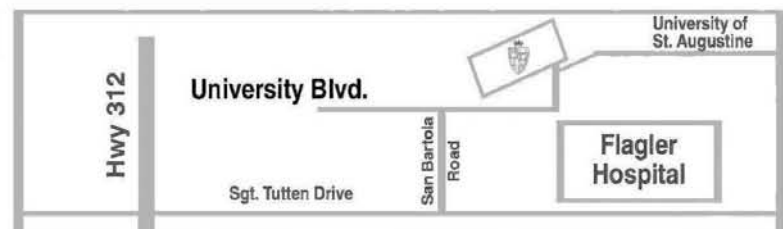
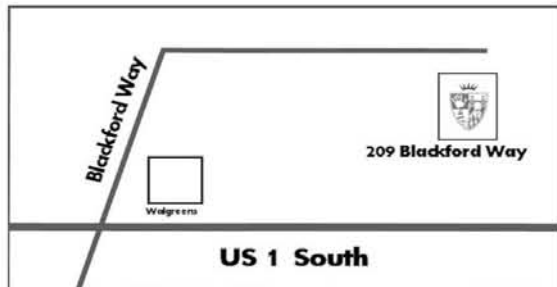


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COVID is a Pain

By Rob Stanborough
PT, DPT, MHS, MTC, CMTPT, FAAOMPT
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Who could have imagined the staggering ramifications a new virus would have on our world? Some may argue our world will return to “normal” and others that our world will remain changed forever. One thing I know is COVID has been a “pain”. It has inconvenienced all of us. It has pushed us out of our comfort zone, lifestyles, patterns, and habits. Although some may have continued to venture out due to necessity with alterations, others have shut themselves in to weather the plight.

As we have adapted more people have started to make their way out. I have seen several people complaining of physical pain they have not experienced in years. There are many reasons for this. First, stress can exacerbate pain. Having written other columns on the physiology of chronic pain before, it is not a simple process. Pain is complicated and requires a series of chemical responses.

In all its wonder, our body can, and does, adapt to stimuli or the lack thereof. This includes overriding noxious (or painful) stimuli. Unfortunately, if a stimulus is repeated, intense or sustained, a release of chemicals can over sensitize the nervous system, thereby making it easier to feel pain that might otherwise ignore or overridden. We call this peripheral or central sensitization, meaning either the peripheral or central nervous system become heightened or hyper efficient, in a negative way.

The stress of COVID and the disruption of exercise or recreational routines has prevented many former patients from maintaining their rehab and manage their pain. Stretching or exercise routines enabled them to keep their backs stable, maintain mobility in their shoulders, keep a respectable level of endurance and more. But with the closing of all “unessential” venues such as gyms, yoga studios, tai chi programs and the like closed, many ask, “what to do now?” Answer: Be creative.

Some of you reading may remember, long before there were places to workout, there was Jack LaLanne. On a TV show, he demonstrated simple calisthenics and home workouts. We do not know how long this pandemic will go and now is as good a time as any to return to such

simple workouts. It is not as difficult as you might think. Spread your workout through the day. Instead of immediately sitting down, sit, then stand, then sit, then stand, then finally sit. Congratulations, you just completed 3 squats. If you get up 10x/day and do this, you will complete 30 squats by the time you go to bed. Get up 20x/day you will complete 60. This works your quads, gluteal muscles and more.

After brushing your teeth, combing your hair, washing your hands, do 3-5, or maybe 10 countertop push-ups. Keep your back straight and push-up/down while leaning on the counter. This will work your back, shoulders, chest and core. Or, to get your heart rate up, bring back the famous 80’s step aerobics by simply walking up/down stairs, a curb or step. Lunges are also an option. Or there are always jumping jacks for a laugh.

Although safety is key in the midst of this pandemic, well-being is also important. Exercise in any form causes endorphin release, which can contribute to a sense of well-being – something we all could use a little bit of.

Dust off the exercises from the past. If you are unfamiliar with these, look Jack up on the internet. Or, if you feel safe enough, visit us at First Coast Rehabilitation and we’ll set you up with things you can do.

Please stay safe and stay well.

Rob Stanborough was one of the first PT’s to be permitted to use DN in FL and doing so since 2017. He has trained others in DN since 2010 both nationally and internationally as a Senior Instructor for Myopain Seminars (www.myopainseminars.com). He is a co-owner of First Coast Rehabilitation (www.firstcoastrehab.com), presented and published about DN and co-author of Myofascial Manipulation: Theory & Application, 3rd ed by Proed Inc.

Read previous columns posted on www.firstcoastrehab.com.



Financial Focus

Information Provided by
Edward Jones

How to Respond When Risk Tolerance Is Tested



When you begin investing, you’ll generally assess your comfort with risk, as your investment choices will be guided at least partially by your risk tolerance. But once you actually experience the ups and downs of the market, this tolerance could be tested.

Risk tolerance may appear less bothersome in the abstract but seem quite different in reality. For example, you might initially think you wouldn’t be fazed by short-term market downturns, no matter how severe. However, when the financial markets really decline, as happened when the COVID-19 pandemic struck last March, you might find yourself being more concerned than you thought you would be.

Before you change your investment strategy, it’s important to understand the potential tradeoffs. By limiting your downside risk by investing less aggressively, you may also limit your upside potential. You might need to change your strategy in other ways, such as saving more or working longer. That said, the tradeoff involved in reducing your downside risk may be worth taking, if it helps you cope better with wild market swings, as the best strategy may be one you can stick with through the inevitable ups and downs of the markets.

Because market fluctuations are a normal part of investing, here are some additional suggestions that may help you focus on your long-term strategy.

Look past the immediate event. While the market’s pandemic-driven fall was sudden, its recovery was also fairly quick. Eight months after its March meltdown, the market had regained all the lost ground and reached a new record high. During the midst of what appears to be a real threat to your investment portfolio, it can be difficult to anticipate a more favorable environment. Yet, while

past performance can’t guarantee future results, every historical market decline has been followed by a recovery.

Understand that the Dow isn’t your portfolio. When the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the other major market indexes such as the S&P 500 fall precipitously (or shoot up), it makes headlines. But the Dow and the S&P 500 only track the performance of large U.S. companies – and while their performance may be an indication of the U.S. economy, they aren’t going to track the results of your portfolio, which should ideally include a personalized mix of large-company stocks, small-company stocks, international stocks, bonds, government securities and other investments.


Keep your emotions out of your investment moves. The market will fluctuate constantly – but you should always try keep your emotions in check. Excess exuberance when the market rises, or extreme despondency when the market falls, can lead you to make poor decisions. Specifically, we may buy when we feel good (when the markets are up) and sell when we feel badly (when markets are down). Your heart and your emotions may drive your financial goals – creating a comfortable retirement, sending your kids to college or leaving a legacy for your family – but when you invest for these goals, you should use your head.


Your risk tolerance is a key part of your investment strategy. But by taking the steps described above, you can gain a broader understanding of how risk fits into your overall picture – and a better understanding of yourself as an investor.

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

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Award-Winning Members of Flotilla 14-7 in 2020 Recognized

Carmen Gautille, Flotilla Commander recognized several flotilla members at the first flotilla meeting of 2021, held on 7 JAN 2021. The Commandant of the Auxiliary had recognized these members with the rest of the Auxiliary on 24 DEC 2020. Presentations of awards included the Auxiliary Commandant's Letter of Commendation and US Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation, two of the highest awards available to Auxiliarists, given for outstanding individual achievement and a group award of team achievements supporting the US Coast Guard and the Auxiliary missions. They were presented to seven flotilla members. Sean Flynn presented a Team Commendation Award to Mr. Gautille.

Recipients of the awards are, in order of the award dates: Elizabeth Elliott, Maxine (Libby) Rattrie (2 awards), Abelardo Lopez-de Queralt, Henry Seiden, William Candeletti, Harry Shields, Charles Elliott.

In a Leadership Link message published to all 24,000 Auxiliarists, COMO Alex Malewski, Commandant of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary said, "We celebrate these outstanding 2020 awardees for their successful efforts and likewise their important contributions to the missions of the Auxiliary," he said, "Please take a moment to celebrate with our members and shipmates, this presentation from the senior leaders of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary."

In a message to the membership Mr. Gautille said, "The members listed below received a high honor. Normally, these awards are presented at NACON and since that didn't happen this year, we wanted to make sure that those awarded this honor are recognized by their peers." Bravo Zulu to the fantastic membership of Flotilla 14-7.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all its service missions. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. For information about Flotilla 14-7 see, www.mysafeboating.com. For more information about the US Coast Guard, please visit www.cgaux.org.

Do You Have Community News to Share?

Do you have news, events or personal interest information that are relevant to our communities in Southern St. Johns County? Please forward them to the Editor for consideration for the monthly Observer.

Please contact Editor

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Computer Corner

by Steven Aldrich
904-479-5661



Do I Need a VPN?

There are many advertisements telling us that we need a VPN to protect our data. So, what is a VPN, and why would someone need one?

VPN stands for Virtual Private Network. When the first VPNs were commercialized, they allowed access to the corporate internal network for remote offices and workers. Plus, it was a way to encrypt any data flowing between the remote office and the mainframes at the home office.

Now, there are scores of companies selling VPN services to consumers, stating that your privacy and Internet usage data are threatened by prying eyes. If you use the Internet, there are ways to find out what websites you go to and what you are doing. A VPN could help obfuscate that information.

The most important reason for a consumer to use VPN is for times when they use WiFi at a local coffee shop or at hotels and anywhere that has public WiFi. In these situations, you want everything you do to be encrypted. A VPN will handle this like a champ!

Another use of VPN is to make it look like you are coming onto the Internet in a different place than where you actually

are. Years ago, I was in Ecuador and wanted to watch my Netflix shows. I had to use a VPN to do that. It made it "look like" I was still in the US when I logged into Netflix. Some folks use VPN so they can access European shows that are not shown on US channels.

The idea that our data is being sold is in the news regularly and that scares many people into thinking that they need to protect themselves. Can a VPN protect your data? It can, but keep in mind you are trusting that the VPN provider will not sell your data. Many VPN companies make claims that they do not store any information about their customers.

If you are on your home WiFi, there is little need to think about a VPN. If you frequently use public WiFi, it is probably a good idea to use a VPN. But, how many of us are using public WiFi on a regular basis?

Steven Aldrich is a technology advisor with decades of experience as an IT Director and is the owner of First Coast Computer Services. Contact Steven if you need a trusted advisor to come to your business or home and help with your technology. See my ad on this page. Steve@fccspro.com or (904) 479-5661.



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STARS REHAB has continued to provide the care you can expect during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our top priority is providing a safe environment for our staff and patients. **We are a leading provider for Physical & Speech Therapy** in St. Johns County and it is our commitment to help slow the spread of COVID-19 within our community.

We have implemented the following measures:

- Masks Required
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- Handwashing
- Social Distancing
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- ALL Staff Required to wear N95 Masks



For a full list of our services and clinicians, please visit

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South Clinic: 105 Mariner Health Way, Ste 213	p. 904.217.4259
Central Clinic: 65 Strongway Place NEW	p. 904.679.3204
Island Clinic: 4320 A1A South, Ste 7	p. 904.679.3449
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