

St. John's Cemetery Foundation

Fall Newsletter

Issue No. 5 - Fall 2014

BP Grant Update

The BP Grant has been completed. Now the cemetery is equipped with automated tours via AM broadcast or the computer, at the SJC website.

Page 1

Road Project

For years many the roads were bad at SJC. Now they are greatly improved.

Page 1

Cemetery Ghost Tour

A spooky October....

Page 2

Impact 100 Grant

For its third year, the Friends are applying for an Impact 100 grant of approximately \$100,000. No previous Impact grants have been received by SJC.

Page 2



President's Message

Wesley Odom

Page 3

Recent Burials

While things seem quiet at St. John's, the cemetery continues to perform its mission.

Page 2

Trees Still Needed

Page 2

All Saints Day and

Annual Meeting

On November 1, 2014
9:00 - 10:00

Page 1

Another Eagle Project

Boy Scout Tristan Wu leads a project this Fall

Page 1

BP Grant Update

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill was a tragic accident that affected countless lives on the Gulf Coast and the environment. Many received financial gifts from BP, which had owned the well. FSJCF was one of them.

The last payment from BP is expected soon. Altogether, \$12,000 will have been paid to install an automated tour system that works over AM broadcast or the internet. The radio signals are available only within the cemetery, but the internet signal is accessible over the world wide web.

The internet signal is clearer with no static.

A new sign at the Gatehouse explains how to operate the tour system. Basically, a person pushes

a button to activate the tour and returns to his vehicle to dial onto a certain frequency with their car radio, and follow the prompts on the radio.

Otherwise, a person can access the tour from his smartphone by going to the SJC website, www.stjohnsdb.com.

Both tours are identical and last 27 minutes. Each traces the development of the cemetery and highlights certain people who are buried there.

All Saint's Day Meeting

Please plan to attend the All Saints' Day Service at St. John's Cemetery in the Gatehouse on Saturday, **November 1**, at 9:00 am. This year the focus will be upon the many babies and children who are buried therein. Pastor Randy Blankschaen, M.Div. of Immanuel Lutheran Church will officiate.

Afterwards, there will be a brief annual meeting so people can renew their memberships, which are \$25/year, provide feedback to the board, and discuss future projects. Also, three directors are up for reelection--Dolores de La Rua Hayes, Emily Walby, and Dwight Watson, who is also seeking another term as Vice President.

Customarily, there is a reception afterwards. All attendees are encourage to bring some snacks or cookies to share.

Road Project Success!

For years, the asphalt roads in the cemetery were very bad. Some generous donors stepped up and made a huge difference.

One cannot have enough friends, and this is especially true for FSJCF.

In late 2013, Wesley Odom, president, made some needy phone calls to the members who had been most vocal about fixing the road problem.

After presenting the proposed remedies and estimates, several key donors stepped forward. Without their magnanimous support, the project could not have been done. They were Patricia Butler, Ashley D. Pace, Jr, Thomas M. Pace, Sr., and Howard King. Other members donated smaller sums, which collectively helped.

All the arterial asphalt roads were removed and replaced with either solid concrete or concrete strips. The driving strips were selected because other non-arterial roads have them. Also, people usually drive slower over the strips than a solid road.

The results have been great. Fewer people "joy ride" through the cemetery, and folks drive slower. Also, the Corporation moved the dumpster outside the cemetery so there are no garbage trucks tearing up the roads now. THANKS AGAIN, DONORS!



Boy Scout, Tristan Wu, is doing an Eagle Scout project this Fall that will replace the wooden section markers with concrete ones.

IMPACT 100 Grant

The Friends applied for an Impact 100 grant for \$103,000 to be spent building a facade and columbarium at the exit on Wright and I Street (see below). Architect Scott Sallis designed this new project.

The facade would complement the existing Gatehouse and would allow the Corporation to enter into the interment of cremains business. Originally, the cemetery was built just for traditional casket burials. More people nowadays opt for cremains burials due to cost savings. Columbariums allow people to commemorate their loved one without having to purchase a lot.

Last year, the organization applied for a different grant and was unsuccessful. Results ought to be promulgated in October.



R e a r E l e v a t i o n

Annual Dues

Annual membership dues for the Friends are only \$25/year, which supports the publication and mailing of this newsletter, website, and on-going cemetery database. There is much more that could be done with more contributions. Previous contributions have enabled the Gatehouse to be renovated, trees and flower plantings, and roads to be resurfaced.

Please write your check today to **"Friends of St. John's Cemetery Foundation"** and send it to **610 N. Spring St. Pensacola, FL 32501.**

2014 Burials

More information on each person can be found at the cemetery's website: www.stjohnsdb.com.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Victor C. Agee | Dianna Lynn Ard * |
| Clement W. Barfield | Frances B. Edwards |
| Sandra F. Henderson * | Louise T. Horne |
| Dorothy B. Miller * | Wallace S. Odom |
| Richard B. Olney, Jr. | James K. Otto, Sr. |
| Bette P. Phillips | Jack C. Richards * |
| Speros Stanton | Thomas R. Willis |
| Cecil F. Wiseman | John F. Zecckine * |

The ones marked with an asterisk (*) either have no photo or biography on file. If you know relatives, please encourage them to share information with us. Future generations will thank us.

Cemetery Ghost Tour

While St. Michael's has sponsored a Cemetery Ghost Tour fundraiser for years, St. John's has not. In 2014, the Friends are planning a neat approach.

With over 150 years of service, this cemetery has plenty of ghost stories. On **Saturday, October 25, from 7-9 pm**, we are sharing some of the stories about those interred within. Then, the cemetery's roads will be lit with candles and actors will be wandering the grounds.

"There will not be any chain saws going, or anything that would disgrace the cemetery," says Wesley Odom. "The stories--some funny and others sad--are all true. The board unanimously approved the proposed script with only minor alterations."

Tickets will be \$5 per person, maximum of \$20 per sedan and are sold at the cemetery's gatehouse the night of the event.

Once inside the cemetery, each car will receive a secret code to begin an automated tour that will guide its occupants through the cemetery. Visitors won't even need to leave their cars.

If you would like to volunteer--and we need volunteers--please contact Wesley at 332-7339. We need people to light candles, direct traffic, and serve as actors.

Hopefully, this will be a successful fundraiser and introduce more people to beautiful SJC.

Friends Officers and Directors

Officers and Directors are elected for three year terms. Below is a list of the current officers, directors, and the expiration of their tenure.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Odom, Wesley (Pres/Treas) | 2015 |
| Watson, Dwight (VP) | 2014 |
| Haynes, Jimmy, II (Sec) | 2015 |
| Riggs, Bobby (Dir) | 2016 |
| Turner, Hill (Dir) | 2016 |
| Wallace, Edwin (Dir) | 2016 |
| De la Rua - Hayes, Dolores | 2014 |
| Walby, Emily (Dir) | 2014 |
| Speed, Jim (Dir) | 2015 |

Trees Needed

SJC used to have more of a tree canopy. This was before Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Dwight Watson, Vice President, is on a mission. He's planted lots of trees in the cemetery, but more are needed.

If you would like to purchase a tree, write a check for \$100, write "trees" on it, and Dwight will plant it. That amount can buy a tree approximately four feet tall.

The goal is to make the cemetery a place shaded with trees, varying in species but indigenous to the area. Please help us!



Left: The tombstone of Gertrude Blanch Monk, who died January 29, 1910. Her husband Henry reserved the entire lot in her memory and is buried elsewhere. It is the tallest monument in the cemetery.



Right: During the deluge of April 29-30, a few vaults were compromised. All these had been built by bricks, and the mortar had given way. Gulf Coast Wilbert, which is the undertaker company assigned to SJC, fixed the problems.

President's Message

President Wesley Odom addresses the membership.

Every year better things seem to be happening at St. John's Cemetery. I credit the success to God and all the members and volunteers who care.

The highlight of the year undoubtedly was the resurfacing project, which cost over \$50,000. I told Patricia Butler, who lives out of town, that I would give her a hug for her generosity. Thankfully, I was able to do so. This was a huge accomplishment. No longer is the journey bumpy, and cars now drive slower. Come see for yourself!

The second biggest accomplishment was computerization of the ownership records. Since the beginning, SJC had been using index cards, which work perfectly fine; however, with interments already in a database, adding the ownership information on the vacant spaces allows for the cemetery to be managed better and more efficiently. Soon we realized that there are many more vacant spaces than what had been thought. In fact, in the 1980s, SJC had announced that all the lots had been sold. Based upon the inventory, analyzing the ownership and future trends, there are enough spaces remaining to last well into the next century.

SJC president, Jim Speed was so pleased about computerizing the database that he authorized the spending of SJC funds to graphically put this on the website. What this means is that open spaces that are for sale will appear in green. Those

sold but not occupied will appear in yellow, and those occupied will appear in red. All these rectangles will link with the existing database.

This is exciting because there are more inquiries via email and phone than the previous three years that I have been associated with SJC. Most of this is due to the database being easily accessible from the website. Part of the BP grant money assisted in improving the search capabilities so if someone, say on google, searched for their relative, the search engine would direct the person to the cemetery's website. With more hits, people are calling, asking about ownership, and how to erect markers for their relatives who have no marker, etc.

Dwight Watson, vice president, has done a great job beautifying the cemetery by adding numerous trees. In his research, he found that historic cemeteries with lots of trees receive more visitors than those with much fewer. Since we want to encourage and foster community awareness and appreciation of SJC, the Board continues to support the planting of trees. Ideally, we would like to make the cemetery a sort of arboretum of indigenous trees. To implement this plan, volunteers will be removing non-indigenous plantings like palm trees this October.

If you can help us by purchasing trees, please add \$100 to your membership dues (for each tree) and mark "trees" on your check. Years later, once these trees are mature, future generations will appreciate our handiwork.

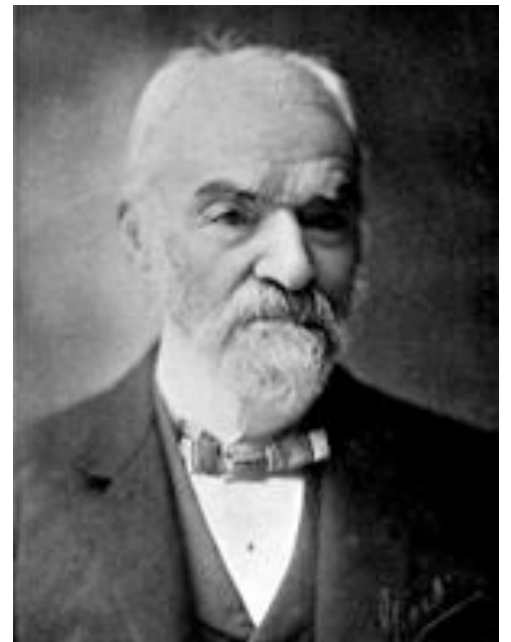
Years ago, Ted Nickinson and Dr. Jack Fleming shared a vision that more could be done in this cemetery and established this organization. SJC truly is a place worthy of preserving the legacies of those who made Pensacola what it is today.

I encourage you to become excited about preserving this historic cemetery and sharing its story with your friends. Together, we can make it better.

If you have any questions or concerns or want to update a relative's obituary or include a photo of them for the website, please contact me at either work, 850-332-7339 or email, info@stjohnsdb.com

Sincerely,

Wesley S. Odom



Samuel G. French, former Major General in the Confederate Army, is the most senior CW veteran buried at SJC. Other generals include Brigadiers, Edward A. Perry and William Miller.

Friends of St. John's Cemetery
Foundation

610 N. Spring St.
Pensacola, FL 32501

Stamp

Celebrate with the Saints!

SATURDAY

November 1, 2014

9:00 - 10:00 am

**Service and Annual Meeting at
St. John's Cemetery**

Bring your favorite snack or desert to share.

Pastor Randy Blankshaen of Immanuel Lutheran Church will officiate