

# St. John's Cemetery Foundation

Fall Newsletter

Issue No. 6 - Fall 2015

**More Money from BP**

*In 2015, BP surprised the Friends with an additional \$920 for marketing purposes.*  
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**Services in the Gatehouse**

*In 2015, there were two funerals conducted in the Gatehouse.*  
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**Cemetery Ghost Tour**

*A spooky October....*  
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*Occasionally, relatives want to clean their ancestors' tombstones. The Friends has arranged for this to be done efficiently and environmentally friendly.*  
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*While things seem quiet at St. John's, the cemetery continues to perform its mission.*  
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*On November 7, 2015 9:00 - 10:00*  
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**Book about burial in SJC**

*Morris Slater is remembered.* Page 2

## BP Surprise

*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.*

FSJCF had closed the books on the BP grant of \$12,000. It had paid for a driving tour that is available via the internet or radio. However, recently, BP surprised us with a \$920 check to fund marketing for the cemetery.

"This gift was totally unexpected," said Wesley Odom, president of FSJCF. "The Board had just met and discussed the need to market the cemetery's Historic Ghost Tours better. This contribution will meet our needs this year and next."

## Funeral Services in Gatehouse

This was a banner year for the Gatehouse Chapel. Two funeral services have been conducted in it year to date.

This might be a surprise to some because the Chapel was used for lawn equipment storage and was in a wretched state following Hurricane Ivan. Since then, it has been thoroughly renovated.

For both funerals, the families selected our Chapel because FSJCF saved them literally thousands of dollars and felt good about supporting SJC.

As explained by Wesley Odom, "We still partner with local funeral homes, which transfer the corpse to SJC and ensure all state laws are followed. We simply provide the facility, assist with the services, and arrange for the committal."

This activity has resulted in needed donations which have allowed for the floors to be sanded and refinished. The local Questers Chapter also assisted by securing a grant, described further in another article. It looks so much better.

Since the Chapel holds a maximum of 50 people, it is suitable for small funerals or those who want graveside services only.

For information about how you could save money and help SJC, please contact Wesley at 850-497-6167.

## All Saints' Day Service

*Annually, the FSJCF conducts a memorial service honoring those who have died over the last year.*

Please plan to attend the All Saints' Day Service at St. John's Cemetery in the Gatehouse Chapel on Saturday, **November 7**, at 9:00 am. This year's service will be conducted by Father Matthew Carter of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church..

Afterwards, there will be a brief annual meeting so people can renew their memberships, which are \$25/year and conduct other business.

At this meeting, the existing board of directors has nominated and seeks approval of the following positions:

Director: Jane Yarbrough Moseley—4th generation Pensacolian and Development Director of Pensacola Catholic High School.

Steffie Varazo Joiner—2nd generation Pensacolian and retired.

President: Wesley Odom—1st generation Pensacolian and president of FSJCF since Aug 2012.

All attendees are encourage to bring some snacks or cookies to share.



**Boy Scout, Tristan Wu, did an Eagle Scout project last Fall that replaced the wooden section markers with concrete ones.**

## Grave Cleaning

Many of the tombstones in SJC need a good cleaning. Because of this, Trevor Odom, decided to start a little business. At 17 years of age, Trevor, who is Wesley Odom's son, has spent part of the summer cleaning several markers for money.

He uses chemicals and brushes that are non-abrasive for the particular markers, whether they consist of granite or marble, and the chemicals are environmentally friendly.

His charges are based upon the size of the marker:

Individual marker: \$25

Joint markers: \$50

Horizontal slab marker: \$50 (babies: \$20)

Urns: \$20 Others: Call for quote.

One reportedly obtained another company's cleaning fee for a horizontal marker at \$350.

Trevor feels good about his lower prices and claims that his procedure should last for 10 years.

FSJCF coordinates the grave cleaning and follows up with photos for a small fee.



BEFORE and AFTER



## 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.

## 2015 Burials

More information on each person can be found at the cemetery's website: [www.stjohnsdb.com](http://www.stjohnsdb.com).

Sheila Kirby Barfield	Joseph S. Bauman
Carolyn Lurton Bell *	Patricia P. Bowyer
Thomas N. Cummings*	Raymond Edwards
Venetia Cocoris James*	Lynn P. Kliesch
Cathryn H. Leonard	Magdalene V. Liollo
Blanche L. McDavid	Malcolm E. McGraw
Boris I. Nekrasov*	George Elias Pagonis
Adolph F. Pfeiffer	Kirby Conrad Smith*
Aubrey D. Wentworth	Bobby Bly 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.

## Questers Support SJC

The Don Tristan DeLuna Questers have been maintaining the baby area in Section 2 for years, now they are doing more.

The local Questers installed a white picket fence around the baby area in Section 2 and have maintained it for years. As members have aged, they are putting more efforts to supporting their charities monetarily.

Local president, Sue Garnjobst, was pleased to award the Friends a check for \$1000 for the floor renovation project. Half of it came from their state organization. They also would like to discuss transferring maintenance of the baby area to a younger group.

## Railroad Bill

The most infamous black train robber in U.S. history is buried in SJC. A new book reveals information about this outlaw.

A few years ago, when Larry Massey called asking for the whereabouts of Morris Slater in SJC, Wesley Odom said, "We know where he is, but it's an unmarked grave and we know nothing more about him." To which, Massey replied, "He's Railroad Bill, and I know lots about him."

Massey has since paid for a handsome marker for Slater and has written a new book, *The Life and Crimes of Railroad Bill* with University Press of Florida.

"I've already got a copy and loved it," said Odom. "Massey sheds new light on a person who became the subject of much folklore in the 20th century."

## Cemetery Ghost Tour

SJC presented its first Historic Ghost Tour last year. This year's ought to be even better.

With over 150 years of service, this cemetery has plenty of ghost stories. On **Friday, October 16 and 23, from 6-8 pm**, we are sharing some of the stories about those interred within. Then, the cemetery's roads will be lit with candles and some actors will be wandering the grounds.

"There will not be any chain saws going, or anything that would disgrace the cemetery," says Wesley Odom. "Some stories are funny and others sad because there always are tragic deaths to discuss.."

This year's approach will be different because we are partnering with Go Retro, which is a tour company owned by Odom. There were technological problems last year relating the stories. This year guests will be able to ride in Go Retro's bus around the cemetery, seeing and hearing commentary from monitors aboard the bus.

Tickets will be \$10 per adult and \$6/child. They are sold online at [www.goretro.us](http://www.goretro.us) or in person at the Gatehouse the nights of the event. The Friends will receive half of all proceeds.

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.



Left: Go Retro's replica 1930 tour bus will be taking people on SJC's Haunted Cemetery Tour on October 16 and 23 from 6-8 pm. Reserve your spot at [www.goretro.us](http://www.goretro.us). The Friends receives half of all proceeds.

Right: A group from Gulf Breeze UMC recently visited SJC and touched the marker of Mollie McCoy. Tradition is, "If you touch her tombstone, you'll have a better love life." Who wouldn't want that curse?



## 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 most noticeable improvement in SJC are the monthly trash pick service, stabilization of the I St. exit road, and refinishing of the floors in the Gatehouse.

For quite sometime, there had been a dumpster in the middle of SJC, which was both unattractive and positioned such that the pick up trucks were so heavy that the road to the dumpster failed rapidly. Also, the dumpster was not being utilized regularly. Initially, it was moved to the edge of the property, but it got more neighborhood use than from the cemetery. Now the dumpster has been completely removed. What's better is that a person removes the trash from one of the five normal sized trash containers monthly. SJC, which pays for this service, actually pays less than for the dumpster. The trash containers are being utilized more, and the cemetery looks better without the dumpster. SJC is considering improving the trash containers, which would be another upgrade.

Since the paving strips were installed on I St., there has been erosion concerns. SJC has been trying to solve this problem by planting new grass and installing rocks. Hopefully, these efforts will solve these issues.

The inside of the Gatehouse looks fantastic—especially with the refinished floors. The only things remaining are the installation of a climate control unit and quatrefoil window. Estimates for both these projects total about \$7000.

Another Boy Scout plans to do his Eagle Scout Project at the cemetery. His plans include eliminating non-indigenous trees, trimming some low limbs, and planting indigenous trees. This will be the third Eagle Project at SJC in the last four years. I love the fact it is getting more attention. You can help with this project by donating \$100 for a tree.

Enclosed you will find voting proxies. We have never had those, but think that since the membership is scattered, this could be an effective way for administration for those you cannot attend the annual meeting.

The website still is attracting lots of attention, and I try to input new information in the database regularly. Weekly I receive phone calls or emails.

While everyone is cordial, some find it hard to believe that their relatives, who died years ago, did not buy an entire lot, for example. Fortunately, the stewards caring for SJC kept detailed records of ownership. Some families bought entire lots, half lots, and some just bought individual spaces. If a family (i.e. husband and wife) buy just two spaces, they cannot expect for SJC to reserve spaces near them for their children. When this has occurred, I make every effort to find a space nearby. However, the best thing to do is to plan ahead by buying more spaces.

Spaces currently are the cheapest in town. For a \$1000 contribution, one can reserve a space for eternity. What a bargain!

Fortunately, business at SJC has been increasing. I credit this to the efforts of SJC and FSJCF. Both organizations are working together to improve the cemetery. SJC cares for the daily and long term upkeep. FSJCF preserves the legacy of those interred, maintains the website, and reviews the ownership records. The Friends also raises money for the benefit of the cemetery. I truly enjoy serving as your president hope to continue.

Please contact me at either work, 850-332-7339 or email, [info@stjohnsdb.com](mailto:info@stjohnsdb.com) with any concerns.

Sincerely, Wesley S. Odom



This is a view of the casket of Lynn P. Kliesch. Her funeral was held in the Gatehouse in January. Since then, the floors have been refinished. Consider the Gatehouse for small funerals.

Friends of St. John's Cemetery  
Foundation

610 N. Spring St.  
Pensacola, FL 32501

Stamp

*Celebrate with the Saints!*

SATURDAY

November 7, 2015

9:00 - 10:00 am

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

*Bring your favorite snack or desert to share.*

*Father Matthew Carter of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church will  
officiate*