

St. John's Cemetery Foundation

Fall Newsletter

Issue No. 7 - Fall 2016

Gatehouse Chapel finally restored

After decades of neglect, the Gatehouse Chapel has been renovated completely. The last items were the beautiful mural and molding around it.

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Combating Mosquitos

The many urns in the cemetery offer ideal breeding pools for these pests. A Boy Scout has a solution and is working with the Friends.

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Trees Planted

Twenty trees were planted earlier this year. They included live oaks, magnolias, and long leaf pine trees. They already look super but will look great in 20 years.

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President's Message

Wesley Odom

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Recent Burials

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

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A spooky October....

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All Saints Day and Annual Meeting

On November 5, 2016 9:00 - 10:00

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Gatehouse Chapel Restored

With more families utilizing the chapels of local funeral homes in the 1950s, the Gatehouse Chapel at St. John's fell into disuse. It then became a storage facility for the cemetery grounds equipment. In the early 1970s, a driver crashed his car into it and destroyed its stained glass window. Yet better days were ahead.

One of the objectives of the Friends always has been to renovate the Gatehouse. It seemed like a daunting task. The facility had been built in 1908. Its plaster was failing. The electrical system was not up to code. Its floors were marred. The windows had bars or wood over them. Even the large stained

glass window was missing, and its molding was rotten in places. Yet slowly, the Friends have been working on this project.

Encouraging us was the increased requests by people who wanted to utilize the facility. Proceeds were reinvested into the project. Volunteers like the Questers even stepped forward and donated \$1000 for the floor refinishing.

A heating and air system was installed late last year, and finally, the last item was the place where the stained glass window used to be. Rather than installing a window, the Friends opted for a less expensive but beautiful mural.

Artist, Sophie Houser, was selected to paint the mural, which now makes the Gatehouse complete. Her design captures a lovely scene at the cemetery: A dove flies before a rising sun, over a blooming Magnolia tree. Her use of color is very realistic and soothing. It also is the perfect resurrection scene.

The cemetery already was a special place for Sophie because she enjoys taking an occasional walk there. "It's a beautiful place," she says, "I'm glad to be a part of its history." Sophie also knew a carpenter who was able to repair and restore the mural's molding.

The Gatehouse Chapel is now fully functional and renovated—available for memorial services or rented for community or family gatherings. Its capacity is 50 people, including a coffin. Contact Wesley Odom for availability or questions.

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 5**, at 9:00 am. Besides remembering those departed, we will celebrate having the new mural and re-dedicate the chapel. Father Nick Schumm, who is the pastor of St. Thomas More Catholic 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. Three directors are up for election—Bobby Riggs, Hill Turner, and a new candidate, Brenda Arnold.

The Board would like to thank Edwin Wallace for the years he served on the board. He is retiring.

Customarily, there is a reception afterwards. Attendees can bring some snacks or cookies to share; however, every year, we always have an abundance. Therefore, if bringing something is deterring your attendance, come without anything.



Combating Mosquitos

Recently, Boy Scout Brandon Wu contacted the Friends about doing his Eagle Scout Service Project in the cemetery. (His brother, Tristan, had done his project at SJC manufacturing and installing concrete Section markers). Brandon was open to suggestions. That is when Friends president, Wesley Odom suggested combating mosquitos.

Odom explained that mosquitos like SJC because they breed in many of the empty urns there. With much attention focused upon the spread of the Zika virus by mosquitos, reducing their habitat seemed like a good idea.

Brandon liked the idea and is formulating a plan to make small, pancake saucer type discs made out of concrete that could sit on top of an empty urn. Some urns already have them.



Brandon Wu demonstrating what his disks would look like atop an urn.

If you would like to donate money towards Brandon's project, please make your check payable to **Friends of SJC Foundation** and in the "For" box, write, "Eagle Project". Send it to **610 N. Spring St. Pensacola, FL 32501**.

Trees Planted

Thanks to many donations, the Friends were able to plant 20 trees that ranged in height from four to eight feet. The species recommended by an arborist were live oak, magnolia, and long leaf pine. Each of these species already were in SJC. They were planted along roadway areas so that in years time they will form a canopy.

2016 Burials

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

Jackson Bryant Arnold	Carole Averill
Thomas Born	William S. Byers, Sr.
Catherine E. Carnley	Lucille F. Dandelakis
Constantine F. Foster	Roy Randall Gray*
Helen Z. R. Kelson	Donald S. McLeod
Richard B. Olney, Sr.	Thomas Pace, Sr.
Charles C. Porras	Walter L. Pou, Jr.
Thomas J. Psaltis	Edna M. Sloan
Flora Sorenson	Dorothy E. Standley
John T. Stanton, Jr.	Carla J. Ward
Wally R. Wilkins	Majorie C. Wiseman

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 thanks us.

Perpetual Care

Years ago, "Perpetual Care" was considered an optional "add-on" item when graves were purchased. Later cemetery laws changed making all cemeteries perform perpetual care. Yet what is perpetual care?

The Cemetery corporation does a great job mowing the grass, collecting debris, repairing the fence, and removing trash. These things are done regularly. Yet some grave sites and garden areas need more attention.

Volunteer Brenda Arnold has been doing many of the extra tasks for months now. She has pulled weeds, trimmed bushes, and planted flowers. Seeing her work has been rewarding and well received, Brenda proposes that others join her in an all-volunteer group known as "Perpetual Care."

"I think the group could do more like right fallen tombstones," she stated. "With a few more volunteers, much more could be done to improve the cemetery."

Those interested are encouraged to contact Brenda at sweeneytodd3624@att.net or see her at the upcoming annual meeting.

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 offered its first. Now it's almost becoming a tradition.

With over 150 years of service, this cemetery has plenty of ghost stories. On **Saturday, October 22, 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.

"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 \$12 per adult, \$9/youth, and \$6/child. They are sold online at www.goretro.com or at the cemetery's gatehouse the night of the event.

Once inside the cemetery, patrons will be able to board a tour bus and begin the tour.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Wesley at 332-7339. We need people to light candles and collect ticket money.

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)	2018
Watson, Dwight (VP)	2017
Walby, Emily (Sec)	2017
Riggs, Bobby (Dir)	2016
Turner, Hill (Dir)	2016
Wallace, Edwin (Dir)	2016
De la Rua - Hayes, Dolores	2017
Moseley, Jane (Dir)	2018
Joiner, Steffie (Dir)	2018

A copy of the By-laws is available on the SJC website: www.stjohnsdb.com. Click on "Foundation", then "By-laws".



Left: The tombstone of Gertrude Blanch Monk, who died January 29, 1910. Her husband Henry was a general contractor, who had just received a handsome federal contract to restore the sea wall near Ft. McRee. He reserved the entire lot in her memory. He is buried elsewhere with his second wife. This is the tallest monument in the cemetery.

Right: Artist Sophie Houser, who painted the mural in the Gatehouse.



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 first highlight of the year undoubtedly was the planting of twenty nice sized trees. Board director Hill Turner used his contacts at a commercial nursery so that the Friends could procure the trees for wholesale prices. Then volunteers Myron Clark and Sophie Houser dug nearly all the three feet wide by two feet deep holes. Lastly, Hill, Sophie, Emily Walby, and I planted them. Fortunately, it rained daily for a week thereafter. All trees are doing well.

The second biggest accomplishment was completion of the beautiful mural by artist Sophie Houser. Her art makes the Gatehouse chapel more beautiful and complements the surroundings. I know everyone will want to celebrate this accomplishment and thank Sophie during the annual meeting, where we will honor the artist and promote to the media about this finishing accomplishment.

The activity in the grounds has been exciting. The local Questers Chapter under the leadership of Sue Garnjobst have labored for years in the Baby area in Section 2. It really looks fantastic.

Also, I am very optimistic about Brenda Arnold leading the new Perpetual Care group. This all-volunteer group will tackle a variety of projects that are beyond the scope of the paid professional

grounds keepers. Be sure to come to the annual meeting to see how you can assist in this new endeavor.

The Friends continues to do a number of things. Every week it seems, we are updating the database, which is accessible on the web at www.stjohnsdb.com. Behind the scenes, we also are assisting families locate loved ones, find space for burials, coordinate funeral arrangements, assist with tombstone locations, and update ownership records.

I cannot emphasize how important it is to update who owns the lot. Many of the lots and spaces were bought years ago. Regrettably, most families have not done a good job updating the ownership upon the death of the original owner.

The easiest way to update the records is to provide the original deed. Whomever has that deed can get a new deed made to whomever that deed holder wants.

The most common situation is when the deed is lost. Then, the deed would go to the spouse. If that person is deceased, the spaces go to the children. Each child has to sign affidavits averring that he/she is a child and either wants or disclaims the spaces to another sibling or relative. If all the children are deceased, then notarized statements with indemnification language has to be executed by the grandchildren. This process, while burdensome, is not complicated, and is meant to protect all parties.

If no resolution can be found, the Cemetery corporation can reclaim and resell the spaces.

This October the cemetery will be visited by two volunteer groups—the Ft. Pickens chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Oct 8) and students from Catholic High School (Oct 22). While this is a first for the DAR ladies, the students have visited SJC for years and make a huge impact. Usually about 20 kids descend upon the cemetery and work for a solid five hours. They typically restore the front entrance and remove lots of unwanted trees, bushes, and weeds. Feel free to join them. I've enjoyed working with the students annually.

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, wodom@armadaadvisors.com. I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting or walking in the cemetery.

Sincerely,

Wesley S. Odom

Friends of St. John's Cemetery
Foundation

610 N. Spring St.
Pensacola, FL 32501

Stamp

Celebrate with the Saints!

SATURDAY

November 5, 2016

9:00 - 10:00 am

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

Fr. Nick Schumm of St. Thomas More Catholic Church will officiate