

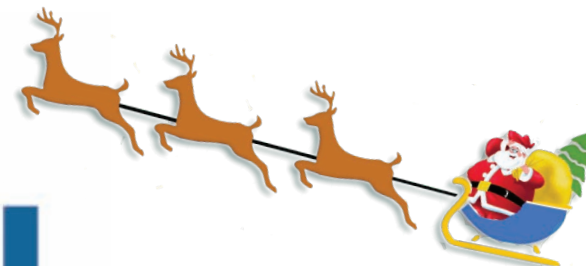
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December 2025

Happy Holidays

# St. Augustine Beaches NEWS JOURNAL

NEWS INFORMATION FOR & ABOUT ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH & ANASTASIA ISLAND



## St. Augustine Beach and Beyond...

By Lorraine Thompson (staugbeachwatch@aol.com)

*Anastasia Island and nearby areas turn into Holiday Island this time of the year with events for all ages:*

### St. Augustine Lighthouse Nights Of Lights Celebration begins December 2 with Luminary Night.

Enjoy the magic of the holiday season at St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum's Lighthouse Illuminations: Tides, Tidings & Trees. From December 2 to January 11, two thousand luminaries will be displayed throughout the Lighthouse grounds, Lighthouse Park, the St. Augustine Yacht Club, and along Red Cox Road. from 6-9 pm

During the season, the Lighthouse, keeper's house, and museum grounds will be decorated with festive garland, twinkling lights and holiday décor. Twenty-one themed Christmas trees are placed around the grounds and in the building. Each tree has a unique twist—such as the "Old Florida Tree," the "Nutcracker Folklore Tree," the "Sweet Treats Tree," and the "Vintage Toys Tree."



ST. AUGUSTINE  
LIGHTHOUSE  
& MARITIME MUSEUM

The event offers the opportunity to capture family and group photos, climb the lighthouse, and view the lighted displays throughout the property and, weather permitting, view the downtown Nights of Lights. (Note: Lighthouse climbers must be at least 44 inches tall).

Throughout the celebration, there will be yuletide musical performances by local student choirs and community groups throughout the property and in various exhibit spaces, kids' crafts, painting, and games. Food and beverages will be available for purchase at the Tin Pickle Café located on the premises.

The Lighthouse is located on Anastasia Island at 100 Red Cox Road. Admission to the holiday events is \$26.95 for adults and teens, \$24.95 for seniors, and \$22.95 for children 12 and younger. On-site parking is free. For more information and to order tickets visit [www.staugustinelighthouse.org](http://www.staugustinelighthouse.org) or call 904-829-0745.

### Wednesday, December 10--Christmas Cops and Claus--

The St. Augustine Beach Police Department will host children (with a parent or an adult) at a meet-and-greet Santa and Mrs. Santa Claus festivity from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The Christmas with Cops and Claus event is part of a national effort to foster police/community relationships, to present a positive image of the SABPD with local and visiting children as well as a welcome environment for families and children. Activities will include free photos with Santa, goodie bags for children along with seasonal music, arts and crafts, visits to fire trucks and police vehicles and more. Children can bring their letters to Santa to deposit in a North Pole Christmas mailbox. The Police Department is located at 2300



A1A South. For information call 471-3600. continued on page 5)



## New Year's Light Up the Night!

St. Augustine Beach's New Year's Eve Light Up the Night fireworks show begins at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 31, at the St. Johns County Ocean Pier. There will not be a pre-show festival this year. Fireworks viewing spots include three designated areas along A1A Beach Boulevard. A free shuttle service will operate from 5 to 10 p.m. from Anastasia Baptist Church to the three viewing locations on the beach.

Park and walk locations include: YMCA, 500 Pope Road (after 1:00 p.m.); St. Augustine Beach Pier (limited parking); St. Augustine Beach City Hall; Ron Parker Park; Anastasia Square Lot, close to Pope Road. (Do not park in the area designated for Amici's Restaurant). Beach driving and parking will be allowed south of A Street.

From the Island to the Mainland—Happy Holidays!

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From our gallery, to your home, we wish each of you a very Happy Holiday Season!

As the gift giving season begins, you may once again be asking yourself, “What do I get for someone who has everything?” or “How do I find a present that is surprising, thoughtful, unique and will last a lifetime?” Answer: Perhaps you should consider the gift of a unique piece of art! Whether it’s an original piece from a world renown artist, or a limited edition from a local artist who has painted a meaningful local theme, our gallery has lots of options. We’d love you to stop in and see if something grabs your attention. We might even have the spiced cider warmed up and waiting!



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St. Augustine, FL 32086  
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Publisher/Editor  
(904) 607-1410  
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City Manager Max Royle[www.staugbch.com](http://www.staugbch.com)  
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- Anastasia Library
- St. Johns County Pier Park
- YMCA
- Main Library
- Southeast Library

The purpose of the St. Augustine Beaches News Journal LLC is to serve neighborhoods of St. Augustine Beach and other communities on Anastasia Island.

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

Information and ads should be received by the 15th of the month in order to appear in the following month's issue. Articles or information may be sent to the Beaches News Journal, 2465 US1 South PMB #8, St. Augustine Florida 32086. Information may also be e-mailed to [clifflogsdon@att.net](mailto:clifflogsdon@att.net) or [clogsdon1@yahoo.com](mailto:clogsdon1@yahoo.com).

All materials submitted to the Beaches News Journal is subject to editing. Publishing of submitted 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 Beaches News Journal.

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The Beaches News Journal is published by an independent publisher and is not affiliated with any government or agency, community development, management company or Homeowners Associations.

## St. Augustine Beach City Hall Update

The City Commission held its regular meeting on Monday, November 3, 2025, and did the following:

1. Witnessed the presentation of two Anastasia Island Environmental Stewardship Awards by Ms. Karen Candler, Chairperson of the Sustainability and Environmental Planning Advisory Committee. The awardees were Ms. Maureen Heenan, who received the Individual Non-Profit/Educational Award, and Ms. Meghan Holder, who received the Group Non-Profit/Educational Award. The Stewardship Awards give public recognition to citizens who have developed and/or promoted projects that protect environmental resources, such as trees, and the plants and animals that are at risk because of development.

2. Approved on second reading an ordinance to transmit changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan to the state, other cities and various agencies for review and comment.

3. Approved three budget resolutions to amend the Fiscal Year 2026 budget to transfer money to complete projects that were carried over from Fiscal Year 2025, which ended on September 30, 2025,

4. Approved the signing of a 50-year perpetual easement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for City-owned



properties adjacent to the beach. The easement allows the Corps to put sand on the beach in those areas to replace sand that has been eroded.

5. Rejected the one bid received for the Magnolia Dunes subdivision drainage project because the bid was above the appropriation in the City's budget.

6. Approved the bid of \$591,592 from G&H Underground Construction for Phase 1 of the Atlantic Oaks Circle drainage improvements project.

7. Approved a budget resolution to amend the Fiscal Year 2026 to appropriate \$819,371 for drainage projects.

The City Commission will hold its next regular meeting on Monday, December 1, 2025, in the Commission meeting room at City Hall, 2200 A1A South, starting at 6 p.m. The public is invited to attend or may view it on YouTube on the City's website, [staugbch.com](http://staugbch.com).

City of St. Augustine Beach  
December Commission Meeting Agenda

The St. Augustine Beach City Commission will meet on Monday, December 1, 2025, at 6 p.m. in City Hall at 2200 A1A South. Topics on the agenda may include:

1. Re-appointment of Ms. Sandra Krempasky to a three-year term on the Sustainability and Environmental Planning Advisory Committee.
2. Discussion of proposed changes to the City Charter and when to bring the changes to the voters for approval or disapproval.
3. A resolution to raise building permit and other fees,
4. Request to authorize Friday, December 26, 2025, as a holiday.
5. Election by the Commission of the Mayor and Vice Mayor for 2026.
6. Determination of Commission assignments for 2026.

The public is invited to attend or may view the meeting on YouTube on the City's website at [staugbch.com](http://staugbch.com).

## Notice from the City of St. Augustine Beach

By Max Royle, City Manager

Attention Owners of Property Bordering St. Augustine Beach. If you are thinking of a major remodeling of your property, changing its land use from residential to commercial or vice versa, or tearing down an existing building to construct a new one, the City of St. Augustine Beach can provide timely and efficient review and permitting services. The only condition is that the property will need to be annexed into the City. Persons with questions may direct them to Max Royle, City Manager, at [mroyle@cityofsab.org](mailto:mroyle@cityofsab.org), or telephone (904) 471-2122.

## St. Augustine Multiple Sclerosis Support Group

The National MS Society maintains a network of affiliated groups to provide opportunities for people living with MS to connect with others in their community. Every group is unique and welcoming — contact the group leader for more information. Join Us! We are recognized by the National MS Society and the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.

We meet every 4th Tuesday at 1:00 pm at Anastasia Library, 124 Sea Grove Main Street, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080. For information or to RSVP, contact: Anita Clark [johnita0013@gmail.com](mailto:johnita0013@gmail.com) 305- 898-1432.

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## St. Augustine Genealogical Society

The St Augustine Genealogical Society holds its monthly meeting the 2nd Saturday of each month in the Southeast Branch of the St Johns County Library. The SE Library Branch is located at 6670 US Hwy 1 South. Check in for our meetings is 12:45 and meeting starts at 1:00 PM.

Our Genealogical Society is open to all. We encourage visitors, as well as current and former members to join us. Refreshments will be served, and feel free to bring your favorite. For information visit website [StAugGenSoc.org](http://StAugGenSoc.org).

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## Alzheimer's/Dementia Caregivers Support Group

Looking for encouragement and support taking care of your loved one with Alzheimer's or Dementia? We have a place for you to share your concerns and get resources to help with your journey.

The Caregivers Support Group meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 10:00 am - 11:00 am at Homeport Christian Church, 5605 US1 South, St Augustine.

For information, call Nancy Wright 904-347-6299, Bebe Kelly 386-7793-8114 or the Alzheimer's Association 800-272-3900 or go to [alz.org/help-support/caregivers](http://alz.org/help-support/caregivers)

## 12th Annual Gullah Geechee Festival and Rails to Trails Celebration Dec. 6th

by Mary Kellough, [lkellough@comcast.net](mailto:lkellough@comcast.net)

The SEA Community Help Resource Center ([seachrc.org](http://seachrc.org)) invites everyone to their 12th Annual Gullah Geechee Festival and Rails to Trails Celebration on Dec. 6, 2025, rain or shine. Admission is free as is parking at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds in Armstrong on SR 207.

Free shuttles will run during the festival. Rails to Trails bicycling activities begin at 9 a.m. and the Gullah Geechee Festival commences at noon, ending at 5 p.m.

Come and enjoy authentic southern cooking, including low country boil, BBQ, sweet potato pie and jambalaya. Experience exciting African dancing, the Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters and regional musical talent! There will be informational booths to learn about the Gullah Geechee culture of which Armstrong is an official partner. For more information, visit [www.gullahgeecheefestival.com](http://www.gullahgeecheefestival.com)

## Families Anonymous Support Group

At your wits end? Tired of lies? Is someone you love destroying your family harmony? Families Anonymous is a free weekly meeting for mothers of addicted loved ones. We have walked your path and are here for you.

Thursdays 9-10 am, 2487 A1A S. Street, St. Augustine (Use red back door entrance) For more information to restore peace and harmony, contact 843-367-1475.

## Living with Cancer Support Group

The Living with Cancer support group has moved to Cancer Specialists of North Florida. 121 Whitehall Drive, St. Augustine 32086 on the third Wednesday of every month at 11:00 am. We still have the ability to ZOOM in if needed. This is an informal gathering for adults with any type of cancer and their caregivers.

It is open to all affected by cancer. This group will provide the opportunity to meet others in similar situations, share your stories, provide practical suggestions and offer support to each other. If you prefer to participate virtually via Zoom, please call 904-819-4793 for further instructions.

## St. Augustine Beach Democratic Club

The St Augustine Beach Democratic Club's December meeting will be our annual holiday party on Tuesday December 2, 2025 from 5:30-7:30 at Cafe 11, 501 A1A Beach Blvd (corner of 11th St) St Augustine Beach. Bring your holiday spirit and let's celebrate the recent Democratic election results and work for more positive democracy in 2026. All are invited.

The St Augustine Beach Democratic Club's focus is on current issues affecting those living in the St Augustine Beach area. Our meetings provide an excellent opportunity to hear from a variety of speakers, get to know elected representatives, mingle with Democratic candidates and socialize with our like minded neighbors. The Club's regular monthly meetings are at the Anastasia Island Branch Library, 124 Sea Grove Main Street, and will resume in 2026 at 5:30 pm on the first Tuesday of each month. There is plenty of parking available. For additional information, please contact [info@sabdem.org](mailto:info@sabdem.org).

## Garden Club of St. Augustine Educator Stipends



The GCSA is offering six educator stipends to school based teachers in St. Johns County for \$600 each for a project designed by you for your class or school which follows our pledge "to protect and preserve our natural resources by promoting education so all may become better caretakers of this earth". For information and application, please contact: [maggieweaver1951@gmail.com](mailto:maggieweaver1951@gmail.com)

Grant will begin in October and runs through April 2026. Garden Club of St. Augustine Educator Stipends

## Shelf Life

By Max Royle  
St. Augustine Beach City Manager



Do you like bananas? If so, at what "stage" do you buy them? When their skin is greenish and their interior is firm, or when they're yellow with brown spots/streaks mottling their skin, their inside soft and mushy? My preference is more green than yellow, more firm, less mush. Bananas definitely have a short shelf life, which leads us to this intriguing question: How is the career of a city or county manager sometimes like a banana?

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is the guru organization for managers in the public sector. Its estimate of the average tenure before a city/county manager may become like an overripe banana is seven years.

To clarify: Let's exclude from my banana/shelf life theme those managers who in less than seven years voluntarily move to another city for such reasons as higher pay, to be closer to family or in a more desired part of the country. My focus is on managers who are forced to leave their position.

There is no single cause for involuntary departures, though anecdotes abound that provide mushy tales indeed. For example, though difficult to believe (?), city and county managers do make mistakes and thus hasten their career to the overripe banana stage: They become romantically entangled with employees whom they supervise; or they overindulge in libations of the happy hour sort; or they're inattentive or indecisive or have poor time management skills.

Then there are darker reasons for a managerial short shelf life: stealing the public's money, misusing the position for other personal advantage, abusing authority, treating employees disrespectfully, not communicating timely with city commissioners and citizens.

Finally, there are reasons, even darker, that are related to egos, personalities, power games and malevolent forces that may lurk in the human psyche. These reasons can be the most morale destroying for a manager and his/her family because they often are the most inexplicable. Sometimes competent managers, who adhere to the highest professional standards and have a record of exemplary service, are fired for the flimsiest of reasons: The commission decides the city/county needs to move in "a different direction" (though the manager is perfectly capable of reading a compass and following directions); the manager's "style" (work, speaking, writing, hair, whatever) displeases the city's movers and shakers; the manager's efforts to make operations efficient also make unhappy those resistant to change; elections bring new commission majorities that are liberal or conservative, pro-growth or anti-growth, and the manager must summarily be expelled to cleanse the city or county of the previous commission's taint.

Yet, despite the risk of occupational short shelf life, men and women continue to become city or county managers. Why? Are they masochists who enjoy having their tenure hastened to overripe banana stage? No. They're attracted to a unique occupation. It allows them to merge their personal values and idealism with the ethical practices of public service to achieve results that benefit the citizens they serve. There are few careers more satisfying and fulfilling.

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## St. Augustine Beach and Beyond...

By Lorraine Thompson (staugbeachwatch@aol.com)

(continued from page 1)

### Santa Suits on the Loose!

14th Annual Santa Suits on the Loose 5K run/jog/walk starts at 8 a.m., Saturday, December 13th, hundreds of runners of all ages, some dressed in colorful Santa suits and holiday garb, will dart through the streets of St. Augustine Beach. The 14th Annual Santa Suits on the Loose 5K run begins at St. Johns County Beach Pier Park, 350 A1A Beach Boulevard, follows a flat 3.1 mile area through St. Augustine Beach neighborhoods and finishes at Pier Park. Runners, walkers, and joggers are welcome to participate. The run, sometimes referred to as "The Merriest Race in Northeast Florida," will benefit the St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS).



The first one hundred to register will receive a Santa suit. After that, participants will receive a Santa-themed t-shirt. All finishers will receive medals. Registration fee is \$35. For registration and other information visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/>

### Holiday Market at the Pier

Holiday Market at the Pier, 3 to 7 p.m., Saturday, December 13th, will feature unique and locally created gift items along with tasty foods--all in a colorful holiday atmosphere. The event at St. Augustine Beach Pier Park, 350 A1A Beach Boulevard, offers one-of-a-kind gifts, seasonal treats, art, jewelry and more. For information visit <https://www.staugbch.com/events/page/holiday-market-pier> or call 904-471-2122 X112.

### Holiday in the Gardens

Washington Oak Gardens State Park will host Holiday in the Gardens from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 13th. The event will feature music, food trucks, arts and crafts vendors and a visit from Santa. The Greenhouse and Gift Shop will offer holiday gifts for sale. Admission is free. Parking is \$5 per vehicle. Donations of non-perishable food and toys for local families will be welcome. The park is located at 6400 N. Oceanshore Boulevard in Palm Coast. Visit [www.washingtonoaks.org](http://www.washingtonoaks.org) for more information.

## St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve Putnam County's Elf's For Kids

by Jane Villa-Lobos

The St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve is participating in Putnam County's Elf's For Kids this holiday season. This charitable organization distributes toys to underprivileged children in the Palatka area.

Please bring an unwrapped toy to St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve by December 12th. Participants who bring one toy will receive one free admission to the garden. The garden is open Thursday – Monday 10 a.m. to 5p.m. Entrance gate closes at 4 p.m. The garden is located at 8310 County Rd. 13 South, Hastings, FL 32145. Thank you for bringing joy to children during the holiday season.

## Community Hospice & Palliative Care

by Michelle Cardinal, michelle.cardinal@aliviacare.com



Community Hospice & Palliative Care welcome families and friends to its 35th Annual Tree of Life and Candlelight Service of Remembrance on Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, at the Stephen R. Chapman Family Community Campus, 1355 U.S.

Highway 1 South, St. Augustine, FL 32084. Prelude music begins at 5:45 p.m., followed by the remembrance service at 6 p.m.

This year's Tree of Life will feature trees adorned with ribbons dedicated to loved ones, including special trees recognizing Community Hospice's youngest patients and children from across the community. Guests are encouraged to bring a photo of their loved one to place on the memory table as part of the evening's reflection and tribute.

Attendees may personalize up to four memorial ribbons during registration. The event is free and open to the public. By participating, supporters help advance Community Hospice & Palliative Care's mission to provide compassionate, comprehensive care for patients and their families across the region. On-site parking will be available, with overflow parking and a shuttle service provided. In addition, a live stream will be available for those who cannot attend in person, allowing the community to share the experience from anywhere.

We were established in 1979, Community Hospice & Palliative Care is an innovative national leader in palliative and hospice care, as well as providing programs and services to meet the diverse needs of the communities it serves. During its 46-year history, through the support of more than 1,000 employees and 1,000 volunteers, the organization helps approximately 1,500 patients per day to live better with advanced illness – at home, in long-term care and assisted living facilities, in hospitals and at its 10 inpatient care centers. No one is ever denied care due to an inability to pay. To learn more about the support and services of Community Hospice & Palliative Care, visit [CommunityHospice.com](http://CommunityHospice.com).

## Want to help your community? Altrusa Club is the answer.

by Linda Herrera

Altrusa International of St. Augustine, Inc. was organized in April 1959 and chartered in 1962. We are part of Altrusa's District 3 which covers the southern states of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Altrusa comes from the word altruism—which means an unselfish regard for the welfare of others. That's what Altrusa is all about, women and men using their talents and skills to benefit others in their community and throughout the world.

Some of our current projects include: A scholarship program for students in transition attending local colleges, an ASTRA Club at St Johns Academy, and the Sebastian Segui Books and Backpack Project through which all children residing with the Homeless Coalition of St Johns County receive a new backpack on their birthday. We expanded this project to celebrate the birthdays of the guests at Port in the Storm, a shelter for homeless young adults. We give books to children in partnership with the St. Johns County School District's Early Childhood Services Department.

Our club has many other service projects with a focus on literacy in the local area. We are a nonprofit organization and rely on donations and fundraising to support our projects. We meet on the third Thursday evening of each month. Please come join us. You'll make wonderful friends, do good work and have some great fun! For more information visit: [www.altrusastaugustine.org](http://www.altrusastaugustine.org) or call Chris at 904-217-2128.

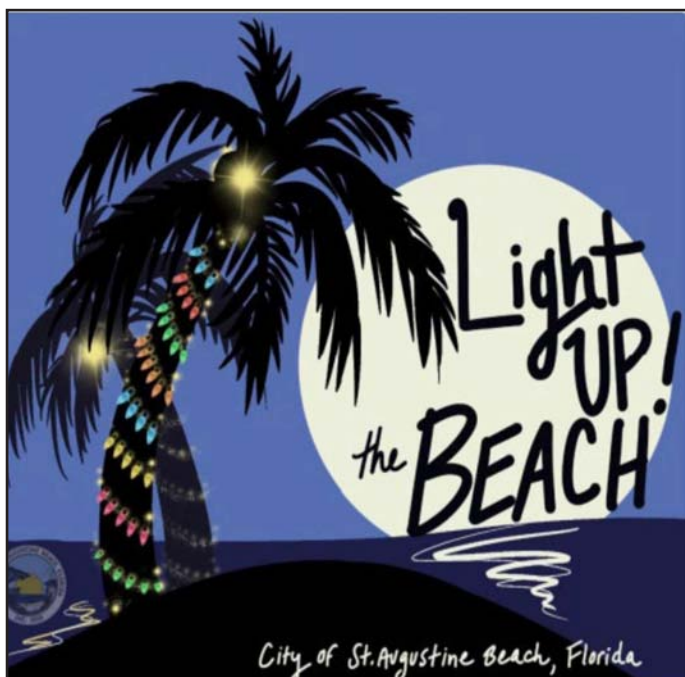
## St Augustine Beach Community Garden

This is an excellent time of year to be planting a garden in Florida. The organic St Augustine Beach Community Garden at Ron Parker Park currently has a limited number of boxes available for new members who are serious about gardening and wish to join a community of gardeners. Newbies are welcome.

For \$40 a year you get a 4' x 11' box, organic fertilizer, compost, water and the use of tools--as well as occasional potlucks. If you have no land to garden or your property is too shaded for good gardening, and you are itching to watch things grow, please consider joining.

Go to St Augustine Beach Community Garden on Facebook and click the "Sign Up" button. The Membership Chair will then contact you with more information.

Also, if you find yourself with bags of leaves, or wood chips, the garden is in need of them. Please leave bagged leaves near the front gate and they will be used for producing compost.



### City of St Augustine Beach UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Christmas with Cops and Claus**  
December 10th - 5:30 – 7:30 PM  
At City Hall
- **Holiday Market at the Pier**  
December 13th - 3:00 – 7:00PM
- **Light Up the Night!**  
December 31st - 8:30 – 10:30PM  
At Pier Park



## St. Augustine Travel Club - Peter Dytrych

Our next gathering is December 17, 2025 at 3:00 pm at the Southeast Branch Public Library, 6670 US 1 South.

We will feature European Christmas Markets. Experience some of this more than 500 years old tradition in Europe. Christmas markets are set up in town squares, selling holiday ornaments and gifts, food and hot gluhwein. Visit old Christmas markets in Vienna and Salzburg in Austria then those in Passau, Regensburg and Nuremberg in Germany.

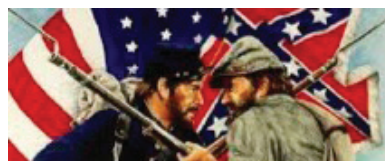
The St. Augustine Travel Club is open to all residents and no registration is required. The program is formatted as arm-chair travel, meaning a brief lecture of the destination we cover, along with a video. We look forward to seeing our regulars and newcomers! Any questions, please call Peter at 904-797-3736

## Interested in the Civil War?

Please join our Civil War Discussion Group. Our next presentation will be Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 1pm, at the Anastasia Branch library in Sea Grove.

The December presentation will be with Len Whiteside, titled "Trading with the Enemy – Cotton". We will examine the legal and illegal trade between the North and South during the Civil War and the resulting greed and corruption that ensued.

For questions or comments, please contact Len Whiteside at armyfam831@gmail.com



## St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church Christmas Events

St. Augustine Shores United Methodist Church, 724 Shores Boulevard, St. Augustine, Florida invites you to join us:

- **Christmas Sing-A-Long December 20, 2025, 2-4pm.** A festive celebration making a joyful noise that resonates with the Spirit of togetherness and devotion!
- **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services December 24, 2025-4:00pm.** Traditional, 6:00 pm Contemporary

## "Wreaths Across America" December 13th at St. Augustine National Cemetery

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is again participating in the Wreaths Across America event. The goal and our commitment as it has been each year is to place a fresh holiday wreath at each headstone in the St. Augustine National Cemetery on Marine Street.

Begun in 1992 when the first wreaths were donated to Arlington National Cemetery by Morrill Worchester, Wreaths Across America has grown to a national event with a ceremony and wreath laying accomplished at the same time and same date at every National cemetery across the Nation. This year's theme is "Keep Moving Forward" and the event will be on Saturday, December 13 at 12 noon. Many thanks to those who have supported this event providing honor with wreaths again on all 2,788 interred veterans.



## Sheriff's Update

By St. Johns County Sheriff Robert A. Hardwick

## Happy Holidays from SJSO



On behalf of Kendell and I, and the men and women of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, we hope this Christmas season is full of opportunities to spend time with loved ones while making holiday memories. Your safety is a priority to us and deputies will be out in full force enforcing traffic and other laws. Merry Christmas and God bless you and your family.

Please reach out to me if I can be of assistance. You can email me at sheriff@sjso.org. For the most up to date information, find us on social media. @teamsjs on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter).

## Help Support Marine Science Education — Donate Furniture to Florida Water Warriors

by Rick Watts

We are reaching out on behalf of Florida Water Warriors, a community-based organization that inspires youth to become the next generation of marine scientists. Our students venture out onto the harbor to perform real-world environmental research — measuring water clarity with Secchi disks, testing salinity and temperature, and counting phytoplankton through microscopes. Their findings are uploaded to global databases that help scientists monitor the health of waterways around the world to continue providing a safe and engaging learning environment for our young scientists, we're currently seeking donations of gently used furniture for our new community center that will be used for public workshops and community meetings as well as an education and lab space for the youths we serve.

Items we're especially in need of include:

- 10 Sturdy folding tables
- 30 Sturdy folding chairs
- 3 Storage cabinets
- 2 Office desks with chairs
- 1 Digital microscope
- 1 Estuary model diorama from Enviroscapes.com

Your donation will directly support hands-on marine science education — giving students a space to learn, collaborate, and connect their discoveries to real-world conservation efforts.

- All donations are tax-deductible
- We can arrange local pick-up
- Every contribution helps keep our program thriving

If you have items to donate or would like to give money to assist our cause please contact us at: 904-827-7728, flwwarriors@gmail.com



## Ancient City Christmas Daily from November 28 to December 21



Get ready for the most amazing Christmas festival in Northeast Florida! Ancient City Farmstead is thrilled to bring the 2nd Annual Christmas Experience to St. Augustine, Florida -- a holiday spectacle so packed with family fun that you're liable to find yourself on the naughty list! Come see the region's tallest decorated Christmas tree, Santa's Workshop, and even skate on a synthetic ice skating rink! [www.ancientcitychristmas.com/](http://www.ancientcitychristmas.com/)

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**St. Augustine South Improvement Association**  
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**10 am - 2 pm**  
**at the SASIA Clubhouse**  
 709 Royal Road, 32086

**Shop and support local artists**

Over 40 vendors with unique wares for sale.



## Marineland to Live On

By Lorraine Thompson

The bankruptcy case that could have resulted in the closing of the historic Marineland Dolphin Adventure was decided on November 12 when a federal judge approved the sale of the facility to #1 Apex Association LLC. for \$6.5 Million ending months of wrangling. The company, owned by Jon and Barbara Rubel of Clay County, Florida, is expected to take full control of the park by Dec. 5.

#1 Apex plans are to keep the park, known as the world's first oceanarium, in full operation. Without going into details about the back and forth bankruptcy procedures, here's a bit of history and information about the Marineland facility:

The oceanfront property in the City of Marineland is located between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway on 125 acres off A1A south of St. Johns County.

Marineland Dolphin Adventures' former parent company, Cancun based The Dolphin Company, filed for bankruptcy in March 2025, six years after purchasing the property. The Marineland adventure has become an important part of local history, a tourist draw, as well as an educational location that has established cherished memories for thousands, if not millions, of locals and visitors through the years.

Marineland opened on June 23, 1938 as an underwater film studio and eventually became the world's first oceanarium and the premier site for marine research.

The first dolphin ever to be trained, Flippy, was trained at Marineland in 1949. The first dolphin to be born under human care, Spray, was born in 1947. Visitors fondly remember Nellie who was born on February 27, 1953. Nellie thrilled visitors with her high jumps and jesters in the daily Marineland shows for 63 years and left her son and grandson to continue in the shows.

"Revenge of the Creature," "Benji Takes a Dive," "Berne the Dolphin," are just a few of the movies that were filmed at Marineland.

In addition to entertaining visitors, Marineland is also credited for its conservation efforts that led to the establishment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

It's the memories that visitors to Marineland still hold dear. Many recall the "face to face" encounters with dolphins which can weigh several hundred pounds.

### GETTING PERSONAL--

Back in 2013 we took our granddaughter and other family members who were visiting from Denver, to the dolphin show as a 13th birthday celebration for Amalia.

"The day that I went to Marineland is one of the favorite memories from my childhood," Amalia recalls. "I had always been fond of dolphins but in a land-locked state it almost felt like they were some mythical animals. When I went to Marineland and saw a dolphin in the flesh for the first time, I was blown away," she admitted.



Amalia Thompson, 2013 encounter with a dolphin, Marineland

"I could not get over how adorable and happy they were to be there! I met Hemingway, who was two at the time, and I got to play with him in the water and feed him fish. I was so happy and could not believe I was face to face with a real dolphin. Afterwards, I bought his fluke necklace and wore it every day in elementary school."

Amalia, now age 20, is in her third year at Santa Clara University (California) and is working on a

double major in Public Health Science and Biology.

### MARINELAND CONTACT INFORMATION

As of this writing, Marineland is open from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesdays to Sundays. For more information, including admission and show fees and times, call 407-563-4701 or visit [Marineland.net](http://Marineland.net).



Celebrate the Holidays with us while we present our Holiday Show and Sale at The Art Studio with the Opening during the First Friday Art Walk, December 6th from 5:00pm-8:00pm and then All Month Long! The Studio will be filled with unique and affordable art for you and someone you care about. Show someone you're thinking of them as you choose a one of a kind piece. Give the Gift of Art! Tell them they're Special, shop and save yourself a lot of time & hassle. Great gifts for Christmas, Hanukah, or for any Occasion. Pick an ornament or two, or three! Right off of our Tree for as low as \$1.00. Choose a "Stocking Stuffer" or a large painting and everything in between. If you can't decide what they will like, we also offer Gift Cards. Make a new Tradition at The Art Studio.



Don't Forget to Ring in the New Year as we are Open Late to celebrate New Year's Eve. Come and join us for some Hot Cider and some snacks while waiting for the Fireworks which will start promptly at 8:30pm to "Light Up the Beach"!

The Art Studio is located at 370 A1A Beach Blvd. in the St. John's County Pier Park and is open 7 days a week from 12pm to 5pm. We are a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit organization that brings Art and Culture to the community and offers classes, special events, exhibitions and rental space. For more information please visit [www.beachartstudio.org](http://www.beachartstudio.org), Facebook or call 904-295-4428.



## St. Augustine Community Chorus

### "A joyful celebration of the season"

The St. Augustine Community Chorus is delighted to present our annual Christmas concert, Rejoice! — a joyful celebration of the season. From soulful spirituals to timeless classics, this year's program highlights American composers in honor of the upcoming America 250, with a touch of British tradition (and, of course, Handel).

- Saturday, Dec. 20 at 7:30 PM
- Sunday, Dec. 21 at 2:00 PM
- The Cathedral Basilica, 38 Cathedral Place, downtown St. Augustine

Enjoy an evening of festive cheer, glorious harmonies, and special collaborations with the Gainesville Brass Quintet and the St. Augustine Youth Chorus. Let the music of the season lift your spirit — and together we'll all... Rejoice!

Tickets available now at [StAugustineCommunityChorus.org](http://StAugustineCommunityChorus.org).

<https://www.staugustinecommunitychorus.org/#upcoming>

<https://www.zeffy.com/embed/ticketing/christmas--2025?modal=true>

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## Christmas FANTASTIQUE - December 6th & 7th Lewis Auditorium, St. Augustine

*The Nutcracker like no other!*



Olivia Budd as Clara and Emmett Kelly as the Nutcracker Prince

Christmas FANTASTIQUE will be presented on Saturday, December 6th at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 7th at 1:00 p.m. at Lewis Auditorium, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine, Florida.

Now in its fifth season, the original production from Zoika's Dance tells the classic holiday story of "The Nutcracker" through the exhilarating language of dance, featuring ballet and contemporary dance styles including tap, hip hop, jazz, contemporary, and acro dance.

Professional dancers, acrobats, and magicians join young, local dancers on stage for the holiday extravaganza, thrilling for audiences of all ages. Tickets range from \$23 to \$38, and may be purchased online at [www.zoikadance.com](http://www.zoikadance.com).

Zoika's Dance is a comprehensive dance school in St. Augustine, Florida, that offers beginner to advanced classes in dance, as well as a wide range performance opportunities. To learn more, visit their website at [www.zoikadance.com](http://www.zoikadance.com).

## Matanzas Riverkeeper's 12th Anniversary Oyster Roast

Join us for an unforgettable evening celebrating the Guana, Tolomato, Matanzas (GTM) Estuary and Watershed at the Matanzas Riverkeeper's 12th Anniversary Oyster Roast!



It's more than just a party—it's a vital gathering for fellow river enthusiasts, neighbors, and friends who share a passion for our local environment. Come honor another year of essential work protecting and preserving our beloved waterways.

Enjoy a lively evening featuring: Delicious Locally Sourced Shellfish including Oysters and Clams, Johnny Barnes' Clam Chowder, Live Music, Breathtaking Sunset Views overlooking the estuary.

Gather your friends for a night of camaraderie, inspiration, and delicious food! Come celebrate the strides we've made and look forward to the important work that lies ahead. Every oyster you shuck and every cheer you raise directly supports our mission. By attending, you play an essential role in safeguarding the health of the GTM estuary and watershed for future generations. Don't miss out on this special night—your support makes a difference! For tickets and information contact: Silas Tanner at: [Silas@matanzasriverkeeper.org](mailto:Silas@matanzasriverkeeper.org)

Thursday, December 4, 2025, 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Genung's Fish Camp, 291 Cubbedge Rd Saint Augustine, FL 32080

<https://www.matanzasriverkeeper.org>

## 12th Annual Gullah Geechee Festival and Rails to Trails Celebration

by mary kellough

The SEA Community Help Resource Center ([seachrc.org](http://seachrc.org)) invites everyone to their 12th Annual Gullah Geechee Festival and Rails to Trails Celebration on December 6, 2025, rain or shine.

Admission is free as is parking at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds on SR 207. Free shuttles will run during the festival. Rails to Trails bicycling activities begin at 9 a.m. and the Gullah Geechee Festival commences at noon, ending at 5 p.m.

Come and enjoy authentic southern cooking, including low country boil, BBQ, sweet potato pie and jambalaya. Experience exciting African dancing, the Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters and regional musical talent! There will be informational booths to learn about the Gullah Geechee culture of which Armstrong is an official partner. For more information, visit [www.gullahgeecheefestival.com](http://www.gullahgeecheefestival.com)

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## December 2025 Newsletter St. Augustine Film Society

### “Paris 36” - Sunday, December 7th

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2487 A1A S, St. Augustine, FL 32080.  
Doors Open at 3:30PM. Film Begins at 4:00PM.

"Paris 36" (French: Faubourg 36) is a nostalgic, music-infused drama set in working-class Paris during the turbulent spring of 1936, a time characterized by political upheaval, labor activism, and rising social extremism. In an era colored by leftist victories and the looming threat of fascism, stage manager Pigoil and his friends attempt to reclaim their beloved Chansonie theatre by staging a new musical revue with the hope of restoring their fortunes and changing their destinies.

### Flagler Senior Thesis Short Film Showing - Tuesday December 9th

Limelight Blackbox, 11 Old Mission Ave, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

Doors Open at 6:00PM. Films Begin at 6:30 PM.

Flagler College partnering with the St. Augustine Film Society for the annual Senior Thesis film showing. Flagler Digital Media Production and Cinematic Arts students will premiere their short films. Q&A with the students to follow the showings!

### “Deaf Santa” - Wednesday December 17th at the Limelight Theatre

11 Old Mission Ave, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

Doors Open at 6:30PM. Films Begin at 7:00PM.

“Deaf Santa” Even the Most Magical Man in the World Can be Deaf. He laughs, signs, listens, and understands in a way only someone who’s lived the Deaf experience can. For some kids, he’s the first Santa Claus they can truly talk to. For parents, it’s a moment they will never forget. With an uncanny resemblance to the icon himself, Charles Graves chases his dream of becoming a professional Deaf Santa Claus. Filmmakers chronicle Charles and his family as he attends Santa school and enlists the support of others in an attempt to better provide for his loved ones. Director Anthony Mowl will lead Q & A.

## The Friends of the Anastasia Island Branch Library (FAIBL)

by Mollie Meikle

The Friends of the Anastasia Island wish everyone a joyous holiday season and great books for the new year! We do not meet in December, but invite everyone to our annual member meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2026 at the Anastasia Island Branch Library. All are welcome!

And while you're looking ahead to 2026, mark our next sale dates on your calendar: March 6 and 7 at the Anastasia Island Branch.

To sign up for our newsletter and email alerts, or to learn more about Friends of Anastasia Island Branch Library, please email us at [anastasiaislandfaibl@gmail.com](mailto:anastasiaislandfaibl@gmail.com).

## Financial Focus

Information Provided by

Edward Jones

Cory Caplinger CFP



### Managing risk at different stages of life

As an investor, you will always need to deal with risk of some kind. How can you manage the risk that accompanies the volatility of the financial markets? The answer depends somewhat on where you are in life.

When you’re starting out ... If you’re early in your career, with perhaps four or five decades until you retire, you can likely afford to invest primarily for growth, which also means you’ll be taking on a higher level of risk – because risk and reward are positively correlated. But, given your age, you will have time to overcome the market downturns that are both inevitable and a normal part of investing. Still, even at this stage, being over-aggressive can be costly.

When you’re in the “middle stages” ... At this time of your life, you’re possibly well along in your career and working on at least a couple of financial goals, such as saving for retirement and your children’s college education. You’ll want to begin adjusting the balance in your portfolio between assets with higher growth and those with lower growth since there will be progressively less time to rebuild losses. You’ll need to decide on the balance between risk and growth that’s right for you.

When you’re a few years from retirement ... You may have already achieved some key goals – perhaps your children have finished college and you’ve paid off your mortgage. As a result, you may have more money available to put away for retirement. Growth still matters because your retirement could be 25 or 30 years long, and you’ll need investments that can keep up with inflation. But you’ll also need investments designed to help provide for your income needs in retirement and provide more stability. Also consider reducing your exposure to higher-risk investments and instead consider investing more in stable dividend-paying stocks, government and investment-grade bonds, and cash.

When you’re retired ... Once you’re retired, you might think you should take no risks at all with substantial assets held in cash. However, you could spend two or three decades in retirement, so you may need some growth potential in your portfolio to stay ahead of inflation. A more balanced mix between equities and fixed income is generally appropriate. Establishing a withdrawal rate that’s appropriate for your lifestyle and projected longevity can help reduce the risk of outliving your money. Of course, if there’s an extended market downturn during any time of your retirement, you may want to temporarily lower your withdrawal rate.

Managing investment risk is a lifelong process that evolves with your goals, responsibilities and time horizon. While you’ll look for balance among your investments based on your life stage, having a balanced and diversified portfolio doesn’t fully protect against a loss. Still, aligning your strategy with your stage of life can help navigate market volatility and stay on track toward long-term success while avoiding emotional investment decisions. The key is staying informed and making intelligent choices that reflect your current income needs and future aspirations.

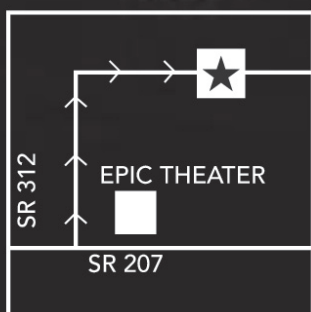
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## Medicare Part B Premium Expected to Top \$200 a Month in 2026

Carol Bogart, Palencia Resident  
904-648-6488  
Carol@AskCarolB.com

Medicare Part B premiums are projected to jump 11.6% next year, rising \$21.50 to \$206.50 monthly, according to Medicare trustees. The annual deductible would increase 12% to \$288, up \$31 from 2025's Part B deductible of \$257..

These increases—roughly double the 2024-2025 rate—could strain seniors on fixed incomes already facing high food, housing, and energy costs.

"It's the persistent high costs that [are] presenting a significant challenge, especially for those who are on fixed incomes," says Shannon Benton, Executive Director of The Senior Citizens League.

## Higher-Income Beneficiaries Face Additional IRMAA Surcharges

Higher-income Medicare beneficiaries will pay Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts (IRMAA) surcharges on top of standard premiums, based on their 2024 Modified Adjusted Gross Income. Projected 2026 IRMAA brackets show individuals earning more than \$109,000 and couples filing jointly earning more than \$218,000 will pay additional Part B surcharges ranging from \$82.60 to \$495.60 monthly.

Part D prescription drug IRMAA surcharges are projected to range from \$14.50 to \$91.00 monthly for the same income brackets. The IRMAA operates as a "cliff" surcharge—exceeding an income threshold by even one dollar triggers higher premiums for the entire year..

The Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund, which finances Part B services, receives no payroll tax revenue. Premiums are calculated annually to prevent shortfalls, but higher anticipated spending drives increases.

Healthcare inflation typically outpaces general inflation due to expensive new drugs, medical technology advances, and increased service use by an aging population with more chronic conditions.

### Medicare Annual Enrollment 10/15/25 - 12/7/25

Medicare Plan reviews are free and there is no obligation to enroll. I urge you to revisit your drug plans each year. I can discuss 2026 plans beginning 10/1.



*Ask*  
**Carol B**

### Health Insurance Enrollment 11/1/25-12/15/25

You can enroll, switch plans, or re-enroll in your current Marketplace plan. I would love to help you personally find the right plan to fit your needs.

**Carol Bogart**

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## Christmas Eve on Anastasia Island (with a visit to Marineland!)

'Twas the night before Christmas, and oh what a sight  
As Anastasia Island wildlife settled down for the night.

The beach mice burrowed down deep in the sand  
Snuggled close to marsh rabbits who shared the same land.

The right whales arrived from the Bay of Fundy  
With hopes that their calves would be born by Sunday.

While down on the dunes near the Ocean Trace ramp

Tortoises nestled 'neath the bright moon lamp.

Exotic birds were flocking to the Alligator Farm

High above reptilians who kept them from harm.

Maximo—crocodilian king of them all

slept comfortably next to his own royal wall.

The animals nestled all snug in their beds,  
while visions of tasty treats danced in their heads.

Then out near the lighthouse there rose such a clatter,  
the animals startled and started to chatter

They all looked above and they understood why,  
as the Lighthouse lens turned to brighten their sky

Flying south overhead in a V formation,

Pelican Pete and pals were off to vacation.

Canadian geese joined— a boisterous crew.

And they honked and whistled as they flapped and flew.

"We're heading to Marineland," said one of the birds.

"We're visiting sweet Nellie," he tweeted his words.

Anastasia Island was below to their right.

As the Matanzas Inlet soon came into sight.

They flew over the bridge then cruised down to find  
What the twelve famous dolphins had on their mind.

The dolphins were sleeping with one eye open wide.

As the birds flew in closer and slowed down their ride.

Pete gave out a holler and called them by name.

They roused from their slumber and joined in the game.

Hi Chubby and Sunny, and there's Betty, too

Whoa Alvin and Tomo, now I see you!

Dazzle, you sparkle with Pebbles and Roxy,

Casique and Toco you're looking quite foxy.

And hola Aqe!

All appeared except the Grand Queen.

Then, as if on cue, Nellie splashed to the scene.

At sixty-one years old she's a lively old girl,

with a big happy grin and her fin in a curl.

The fun loving dolphins jumped high in the air,

while Pete and his friends flew in circles with flare.

With all of the flips, the flaps, and the flurry,

No one was ready to leave in a hurry.

The party went on till the clock struck eleven  
when a movement above brought their eyes toward heaven.

Santa was passing with reindeer pulling his sleigh  
as bright twinkling stars and the moon lit their way.

The birds all agreed it was time for goodbye.

But first they had something important to say.

Up, up and away in their V formation,

they headed north from their fun-filled vacation.

And they tweeted loudly so islanders could hear,

"Merry Christmas to all, and a Happy New Year!"

*Poem by Lorraine Thompson in collaboration with  
Frances Keiser, co-author of the Pelican Pete children's  
book series. Art work by Hugh Keiser (est. 2013)*



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