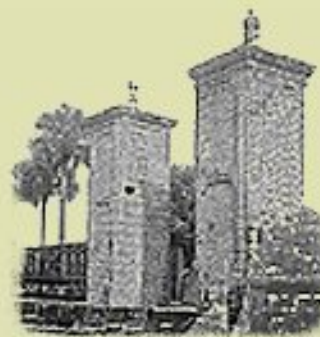




# THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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## Plan Board to look at short term rentals

Provisions to register short term rentals in residential districts and prohibit large gatherings will be considered by our Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) at today's monthly meeting. The board meets the first Tuesday each month at 2 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall.

Also on the agenda: a prohibition on further outside mechanical equipment for vehicle repair.

City Commissioner Leanna Freeman brought to our City Commission Abbott Tract residents' concerns about large gatherings in that neighborhood - apparent short term rental properties being used for such as wedding receptions. Commissioners referred it to PZB, which examines and makes recommendations to the commission on potential planning or zoning legislation.

The potential ban on further establishment of outside units like lifts for vehicle repair was prompted as commissioners look to a city beautiful for our upcoming commemorations.



## Skyscraper billboards

Big - as in billboards and money - won out in a hotly debated proposal before Miami commissioners last week.

Big, as in 500-foot billboards hovering over downtown pedestrians - and traffic. Big, as in \$2.2 million a year for cash-strapped Miami, facing a \$20 million shortfall this year and \$100 million in 2011.

## It *does* get cool in our city

Max Bloomfield, in his 1882 *History of St. Augustine*, records "In January, 1766, the thermometer sank to 26° above zero. The only snow-storm remembered was during the winter of 1774; the inhabitants spoke and thought of it as the 'white rain.'

"But the coldest weather ever known in Florida or St. Augustine was in February, 1835, when the thermometer sank to 7° above zero, and the St. John's River froze several rods from the shore.

"This freeze proved a great injury to St. Augustine, for it killed every fruit tree in the city, and deprived the majority of the people of their only income. The older inhabitants still remark, that the freeze of 1835 cost most of them their all."

Henry Flagler, both a philanthropist and hard-headed businessman, encouraged and financed settlement of farmers and grove-tenders along the way as he spread his interests through railroads down Florida's east coast. When a killing freeze hit in the mid 1890s, he bolstered those settlers not with handouts but with loans to reestablish themselves - and keep his Florida dream alive.



Snow in St. Augustine, 1953

Developer Mark Siffin plans twin electronic towers, a parking garage they will sit on, and, ultimately, a retail center with outdoor cafes on Biscayne Boulevard. The Miami [Herald](#) has the story.

*Photo: Artist rendering of billboards*

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February 3, 1953, a dusting of snow was captured on film at Ripley's Museum on San Marco Avenue. Chief Librarian Jess May at our St. Augustine Historical Society assures us "we have an entire exhibit on the snow" if anyone would like to cool off.

December 24, 1989, freezing rain fell on our city. For the Gardner family as newcomers (from Vermont, yet), it was memorable. We had yet to install heat and air at 46 Charlotte Street, and Sally's mom was visiting for the weekend. Memorable was Jack Cabbage, then assistant city manager, shoveling sand from the back of a city truck at the west end of the Bridge of Lions.

Historic records to help us through our current weather.

*Photo: [Henry Hird](#)*

## Elections 2010 - Three City Commission seats

One City Commission race in the August 24 primary and two or three more November 2 face city voters as Elections 2010 get under way.

City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline faces two opponents in the primary, consultant Chuck Hennessey and courier Dutch Register. The primary will decide the two candidates for the November election, unless one gets more than 50 percent of the vote for automatic election to office.

In the general election, incumbent Mayor Joe Boles is challenged by Don Heine, while two candidates seek retiring Commissioner Don Crichlow's seat - Bill Leary and Michael Gold.

Three of our City Commission's five seats are up for election every two years - the mayor, who has a two-year seat, and two of the four commissioners.

## More creative ideas for 450th

One reader submits a bevy of creative ideas for our 450<sup>th</sup> commemoration, ranging from recreation of the original settlement to Pete Seeger singing protest songs of the 1960s.

- Work with Florida Memorial College to develop the old campus site as the original St. Augustine. It would be an educational site befitting the college's tax exempt status as an educational institution.
- Work with [Full Sail College](#) in Orlando to produce and promote a wide variety of media on St. Augustine.
- Create an "Old News" newspaper, with news of each week in history - a kind of "You are there" format.
- Create blogs by St. Augustine residents, on events and day to day at different periods of our city's history.
- World War II Era: Rosie the Riveter, swing music, and aviation. Have a swing era big band perform in one of the large buildings at Northrop Grumman. Have WWII vintage airplanes for viewing on the airport runway.
- Flagler Era: Work with FEC and the [Yulee Railroad Days](#) organization to bring locomotives and Flagler era passenger cars to St. Augustine, perhaps exhibiting at the old station on US 1 North.
- Civil Rights Era: Perhaps Stetson Kennedy could get Pete Seeger to come to St. Augustine to perform in the Plaza, singing protest songs of that era in honor of those who fought for civil rights in the 1960s.

## ***Vets' home to open September 25***

The Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home on SR 16 has begun accepting applications for admission as it prepares for opening September 25.

Basic admission requirements include an honorable discharge, Florida residency for one year prior to admission, and certification of need of skilled nursing care as determined by a VA physician, according to VA officials. Applications are available at the home and on the FDVA [website](#).

The 120-bed skilled nursing facility will dedicate half its beds for residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Call 904.940.2193, extension 805 for details.

The tobacco and smoke-free campus is named for the late Commander. Clyde E. Lassen, a Navy helicopter pilot and Medal of Honor recipient in the Vietnam War.

### ***History's Highlights***

## **St. Augustine's founding marred by mutiny**

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our 450th, researched by George Gardner

### ***5 years, 1 month, and 6 days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary***

Establishing garrisons and maintaining them in a distant frontier are two very different challenges, Pedro Menendez discovered within a year of his founding of St. Augustine in September, 1565.

The last of October, Menendez left St. Augustine, promising to return within twenty days at the outside, but leaving rations for fifteen days only. According to Juan de Junco, a faithful member of the Menendez entourage, serious murmuring and discontent began in the St. Augustine garrison within a month after the *Adelantado* left.

Menendez' brother, Bartolome, who lacked Pedro's charisma, was left in charge of St. Augustine. Ordering his soldiers to make themselves houses, the soldiers swore they had no intention to cultivate or populate Florida. "Why," they asked, "build in a bad land?" Only the Devil himself, they thought, could have ever brought them there.

Rations grew short, and word was sent to Menendez in Havana that more than a hundred men had died from hunger or cold in the two northern forts of St. Augustine and San Mateo.

Growing bolder, the malcontents began to meet; they exchanged letters with others in Fort San Mateo. At noon one Sunday, Captains Juan de San Vicente and Diego de Alvarado challenged St. Augustine Commander Bartolome Menendez in the main plaza. Saying that he governed "*no nada*," nothing, they belittled his authority and said they would trample the flags

of his companies. They stamped their feet on the ground.

When the governor reprehended them saying, "Gentlemen, what insubordination is this?" they drew their swords and daggers. Cooler-headed bystanders separated the men, but an unmistakable challenge to authority had been made.

Another moment of defiance came when the rebels began to prepare a small boat at St. Augustine for their escape. They began to cut wood and make pitch, and went to chief smith Alonso Velez with an order to make nails for the boat. Velez told Captain San Vicente that the Governor had ordered him to work on the garrison's arquebuses.

San Vicente said that he, not the Governor, gave the orders, and that the smith would make nails or be hung.

At that moment, Bartolome Menendez arrived, having heard the conversation, and said "Watch what you say; you have put yourself forward, and you are in the wrong."

San Vicente shook his walking-stick at the Governor, saying "Count yourself lucky! Go to your fort and hole up there."

From that moment, Bartolome Menendez withdrew to his quarters, the rebellion gathered its own momentum, and there was little royal authority left.



Menendez

**First of three accounts from Eugene Lyon's [\*The Florida Mutineers, 1566-67\*](#)**

**Next: San Mateo's mutineers, and Menendez' martial law**

The St. Augustine Report is published by the Department of Public Affairs of the City of St. Augustine each Tuesday and on Fridays previewing City Commission meetings. The Report is written and distributed by George Gardner, former St. Augustine Mayor (2002-2006) and Commissioner (2006-2008) and a longtime newspaper reporter and editor. Contact The Report at [gardner@aug.com](mailto:gardner@aug.com)

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