



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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City trims delegation to Spain

A city delegation traveling to Spain has been cut to one commissioner and two staffers, with visits to Aviles, our sister city, Cadiz, focal point for the 200th anniversary of the Spanish Constitution of 1812, and Malaga, where construction of a replica of the 18th century ship, the *Galveztown*, includes more than 13 tons of live oak provided from here.

"While city administration is still strongly committed to the purpose of this trip, it is clear that a portion of the city's constituency lacked support for the (earlier proposed) size of the delegation," City Manager John Regan said. "A smaller delegation can travel more efficiently and be equally productive."

Commissioners Don Crichlow and Leanna Freeman - commission representative to the St. Augustine Sister Cities program - have opted out. The delegation now includes Vice Mayor Errol Jones, Regan, and City Comptroller Mark Litzinger.

The visit to Cadiz will coordinate planning for the 200th anniversary of the Spanish Constitution enacted there. St. Augustine may have the only Constitution Monument that survived removal orders with the monarchy's return in 1814, and so could be a focal point in America.

At Malaga, the donated timber will be officially presented. The *Galveztown*, representing Spain's support of America in the Revolutionary War, is expected to include St. Augustine among its stops next year.



Panhandling ordinance returns to commission

Our City Commission Monday will consider extending its ban on street corner panhandling to the May Street/Davenport Park area and King Street and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, and will review a toughened aggressive panhandling ordinance.

The regular commission meeting begins at 5 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall.

Also on the agenda: a public hearing and final action on an ordinance regulating large gatherings in short term rentals, presentations on the proposed San Sebastian River bridge replacement and pedestrian access improvements along our bayfront, a policy for loaning city-owned artifacts, and a progress report on installation of mooring fields

Aggressive panhandling defined

Arrrrrgh

Our living history community may not be pleased, but they're here, and maybe Dr. Kevin McCarthy can put them in proper perspective.

The University of Florida Distinguished Alumni Professor will be at Amelia Island Museum of History tonight at 7 to discuss the role of pirates along the east coast of Florida, with particular attention to Amelia Island and St. Augustine.

He'll also tackle why they're so popular in movies and literature and what their lives were really like.

Admission is free for museum members, \$5 for nonmembers.

Contact Alex at 261-7378 ext. 102.

Assistant City Attorney Carlos Mendoza returns to the commission Monday with a strengthened ordinance proposal on aggressive panhandling, based on commissioners' comments two weeks ago.

Current city code prohibits threatening, touching, or blocking a person's path. Recommended additions include continuing to solicit after refusal, soliciting within 20 feet of an ATM or financial institution, at outdoor dining facilities, at or on transit facilities, persons standing in line, and after dark.

City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline two weeks ago summed up the intent: "Anywhere people have their wallets out."

Police Chief Loran Lueders says a stronger code will help police stop aggressive panhandling.

Short term rentals back for hearing

A proposed ordinance to regulate short term rentals, prompted by a Water Street property allegedly being rented for large wedding parties, goes to a second public hearing Monday.

Two weeks ago, commissioners and speakers wrestled with control of specific events without impacting normal residential activities throughout our city.

The proposal to register properties rented more than four times a year brought concerns that homestead exemption status could be threatened, while a citywide limit of less than 20 persons at a function could impact periodic residential functions.

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2010-2011 budget review begins Tuesday

City commissioners will get a look Tuesday morning at the city budget for the next fiscal year - slimmed by \$2 million through reduced property values and increased expenses.

The budget workshop will be held at 9 a.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall, and will be open to public comment.

Final hearings on the budget will be held September 9 and September 23 at 5:05 p.m. in the Alcazar Room.

Pirate Museum plans November opening



Pat Croce is completing a transformation of the former Christmas Shop/TepeeTown site on St. Augustine's bayfront into a Colonial Spanish-styled Pirate & Treasure Museum, scheduled to open in November.

Croce, considered an expert on the Age of Piracy, is moving his \$10 million Key West Pirate Soul Museum lock, stock, and Jolly Rogers to the new site, "just across the street (from the Castillo). How cool is that!"

His museum [website](#) has already been transformed to offer promises of "wandering aboard a real pirate ship replica, inhaling the sharp scent of gunpowder and sweet caramel packaged for export to Spain, (and sitting) as a prisoner inside a dark and shifty ship's hold."

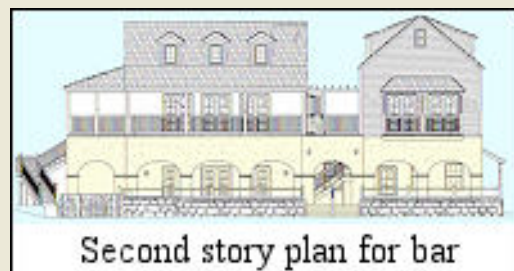
The museum will be open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., at \$11.99 plus tax for adults and \$6.99 plus tax for children 5 to 12 years old. Children under 5 free.

While pirates are Croce's passion, he's recognized as a pioneer in the sports medicine field, former president of the Philadelphia 76ers, motivational speaker, and author of books on motivation and piracy.

'No Name' bar plans a topper

The so-called "no name" bar adjacent to the pirate museum project has plans to add a second floor and loft, and change its appearance from First to Second Spanish Period. Owner Warren Merrill recently developed his project on the site of the former Bay Bags.

The lower shaded area is the existing building.



Visitation surges here

Visitation to Florida's Historic Coast (St. Johns County) is climbing back to numbers not seen since 2007, according to Smith Travel Research, which monitors the American hospitality industry.



"July data show the occupancy rate for the area's seaside resorts, luxury hotels, historic inns and family-friendly lodgings was 66.2 percent- the highest rate since July 2007 - a year that set a record for visitors to the area," according to our St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and the Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB).

"We are extremely encouraged by these numbers," said Richard Goldman, VCB executive director. "Tourism is often one of the first victims of an economic downturn, but it's also a great indicator of consumer confidence. This summer, it's now obvious that vacationers are confident that Florida's Historic Coast will provide them with an outstanding and memorable vacation experience."

The research figures included 118,379 rooms sold and \$13.2 million in revenue, the highest since July 2007.

History's Highlights

The voyage - Father Lopez' memoir

As St. Augustine's 445th birthday approaches, this is the first of four accounts of our founding period, including Pedro Menendez' contract with Spain's King Phillip II, the founding voyage, the battle with the French, and the founding.

5 years and 17 days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary

The voyage of Spain's ablest seaman, who could be facing upwards of 5,000 French troops in distant La Florida, is the stuff of epic tales.

Father Francisco Lopez de Mendoza Grajales, principal priest with Pedro Menendez de Avilés on the Spanish fleet's voyage to oust the French and establish Spanish settlements, wrote a 10,000-word *Memoir of the Happy Result and Prosperous Voyage of the Fleet commanded by the Illustrious Captain-General Pedro Menendez de Avilés*.

From his memoir of the two-month voyage June 28 to August 28, 1565:

"Very often the sea washed completely over the deck where we were gathered, one hundred and twenty men having no other place to go, as there was only one between-deck, and that was full of biscuit, wine, and other provisions.

"... It appears that the storm had injured also our first galley. A severe gust of wind snapped off their foremast, and blew it overboard with the sail and rigging; and, as many of the ropes were fastened to the sheets, it caused the ship to lean so that twice they saw their topmast dip under the waves.

"On Wednesday, the 15th, more than thirty men deserted and concealed themselves around the (Porto Rico) harbor ...

"When (a Spanish royal dispatch boat) arrived off Mona Island, she was attacked, and compelled to surrender to a French vessel. The enemy boarded her, possessed themselves of all her papers, (and) read the plans for the conquest of Florida.

"On Monday, August 27, while we were near the entrance to the Bahama Channel, God showed to us a miracle from heaven. About nine o'clock in the evening a comet appeared, which showed itself directly above us. It went towards the west, that is, towards Florida. According to the sailors, this was a good omen.

"On Tuesday, the 28th, we had the pleasure of seeing land. We steered in that direction, anchored near a point of land, and found ourselves actually in Florida, and not very far distant from the enemy, which was for us an occasion of great joy."

Father Lopez' detailed account of the voyage provides not only the epic voyage itself but as well the rigorous, sometimes humorous, life of the voyagers.

One archive of Father Lopez' detailed memoir can be found [here](#)



Next: Battle with the French

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

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