



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



Published by the Department of Public Affairs, City of St. Augustine, Florida

March 9 2010

Former Police Chief Bill Robinson 1946 - 2010

Flags were lowered at the St. Augustine Police Station Monday morning following news of the death of former St. Augustine Police Chief William "Bill" Robinson, who died at his home Sunday after a three year battle with leukemia diabetes. He was 64.

A veteran of 32 years with the department, he served as police chief from 1991 until his retirement in 2000. A graduate of St. Augustine High School, Chief Robinson continued his education through the University of North Florida, Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville, and the FBI National Academy, ranking summa cum laude on several occasions.

That advanced law enforcement training was reflected in his service to St. Augustine. "It was Chief Robinson who took St. Augustine's police department into the 21st century," City Manager Bill Harriss said. "He was instrumental in bringing to our police force much of the modern technology we depend on today. He understood good basic police work, and always wanted our officers to have the very best tools."

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Michele Claire Robinson, two daughters, one sister, two brothers, and four grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held 11 a.m. Friday at Crescent Beach Baptist Church, with burial in Craig Memorial Park. Visitation will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday at Craig Funeral Home. Contributions in his memory may be made to Biblical Framework Ministries P.O. Box 1820 Belleaire, TX 77401 or Crescent Beach Baptist Church Lottie Mission Fund, 885 State Road 206 East, St. Augustine, FL 32086.

Photo historiccity.com



Committee to design 450 product licensing

A "Product Development and Licensing Committee" will design a plan for regulating city-sanctioned products and merchandise.

Our City Commission Monday decided not to move forward with any authorizations until the committee, one of "40 identified committees" for the 450th Commemoration, has created a plan for commission approval.

Commemoration Executive Director Dana Ste. Claire said this and other committees are being drawn from more than 300 volunteers who have applied to assist in the commemoration.

He noted that copyright and trademark policies used by Jamestown for its 400th anniversary in 2007 "were one of their most difficult areas to work out."

La Guardia de Noche

Our annual Spanish Night Watch next weekend opens Friday with a depiction of actions leading up to and during St. Augustine's Siege of 1740, and concludes Saturday night with a torch-light parade from the Castillo to the Governor's Palace.

In between will be military maneuvers, sutlers vending replicas of 18th-century wares, and demonstrations of spinning, weaving, natural dying, lace-making, and other textile arts of Florida's colonial past.

The activities begin Friday at 7 p.m. at the Castillo with living history interpretations of the 1740 period, and continue all day Saturday with musket and cannon demonstrations and military maneuvers on the Castillo green, and Textile Guild and vendors in the deMesa yard on St. George Street interpreting 18th century daily life in Spanish Florida.

The traditional Spanish Night Watch Military Parade steps off at 7:30 p.m. Saturday from the Castillo.

The annual event is hosted by the [St. Augustine Garrison](#). Information at [Florida Living History, Inc.](#) 1-877-352-4478.



Bridge lighting seeks funds

Our City Commission won't try to sell you a bridge, but you can buy its lighting - for \$289,000 or more.

Concepts to illuminate our restored Bridge of Lions and its towers impressed city commissioners Monday; the outlook for funding it, however, was depressing.

David LaFitte, lighting specialist with consultants Reynolds, Hill, and Smith, estimated a cost of \$289,000 to install lighting to illuminate the undercarriage and towers, "and that was estimated for installation before the bridge is reopened," he said.

"It doesn't look to be in our immediate funding," said Commissioner Don Crichlow, who originally proposed the lighting idea. "Maybe someone out there, like General Electric, would be willing to step in on this one."

Commissioners agreed we should look for private sector funding, and Chief Operations Officer John Regan urged anyone with ideas on potential support to call his office, 904-825-1015.

Join Our Mailing List!

Previous Issues

Riberia start expected in October

First will come rip rap for south end

Chief Operations Officer John Regan Monday projected a start on the long-awaited Iberia Street improvement project in October, but before then, trucks will rumble along the street carrying the remains of the temporary Bridge of Lions and clean fill to a state-mandated securing of the south end of Iberia.

The state Department of Environmental Protection wants the former landfill there capped with clean soil, and an "armament system" to a level above the projected 100-year flood level, Regan said.

"Using the concrete from the temporary bridge is a win-win for the city and (bridge contractor) Skanska," Regan said. "It saves them the cost of trucking it elsewhere, and saves the city the cost of finding other armament."

Regan is hoping a necessary US Army Corps of Engineers permit will be secured in April to begin the south Iberia project. Meanwhile, he anticipates advertising for bids in May and June and contract signing in July to begin the first phase of the Iberia Street project. That phase will extend from King Street to the area of Bridge Street.

West Augustine utilities a matter of city and county commitment

The elephant facing our city and county to provide sewer lines throughout West Augustine is \$21.5 million, and the only way to take it down is one bite at a time.

Under questioning by Vice Mayor Errol Jones, Chief Operations Officer John Regan told commissioners Monday efforts are under way on several fronts to meet commitments in a city/county agreement to provide the utilities critical to West Augustine's growth.

Among them: a funding application for a necessary force main on West King Street, a gravity line connection with county sewer lines in the Duval Street area, and expansion of the city's utility service in the Holmes Boulevard area.

Regan said the city is negotiating with the county on the Holmes Boulevard expansion, which would make investment practical for sewer line extension. A planned residential development in that area would support the extended service, he said.

Echo House deed transferred

Lincolnton's historic Echo House is a major step closer to becoming a School of Excellence following paperwork last week transferring the property from its board of trustees to St. Paul AME Church.

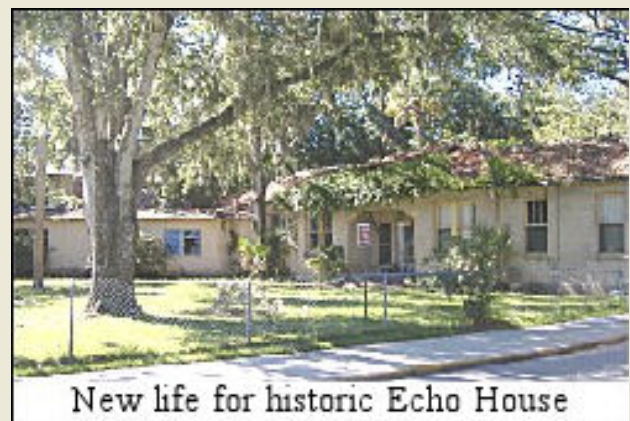
St. Paul Pastor Ron Rawls, whose community team has been planning the school, said he also received news last week that Apple Corporation will donate 25 new computers, and a curriculum grant has been confirmed.

Rawls said the property's main building will be named for Dr. Rudolph N. Gordon and Mrs. Rosalie Gordon-Mills, in recognition of their years of support for the property. The southerly and rear buildings will be named later, he said.

Echo House was originally built in 1926, a gift of Dr. Andrew Anderson, and in the 1950s was the Buckingham Smith Home, serving indigent members of the black community.

The School of Excellence is scheduled to begin with a kindergarten class this fall in the church parsonage, then move to the restored facility next year. But that will depend on raising an estimated \$617,000 to restore the property.

The school's advisory board next meets at 5:30 p.m. March 25 at St. Paul Church.



New life for historic Echo House

Bridge of Lions to reopen 'wearin' the green'

Our Bridge of Lions, trimmed appropriately with green railings and girders, will reopen on St. Patrick's Day.

A brief ceremony will formalize the reopening Wednesday, March 17, at 10 a.m., including official remarks, ribbon cutting, and a procession of the "27 Club" and antique vehicles representing decades of the bridge's service. The general public then gets to walk over the bridge before traffic is shifted from the temporary bridge.

The "27 Club" represents the bridge's first opening in 1927, and includes 27 people whose names were drawn last fall from more than 750 entries.

To prepare for the Wednesday's traffic transfer, the temporary bridge will be closed to all vehicles and pedestrians on the night of Tuesday, March 16, with traffic detoured to State Road 312.

Work will continue after the opening, to dismantle the temporary bridge and complete landscaping of the entries to the bridge. When completed, our iconic lions will be reestablished. Complete info on our [city](#) and [Bridge of Lions](#) websites.

Weekend filled with activities

Menorcans celebrate Heritage

Menorcan descendants will be out in force Saturday, March 13, for the Menorcan Heritage Celebration in the courtyard of the Llambias House from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Menorcan Crests, pilau, clam chowder, fromajadas, baked goods, Sally Reyes Walton's dancers, and Menorcan storyteller Herb Greenleaf will all be on hand for the festivities.

29th Annual Lions Seafood Festival

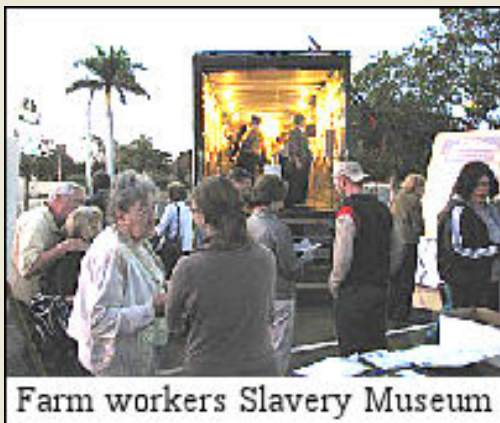
Great seafood, live bluegrass, folk and country music, and more than 100 arts and crafts exhibitors are featured at the 29th Annual Lions Seafood Festival March 12-14 at Francis Field. Hours are 3-9 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission \$2, kids 12 and under free. Proceeds will benefit Lions Club charities. Visit the [website](#) or call 904.825.0850.

Southern Exposure Festival

The St Johns County Special Events Division presents the Southern Exposure Festival March 14, from 11:30 a.m. to sundown at Alpine Groves Park, SR 13, Switzerland. Music, barn dances, Old Florida vendors, southern cooking, storytelling, and kids activities will be featured in this benefit for the Stetson Kennedy and Arlo Guthrie foundations. Tickets \$15, kids under 12 free. Visit the [website](#) or call 904-209-3760.



Harvest of Hope will feature museum



A new feature will be added to next weekend's Harvest of Hope at the St Johns County Fairgrounds on SR 207.

The [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#) Florida Modern-Day Slavery Museum will be on hand from 2-8 p.m. Sunday. A cargo truck, outfitted as a replica of the trucks involved in a recent slavery operation (U.S. v. Navarrete, 2008), includes displays on the history and evolution of slavery in Florida, focusing on "modern-day slavery" - the plight of migrant farm workers.

More than 150 performers will take the stage Friday through Sunday to raise awareness to migrant farm workers. Three-day passes are \$39.50 and 1-day \$25. Details and tickets [here](#).

History's Highlights

A bold strike turns back the siege of 1740

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our commemorations, drawn from research by George Gardner

June, 1740. For nearly 200 years Spain had controlled the entire eastern seaboard, but its only strong garrison was St. Augustine. Carolina seemed too distant to try to defend. Georgia, however, was much closer to home, and the Spanish government would not yield this debatable land to intruders.

General James Oglethorpe, British governor of newly claimed Georgia, was determined to change that. With him were 1,600 men, seven warships and 40 dugouts for landing parties - surely more than a match for the massive but usually undermanned Spanish Castillo.

In fact, sensing British intentions in the mid 1730s, Florida Governor Moral Sanchez strengthened his defenses to the north, and his successor in 1737, Manuel de Montiano, convinced Havana to send 400 fresh troops, new iron cannons, funds to build barracks and patrol boats, and 82 laborers including engineers, bricklayers and stonemasons.

By early June, 1740, the British force had encircled the city. Oglethorpe's heavy ships could not pass the sandbar into the bay, so his siege guns were landed and dragged across Anastasia Island and along the southern point of Vilano, to pummel the Castillo and city.

To break the strangling encirclement, discourage the attackers or encourage his defenders, Montiano made a bold decision. On June 25th, he committed nearly half his force to counterattack British-held Fort Mose. The move was totally unexpected, and the Spaniards retook the northern outpost, killing 87 of the British and 35 Indians in the process.

Two weeks later, Spanish relief ships slipped up the inland waterway through its outpost at Matanzas Inlet. The newly replenished garrison was too much for the British forces, and by July 20 the last of them had pulled out.



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

Email Marketing by



