



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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City in AA financial shape

Our city's in strong financial shape, according to the rating service that guides bond investments.

"Fitch Rating Service has increased our city's ratings," Chief Administrative Officer Tim Burchfield reported to city commissioners last week "Our water and sewer bond rating climbed two steps, from A to AA-minus, and our General Obligation Bond rating one step, from A-plus to AA-minus.

"These ratings are the underlying ratings, meaning the rating agency views the City as a quality company and a solid investment," Burchfield explained. "The City always buys up the ratings to AAA when issuing bonds, making the bonds even more desirable on the open market. The increase in the underlying ratings means the cost of buying up the rating will be less expensive to the City in the future."

Commissioners gave credit to outgoing City Manager Bill Harriss, an accountant by training, for raising our ratings from less than junk bond status to the current strong position during his 25 years with the city, beginning as Financial Services Director in 1985.

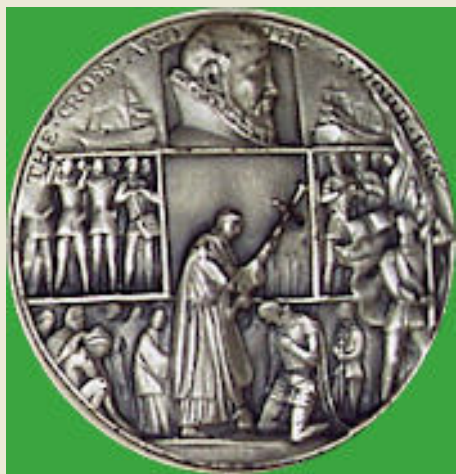
VIC restrooms to reopen

Reopening of the Visitor Center restrooms is promised by the end of May, "barring any unforeseen construction delays," General Services Director Jim Piggott told city commissioners last week.

The restrooms were closed last fall when faulty ventilation caused the ceilings to begin collapsing. The extent of problems was greater than expected, and repair time longer.

The restrooms were completed with the opening of the VIC parking facility in 2006. Our City Commission authorized \$100,000 to speed immediate repair work, while City Attorney Ron Brown continues to investigate who among the restrooms' contractors to send the bills to.

White Room is an island



More 400th Memorabilia

Bronze and silver medallions, a package of tour brochures from the 50s & 60s, and an autographed copy of a book written by Pat Wickman, *St. Augustine, Florida - 1565-1965* - measuring two by three inches!!

The medallions were produced for *The Cross and The Sword*, which opened at the newly completed St. Augustine Amphitheatre June 27, 1965.

They're all being added to our inventory as we scour our city for memorabilia to be exhibited before and during our commemorations.

Of particular interest are items produced for our 400th anniversary in 1965. If you have items to loan or give for display, contact gardner@aug.com.

Any memorabilia will remain in owners' hands until suitable exhibit space is created.

"It's that time of year again to slip on your favorite tropical shirt, board shorts & flip flops!" the St. Johns Welfare Federation announces.

Its 2nd Annual Caribbean Calypso Night will transform the loft and rooftop of the White Room into an island of calypso cuisine, casino gaming, silent auction, and dancing to the sounds of steel drums and island music this Friday from 7 to 10:30 p.m.



That island is atop the A1A Ale Works building at King Street and Avenida Menendez.

Tickets purchased before the event are \$45, at the door \$55. Proceeds benefit Caring Hands - Caring Community, providing continuum of healthcare services and charitable assistance to our community regardless of ability to pay. Call Anne Guenther 824-3195 for details and sponsorship opportunities.

Celebrating African-American roots

Road to Freedom: African-Americans in Florida, takes center stage at Flagler College auditorium tonight in the seventh and final program in the 450th Commemoration Commission's *First America* series.

African roots from the earliest black explorers in the 1500s, to Fort Mose - the first free black settlement in 1738, to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, will be traced through exhibits and programs.

Doors open at 6 p.m. for our modern-day explorers to get their passports stamped and visit exhibits before the program begins at 7.

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Kinsey Collection sought for 450th

among them local residents who were part of the cast. It was an early addition to the *Idea Vault* on the 450 Community Corps [website](#) for restoration, at least during our commemoration period.

Photo and details from lostparks.com

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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