



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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

December 1 2009

British Night Watch opens season

As many as 500 reenactors and living history professionals are expected as St. Augustine opens its holiday season this year with the 35th annual Grande Illumination~British Night Watch.

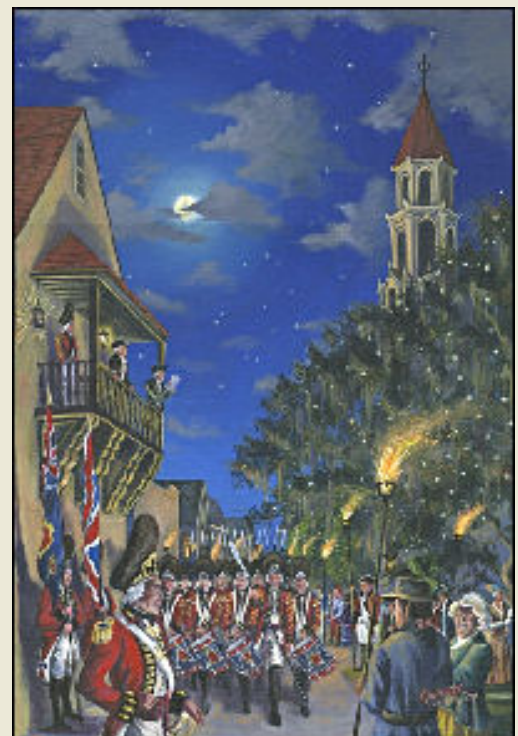
"We expect about a third of the participants will be joining us for the first time," event coordinator Scott Manny says, "and among them will be historians and museum representatives from around the country."

The expanded Night Watch weekend includes a Friday Night free performance by recording artists Father, Son and Friends at 8 p.m. in our Colonial Spanish Quarter, British encampment activities all day Saturday at the Quarter, Night Watch torchlight parade at 7:30 from Government House, and Stacked Drums - 18th century Anglican Church Service at 9:30 a.m. Sunday at the encampment.

The 18th century festivities highlight a weekend that also includes our annual Christmas Parade through the downtown at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, produced by the St. Augustine & St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, and PAL Day, honoring our military services, sponsored by the Greater Jacksonville USO.

Details for the [Night Watch](#) 829.5318, parade 824.4997, and PAL Day 246-3481 or 778-2821.

The British Night Watch recreates the duty of 18th century British troops, posting guards at the city gates and along the ramparts of the fort, and delivering the city keys to the principal official of the town, ensuring the safety of the town and keeping order for the night. It has been expanded through the years to celebrate the advent of the holiday season.



A limited edition of canvas prints of Dean Quigley's "Night Watch" will be available this weekend



Celtic comes home

One of the forgotten pages in our heritage is that our founder came not with traditional Spanish culture but rather more Celtic.

Reason: the Moors who invaded and left their influence on southern Spain never conquered the north and Pedro Menendez' Asturian region.

That Celtic heritage will kick off the British Night Watch at 8 p.m. Friday with nationally known recording artists Father, Son and Friends in a free performance at our Colonial Spanish Quarter.

As many as fifteen instruments may be played, including guitar, banjo, bones, mandolin, octave mandolin, penny whistle, bodhran (drum), and of course the bagpipes.

Some argue that the bagpipe emigrated to Scotland and Ireland from the single pipe Asturian gaita.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

[Previous Issues](#)

A park wall for Christmas

Flamingo Drive residents should have a Christmas present days before December 25. Core Construction, Jacksonville, expects to complete installation of a 12-foot sound abatement wall at Hamilton Upchurch Park's skateboard area by December 21.

City Commissioners approved the wall, at a cost of \$81,900, as one step in keeping harmony with adjacent Flamingo Drive residents. Additional efforts have included removal of noise-generating metal rails and adjustment of hours.

Chautauqua performance?

TV Actor Chaz Mena gave a Chautauqua performance as St. Augustine Founder Pedro Menendez at last week's program, *Colonial St. Augustine*, in the 450th Commemoration Commission's free seven-part series, *Discover First America: Legacies of La Florida*.

Chautauqua? That's not an Indian, but a movement popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, named for the first session in 1874 at a campsite on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in New York.

Chautauquas brought entertainment and culture to communities in the days before radio, TV, and text-messaging, providing speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers, and specialists of the day.

Steps to a sculpture



A clay model of figures to be featured on a bronze St. Augustine Foot Soldiers monument stands in the studio of Brian R. Owens of Deltona as the sculptor's work continues.

"The hazard in showing an incomplete sculpture is that people are not used to seeing it in this state," Owens noted in a monthly report to the project committee. "Nothing is done yet. The composition, expressions and everything else that will bring the sculpture to life are still in progress."

The detailed model should be completed for committee approval early next year.

Parking changes to 'Rediscover Downtown'



Our city's on-street and Visitor Center parking elves have been busy preparing a better welcome for residents and visitors during this holiday season, including special "Rediscover Downtown" ParkNow cards, more budget-conscious parking facility voucher packages for merchants, and longer on-street parking limits.

Free "Rediscover" card

A special "Rediscover Downtown" ParkNow card with a 10-hour parking value will be given free to the first 500 people who visit the city's Financial Services Center in December to pay their utility bill.

3-hour on-street parking

Parking meter guru Mark Litzinger (our city comptroller)

says a new on-street parking limit of three hours, up from two, should be in place by week's end. The time increase, prompted by merchant feedback, was recently approved by our City Commission. There's already a 4-hour limit in off-street lots with parking terminals.

Vouchers within reach

Buddy, can you spare a dollar?

Our Visitor Information Center (VIC) parking facility is putting them together to provide two hours of free parking.

VIC Manager Sharon Langford says a voucher program, primarily for merchants, has been in place for some time, but with few takers outside of larger businesses and wedding parties. The price for a book of 25 vouchers at \$3.75 each for all-day free parking was \$93.75 - too steep.

The new program will offer books of 25 for \$25. The vouchers will credit two hours of free parking on exit. More info at 904-484-5160.

Details on these changes are on our city [website](#).



History's Highlights

Ponce - 'What fountain?'

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our commemorations

The existence of a fountain of youth was very believable among the mysteries of the 16th century, however its quest was not attached to Ponce de Leon until an historian's treatise on the Indies - 14 years after his death.

Ponce was a "gentleman volunteer" in one of Christopher Columbus' several voyages - none of which ever reached mainland America.

In his own voyage of discovery, Ponce found what he thought was the island of Bimini. In fact it was Florida, the tip of the North American continent.

And it was Ponce who discovered - as his ships were pulled northward while heading south along the Florida coast - the Gulf Stream. This powerful current, moving between 30 and 85 million cubic feet of water per second - stronger than any other current on earth and greater than all the streams and rivers in the world combined - would become the catapult for treasure ships returning to Spain from the Caribbean..



Ponce de Leon

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

