



# THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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## Board will study Lighthouse traffic

There's traffic at R.B. Hunt School, the Lighthouse, the Hamilton Upchurch Park, the boat ramp, the neighborhood.

Neighbors were first to cry "Uncle." City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline, who represents the city on the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (NFTPO), responded, gaining NFTPO approval for a study of traffic circulation throughout the Lighthouse Park area.

PBS&J, Jacksonville, will handle the four-month study of "access for Hunt Elementary School, Way Finding for the St Augustine Lighthouse, and impacts to the neighborhood streets." City Planning and Building Director Mark Knight will oversee for our city, and Nancy promises, "We will definitely schedule and host a public meeting with members of the neighborhood and other interested citizens."



Sikes-Kline

"PBS&J will give particular attention to the traffic entering and exiting the elementary school to determine if there is a safer and more efficient way to accommodate the parents dropping off and picking up students," its scope of work promises.



Parked cars line Red Cox Drive

Also included: traffic counts on side streets along Anastasia Boulevard; the boulevard's intersections with Old Quarry Road and Magnolia Drive; signage adequacy, and potential for a traffic signal at the Old Quarry, Red Cox Drive, and Anastasia Boulevard intersection.

## 450 by the numbers

We could expect an additional two million visitors during our three-year commemoration period, and volunteers with a variety of skills and talent are signing up to host those visitors.

450 Commemoration Commission Director Dana Ste. Claire says, "Our conservative projections for attendance over the three year 450th linear event is two million, over and above the visitor base we currently maintain." That estimate is three to four million annually.

"Needless to say, one of our concerns is carrying capacity, or the visitor load that the program and infrastructure will support," Ste. Claire says.

## Volunteer applications

St. Augustine's History and Heritage ranks highest so far in volunteer interest for commemoration committees, followed by Arts and Culture, Signature Events, and Public Relations.

They're among 24 choices listed on application forms for "How do you see yourself participating in the planning of St. Augustine's First America



## ***Slow Food good food***

[Slow Food First Coast](#) is launching a Snail of Approval program "to award local farms and businesses that contribute to the quality, authenticity, and sustainability of the food supply of the First Coast."

The area organization is part of Slow Food USA, whose mission is to "reconnect Americans with the people, traditions, plants, animals, fertile soils and waters that produce our food - a transformation in food policy, production practices, and market forces so that they ensure equity, sustainability and pleasure in the food we eat."

### ***What happened?***

Click the "Previous Issues" button below to check out news you may have missed in other media.

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## **'Dig' our history online**

Years of archaeological digs in St. Augustine are coming to light in a new city website devoted to the in-ground explorations of our history.

The website, [www.digstaug.org](http://www.digstaug.org), has been developed through a grant from the St. Augustine Research Institute, a cooperative between Flagler College and the University of Florida. Its goals: "to encourage, coordinate and disseminate active academic research related to the history, archaeology, and historical landscape and structures of St. Augustine."

City Archeologist Carl Halbirt, custodian of our city's best-kept secret, is grateful to see this step in bringing tangible evidence of our history to public view. City Heritage Director Dana Ste. Claire has also promised "a public archaeology program with accessible excavations and research centers."



**Halbirt and volunteers on a dig**

## ***Protecting our historic assets***

celebration?"

Information provided by applicants shows the range of skills and talent in our community, from master gardeners, grant writers, musicians, and playwrights to urban planners, air traffic controllers, and counter-intelligence veterans.

Volunteers will be matched with potential committees as commemoration planning continues.

More than 300 have answered the call so far. Many signed up last June, before the more detailed application was developed. If you're in that number, contact the 450 Community Corps at [gardner@aug.com](mailto:gardner@aug.com) to update your interests.

## ***Pirates! Fact & Fiction***

Johnny Depp romanticism vies with Sir Francis Drake and Captain Robert Searle's actual raids on St. Augustine as pirate aficionado Dr. Pat Croce visits tomorrow in the third of the 450 Commemoration Commission series *Discover First America; Legacies of La Florida*.

The program begins at 7 p.m. at Flagler College Auditorium. Doors will open at 6, with St. Augustine's pirate contingent to greet you.

Croce promises truths about privateers, swashbucklers and other pirates of La Florida and the Caribbean.

Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program (LAMP) maritime archaeologist Brendan Burke will also be on hand with findings from shipwrecks off the coast of Florida.



Huguenot Cemetery fencing

Our city will seek Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) approval to install fencing around the Constitución Monument in our Plaza de la Constitución.

The plan follows a recommendation by the [Colonial St. Augustine Foundation](#) that the monument to Spain's Constitution of 1812 needs greater protection. HARB's next meeting is December 17.

The monument, believed to be the only one remaining after a return to monarchy ordered destruction of all such recognition, was restored last year by the foundation, assisted in part by grants from the Florida Department of State and the Lastinger Family Foundation.

City staff will present several fence styles to replace the existing low-set chain border. Examples they've found about town include fences at the Huguenot Cemetery and Ancient City Baptist Church.

## History's Highlights

### Hurricanes secured our place in history

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

Two hurricanes secured St. Augustine's place in history as our nation's oldest continuously occupied European settlement. August, 1559, forty-six years after Ponce de Leon's discovery of the North American continent, Spain's Tristan de Luna sailed into Pensacola Harbor, determined to establish a permanent settlement, and carrying with him the necessary manpower and supplies to succeed. Most of the supplies were left aboard his ships in the protected harbor while shelters were built.



Menendez

September 19, 1559, a hurricane roared through the Gulf of Mexico and into Pensacola's Harbor, ravaging the fleet, driving one ship into a Mangrove stand deep inland, and ending Pensacola's opportunity to be the oldest city.

September, 1565, six years later, Spain's Pedro Menendez sailed up along the east coast of La Florida with orders from King Phillip II to drive out the French and establish a garrison settlement. France's Jean Ribault arrived at the same time, to reinforce Fort Caroline, 40 miles north of St. Augustine in today's Mayport area.

After founding St. Augustine September 8, Menendez prepared to challenge Ribault. The hurricane that struck the area in the second week of September gave the two commanders choices. Ribault decided it would provide cover for his force to attack Menendez' fleet in his harbor. Menendez decided an overland assault would be safer than risking his ships in the storm.

September 20, 1565, Menendez' troops, after slogging through marsh and swamp in torrential rains for four days, easily overwhelmed the defenseless French fort, while Ribault's fleet was storm-driven past St. Augustine and destroyed along the coast in the Canaveral area.

**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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