

St. John's Cemetery Foundation

Fall Newsletter

Issue No. 7 - Fall 2017

Gatehouse Chapel finally restored
Donated items make the chapel really shine.
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For years, students from Catholic High School have been making a difference at SJC. Page 2

Trees Down
Some aged trees fall in SJC. Steps are taken to minimize the damage caused.
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Recent Burials
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Gatehouse Completely Restored

With more families utilizing the chapels of local funeral homes in the 1950s, the Gatehouse Chapel at St. John's fell into disuse. It then became a storage facility for the cemetery grounds equipment. In the early 1990s, the cemetery office, which had been open and manned for decades, was closed.

One of the objectives of the Friends always has been to renovate the Gatehouse. It seemed like a daunting task. The facility had been built in 1908. Its plaster was failing, The electrical system was not

up to code. Its floors were marred. The windows had bars or wood over them. Even the large stained glass window was missing, and its molding was rotten in places. Yet slowly, the Friends have been working on this project.

Over the last few years, the chapel got restored and artist, Sophie Houser even painted a beautiful mural inside, but not enough money was left for renovating the bathroom and office. That changed when an Impact 100 grant was secured.

Recently, the bathroom has a sink for the first time, and the office is functional again. All the rakes and shovels were moved into the pump room, which opened space for a sink and counter top. The old desk in the office was replaced with a built-in. All the walls were painted, and the floors were refinished.

A small handrail was installed on the steps leading into the chapel. Also, new door locks were installed.

"It really looks nice," says Charles Green, who is the acting president of SJC. "Everything has been modernized, and thanks to a generous donation of furniture by retired educator James E. Reese, the chapel has been equipped like never before."

Reese, who was a longtime principal at Hallmark Elementary and sports coach at several schools, will be 100 years old in November!

The Gatehouse is now fully functional and renovated—available for memorial services or rented for community or family gatherings. Its

capacity is 50 people, including a coffin. Contact Wesley Odom for availability or questions.

All Saint's Day Meeting

Please plan to attend the All Saints' Day Service at St. John's Cemetery in the Gatehouse on Saturday, **November 4**, at 9:00 am. Besides remembering those departed, we will celebrate having the newly renovated Gatehouse. The Rev. Michael Hoffman, who is the rector of Christ Episcopal Church, will officiate.

Afterwards, there will be a brief annual meeting so people can renew their memberships—which are \$25/year—provide feedback to the board, and discuss future projects. We value your input. Please come and share your ideas with us.

There also will be elections, so all members are encouraged to participate.

Customarily, there is a reception afterwards. This year the St. John's Cemetery Corporation, which owns the cemetery, will be hosting it. Therefore, there is no need to bring a pot luck item.



Make a Difference Day

What can two dozen high school students do in a Saturday morning? Lots!

Getting up to volunteer early on a Saturday morning is not every teenager's goal, but for once a year on Make a Difference Day, the students at Pensacola Catholic High School do just that.

For several years now, students have been working at SJC on a Saturday of every October.

They perform a number of tasks that usually is overlooked by the normal cemetery grounds crew. These include things like weeding the front garden near the gatehouse, plant new flowers and shrubs, install pine straw ground cover, cut down volunteer-palms growing in peoples graves or along the fence perimeter, picking up limbs, raking leaves. The list goes on.

Once, we even located a grave maker that was for someone buried in Holy Cross Cemetery. Somehow it got moved to SJC. The students loaded it onto a truck and took it back to Holy Cross.

The brains behind this huge volunteer effort is Jane Moseley, who has been working on the administrative staff at Catholic High for years.

Annually, she organizes multiple work efforts all around town. SJC has been lucky to have her as a friend. Last year, she agreed to serve on the board of the Friends of St. John's Cemetery Foundation.

This year, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) will be participating in Make a Difference Day by cleaning monuments.

You can assist also. The work day is October 28, 8-12. There is plenty to do. All you need is to bring your work gloves. For more information, contact Brenda Arnold, who is a board member and leads the cemetery's "Perpetual Care" team, which is a group of folks who like to help beautify SJC.

Together, we can make SJC a better place.

Burials Year to Date

SJC continues to fulfill its mission. Burials year to date are as follows:

Walcott Frederick Anderson

Pamela Joan Barwick

Carolyn Elaine Benton

Derlia Gillis Frady

Anita Hannon Hall

June Ulmer Harper

Theresa Simpson Isakson

James Francis Kehoe

Frieda C. Markert

Emmalyn "Em" T. Owens

Arnette S. Patane

Clara Peagler

Pamela Pitman

Lucia Scotto Moes

Evie P. Silivos

Angela Stamitoles

Steven R. Thorsen

Doris Stanton Trout

Michael James Viscuso

Kenneth Warren Wright, Jr.

Many new burial spaces are available for sale. If you know of someone with that need, please refer them to SJC. It is the least expensive place to be long term—no pun intended.

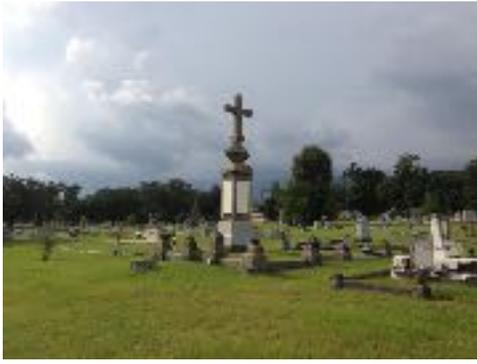
Plots are available for traditional coffin or cremains



The urn at this grave was damaged when a tree fell, smashing it; however, Friends volunteers painstakingly pieced it back together.

Many neighbors now regularly walk in the cemetery and report downed trees, caved in graves, etc.

The Friends and SJC do their best to restore and to beautify the cemetery.



Left: The tombstone of Gertrude Blanch Monk, who died January 29, 1910. Her husband Henry was a general contractor, who had just received a handsome federal contract to restore the sea wall near Ft. McRee. He reserved the entire lot in her memory. He is buried elsewhere with his second wife. This is the tallest monument in the cemetery.



Right: Sometimes families pay to have flowers delivered and ask the Friends to photograph it.

President's Message

President Wesley Odom addresses the membership.

Every year better things seem to be happening at St. John's Cemetery. I credit the success to God and all the members and volunteers who care.

The first highlight of the year undoubtedly was the cemetery's receipt of an Impact 100 grant. This was a \$100,000 grant, which is allowing the cemetery to accomplish several long term goals of making it an outdoor museum.

While the Friends already had renovated the chapel, this money allowed the rest of the Gatehouse to be updated, which was described in a previous article. You have to see it for yourself!

Also, several people have been working on signage and walking tour information for the cemetery. All will be pleased with the results.

Several weeks ago, when there was talk of dismantling Pensacola's only Civil War monument, I contacted Charles Green about whether SJC could offer space to the marker, if the decision was made to move it. Since this marker was erected to memorialize the Confederate dead who had died from this area, his group approved of the idea and it was offered to the city. However, for now there are no plans to move the marker. If the city were to move it to SJC, the tentative plans are to install it in the first roundabout.

The local Questers Chapter under the leadership of Sue Garnjobst continue to labor in the Baby area in Section 2. It

really looks fantastic and is always an area visitors ask about.

Brenda Arnold continues to lead the new Perpetual Care group. This all-volunteer group tackles a variety of projects that are beyond the scope of the paid professional grounds keepers. Their next event is October 28, which is on Make a Difference Day. I encourage you to participate.

The Friends continues to do a number of things. Every week it seems, we are updating the database, which is accessible on the web at www.stjohnsdb.com. Emily Walby, another board member, has been instrumental in putting photographs of grave markers with peoples' names in the database. Behind the scenes, we also are assisting families locate loved ones, find space for burials, coordinate funeral arrangements, assist with tombstone locations, and update ownership records.

I cannot emphasize how important it is to update who owns the lot. Many of the lots and spaces were bought years ago. Regrettably, most families have not done a good job updating the ownership upon the death of the original owner.

The easiest way to update the records is to provide the original deed. Whomever has that deed can get a new deed made to whomever that deed holder wants.

The most common situation is when the deed is lost. Then, the deed would go to the spouse. If that person is deceased, the spaces go to the children. Each child has to sign affidavits averring that he/she is a child and either wants or disclaims the spaces to another sibling or relative. If all

the children are deceased, then notarized statements with indemnification language has to be executed by the grandchildren. This process, while burdensome, is not complicated, and is meant to protect all parties.

If no resolution can be found, the Cemetery corporation can reclaim and resell the spaces.

This October the Friends will not be leading any walking tours. Orchestrating the annual event was too burdensome on our volunteers and attendance was poor.

Occasionally, I personally lead a walking tour. It is usually around dusk on a Saturday. I love to brag about the souls that rest in SJC.

Years ago, Ted Nickinson and Dr. Jack Fleming shared a vision that more could be done in this cemetery and established this organization. SJC truly is a place worthy of preserving the legacies of those who made Pensacola what it is today.

I encourage you to become excited about preserving this historic cemetery and sharing its story with your friends. Together, we can make it better.

If you have any questions or concerns or want to update a relative's obituary or include a photo of them for the website, please contact me at either work, 850-332-7339 or email, wodom@armadaadvisors.com. I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting or walking in the cemetery.

Sincerely,

Wesley S. Odom

Friends of St. John's Cemetery
Foundation

610 N. Spring St.
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Stamp

Celebrate with the Saints!

SATURDAY

November 4, 2017

9:00 - 10:00 am

**Service and Annual Meeting at
St. John's Cemetery**

Fr. Michael Hoffman of Christ Episcopal Church will officiate