

San Marco Times



The Official Newsletter of the San Marco Preservation Society

FALL 2011

Autumn in the Park

The San Marco Preservation Society and San Marco Merchants Association are pleased to announce Autumn in The Park – Farm to Table Dinner. After a very successful inaugural fundraising event last year to benefit the ongoing beautification of San Marco Square, plans are underway to create a dining experience you won't want to miss!



The Farm to Table concept celebrates fresh, regional and seasonal food by applauding the farmers, producers and artisans who cultivate it and the chefs who integrate the ingredients into their menus. This year's menu will once again be prepared by two of the city's top chefs, Tom Gray of Bistro Aix and Sam Efron of Taverna.



Proceeds from last year's event went towards storefront light bulbs-replacement and repairs, sidewalk pressure washing and tree trimming. Proceeds generated from this year's event will fund the purchase of planters around the statues in the square. The alfresco dinner will take place in Davin Park (River Road)/San Marco, Sunday, November 6, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. We anticipate this exclusive event to sell out quickly. Seating is limited. To purchase tickets, please visit www.smpsjax.com.



Kevin McLain, Dee Burke, Dale Tucker, Jennifer Holland, Steve Morrill, Troy Spurlin

San Marco Streetscape Project



Rendering of new roundabout at North end of San Marco Square

At the General Meeting of San Marco Preservation Society on October 3rd, Councilwoman Lori Boyer provided an update of the San Marco Streetscape Project, the 1.4 mile of improvements down San Marco Boulevard from Prudential Drive to San Marco Square. The project includes standardized street parking, new sidewalks, new landscaping and three new roundabouts: one at Prudential Drive which is completed, one at Landon Avenue and one at the north end of San Marco Square. The roundabouts were established as part of the project in an effort to slow down traffic along the boulevard.

The estimated completion date of all improvements is October 2012. Future traffic detours have been rerouted in order to avoid going through residential neighborhoods. There will also be no construction from I-95 South to San Marco Square from December 2nd to January 2nd. The revised Landscape plans provides for the Oaks and Sycamores in the medians to be replaced with palms and crape myrtles more suited to thriving in the limited spaces. Peanut Sod, a flowering, low maintenance eco-turf will be used as groundcover to reduce maintenance costs for the future.



Rendering of new roundabout at Landon

San Marco Times is the news and information publication of San Marco Preservation Society.

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Letter from the President

With so much happening in the upcoming weeks, I am reminded how blessed we are to share this neighborhood. San Marco has something for everyone - beautiful parks, charming homes, vibrant businesses, incredible food and award-winning schools. None of these came to be by accident. It has been through the vision and hard work of generations before that we have the opportunity to experience this quality of life. And so it is our privilege now to continue these good works for our current neighbors and generations ahead.

This is why we take the time to be involved in local decisions, join together to protect our assets and celebrate the seasons in style. You will find many activities described in this newsletter that need your help. I encourage you to pull a few weeds with us in November (two dates to choose from) and welcome visitors to our Holiday Tour of Homes in December. And we are always in need of new committee members and board members.

Whether you are renewing your membership or joining for the first time, please take the time to check the areas interesting to you. And most of all, if you aren't a member, please join today. We need your support.

I wish everyone a fantastic holiday season and look forward to seeing you about the neighborhood.

Doug Skiles

President, San Marco Preservation Society

San Marco Preservation Society New Board Members and Staff

Jessica Cumbie, Secretary

Jessica is owner & photographer for Jess Cumbie Photography. Jess was born and raised in Jacksonville. Her first real job was for a chiropractor in San Marco and has always loved the area. When the opportunity to be part of San Marco Preservation Society arose, she jumped on the chance to get involved with the San Marco community.

Dana Kontras, Beautification

Dana is originally from Cleveland, Ohio. After living in Charleston, SC, she moved to Jacksonville in 1994. She has a Masters in Nursing and works as a Registered Nurse in Clinical Research. Dana has been a San Marco homeowner since 2005. Her interests are in American Indian Health. She enjoys gardening and caring for her pets.

Anthony Edwards, Electronic Media

Anthony Edwards is part of a second generation to be involved in the San Marco Preservation Society. Anthony has grown up in San Marco when his parents moved to Jacksonville more than 10 years ago. Anthony is a graduate of the University of Central Florida with a degree in Business Administration in Real Estate. He is currently the Real Estate Representative/Digital Media Coordinator at Clear Channel Outdoor.

Sarah Parent, Administrator

San Marco Preservation Society also welcomes Sarah Parent to the organization as the new administrator at South Jacksonville City Hall. Sarah is a long time San Marco resident actively involved in the community. Sarah will be at City Hall on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:00 am.

Rebirth of San Marco Library's Tree Canopy

We are blessed with many beautiful trees in San Marco, and are equally blessed to have our neighbors work as hard as they do to protect them. There does come a time when some of our older trees become a safety hazard. Regrettably, we have to report that the city will be removing five of the live oak trees along Lasalle Street adjacent to the San Marco Library. As can be seen from the aerial photo, these trees are no longer able to regenerate leaves each year and have more dead branches than live ones. With so many pedestrians in this area, it has been determined that the best course will be removal, which is scheduled for the end of October. We have been told that the tree at the corner of Hendricks Avenue and Lasalle Street will be saved.



With every loss there is an opportunity for new growth, and so it is in this case. Through the efforts of Councilwoman Lori Boyer, we have the opportunity to work with the city in the design of the replacement trees. The city has committed to replacing the trees in an area of the property where they are more suitable.

We are also working with the St Johns Riverkeeper to install a rain garden (or bioswale) in the area between the sidewalk and street. This will serve as a demonstration project for Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to reduce the pollution entering the St Johns River. We are always looking for ways to be leaders in our great city.

We always welcome your input and ask that you contact us by email or phone so that you can be a part of the process.

San Marco Preservation Society and Robin Robinson Receive Historic Preservation Awards



The Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission honored 17 projects and services at its annual awards ceremony in May. San Marco Preservation Society and Robin Robinson each received an award in the Heritage Education/Publication category for the publication of the book “Southbank Sojourn: A Photographic Journey Through the Early Days of San Marco and South Jacksonville.” The book was written by Robinson and published by George Foote of Silent E Publishing.

“Southbank Sojourn” contains vintage photos and stories of the City of South Jacksonville and the beginnings of the development of San Marco. It is a walk down memory lane for long-time residents and, as such, the book was sold out in a matter of months. Mary Bryant Russo, a graduate of Bishop Kenny, said she “appreciated the photos and remembrances of all those years ago – and, at the same time, was touched in gratitude for the blessing of a childhood and young adulthood in this lovely area of Jacksonville.”

The awards ceremony takes place each year in celebration of National Preservation Month, and recognizes outstanding projects and services that promote historic preservation in Jacksonville for Heritage Education, Residential Rehabilitation, and Preservation Projects and Services. National Preservation Month was created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to spotlight grassroots preservation efforts around the country. Communities take this time to celebrate historic preservation activities in order to create greater public awareness, understanding and appreciation of efforts to preserve local historic resources and heritage.

A second edition of Southbank Sojourn is to be released soon. You may purchase it at the San Marco Bookstore in San Marco Square. Proceeds from sales of the book Benefit San Marco Preservation Society.

Swaim Memorial United Methodist Church Celebrates 125th Anniversary

Elizabeth Swaim Memorial United Methodist, a beautiful church set in the heart of San Marco, celebrated its 125th anniversary on Saturday, September 24th and Sunday, September 25th. Swaim Memorial United Methodist was founded in 1886 with the Governor of Florida, Harrison Reed, as one of the original Trustees. At the time of the Church's inception, there were no houses of worship in what was then known as South Jacksonville, now San Marco.

The existing sanctuary, at the corner of LaSalle and Naldo, was opened, dedicated and renamed the Elizabeth Swaim Memorial Methodist Church on December 13, 1925. It is one of the few churches in Florida dedicated as a memorial to a woman: two-thirds of its stain-glass windows honor women — members of the congregation, relatives of members, and women's groups.

Throughout its 125-year history, Swaim Memorial United Methodist Church, the "Church of the Lighted Cross," has had an integral and significant role in San Marco's life and history; many of its parishioners have been pillars of the San Marco community, and the church continues to be very much a part of the enriching heritage of San Marco.

San Marco residents take part in a favorite holiday tradition— the Gingerbread House Extravaganza!



San Marco's Robin Robinson has taken the helm of one of the city's most creative holiday charity events, the Gingerbread House Extravaganza. The Extravaganza, in its ninth year, features gingerbread houses and confection replicas by professional and amateur bakers. The city's historic buildings and homes are regular features of the show, recreated in gingerbread, icing and candies of all types. Confection castles, Ferris wheels, barnyards and giant cupcakes have all been part of past shows!

The Jacksonville Historical Society steps forward as the new Extravaganza sponsor following the recent decision by South Jacksonville Rotary to concentrate on other projects.

"We've long been the site for the Extravaganza at our beautiful Old St. Andrew's, across from the Veteran's Memorial Arena, and the project is a perfect fit," said Emily Lisska, the society's executive director. We didn't want to see this beloved local tradition end. The Extravaganza is a delightful experience for both children and adults showcasing history and preservation, along with amazingly creative edible art."

The first entry submitted for this years show is from Girl Scout Troop 335, of San Marco, visitors at last year's show. Robinson won't provide too many details, but said she's excited that the troop decided to construct an historic building for the show.

The Extravaganza runs November 30 through December 22, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Sundays. School children visit in the mornings. Thirty or more amazing creations will be on display for visitors to see with a requested donation of \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

A video production featuring Jacksonville Christmas past also plays at the show venue. The adjoining Merrill Museum House will open Wednesdays through Saturdays from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The museum house and the Extravaganza's Old St. Andrew's are located at 317 A. Philip Randolph Boulevard.

Entry forms from gingerbread house builders are still being accepted and more participation from the San Marco neighborhood is sought. For more information, please call 904-665-0064 or visit www.gingerbreadjax.org. To submit and entry or to schedule a group tour, please email gingerbread@jaxhistory.com.

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Fast Facts about the Gingerbread Extravaganza !

- The Gingerbread Extravaganza showcases dozens of holiday creations made by local chefs and everyday citizens. It's all at Old St. Andrews, the Jacksonville Historical Society's home and one of the city's National Register Sites.
- The Gingerbread Extravaganza, in its ninth year, was created by South Jacksonville Rotary and turned over this holiday to the site's host for the past four years, the Jacksonville Historical Society.
- The event features the city's historic buildings, the history of our city's past, the most creative art in Jacksonville and it's all tied together with an entertaining holiday theme.



- Special events and activities are planned for schools, seniors and other groups. Underserved populations attend at no charge. Teachers and parents will tell you that this event makes learning fun!
 - A tour at the adjoining site, the Merrill Museum House, offers a walk through a typical Jacksonville middle class home of a century ago—all in a Victorian setting—no television, no radio, and no bathroom, are among the fascinating realities!
 - The event is staged at the Jacksonville Historical Society's grounds across from the arena—it's easy parking for large school and children's groups and the many locals who attend. The Extravaganza brings our city's citizens downtown in BIG numbers with modest requested entry donations of \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. No one is turned away!
- Thousands attend the Gingerbread Extravaganza annually and it's now a beloved Jacksonville tradition!

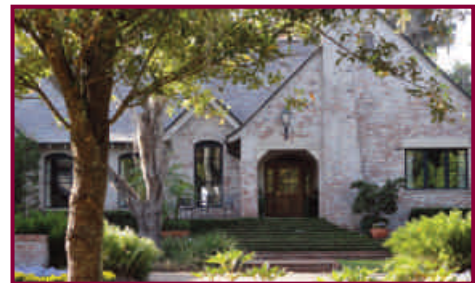
Patron's Party

The 2011 Patron's Party was a huge success! More than 150 people attended the cocktail party held on May 21, 2011 at the beautiful riverfront home of Frank and Colleen Sanchez, located at 3500 Sunnyside Drive. Delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts from Bistro Aix as well as fine wines and spirits were served. The Debra Rider & Company band, a wonderful six-piece jazz ensemble, laid down cool jazz notes during the party.



*Patrons Party co-chairs
Sherri Meadows, Diane Martin
and Kelly Rubin*

For the first time, there was a Silent Auction with a few select items from bb's, Matthews, Miriams, Open Road Bicycles, Stellars PV, Taverna, the Ritz Carlton and Underwoods. The event raised more than \$22,000 and the proceeds will go towards improvements in San Marco Square that include bike racks, street furniture and an information kiosk.



We wish to thank our sponsors and benefactors for supporting the San Marco Preservation Society's Patron's Party, including:

The Brumos Companies
AccuBuild Companies
Manormor Sotheby's International Realty
Murphy & Anderson, P.A.
David & Associates, Dental Group Practice
Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute
OE&S, Office Environments & Services
Suzanne Perritt, Virgin Galactic Accredited Space Agent
Robert's South Bank Pharmacy
ruckus. advertising + public relations

The Tile Market
MAC Hair Studio
Sherri Meadows Interiors
Regions Bank
Troy Spurlin Interiors
Corinne Hodak
Peter Rummell
Gordon Mott
And of course, Frank and Colleen Sanchez

Tennis Anyone?

Join the Campaign to Raise Critical Funds for Southside Tennis Complex

Ask anyone who plays tennis at the Southside Tennis Complex courts in San Marco about their experience and they'll probably tell you two things: 1) these courts are an absolute gem in the city parks system and 2) they are in desperate need of significant maintenance.

"It's been over six years since the clay courts were resurfaced," explained Alison Abernathy, Southside Tennis Complex regular and tennis enthusiast. "They're in dire need of new lines, new clay, and general resurfacing work to ensure they're safe and playable – not only for the dozens of teams who play on the courts weekly, but also for those who play on them less frequently."

A group of committed tennis facility users and team members are working with San Marco Preservation Society to help raise the necessary funds for this resurfacing project, which will total approximately \$30,000 for this project.

"We're taking a cue from other successful campaigns in the city and going at this as a public-private partnership effort," Abernathy said. "In addition to asking the City to help with funding, we're working with San Marco Preservation Society and members of Southside's active tennis community to raise critical funds."



The following donation levels are intended to challenge givers to step forward and reach for as much as they can in giving to this campaign:

Ace Level: \$500+

Overhead Smash Level: \$100 - \$499

Put Away Volley Level: \$50 - \$99

Down the Line Winner Level: \$10 - \$49

If you'd like to help, send a tax-deductible check made out to San Marco Preservation Society (write Southside Tennis Campaign on the memo line) and mail it to San Marco Preservation Society, 1468 Hendricks Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32207.

San Marco's Live Nativity

The year was 1987 and a group of neighbors were busy planning one of the first ever San Marco Tour of Homes. During the planning of the Tour of Homes, the idea of featuring a live nativity was born and several neighborhood residents loved it. From there, an annual neighborhood treasure was born.



A yard was secured, material was donated and neighbors designed and sewed costumes for angels, shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and of course, the Wisemen. A kresh was built, animals secured and before you could sing Silent Night, the San Marco Live Nativity had been born.

This time honored tradition has been a highlight of the Christmas season for 24 years. Many young angels have ascended to the ranks of Wisemen and Mary's. But times have changed. Unfortunately, the animals, which at one time cost as little as \$50 for the weekend, are now \$375 per night. Other miscellaneous expenses make the beautiful evening cost neighbors more than \$400 a night. Area residents still make the evening possible with hours of time and effort, but expenses have become a problem.



If you would like to donate to our neighborhood nativity, please call San Marco Preservation Society at 904-396-0081 to make a donation. If you'd like to participate as an angel or shepherd, please contact Sharon Bennett at 904-346-3816 or Jan Bebeau at 904-346-3816.



Community Clean Up Event

San Marco residents, roll up your sleeves! We invite all San Marco residents to participate in two community clean up days. The first on day will be held on Saturday, November 5th where we will meet to clean up Davin Park. Volunteers are asked to meet at 8:00am at Davin Park, on the corner of River Road and Arbor Lane.

The second on community clean up will be held Saturday, November 12 where we will meet to clean up San Marco Square. Volunteers are asked to meet at 8:00am in front of the San Marco Movie Theater in San Marco Square. Trash bags will be provided.

Your efforts are greatly appreciated and will help us keep our neighborhood looking its best!

San Marco's Upcoming Event Calendar

Some Upcoming Dates to keep in mind as we move closer to the Holiday Season.

Holiday Magic returns to San Marco Square this year on Saturday evening, December 10th. Holiday Magic is free and open to the public.

Help us light up San Marco with the **Annual Luminaries**. Luminaries will be placed throughout the neighborhood December 3rd-4th. Kits are on sale and available through the merchants and at upcoming events.

Back by popular demand, the **Live Nativity** will be Dec 3rd, from 6:30-8:30pm on the corner of Arbor Lane and Laurel Road. Please mark your calendar and bring your family for this special neighborhood experience.

San Marco Preservation Society's 21st Holiday Tour of Homes will be Saturday, December 3 from 4:00-8:00pm and Sunday, December 4 from 2:00-6:00pm this year. This year's Holiday Tour of Homes will feature more than six homes which will be expertly decorated for the holidays for your enjoyment. We'd like to thank each of the families who are opening up their homes to the community for the holidays. With the help of dozens of volunteers, this year's 21st Annual San Marco Holiday Tour of Homes should prove to be the most joyous year ever. Tickets are on sale for \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.smpsjax.com.



South Jacksonville City Hall

Did you know that South Jacksonville City Hall at 1468 Hendricks Avenue is available to rent for meetings? Please call Becky with Greenscape of Jacksonville, Inc. at 904-398-5757 to reserve the Conference Room for your next meeting. As of November 1, 2011, a small fee of \$25 per hour will be billed to your organization which will be used to maintain the facility and provide heating, cooling and electricity for your gathering.

SMPS: Membership Has its Rewards

The San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) represents the interests of every resident within San Marco's boundaries—a census of more than 5,500, including individuals, families and businesses. Yet, less than eight percent of San Marco's residents—only 411 members—belong to the SMPS, helping contribute funds that make our work possible.

For nearly 37 years, the San Marco Preservation Society has been hard at work to maintain the character and charm of San Marco. A volunteer-driven organization, our small non-profit has helped to lead large efforts that make our community one of the best places to live, work and play in Jacksonville.

continued



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Jacksonville, FL 32207

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SMPS: Membership Has its Rewards continued

In recent years, the Preservation Society has played a major role in advocating for zoning to ensure the long-term viability and value of our area. Our leadership has helped to restore South Jacksonville City Hall and maintains Preservation Hall. We have brought our neighbors together through events such as concerts in the park, duck pond races, the 35th anniversary party and community planning; sponsored events that have raised funds to maintain and upgrade the San Marco Square and our large park system; and helped receive grant-funding for special projects including those that will ensure the long-term safety and walk-ability of our neighborhood.

Many of you have been part of these efforts as attendees, volunteers and donors—and we are very grateful for your support!

SMPS membership fees are relatively inexpensive—in fact, family and individual memberships are \$40 per year or less. That averages only .10 cents per day for the year! We'd like every resident in San Marco to contribute to improving and sustaining the area. We can only be effective with the help of our neighbors. If you have not renewed or joined for the 2011-2012 Membership Year, please take a moment to send us your check or pay online today.

- Did you know that the SMPS secures grants that benefit our community? The size of our membership is critical to receiving grant consideration.
- Did you know that SMPS helps every resident in San Marco? In fact, SMPS represents the interests of more than 5,500 residents within the boundaries of the San Marco area.
- Did you know that SMPS sponsors the fantastic Concerts in the Park as well as many other events throughout the year?
- Did you know that out of a potential 5,500 members, there are only 411 current members of SMPS?

There are several ways to update your Membership status:

- **Mail your check**, payable to: San Marco Preservation Society, to:
South Jacksonville City Hall
1468 Hendricks Avenue
Jacksonville, Florida 32207
- **Pay online** at smpsjax.com

Annual Membership Fees are as follows:

Senior: \$15 (age 70+) **Business:** \$75 **Individual:** \$30 **Corporate:** \$125 **Family:** \$40

Reminder: The San Marco Preservation Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Contributions may be tax deductible.