

# San Marco Times

The Official Newsletter of the San Marco Preservation Society

September 2004

## Jim Rink Memorial Park Groundbreaking Takes Place

by Robin Robinson

On July 7, 2004 a groundbreaking took place for the Jim Rink Memorial Park to be located at the end of Cedar Street where it meets the river. The site is being developed as a neighborhood pocket park which will be a welcome piece of beautification for the neighborhood. Former City Councilman, Matt Carlucci, conceived the idea of the park and Art Shad, our present City Councilman, is seeing the project through. Art brought in Greenscape of Jacksonville to manage the project last year, thus, the project is a partnership of public, private and non-profit

sectors.

Tom Fisher, a partner with Rink at Rink Reynolds Diamond Fisher Wilson architectural firm, presented a rendering of the park describing how the park will appear upon its completion in mid-August. There will be a designated fishing area, paved walkway, picnic benches and additional benches along the river. The focal point of the park will be an abstract sculpture in the center of the park. Enzo Torcoletti of St. Augustine designed the sculpture.

Jim Rink was a charter member of San Marco Preservation Society and his



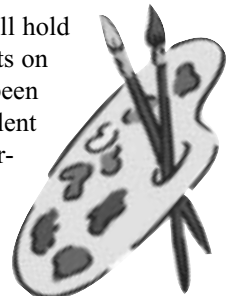
Tom Fisher, Connie Rink, Councilman Art Shad and Lisa Taylor, Greenscape president, break ground for Jim Rink Memorial Park.

contributions to San Marco were numerous. He was also on the Governor's Board for Historic Preservation and made statewide

contributions in that area. He is survived by his wife, Connie Rink, who is also active in the San Marco community.

## Artists Wanted for San Marco Merchants' 3rd Annual Art Festival

The San Marco Merchants Association will hold its third annual Art Festival for local area artists on Saturday Sept 18th from 10-5. The event has been very well accepted in the past due to the excellent talent in our community. They are also sponsoring a second annual poster contest. Artists participating in the show must submit their rendition by August 30th. Posters and postcards of the winning selection will be for sale beginning Sept. 18th at the show and at the Merchant members shops. All proceeds for this go to San Marco Square beautification. For information, call Jill or Laurie Dyer at III Lions Gift Shop, 396-9519.



### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Monday, September 20 • 7:00 p.m.

Preservation Hall - 1652 Atlantic Blvd.  
For members and prospective members - if you live, work, play or worship in San Marco, you are welcome at this meeting. Don't miss it!

#### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING DATES:

September 20, 2004

November 15, 2004

January 17, 2005

March 21, 2005

May 16, 2005

## SAN MARCO TIMES

...is the news and information publication of the San Marco Preservation Society. Address newsletter correspondence to: Robin Robinson, 1573 Marco Place, Jacksonville, FL 32207 or call 396-9011 evenings. Send change of address notices to the San Marco Preservation Society, 1652 Atlantic Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32207.

<b>PRESERVATION HALL</b>	<b>396-4734</b>
<b>Pres. Hall Coordinator</b>	
Laura Chepnik	396-9534
<b>President</b>	
Lori Boyer	398-1194
<b>President-Elect</b>	
Tim Martin	396-9050
<b>Secretary</b>	
Barbara Hall	448-6820
<b>Treasurer</b>	
Jennifer Newman	399-5279
<b>Membership</b>	
<i>Adm. &amp; Dev.</i>	
Missie Sarra LePrel	398-0141
<i>Events</i>	
Lesley Mauldin	396-5545
<i>Meeting Pl. Coord.</i>	
Yvonne Corey	399-1580
<i>New Neighbor</i>	
Dawn Hudson	
<b>Historian</b>	
Cynthia Murray	396-4890
<b>Public Relations</b>	
Virginia Norton	390-0956
<b>Preservation Hall</b>	
Barbara Hall	346-3385
<b>Nuisance Abatement</b>	
Karen Franklin	399-8977
<b>Grants</b>	
Kevin McLaughlin	398-6868
<b>Traffic</b>	
Valerie Evans	398-0326
<b>Beautification</b>	
<b>Newsletter</b>	
Robin Robinson	396-9011
<b>Merchant Liaison</b>	
Jay Jabour	737-8482
<b>Zoning &amp; Land Use</b>	
Mitch Weiss	396-0683
<b>Parks</b>	
Karen McCombs	398-6458
<b>Landmark Designation</b>	
Pat Andrews	398-1863
<b>SE-PAC</b>	
Mark MacLean	396-9789
<b>Hospitality</b>	
Suzanne Perritt	396-0487
<b>Home Tour 2004</b>	
Malinda Durham	858-9704
<b>Immediate Past Pres</b>	
Mark MacLean	396-9789
<b>Director Emeritus</b>	
Barbara Puckett	398-4989
<b>Special Projects</b>	
<i>So Jax City Hall</i>	
Zim Boulos	396-0249
<i>Luminaria</i>	
Janet Hogshead	396-7489
<b>Honorary Board Members</b>	
(2004-2005)	
Janet Hogshead	396-7489
Jack Nooney	398-4887
Rob Smith	399-0342
Keith Kimball	398-9649

# President's Message



What a busy and exciting year this promises to be for our community! We look forward to our 18th Candelight Tour of Homes December 11-12, the unveiling of our new web site at [sanmarcopreservationsociety.com](http://sanmarcopreservationsociety.com), the commencement of the Town Center project, completion of the zoning overlay, and implementation of several initiatives to involve more of you in SMPS decisions and improve communication within our neighborhood. Look for articles on these projects in this newsletter and future ones, and attend our general membership meetings for updates. The next meeting will be held **Monday, September 20 at 7:00 p.m. at Preservation Hall**, 1652 Atlantic Boulevard.

This newsletter has been mailed to all addresses in the community, not just our members, in an effort to let you know the scope of our numerous projects and activities and in the hope that you will choose become involved. SMPS can use your unique talents and welcomes your suggestions and ideas. Look at the list of committees on the Board list opposite and if one looks interesting, contact the chair or me about getting involved. The Home Tour is always a great place to start since there are so many jobs to fill, many of which are limited in their time commitment, and it is a fun way to meet your neighbors.

I want to personally thank all of you who took the time to attend one of the zoning overlay neighborhood meetings. You provided great feedback which should be very helpful to the General Counsel's office in drafting the new ordinance. Look for Councilman Shad's Town Meeting sometime in August.

Finally, I must thank all of you who have agreed to chair committees this year, especially for bearing with me as I attempt to shift many decisions from the Board to the committees. I know I have set ambitious objectives for each committee but I have confidence we will accomplish most of them. I am most grateful for your commitment to our community.

—Lori Nemeyer Boyer,  
President

## The "Big Apple" Discovers San Marco

In case you missed it, the following is an excerpt from an article written by Catherine O'Neal and printed in the "*New York Times*" on April 30, 2004

WITH its working-city image and nebulous locale — on the brink of northeast Florida, whistling distance from Georgia — Jacksonville has never been a serious vacation spot. Now it should be. Along the sleek-blue St. Johns River, neighborhoods are sliding into style. Artists and designers have turned up the vogue volume, opening galleries, cafes and shops among the ancient maples and magnolias. Travelers can slip in for savvy weekends, knowing that the place long called "the biggest city in South Georgia" is fast becoming Florida's next jewel.

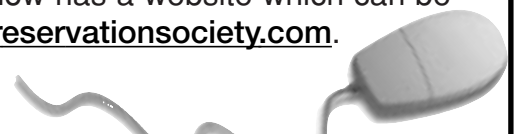
The San Marco Scene  
... the elite hit San Marco to stroll, shop and linger over espresso alfresco. The eight-square-

block neighborhood is graced with gas lamps and scrolled iron benches. Design houses, yoga salons, antiques shops and art galleries keep multiplying . . . San Marco swarms with high-end restaurants, though none is more sought after than Bistro Aix where the vigorous fare gets a French twist and is shaped according to what's in season. The dining room is alluring with its mosaic-inlaid globe chandeliers, curving black banquettes, and windows dressed with crushed green velvet . . .

From Aix, stroll to Simon's Wine Bar for smooth wine and jazz on Thursday through Saturday nights starting at 8:30. Ensembles play in a space with lustrous wood floors and a glass-walled cellar holding 5,000 bottles of wine. After midnight, clubbers head for Endo Exo for martinis and dancing. With cubist furniture and silk-covered beds by the bar, Endo feels more South Beach than San Marco.

The San Marco Preservation Society now has a website which can be accessed at [www.sanmarcopreservationsociety.com](http://www.sanmarcopreservationsociety.com).

**COME CHECK IT OUT !**



# The Stockton Cottage Open for Business

By Barbara Hall-Elmore

The Stockton Cottage awaits its first bridal party as the final touches for the building have been completed. The Stockton Cottage was moved by Hygema House & Building Movers to Fletcher Park on December 16, 2003. Our thanks goes to Mr. & Mrs. George McCalla who donated the small wooden house to the San Marco Preservation Society for its restoration. The "Cottage" was located behind their newly purchased home at 909 Arbor Lane which was originally a Stockton family home.

This little cottage has had an interesting history. Built in 1938, it was originally the temporary sales office for the Telfair Stockton Company and was located at 2101 San Marco Boulevard. It faced the intersection of San Marco Boulevard and Alford Place. It was designed by architects, Marsh & Saxelbye, and built by the Colonial Homes of Jacksonville. This company



was probably the Colonial Manor, Inc. under James R. Stockton, Thomas K. Boardman, and Brown Whatley that platted and marketed Colonial Manor Subdivision south of San Marco between 1935 and 1940. There is no definite confirmation of the relocation date, but probably occurred in 1941 when the first gas station was constructed on the block or in 1966 when the current building was constructed (Starling's).

The Cottage measures 19x15 feet and its exterior is cypress lap siding. A brick porch has been added. The interior walls are tongue and groove cypress paneling and the single wood floor was heart pine. Because of rot and some termite damage a new heart pine floor has been installed over the old floor. The restoration of the building was supervised by San Marco Preservation board member, Kevin McLaughlin. Boy Scout,

Morgan Andrews, helped with the exterior painting. New electrical, plumbing fixtures, insulation, drywall ceiling, recessed lighting and roof repair have been part of the renovation.

The furnishings in the cottage are donations on loan from San Marco Preservation members Cathy Watkiss, Jennifer Newman, Tim Martin and Barbara Hall. The beautiful landscaping around the building was purchased with monies from the Mayor's Neighborhood Grant funds and planted by San Marco volunteers working with Karen McCombs' SMPS Parks Committee. Installation of a brick patio is also planned for the area in front of the cottage.

**Preservation Hall and the Stockton Cottage are each available for rental to the public.** The Hall rents for \$600 for the entire day and the Cottage rents for \$200 for the entire day. Shorter terms of rental are also available. Please contact Laura Chepenik at 396-4734 for further information.

## "Home is Where the Hearth Is" Holiday Home Tour Volunteer Opportunities Abound

by Malinda Durham, Tour Chairman

The 2004 San Marco Preservation Society's Holiday Home Tour will be held Saturday, December 11th from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday, December 12th from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Plans are underway for what is hoped will be the most successful tour ever.

Every other year (barring extended street improvements) SMPS undertakes this project, its major source of income, and asks that community members take advantage of the many opportunities to participate. For example:

\* If you are a business owner in the neighborhood, consider buying an ad in the Tour program. Call Kathy Watrel, 399-0556.

\* As an individual or family, send season's greetings or a personal message to a friend or neighbor (see insert).

\* Buy a ticket or a basketful of tickets (at a reduced rate) to share with friends or co-workers OR call Margaret Rush at 396-5778 and offer to

help her with ticket sales.

\* Each home on tour requires a staff of hosts. Call Barbara Swindell or Gloria Andreu at 396-6456 and volunteer your time during Tour hours to participate in this way.

\* We need volunteers to man the hospitality tent which, this year, will be in Davin Park. Call Gwen Gallagher at 396-3258. Preservation Hall will also be open during the Tour hours. Call Barbara Hall-Elmore to volunteer your time 448-6820.

\* Last minute placing of route signs, setting up hospitality tent, helping with traffic control, etc., etc., are the responsibilities of Laura & David Byers. They could really use your help and can be reached at 514-9531.

Finally, thank you, thank you, thank you, to those of you who have answered Robin Robinson's call and agreed to open your homes to the community on Home Tour weekend. You are what makes it happen!!

## Jazz, Food and Fun



*The Jazz Picnic held in Fletcher Park was a big success. A good time was had by young and old alike. Look for more concerts in the park to be held next spring.*

# Zoning Overlay Nears Completion

by Lori Nemeyer Boyer

As you probably know, a zoning overlay ordinance was passed by the City Council for "Lake Marco" in March. Lake Marco included the majority of the original San Marco subdivision and includes the area from Landon to Sorrento, including both sides of San Marco Boulevard and the Square. At the same time a moratorium ordinance was passed covering the area from Cedar Street to Craig Creek and the river to the railroad tracks south of Atlantic and Old Kings north of Atlantic. The moratorium was designed to provide public notice that an overlay was being prepared for that area as well.

An overlay ordinance basically refines the zoning for a specific area to address specific concerns applicable to the designated area. In our case, our neighborhood consists of many platted subdivisions, most of which were planned and developed before 1945. A great many of those original plats depicted building restriction lines for the lots they created and the original homes and commercial buildings that comprise San Marco were built in accordance with those lines. Most plats specified a certain setback from the front or street right of way (the right of way line is generally the inside of the sidewalk where there are sidewalks), many specified a setback from the side lot line, and some included rear and riverfront setbacks. Some subdivisions also had recorded covenants adding additional conditions about structure height, size, etc. Most, if not all, of the covenants have expired by the terms of those documents. The lines on the plats remain and are probably enforceable among those who own property in the subdivision. However, as San Marco was merged into the City of Jacksonville, and various zoning codes were adopted and modified over time, the City no longer enforces those original plat lines but rather the setbacks, size and height limits established in the current zoning code. In some cases these are more restrictive and in some cases less restrictive. In either case, they are not consistent with what is actually built in our neighborhood.

As our neighborhood has prospered, and values have risen, we have seen increasing numbers of demolitions and new construction, as well as major renovations. Many property owners have com-

plained to SMPS and our recent Council members that the new construction was out of scale, or blocked their view, or encroached on the consistent green space along the street. Individuals buying property in an established neighborhood arguably have reason to assume that the adjacent properties will remain somewhat consistent. This does not mean that styles, color, or size may not change but at least as to setbacks, height, and lot coverage there would be continuity with the original development plan. The Planning Department and former councilman Carlucci proposed the overlay as the solution and the concept was endorsed by SMPS.

A series of neighborhood meetings were held between May and July to seek input from property owners regarding what should be addressed in the overlay. The Lake Marco ordinance will be used as a template. It basically adopts the platted lines as the operative setbacks, establishes a 35 foot height limitation, and a lot coverage maximum of 35%. It also allows the reconstruction after casualty of existing detached garages that are closer to the property lines than current zoning would allow. The Office of the General Counsel is currently drafting the new overlay and Councilman Shad will hold a Town Meeting to discuss the legislation when it is completed.



**THANKS TO LAURA BYERS  
AND SCOTT DOWMAN**

*for the new plantings which  
were recently placed in Balis Park.*

## Administrative Deviation Procedures

by Mitch Weiss

An application for an administrative deviation is a request for a relaxation of the terms of the Zoning Code requirements for such items as a reduction in the minimum lot area and required side yards, minimum number of required off-street parking spaces, and minimum landscaping requirements, and/or to increase maximum lot coverage or the allowable maximum height of structures, including fences. Administrative deviation applications are filed with the Zoning Section of the Planning and Development Department for the City of Jacksonville. Once a hearing date is set for the application, written notice is to be mailed at least 14 days in advance of the first hearing to all owners of real property within 350 feet of the boundaries of the property for which the deviation is requested. The applicant must post a sign on the property in full view of the public within five working days of filing the application. The Zoning Administrator is authorized to grant an administrative deviation only if substantial competent evidence exists to support a positive finding based on certain set criteria. Most important, though, if you wish to support or oppose the application, you must file a written response to the application with the Zoning Administrator and/or appear at the hearing before the Zoning Administrator. Your written response or appearance is your opportunity to present evidence regarding whether or not the proposed deviation will substantially diminish property values in, or alter the essential character of, the area surrounding the site and whether or not it will substantially interfere with or injure the rights of others whose property would be affected by the deviation. If you are concerned about a specific application for administrative deviation, don't miss the opportunity to present viewpoint.

**If you have plans to file an  
application for an  
Administrative Deviation,  
please contact SMPS by calling  
Mitch Weiss at 396-0683 prior  
to filing the application.**

# Awards Presented at Annual Meeting

by Cathy Watkiss and Barbara Puckett

## COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS - "Beautification/Renovation":

*American Cancer Society*, 1430 Prudential Dr  
*Beard's Jewelry*, 3200 Hendricks Avenue  
*The Corner Brasserie*, 1430 San Marco Blvd.  
*Turner Plumbing*, 1903 Hendricks Ave.

## RESIDENTIAL - "Beautification/Renovation":

*Ashton & Dawn Hudson*, 1304 River Oaks Rd.  
*Fred Lambrou*, 1998 River Rd.  
*John & Debbie Tomlinson*, 1422 River Oaks Rd.  
*Carolyn Munro Wilson*, 2171 River Rd.

## "Green Thumb" Awards:

*Julia Canipelli & Eddie Johnston*, 2320  
Broadmoor  
*Cory Hodak*, 931 Sorrento Rd.  
*Bill & Olga Joos*, 1326 Lakewood Rd.  
*Doug & Missy Reston*, 2227 Belote Pl.

## 50 YEAR AWARDS

### 50 years in same house:

*Mrs. Cascile M. Knight and the late Rev. Malcolm Knight*, 27 years pastor Southside Baptist Church, 844 Mapleton Terrace.  
*Robert & Sara Alice Darby*, 1125 Eutaw, since 1947  
*Holmes Stamp Co.* - Present owners - Father, Bob Croft; Son, Brian Croft. 50 years in business on San Marco Blvd.  
*Lois Claire Rush Yaeger*, 2nd generation, 1994 River Rd. Parents: John, Sr. and Clara Rush.

### 50 years in San Marco:

*Libby Lee and the late Randy Lee*, 1947 on Alford Place, 1967 on San Marco Place.  
*Betty Altee*, 1731 Belmonte Av., 40 years Dante Pl. Member of SMPS since 1984.

Thanks to **Bobbi Yoffee** for donating her calligraphy skills in preparing the Beautification and Green Thumb certificates.

Thanks to **Judy Davis** for photographing the award-winning homes and businesses for our annual meeting.

*Angela Akra Collie*, 2nd generation. 1st home 109 Home St. (in 1923), Philip & Teresa Akra. 2nd 1222 River Oaks Rd., 3rd 1548 Alexandria Pl. S., Angela, 2343 Broadmoor Lane.

*John Rush, III* - 3rd generation, 1994 River Rd. (grandfather), 2311 Laurel Rd. (father), 2344 Laurel Rd.

*South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church*, celebrates 65 years in San Marco (1915). Moved from Hendricks & LaSalle to present location July 1939.

### The "Native Son" Award:

*Jack Nooney* - 3rd generation, 1560 Alford Place (grandmother), Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Nooney at 952 Sorrento Rd in 1926 (parents). There were only 3 houses on Sorrento at that time and none south of Sorrento with the exception of the Mitchell Home and 3 houses on River Oaks Rd. (Vista del Rio). Jack and wife Patsy presently at 1035 Elder Lane.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM SAN MARCO PRESERVATION SOCIETY BOARD MEETINGS

### June SMPS Board Meeting

The Board Meeting has been changed to the 2nd Monday of each month and the General Meetings to the 3rd Monday of alternate months. Janet Hogshead, Jack Nooney, Rob Smith, Keith Kimball were appointed Honorary Board Members for an annual appointment for the 2004-05 year.

Subcontractors have been hired to complete the Stockton Cottage. The plan is to have it ready to rent by July 1. Some furniture has been donated but more is needed.

This year's newsletters will go out to the entire community list, approximately 2,200, and will also be available on the web site.

The Merchant Liaison was asked to see if the merchants would help supply a welcome basket to give to new residents. The menus and coupons will be free advertising for merchants who are SMPS members.

### July SMPS Board Meeting

We have openings in our Beautification & Luminaria Committees. Please contact Lori if you know of anyone who is interested in these positions.

The Sea Cow Foundation has requested several locations for the Sea Cows in the Square, (1) in front of Stellars Gallery, (2) in front of Theatre Jax, and (3) in Balis Park. The SMPS Board did not want the Sea Cow sculpture located in Balis Park. A recommendation was made to put the third sculpture at the point in front of Starlings or at Bank of America.

The Mayor's Neighborhood Summit will be held at the Adams Mark September 16-18. We will not have a booth at the event this year.

The SMPS web site cannot be up and running until there is a resolution of the credit card issue. The cost of the use of credit card charges is more than what was originally expected. A decision will be deferred until next month.

Current requests for Administrative Deviations are as follows: 1) 1543 Alexandria Pl. N. - Increase maximum height of structure from 4 to 7 ft. for brick wall. Reduce required front yard from 20 to 13 ft. along NW property line. 2) 1605 Brookwood Ave. - increase max. height of structure from 15 to 25 ft. Reduce required side yard east property line from 5 to 0 ft. Reduce required rear yard north property line from 10 to 2 ft. A motion was passed to oppose the application. 3) 1604 Alford Place - Reduce required front yard from 20 to 14 feet along west property line. A Motion was passed to oppose this request. 4) 1733 Landon Ave. Exception sought: single family dwelling, change to residential. Board decision - this is good - send a letter in support. 5) 1610 Emerson Street, between Grandy Avenue and St. Augustine Road. CO to CRO (CRO- multi-family). Ignore - not in our area. It was requested that a notice be placed in the Newsletter asking that anyone seeking an AD to come

The Parks Committee reported that several events are being planned this year, i.e., Jazz Picnics in the Park, Doggie Parade and a Bike Tour. There will be a meeting with park leaders soon to set a list of park priorities. Cynthia reported that the City owes us two benches for Davin Park. Lori reported that she is talking to the Parks Dept. in regard to the trees dying in Southside Playground Park. She is still trying to get them replaced. The new plantings in Balis Park were planted by Laura Byers and Scott Dowman.

The renovation and furnishings to the Cottage have been completed and the building is ready to be rented. Furnishings were donated and loaned to the Cottage by Cathy Watkiss, Tim Martin, Jennifer Newman, and Barbara Hall-Elmore.

Residents on River Oaks Road and Arbor have requested that their power lines be placed underground. Valerie requested some input on the past history of this request. She will do some further

research and get back to us.

before the Board before sending their application to the Zoning Dept.  
Our application for a \$350,000 grant from the State has been completed and submitted for the Southside City Hall. A contingent will need to go to Tallahassee in September when this request will come before the committee.

Three Overlay Meetings were held last week. One will be held tonight. We are having a good response. The meetings have been very positive. We have until August to finish the Overlay.

Credit Card use on Web Site - discussion was held in regard to the use of credit card purchases from our new web site. The initial fee is \$2500. Many questions were asked regarding use fees. The Board decided that Malinda has the authority to spend up to \$2700 out of Home Tour monies for a credit card site and that the transaction fee should not exceed 5%. Stephanie will take this info to the Home Tour Committee.

research and get back to us.

The JEA accepts the responsibility for the delay in the completion of the pumping station in Landon Park. The JEA is installing a new water line. The delay has added 60 days to the contract. The project is now scheduled to be completed by August 31. The President requested that Pat Andrews and Rob Smith draft a letter to Public Works regarding the landscaping and damage to the park.

The repair of the roof of South Jacksonville City Hall has been completed. There is concern regarding the re-mortaring of the bricks and the windows. The grant request for the restoration of the building has been submitted to the State.

The final overlay meeting took place last week. Tim Franklin from the General Counsel's Office is preparing the draft. The overlay meetings were a great process. All attending thought it was a great idea and they were very positive meetings.

# From South Jacksonville to Havana — on the “Speedway to Sunshine”

By Louis Zelenka, Jr.

After the Florida East Coast Railway extension was completed to Key West in 1912, passengers could board an FEC train at the South Jacksonville depot and stay on board all the way to Havana, Cuba. Let's imagine we are vacationing in the tourist season of 1926 - 1927, just after the disastrous September 1926, hurricane yet before the total collapse of the Florida building boom in 1927. We would have had a choice of boarding one of two regularly scheduled passenger trains at Jacksonville's Union Station (now the Prime Osborn Convention Center), or at the South Jacksonville passenger depot, which was just east of the Hendricks Avenue crossing, on the north side of the tracks. Our train would be complete with dining car, Pullman (sleeping cars), coaches and observation car and could take us all the way to Key West. From Key West our car could be placed on a railroad car ferry, and we would travel on to Havana. However, this was more in theory than actual practice. Most likely we would have transferred from our Pullman car to a stateroom on the car ferry for a more comfortable cruise. Among our reasons would be that trains were not air conditioned in the 1920s and staying on a car in the hull of a ship would be unbearable in tropic water. The Florida East Coast Railway operated steamships and car ferries from Key West to Havana for passengers and freight. This would provide travelers with a chance to dine aboard ship, perhaps tango to the tunes of the ship's orchestra and gaze upon the deep blue of the Gulfstream waters. The total time from Miami by rail, and then by ship to Havana was about twelve hours. That is probably the route taken by my godparents when they went to Havana on their honeymoon in 1933. They lived most of their married years on Sorrento Road in San Marco and also on San Marco Blvd. itself, but I never thought to ask them questions that would now be of historical interest. In later years other options evolved for Cuba-bound travelers. By 1929 the FEC was offering tri-motor airplane service from Miami to Havana in partnership with Pan American Airways. Northbound from Cuba railroad freight would be produce such as pineapples, bananas, sugar, coconuts, and other agricultural items from the island nation. After the Key West railway extension was destroyed in the 1935 hurricane the Flagler System steamships sailed from the port of Miami to Havana, since the Key West extension was never rebuilt. The most popular and long lived of these steamships was the P&O liner the “S. S. Florida.”

The Florida East Coast Railway had much more activity in San Marco and South Jacksonville seventy years ago than now. Several trains ran daily from the “new” South Jacksonville Ferry Terminal (where the Main Street Bridge is today) to Jacksonville Beach, Neptune, Atlantic and Manhattan Beach and Mayport. Also, there was freight traffic to and from the shipyards and fertilizer plant along the St. Johns River in Southside. The rail line to the beaches followed present day Beach Boulevard, but in 1934, the beaches line was discontinued. From the main railway line, there was also a siding that connected near Alexandria Place across Hendricks Avenue to the brickyard where Lake Marco is now situated. This siding was gone by the 1940s, and within the past thirty years the riverfront lines have been pulled up. The steam locomotives have been gone since 1954, and today the resumption of passenger service along the Florida East Coast is only a dream in Amtrak's mind. I personally rode the FEC to points south a number of times in the 1950s and early 60s. Service was top notch until the strike of 1963, when after boarding a train, I saw the sign “Notice to the Public: Florida East Coast Railway Company is operated under Strike Conditions.” There had been some fears about track conditions, and there was no diner, just fast food from a chain in Cocoa, but we made it to Miami. Today, the passenger trains are gone, but, the long freight trains still roll across the St. Johns River double track span and through San Marco blowing their modern whistles as they head north and south along the much admired “Speedway to Sunshine.”



1652 Atlantic Blvd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32207

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION <b>US POSTAGE PAID</b> JACKSONVILLE FL PERMIT NO. 1669
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