

San Marco Times

The Official Newsletter of the San Marco Preservation Society

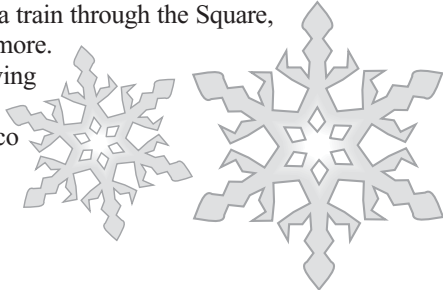
December 2004

It's Snowing in the Square

By Robin Robinson

Yes, you read it correctly, it will be snowing in the Square on the evening of December 3 for the annual San Marco Merchants' Holiday Magic celebration! Come see for yourself and join in all the fun. Holiday Magic offers you a chance to meet Santa & Mrs. Claus, enjoy an ice skating show, ride a train through the Square, take a carriage ride, and more.

You can also enter a drawing to win a \$1,000 gift basket from the San Marco Merchants. Don't miss out from 5 - 9 pm on December 3 - a grand San Marco tradition!



Home is Where the Hearth Is

HOLIDAY HOME TOUR BETTER THAN EVER

by Pam Rush

This year's home tour is literally "a walk in the park." Seven beautiful homes make an easy walking tour down River Road, Elder, Laurel and Maple Lane. An extra special thank you to our generous neighbors who agreed to open their homes. The house selection allows for improved traffic flow, use of large area parking lots, and less-congested streets for enjoyment of Luminaria and Nativity. Sunday afternoon hours enhance the availability of the tour to a broader spectrum of guests. Volunteers will host a hospitality tent at Davin Park with music provided by area churches, schools and community groups. We are grateful to our institutional neighbors who will provide parking on tour days at Hendricks Avenue Elementary School, Southside United Methodist Church, South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church and the SouthTrust Bank (rear lot). The trolley will pick up guests at all lots, with tour starting points at Marco Place and Landon Avenue.

Over 200 San Marco residents and friends help make the bi-annual Holiday Tour of Homes a success. For 2004, the Committee undertook to sell advertising and print its own guide. Led by Kathy Watrel, advertising support was excellent, producing a 48 page full-size guide with color pages. The guide was distributed to over 2000 homes in the San Marco area; another 1000 were distributed at specialty locations in Amelia Island, Jacksonville, Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine, and Savannah; while the balance are available to the 2500-3000 expected tour guests.

The Home Tour is the major fundraiser for San Marco Preservation Society. Just as important, the tour provides a glimpse into the architectural character of San Marco, interesting and fun holiday decorating ideas, remodeling/renovation successes, and the hospitality of our neighborhood. **Tickets can be purchased at:** all Peterbrooke Chocolate locations, at San Marco Square merchants: Duck Duck Goose; Edwards Tobacco; Karl's; Sushi Rock Cafe; Rosie True; Villa Vita; The Write Touch & III Lions. They will also be available at Turner Plumbing, Riverpoint Properties & Myra et al. For more information, visit www.sanmarcopreservationsociety.com.

Home Is Where
the Hearth Is

18TH HOLIDAY TOUR OF HOMES



DECEMBER 11, 2004 • 4:00-8:00PM

DECEMBER 12, 2004 • 2:00-6:00PM

\$18 IN ADVANCE • \$20 AT THE DOOR

For more information call 858-9704.

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.

PRESERVATION HALL	396-4734
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10 am-2 pm	
Pres. Hall Coordinator	
Laura Chepnik	396-9534
President	
Lori Boyer	398-1194
President-Elect	
Tim Martin	396-9050
Secretary	
Barbara Hall	448-6820
Treasurer	
Jennifer Newman	399-5279
Membership	
<i>Adm. & Dev.</i>	
Missie Sarra LePrelle	398-0141
<i>Events</i>	
Lesley Mauldin	396-5545
<i>Meeting Pl. Coord.</i>	
Yvonne Corey	399-1580
<i>New Neighbor</i>	
Dawn Hudson	
Historian	
Cynthia Murray	396-4890
Public Relations	
Virginia Norton	390-0956
Preservation Hall	
Barbara Hall	346-3385
Nuisance Abatement	
Karen Franklin	399-8977
Grants	
Kevin McLaughlin	398-6868
Traffic	
Valerie Evans	398-0326
Beautification	
Michael Boyles	396-7945
Newsletter	
Robin Robinson	396-9011
Merchant Liaison	
Jay Jabour	737-8482
Zoning & Land Use	
Mitch Weiss	396-0683
Parks	
Karen McCombs	398-6458
Landmark Designation	
Pat Andrews	398-1863
SE-PAC	
Mark MacLean	396-9789
Hospitality	
Suzanne Perritt	396-0487
Home Tour 2004	
Malinda Durham	858-9704
Immediate Past Pres	
Mark MacLean	396-9789
Director Emeritus	
Barbara Puckett	398-4989
Special Projects	
<i>So Jax City Hall</i>	
Zim Boulos	396-0249
<i>Luminaria</i>	
Janet Hogshead	396-7489
Honorary Board Members	
(2004-2005)	
Janet Hogshead	396-7489
Jack Nooney	398-4887
Rob Smith	399-0342
Keith Kimball	398-9649
visit us on the web at:	
www.sanmarcopreservationsociety.com	

President's Message

On December 11 and 12, San Marco Preservation Society will host our **18th Holiday Tour of Homes**. We hope you enjoy our hospitality, are inspired by the beauty and style of the wonderful homes on tour, and gain insight into the unique character and value of this wonderful neighborhood full of history and community traditions. Stroll the streets lined with luminaria, listen to the holiday music in Davin Park and in San Marco Square, watch the live nativity, notice the traditional white candle lights in the windows of so many homes, enjoy a carriage ride and let the stress of the season fade away as you enjoy the sights and sounds of this spectacular weekend.

San Marco is a unique neighborhood radiating historic charm dating as far back as the 1920's. The homes on this year's tour will give you the opportunity to see how beautifully these old structures can be renovated and adapted to 21st century style and function. A number of San Marco homes and businesses have been officially designated historic landmarks by the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission, but most meet the criteria for such a designation. If you are interested in learning more about San Marco, the history of many buildings and a number of notable residents can be found in our recently revised San Marco Historical Points of Interest brochure and on our website: www.sanmarcopreservationsociety.com.

Events such as this Tour of Homes are important not only to raise funds for neighborhood projects, but also serve a vital role in bringing friends and neighbors together. I want to personally thank the homeowners who have graciously opened their homes for the tour and the members of our Home Tour Committee who have spent countless hours over several years planning this event. Special recognition is due to Malinda Durham, our chair, and her co-chair Stephanie Edwards. I extend my appreciation to each and every tour volunteer, donor and advertiser.

I encourage you to become actively involved in San Marco Preservation Society. We welcome your participation and ideas. Join us in January for Twelfth Night, a covered dish family supper on the 10th at 6:30 pm and on the 17th for a General Membership Meeting at 7:00 p.m. Both events will be held at Preservation Hall.

Together we will keep this neighborhood among the best in the City!

Lori Nemeyer Boyer,
President San Marco Preservation Society

SouthTrust Bank Raises \$3800 for SMPS

In late September, our local Hendricks Avenue branch of SouthTrust Bank held a furnishing sale to dispose of surplus furniture, artwork, and accessories. SMPS was named charitable beneficiary of the sale and helped provide staffing for the event. Thanks to the bank, over \$3800. was raised and contributed to San Marco Preservation. We are most grateful for this opportunity. Please be sure to thank the bank staff.



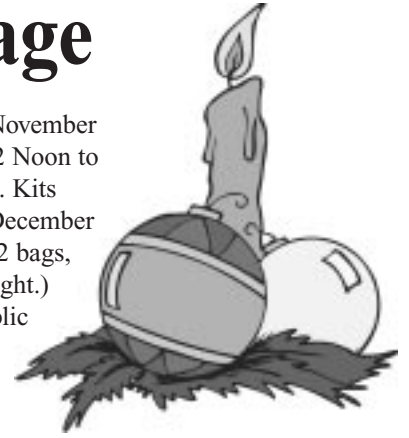
Employees of the SouthTrust Bank, San Marco branch, gathered to promote the SMPS fundraiser.

It Takes a Village to Light a Village

By Janet Hogshead

San Marco will be at its lightest and brightest Saturday and Sunday, December 11 and 12, when all the streets and parks are lined with glowing luminaria placed there by San Marco residents. Please do your part to illuminate your property and the parks in your neighborhood. SMPS will be selling the luminaria kits at the old Starlings Market at 2103 San Marco Blvd. We are grateful to Mathew Medure for the use of the store front and parking area for the luminaria sales

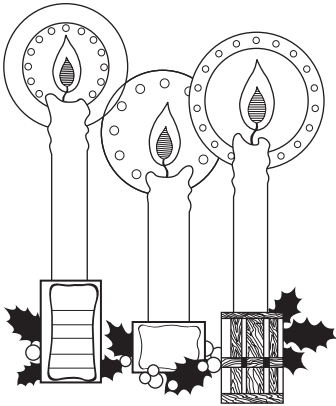
which will be held at the following times: November 26, 12 Noon to 4PM; December 3 and 4, 12 Noon to 4PM; December 10 and 11, 10 AM to 4PM. Kits will also be available at 2103 River Road, December 8 and 9, 9 AM to 6 PM. The kits contain 12 bags, sand and 24 candles (12 candles for each night.) The cost is \$12.00 for each kit. Kits for public areas are free. If you would like to help in selling these luminaria kits, please call: Janet Hogshead 396-7489.



Welcome Mike Boyles

Mike Boyles, a resident of Inwood Terrace and a former editor of our newsletter, the San Marco Times, has accepted appointment as Beautification Chair for the 2004-2005 year. Mike will be working on re-establishing the yard of the month recognitions as well as coordinating our annual beautification awards. Thank you Mike!

Don't Forget: Put a Light in the Window



It is a long-standing tradition in San Marco for homeowners to place white electric candles in their windows during the holiday season. If you are new to the neighborhood, please join us in participating in this wonderful tradition. It truly adds an extra sparkle to the season! And don't delay, they should be up in time for home tour weekend - December 11 and 12.

Library Oaks

by Karen McCombs

The Third Annual "Friends of San Marco Parks" Cocktail Party was held October, 29th at the home of Sharon Cahoon. It was a delightful evening with lots of old and new friends and neighbors. The guests were asked if they might want to make a contribution to the much needed pruning of the "Library Oaks". As is the case with such wonderful and generous neighbors, we are only about \$400 short of our goal of \$3,000. If you did not receive an invitation and would like to be involved in the parks on San Marco, please call Karen McCombs at 398-6458 or E-mail kmm30@comcast.net. If you would like to send a contribution to the "Library Oaks" fund, please mail your check, made out to San Marco Preservation Society to Jennifer Newman at 2209 River Road. The trees are scheduled to be worked on the week on November 15th. Many thanks to Sharon Cahoon, for all of her generous hospitality, Mike Boyles for the wonderful invitations and the parks committee and all of the park leaders for all of the delicious appetizers.

Preservation Hall, located at 1652 Atlantic Boulevard, is now available for rental for your next meeting, party, or wedding. Inquiries can be directed to the Preservation Hall Coordinator, Laura Chepenik, whose office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am until 2 pm. You can reach her at 396-4734 on those days, or leave a message for her at other times.

Mayor Peyton Speaks at SMPS General Membership Meeting

It took one phone call and a favorable calendar (which for our busy Mayor could mean only 3 agenda items in one night) to schedule our Mayor for our General Membership Meeting held on September 20. He spoke to an overflow crowd and was totally generous with his time followed by a much appreciated Q & A session.

SMPS would like to thank Gary and Dianne McCalla for their generous donation of the Stockton Cottage building which has been relocated to Fletcher Park. We regret that the September 2004 issue of the "San Marco Times" stated their names incorrectly.



A Short History of San Marco and Vicinity

by Louis Zelenka

Using our mind's eye, if we go back to 1832, at which time the City of Jacksonville was first incorporated, we might imagine a few early settlers on the south bank of the St. Johns River, across the river from Jacksonville. These might have been an assortment of persons who for various personal reasons did not choose to settle on the north bank of the river. There would have been some white, some free blacks, and some Native Americans scattered about and living frugally on what the land and river had to offer. This is a pattern that we see as the frontier of Florida is pushed further southward later in the 19th century. Many of these settlers may not have owned the land upon which they built their cracker style homes, but Florida was not yet a state, just a Territory, so property ownership was often based on homesteading. However, there are records of a sizable land grant in the San Marco/South Jacksonville area which had passed to Isaac Hendricks in 1828.

Several miles inland, by the 1830's, a working plantation surrounded Red Bank, the home of Albert Gallatin Philips. He was Sheriff of Duval County and built a frame house on his plantation during his tenure in office. Later, he built a brick home, which still stands on Greenridge Road. This house was begun in 1854. In the post Civil War era two prominent land owners in the area we now know as San Marco were Harrison Reed, who was one of Florida's governors, and his sister, Mrs. Martha Reed Mitchell. After his term as governor was completed Mr. Reed moved back to his home near the river on the south bank. Mrs. Mitchell built her home further south on what she called "River Road." This fabled house, Villa Alexandria, was the scene of much formal entertainment. The furnishings are said to have reflected her many travels about the world.

Moving in to the early years of the 20th century, there was much development taking place in what is now known as greater San Marco, but back then it was the City of South Jacksonville. Dixieland Park, including the alligator and ostrich farm, was located about where the Hilton Hotel is today. The wooden theatre or "opera house" was used by several movie studios in their film productions, notably Kalem Studios. Shipyards were developed along the waterfront, among them the Merrill-Stevens Shipyards. There was the massive E. O. Painter fertilizer plant. The steam ferry from Jacksonville made numerous trips daily carrying wagons, buggies and passengers. The only bridge across the St. Johns was the railroad bridge. Shipbuilding activity during World War I led to several housing projects including

Fletcher Park at the eastern end of today's San Marco.

Before 1920, there were a few who took advantage of the rural atmosphere along the southern banks of the river. Contractor Thomas Eastmore began building houses in the San Marco area including his own home, which still stands on Inwood Terrace. He actually put in sidewalks on Inwood about the time of World War I. They are gone today, of course. Irving R. Felch and his wife, Helene, were among those who came south after the Great Fire of 1901. The Felches were from New York State, and they lived at first in downtown Jacksonville in the Aragon Hotel, which did not burn during the Fire. Soon they built a large southern colonial style mansion on the river. The white columned veranda faced the St. Johns and looked onto a garden vista leading to their dock. Their large estate and fruit orchards extended all the way from San Jose Boulevard to the river. The Felches also built small rental houses on Felch Avenue. They probably were also responsible for the building of a boarding school on Felch plus a service station at the corner of Felch and San Jose Blvd. After Mrs. Felch died in 1953, her home was demolished to make way for the even larger home of George H. Hodges.

Elsewhere in South Jacksonville, some readers may remember a large Prairie School house at 1130 Flagler Avenue owned by Dr. Julius Kline. Nearby was the green wooden shingled Church of the Assumption Catholic Church on Gary Street. The house and church were demolished to make way for the Expressway. Another old home dating back to the horse and buggy days taken by the Expressway was that of William O. Jackson on Hendricks Avenue. Also, on the river, was the home of Dr. A. M. Mansion on what became Sunnyside Drive. No trace of his house survives.

The approximately 16 acres where Hendricks Avenue School is now located was used by the owner of that tract, Mr. Henry Ploof, as a racetrack for his trotting horse and sulky. In the 1920's Telfair Stockton was developing the original subdivision of San Marco. This included the area where Villa Alexandria had once stood. Upscale homes were built along the riverfront including those of the Swisher family of King Edward Cigar fame. Other developments pushed south into the River Oaks Road area, and by the mid to late 1930's, Colonial Manor was being started. San Marco thrived with the post World War II boom to such an extent that today there remains virtually no undeveloped land. San Marco has retained much of its history and past, but continues to move on with the times.

There was a great deal of interest in Louis Zelenka's article which appeared in our September newsletter entitled "Speedway to Sunshine". We would like to acknowledge that Seth Bramson owns the copyright to "Speedway to Sunshine" and that he has generously granted belated permission for us to use the title. Bramson is the author of a book entitled "Speedway to Sunshine: The Story of the Florida East Coast Railway" which can be purchased online if you are interested.

Please mark your calendar for 2005:

Monday, January 10th - 6:30 pm Traditional 12th Night Celebration (covered dish dinner) for all San Marco residents.

Monday, January 17th - 7:00 pm General Membership Meeting (featuring a timely speaker)

Saturday, March 19 - 10am-2pm Boat Regatta at the Duck Pond

April - Concert in the Park at Fletcher Park



A good time was had by all at the 1st Annual San Marco Dog Parade held on November 6. Dogs of all sizes and types were dressed for the occasion. We are looking forward to next year's parade.

Don't Miss Out

San Marco Posters are on sale by the San Marco Merchants Assoc. at the Gallery Framery. These annual posters are quite a collector's item and all proceeds from the sale of the posters go to the beautification of the Square.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SAN MARCO PRESERVATION SOCIETY BOARD MEETINGS

AUGUST BOARD MEETING

Janet Hogshead volunteered to chair the Luminaria Committee. Other volunteers will also be needed for this committee.

The Membership chairman is working on the preparation of membership cards. Gift baskets for new neighbors are being prepared by the Merchants. A plaque will be displayed in the participating merchants' store windows. There is \$1000 left in the Mayor's Neighborhood Matching Grant to be used in Fletcher Park which must be spent by September 30. This can be used to construct the brick patio in front of the Cottage.

Zoning: There was an Adm. Dev. request for a height change from 32 to 39 feet on Mapleton Terrace. This request was opposed. A complaint was submitted to

Zoning in regard to the side yard setback for 1974 River Rd. Art Shad reported that there has been a stop construction order issued.

The FEC Park cleanup with JEA was discussed.

Councilman Art Shad reported that he has funding for a pocket park at the end of LaSalle Street which will be a Greenscape Park. He also reported on the withdrawal of legislation for the closing of Landon Road at the railroad tracks. The Dept. of Transportation could still choose to close the road. It was suggested that a Quiet Zone could work very well for this area. Landon Pumping Station and Landon Park repair: August 31 is the completion date.

A list of historic homes that are eligible for historic designation was presented. Anyone interested in applying for historic

designation for their home should contact Pat Andrews.

Mark reported on the items discussed at the CPAC meeting.

Southside City Hall: The roof has been repaired. The replacement of the windows and the pointing of the bricks are being bid out.

The hearing date for the Grant request in Tallahassee is September 21, 22 & 23 when we need to go to Tallahassee to lobby for the Southside City Hall grant.

Town Center Initiative: The plan is mostly Atlantic Blvd. with some work in the Square. With a grant of \$800,000 we want to do the most costly items first.

The decision to add credit card charges on our web site will be deferred until a later date.

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

Mike Boyles has accepted the position of Beautification chairman.

The Overlay Town Meeting will be held September 29, at the Balis Community Center.

The SouthTrust Bank will hold a sale of fixtures and furniture on September 28, 29 & 30. The proceeds of the sale will go to SMPS. We have been asked to provide staffing.

The Sea Cows will have five locations in San Marco Square; 1) Theatre Jax; sponsored by Beard's Jewelers and Jimmy &

Benita Boyd; 2) Cafe Carmon: OES; 3) San Marco Theatre: Dalton Advertising Agency; 4) Stellars Gallery; Stellars Gallery; 5) Median at San Marco Blvd. & Atlantic; Gary and Dianne McCalla.

A tree will be planted in a San Marco park in honor of Jack Nooney for all his work in the community.

Home Tour planning is going very well. 5000 programs will be distributed throughout the San Marco community.

A Dog Parade will be held November 6. The New Neighbors chairman is seeking contributions for the New Neighbors gift baskets from the merchants. Research is

being done for the historical information being written for the "Walking Tour of San Marco."

The Merchant liaison reported that the Arts Festival will be this coming weekend in the Square. Artistic posters for this event will be on sale in the Gallery and all profits will be used for beautification of the Square.

Zoning: The committee reviewed a Land Use Amendment request for property at 3535 Hendricks Avenue & saw no problem with it.

Art Shad reported that the resolution of the construction problem on the property at

HIGHLIGHTS FROM SAN MARCO PRESERVATION SOCIETY BOARD MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

1039 River Oaks Rd. has been finalized. The structure can be no taller than 21 ft. The height will be coming down 7 ft.

The tree lighting in Whatley Park was

revamped and the balustrades on the bridge will be re-done. Weeping willow trees are to be planted there. The dead palms are to be replaced in Southside Park.

Councilman Art Shad reported that bids

are being taken for the cleanup of FEC Park. The Landon Avenue pumping station is 4-5 weeks away from being completed. LaSalle Street Park (Greenscape Park) is in the planning stage.

OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

A public Park Taskforce Meeting was held by the City and several of our board members attended. The mayor appointed a committee to study our park system which recommended that it be restructured. The Taskforce agenda is to bring the worst parks in the county up to a higher standard. Our concern is that this would penalize the good parks by concentrating on the poorer parks.

The Overlay Meeting was held two weeks ago at the San Marco Community Center. Some people in attendance wanted to do more with overlay restrictions, not less. The schedule of the Council Meetings dealing with this issue will be distributed. Councilman Shad's Report: 1) the meeting of the Trust for Historic Preservation Commission to review grant applications has been postponed and the new dates are November 16-18; 2) the Overlay meeting went well; 3) Fletcher Park sidewalk has been completed; 4) Construction work in Landon Park is expected to be completed in a few weeks; 5) This year's City

Budget did not provide funds to replace or repair the San Marco fire station. 6) The Town Center Initiative plans are on schedule.

Home Tour: Plans for the Home Tour are going well. We are having a party on November 30 for the Home Owners, Board of Directors and the Home Tour Committee. Each board member is requested to sell a minimum of 6 tickets to the tour.

Work is continuing on Sites of Distinction and the Walk Around San Marco brochure.

The pressure washing of Preservation Hall has been completed. The exterior of the hall will be painted next week.

Landon Park construction is to be completed by October 25. Work is being done to drainage in the area of San Jose at Hendricks Avenue School. A River Oaks Road resident complained about cars speeding through the area.

The merchant liaison reported that the merchants have collected monies for Square beautification and cleanup. It was reported that Starlings has retired and Matthew Medure (Matthew's) is plan-

ning to open an upscale market in that location.

Parks: The Third Annual Parks Cocktail Party is planned for October 29 at Sharon Cahoon's home. The goal of the get-together is to raise \$2,000 for work to be done on the oaks on LaSalle St. next to the Library & Community Center. The City Parks Dept. has promised to put in trees at Southside Park to shade the playground. New oak trees are to be planted at Landon Park. The City will be repairing the lights at Davin Park in preparation for the Home Tour. A cleanup day is planned for Davin Park on November 20 and all neighbors are invited to help. The drainage in Whatley Park continues to be a problem.

The Police Dept. has requested to use space in the Southside City Hall as a Stop Station after its renovation.

Jennifer Hewitt with the City will meet with Town Center Initiative committee.

South Trust Bank donated the \$3,800 made from the furniture sale to SMPS in appreciation for the board members who helped with the sale.



1652 Atlantic Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32207

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
JACKSONVILLE FL
PERMIT NO. 1669