



The Islander

January 2014

A Publication of the St. George Island Civic Club

2013 Reviewed at December Christmas Party

The Annual SGI Civic Club Christmas Party was held at the Volunteer Fire Department on East Pine Avenue on December 19. President Newt Colston reviewed the accomplishments of the Civic Club during the past year.

He began with the January meeting where SGI Civic Club member Steve Kearney said that the Franklin County Commission approved a motion to hold a special election Tuesday, May 14 for an increase in the rate of MSBU taxes for the St. George Island volunteer fire department. If approved, it would raise the amount each homeowner pays yearly from \$50 to \$96.

Matthew Anderson of the Apalachicola Estuarine Nature Center in Eastpoint entertained the members at the January meeting with a presentation of local birds of the Forgotten Coast.

He explained the foraging habits of Eagles, Ospreys, Hawks and Owls and dispelled some myths. He also talked about song birds and brought laughter from the crowd as he mimicked a few bird calls.

In March, Franklin County Commissioner and SGI Civic Club member Pinki Jackel made a report to the *(See Review on Page Two)*

It is time to renew memberships for 2014. The dues are \$20 per member. Checks can be made out to SGI Civic Club and mailed to P.O. Box 451, Eastpoint, FL 32328

The next meeting will be January 16 at SGI Volunteer Fire House with a social at 6:30, meal at 7:00 and meeting at 8:00. Bring a side dish and Beverage. The Speaker will be Jamie Meyers of Edward Jones on Social Security.

2013 Civic Club Citizen of the Year

President Newt Colston announced that Eric Roberts had been chosen as the 2013 Citizen of the Year.



Newt Colston presented Eric Roberts a glass plaque as Citizen of the Year

Newt spoke about Eric's duties as Secretary of the Civic Club, but also explained that during his 3 year term, he established a website, an email address and an electronic newsletter for the Club. Eric also headed up the committee that proposed updating the Club's By-Laws that was approved unanimously by the membership. He and his wife, Sherri, were selected as 2013 Bingo Volunteers *(See Citizen of Year, Page Four)*

(Review, from Page One)
membership on the status of the fishing bridge repair and other actions taken by the Commission.

She also spoke about how Restore Florida will have money for Franklin County from the BP settlement, but doesn't know yet how the distribution will be done. Civic Club members

In February, SGI Civic Club member Ellen Ashdown gave a presentation on the progress of the new Franklin County Library in Eastpoint. The new library was built because the old library had run out of space. She said that Club members Rick Watson and Pat O'Connell would be on the Franklin County Library Board.

Also in February, Secretary Eric Roberts was asked by President Newt Colston to chair a group to review a by-law revision written in 2010 but not acted upon. Along with Carol Talley and Tom Wood, who were on the 2010 committee, and Cecilia Harris, some items were updated and some were edited for errors in grammar and typos. The main revisions from the 2010 committee were not changed.

In a mainly online ballot, the proposed By-Laws

were accepted by unanimous vote in April.

Susan Basset brought several members of the Plein Air Artists to the March Civic Club meeting. "Plein Air", a French word, simply translated means "open air". The roots of plein air painting are found in 19th-century Europe. An Englishman, John Constable, believed that artists should forget "formulas" and trust their own vision in finding truth in nature.

Susan explained that true plein air painting is done on location, capturing the atmosphere of the moment. The majority of the painting must be completed on site with little to no work done in the studio. Most artists agree this is the true test of skill as it requires complete confidence in placement of color and brushwork in a short amount of time. For example, a sunset may only last 30-40 minutes. That would be all the time the artist has to capture the scene.

In April, Franklin County Manager Alan Pierce talked about upcoming actions by Franklin County headlined by the repair of the fishing pier damaged during Tropical Storm Debby.

In May, Franklin County Sheriff Mike Mock talked about his goals for Franklin County and St.



Mike Mock

George Island, followed by a question and answer session.

Mike said he was employed by the citizens of Franklin County and would do his best to serve us. He mentioned that losing the last election to Skip Shiver was a very hard lesson but made him determined to do a better job.

Mike addressed the question of providing more visibility of Deputies, not only during Chili Cookoff and Spring Break, but throughout the year.

He also clarified who was in charge of closing the bridge during storms and replied that the DOT was responsible for closing the bridge whenever sustained winds exceeded 50 mph. He acknowledged that some people blamed Commissioner Pinki Jackel *(See Sheriff, Page three)*

(Sheriff, from Page Two)
for the bridge closing during Tropical Storm Debby last year, but said that just was not true..

In June, David Damon, a local shutter expert, used a PowerPoint presentation at the meeting to explain the different types of protection available for hurricane protection.

He said the most basic protection would be impact resistant glass, plywood and thick plastic coverings on the openings of a house. The most damage results from wind and water getting behind the coverings and attacking the inside of the house.

Also in June, Gail Riegelmayr spoke about new regulations regarding turtle lights on the Island. The Islander reprinted an article written by Lois Swoboda on the Franklin County Commission meeting that brought this matter to our attention.

Here is an excerpt from her article:

“Stiff penalties may be in store for as many as 140 St. George Island property owners who fail to remedy problems with lighting that disorient sea turtles during nesting season.

At the June 18 County Committee meeting, commissioners were told

the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) may invoke the Endangered Species Act on St. George Island.

County Planner Alan Pierce said he received a letter from USFW last month, asking the county to be “more diligent in protecting nesting sea turtles.” The letter requests a meeting with commissioners to discuss sea turtle protection.”

The July meeting was cancelled

At the August Civic Club meeting, USFW biologist Lisa Lehnhoff addressed about 20 Club members on the subject of sea turtles and lighting. All sea turtles are on the federal list of threatened species. Both adult turtles coming ashore to nest and hatchlings returning to the sea can be disoriented by artificial lights.

Lehnhoff told the group that Franklin County passed the Panhandle’s first ordinance protecting sea turtles in 1997. Over the last six months, the county received two letters from USFW warning that this ordinance is not being properly enforced. The second letter included a list of 140 residences with lighting that appears to be out of compliance with the county law.

When our scheduled speaker for September had to postpone his appearance, President Newt Colston used the opportunity to get reports from the donations and nominations committees. Mason Bean, who chairs both committees, first addressed how our treasury should be used to improve the Island and various charity groups. Our By-Laws direct the Civic Club to “...donate money to an organization operating or person residing in Franklin County.” He spoke of the dune walkovers to the beach, landscaping around the Lighthouse and Welcome Sign and also the irrigation system as examples of work done by the Civic Club. The committee proposed more landscaping around the center of the Island by adding 30 palm trees to the parking areas in the center of the Island.

October is the annual Pig Roast at Lighthouse Park



*Newt & Elaine Kozlowsky at Pig Roast
(See 2013, Page Four)*

(2013, From Page Three)
instead of our normal meeting in the Fire House. This year, President Newt Colston asked members to bring potential new members to enjoy an evening of great BBQ and meet new friends. Mason Bean, Fred Stanley and others started the grill at 7 a.m.

In November, District One County Commissioner Pinki Jackel brought the membership present up-to-date on issues concerning St. George Island and Franklin County. Pinki was told she had 10 minutes by President Newt Colston, but was still answering questions from the audience 45 minutes later.

The topics included the Repair of the SGI fishing bridge, the funding for Weems Hospital, the Turtle Ordinance and the state of the oyster industry.

Also in November, Newt discussed the nominations for next year's Board of Directors. A motion was made to accept the nominations and they were approved by vote.

The Board of Directors for 2014 are:
Steve Childers, President
Chris Jensen, Vice President
Linda Thurman, Secretary
Mike O'Connell, Treasurer

Fred Stanley, Director-at-large
Lon Wilkens, Director-at-large
Newt Colston, Immediate Past President

(Citizen of the Year, from Page One)

of the Year. Newt also mentioned that Eric had ordered and delivered the main entrée for the Civic Club's meetings for the last three years.

Outside of the Civic Club, Eric was a member of the Board of Directors of the SGI Water District, Inc., which considered buying the Island water supplier Water Management.

Each Wednesday, Eric volunteers to read the Athens Banner Herald for the Georgia Radio Reading Service for the Blind (GARrs). He downloads the articles from the internet, records them using software provided by GARrs and electronically transmits the file to the Georgia Public Television Network for distribution through closed circuit radio to their blind subscribers.

Upcoming Events

New Year's Eve Bonfire

Ring in the New Year on Tuesday, December 31 with a bonfire on the beach at Lighthouse Park. A DJ will play rock and roll

music for everyone's



entertainment and dancing pleasure. The New Year will be enjoyed in Island Style. This event is sponsored by the St. George Island Civic Club and the Franklin County Tourist Development Council.

Tallahassee Swing Band
Saturday, January 4
Making their Dixie Theatre debut, this big band ensemble has been playing the 40's, 50's & 60's classics and more for 24 years!



The music will be sure to help you relive the best of times. So join us and tap, dance and sway to your heart's content. For more information, call 850-653-3200 or go to www.dixietheatre.com

Sock Hops & Soda Pops

January 8, 10, 11 (Wed. & Sat. at 3 PM Fri. & Sat. at 8 PM)

The Big Bopper's back and Murphy's Diner is rockin' around the clock in this outrageous, feel-good musical from the creators of Season 16's We Go Everywhere Together. Back from New York for their 2nd Dixie, Stephen & Jeff bring Magdalyn Donnelly to help us laugh our cares away, don't miss it cause it's gonna be fun, fun, fun! For more information, call 850-653-3200, or go to www.dixietheatre.com

Gretchen Peters

Friday, January 17 at 8 PM at the Dixie theatre
This Grammy nominated Nashville singer-songwriter graces the Dixie stage with her poetic language and complex music. Ranked #15 by The Alternate Roots Top 30 Female Vocalists, the evocative sound she creates with her warm-honey voice and sophisticated lyrics assures an evening like no other. For more information, call 850-653-3200.

information, call 850-653-3200 or go to www.dixietheatre.com
Thanks to the Franklin County Tourist Development Council for Upcoming Events.
<http://www.saltyflorida.com/events>

Please visit our website: www.sgicivicclub.org for the latest news from St. George Island and the surrounding area. Email us at sgicivicclub@gmail.com

2013 Christmas Party Pictures



One corner of the Fire House meeting room held the Christmas Tree



Art & Judy Little in the back and Ray and Lois Bouie in the front



From Left: Jimmy Lewis, Glynda Ratliff and Jay Abbott. Across the table are Sandy Mitchem & guest John Black



From left are Steve & Linda Childers, Newt Colston, JoAnn Russell, Susan McLendon, Cecilia Harris, Eileen Fleck and Carol Talley

2014 Board of Directors

Steve Childers President
schilders1946@hotmail.com
Chris Jensen Vice-President
jensenchris@me.com
Mike O'Connell Treasurer
poconnell1414@gmail.com
Linda Thurman Secretary
sgibeach1@gmail.com

Directors:

Fred Stanley
fred_stanley3@yahoo.com
Lon Wilkens
pennywilk@charter.net
Immediate Past President
Newt Colston
newtcol@gmail.com
SGI Civic Club Mailing
Address: P.O. Box 451,
Eastpoint, FL 32328

The Islander is edited by Eric Roberts.