



# THE ISLANDER



Photo by John Spohrer of the Three Servicemen Sculpture honoring American Veterans

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## Upcoming ISLAND EVENTS

### Franklin County Board of County Commissioners

Regular Meeting - July 2, 16 at 9:00 am  
Commission Meeting Room, Apalachicola  
Planning & Zoning - July 9 at 6:30 pm  
Annex Building  
Budget Workshop - July 25, 26 at 9 am  
Commission Meeting Room

### Turtle Talk

July 2, 9,23,30 from 2 - 3 pm  
Apalachicola National Estuarine  
Research Reserve Nature Center  
[www.ApalachicolaReserve.com](http://www.ApalachicolaReserve.com)  
(850) 670-7708

### NEST Youth Patriotic Tribute to Vets

July 2, 5 pm - NEST UMC Youth Center  
317 Patton Drive, Eastpoint

### SGI Independence Day Celebration

July 4, 10 am - O'dark-thirty  
Island Center Business District

### SGI Lighthouse Full Moon Climb

July 16 at 8:30 - 10 pm  
[www.stgeorgelight.org](http://www.stgeorgelight.org)  
850-927-7745 for information

### Sizzler 5K & 1-Mile Fun Run

To benefit Elder Care Community Council (ECCC)  
August 3, St. George Island  
[www.ecccfranklin.org](http://www.ecccfranklin.org)

### SGI Civic Club Meeting (3rd Thursday)

6:30 pm, July 18 @ SGI Firehouse  
Speaker: TBD  
[www.sgiCivicClub.com](http://www.sgiCivicClub.com)

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF  
FRANKLIN COUNTY AREA EVENTS  
CLICK [www.ApalachicolaBay.org](http://www.ApalachicolaBay.org)

# THE ISLAND'S Little Success Stories

Have you noticed modest improvements to the island?

These all represent a cooperative effort between our citizens and our county staff.

They weren't accidents.

Someone took the initiative to make life on the island better.

Let's give credit where it's due.

Alert us to the good works of your neighbors and county staff.

## Welcome Sign Reborn

Great thanks to **Fonda Davis**,

Franklin County Parks & Recreation Director, whose crew recently brought the island's welcome sign back to a more "welcoming" appearance after Hurricane Michael destroyed plantings and tried to wash everything away. The county crew added back the oyster shell base, removed all the dead plants, and added pine straw to delineate the area. The biggest challenge was relocating the sturdy bench. It had been secured in buried concrete but the dune washed away! Now the bench is steady again and ready for sunset viewing.

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## Ready to lead the Civic Club?

Is it your turn to serve on the Board of Directors of the Civic Club? Vacancies will occur this year as board members complete their designated terms. We will need a Treasurer, who oversees the budget, collects and notes memberships, and otherwise keeps us fiscally solid. Carol McCormick has served this year through our labor intensive accomplishments of federal and state registrations so that we are legally functioning as a recognized charitable organization. She's done the heavy lifting; she's ready to hand off the checkbook.

Buena Brown has led the Communications Committee by creating new looks for the website and the newsletter and moving them to professional support software. She also led the effort to convert our mailing list to a commercial service and created the online communication that permits the exchange of comments and concerns from members directly to officers. Finally, she set up the electronic credit card pay system for dues and donations. She's not abandoning us. She just needs more help, particularly in maintaining the currency of the website. As to the newsletter, we are considering publication every other month, instead of monthly as has been our tradition, unless another person steps up to write articles each month.

The Civic Club is waiting for your leadership and service.

## County Agrees to RESTORE Planning Grant for SGI

County Commissioners report by **Pat O'Connell**

St George Island and the Civic Club had a major victory on Tuesday, June 18, when the County Commission agreed to include, in this year's proposed RESTORE applications, the top priority of SGI 2025 Vision, the infrastructure plan for improvements to the island. These funds, administered by the U.S. Treasury, are from the settlements with responsible parties, such as BP Oil company, who were involved in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. This is the first grant identified specifically for the island since the distribution of settlement funds began several years ago.

In order to put the project in position for approval, Commissioner Ricky Jones helped get this project included the county's 5-year Comprehensive Capital Improvements Schedule last fall.

The planning grant is for re-engineering of our business district roadways to mitigate storm water problems and improve the roads. The 70-acre commercial district is currently served by two detention ponds on Franklin Blvd which were designed to serve approximately 25% of the area. Those ponds are quickly approaching capacity. The absence of adequate swales within the business district and the near sea-level elevation exacerbate the difficulty of moving stormwater. All stormwater treatment in place ultimately directs the water to the Bay underground.

## SGI Requests Better Clean Up and Needed Improvements in county budget.

Franklin County Commissioners will hold 2019-2020 **budget workshops on July 25 and 26**, the last Thursday and Friday of next month. The final vote on the budget occurs in September. The Civic Club and its partners on the island are actively seeking additional funds in this next budget year to accommodate some of the items needed by the island for a long time. The capital projects of SGI 2025 Vision require large expenditures that necessitate public or private grants. But several requests are considered modest increases or redirection in the operating budget.

- \$10K — Adequate one-time only funds to resurface and re-stripe the existing basketball court, with modifications to create a pickle ball court also, changing that area to a dual-purpose exercise location. Funds for resurfacing the court have been in the budget several years but the work has not been done.
- \$15K — Adequate funding for installing a mobi-mat instead of rebuilding a boardwalk to provide greater disabled access to the public beach. These mats are in use in both the Plantation and the State Park. Although initially the expense is significant, the mats are cost effective because they are protected from storm and high rising water damage.
- Amount unknown — adequate ongoing funding to accommodate a more frequent and thorough level of litter control and grounds maintenance on the bridge, the causeway, and the commercial area of the island.



The Flooding at the Island Center business district will only get worse without intervention.

*Little Success Stories, continued.*

## Express Lane Cleaned Up

Special kudos to member **Susan Bassett**, a realtor with Berkshire Hathaway, who spearheaded efforts to communicate with the family who owns the property the Express Lane occupies. You may have been as discouraged as we were by the months and months of neglect, after Hurricane Michael shut down the store's operation. The distant owners had no idea of how bad the property looked. Through Susan's efforts and those of the county staff, the exterior of Express Lane has been cleaned and organized. The Express Lane corporation, which leases the property, expects to open the island store again in the coming months.

## Increased Law Enforcement on Island

**Sheriff A. J. Smith** has responded to many islander complaints of underaged golf cart drivers, speeders, and litterers on the island. Unfortunately, some of us have been reminded the hard way that speed-limit driving is safe driving on our narrow streets! The Sheriff's constant request: If you see something, say something! His office will follow up.

Thanks for keeping us all safe!

Call (850) 670-8500.

SAT. AUG 3  
St. George  
Island



PRE-REGISTRATION

[www.Eventbrite.com](http://www.Eventbrite.com)

OR

[www.ecccfranklin.org](http://www.ecccfranklin.org)

## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Elder Care Community Council  
of Franklin County, Inc.

Ginormous Grouper - \$1000+

Low Country Boil - \$500+

Seafood Platter - \$200+

Oysters are King - \$100+

Crafty Crab - \$50+

An Apple a Day - \$25+

## ECCC Sizzler 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run/Walk 2019

It has been a great year of growth and we need your help to continue our work. Our activities for the past year have included:

- Delivery of food from the Franklin County Food Pantry to homebound seniors twice a month
- Outreach and advocacy to link people to existing services funded through Area Agency on Aging in North Florida
- Providing fans and other household items to those seniors in need
- Advocacy and support to elders through Neighbor 2 Neighbor where we provide limited respite, handy person chores and friendly visitors
- Linkage to local transportation services and providing rides to those in need for appointments and commitments.

Registration and sponsorship donations can be made now on Eventbrite by credit card, searching for ECCC SGI SIZZLER 5K RACE & ONE MILE FUN RUN/WALK, or by printing the form below and mailing it to us along with your check. We will also pick it up from you if you prefer, just let us know. Please join in the fun by being a sponsor, walking, running and coming out SGI to enjoy the Low Country Boil on August 3.

### Comments, Concerns — Tell us what you think online.

Did you read an article that moved you to volunteer? Have an idea that will improve the island? Please use the form below to send your comments to SGI Civic Club Communications Committee. We love your feedback.

Visit the “Comments & Contact” tab on [www.sgiCivicClub.com](http://www.sgiCivicClub.com) to share your thoughts, suggestions, or how you want to get involved.

### Recommending Donations to the Island’s Charitable Organizations.

**VP Jim Morris** ([jim.morr98@yahoo.com](mailto:jim.morr98@yahoo.com)) is heading a group to determine the best use of the Civic Club’s record 2019 collections. Thanks to the generosity of our members and guests who support our objectives, our treasury contains over \$30,000. Traditionally, the club has contributed to improvements on the island as well as donated to local charitable organizations, spending all the annual funds collected. The Civic Club is looking at contributing cash to capital projects that will have a lasting impact on the island, such as the public restrooms and rebuilt lighthouse, which were both established through enormous efforts of island volunteers. Local charities we typically help annually include popular and worthwhile organizations such as Volunteer Fire Department, Franklin County Humane Society, Elder Care, and the Fresh Start prison ministry. The committee will soon make recommendations to the membership and the board. If you have suggestions, please share your ideas.

## Beautification Grant Could Enhance Attractive and Welcoming Entrance to the Island

People might disagree on what “beauty” is when the describing landscaping, but when it’s their money, the State of Florida has very specific ideas of what can be planted in rugged coastal environments. If Franklin County applies for a FDOT beautification grant this summer, for sure the county will be following state guidance. That means full sun, low maintenance, High Salt Tolerant and High Drought Tolerant plants identified in Florida-Friendly Landscaping Planting Guide. Those criteria take most landscaping choices off the table for the island’s main streets.

Following adoption by the County of Ordinance 2018-02, creating the Business District Overlay designed to improve the attractiveness of the entrance to the island, the Civic Club has been looking for ways to fulfill that goal. Now, the possibility of receiving a Florida Department of Transportation beautification grant this year has inspired the generosity of island residents Greg and Candi Howington, who donated \$5,000 to underwrite the costs of the application and other costs not included in the grant. The Civic Club hired Falon Land Studio, because of their extensive experience with successful landscaping designs on the island.

If approved, the grant would cover less than a mile of land stretching from the base of Bryant Patton bridge to Bayshore Drive. In several years, after infrastructure work is performed on

the island, the Civic Club and county will address the rest of Franklin Blvd from Bayshore to Gulf Beach Drive.

A major issue for the county in choosing to go forward with the grant application is the need for funding for required maintenance to the area so that it continues to be appealing to the eye. The decision will be made in July when the county plans the FY 2019-2010 budget.

FDOT funds beautification projects like this one which are natural, low maintenance, and sustainable.



These flowering plants will NOT survive on the island and are NOT part of the proposed plan.



## Calling Volunteers to Trim Plantings

Thanks to Ada Long, the Trash Patrol is a highly effective, efficient and reliable service performed by an all-volunteer army who can transform the island into a tidy, attractive community within two hours. When called to service, usually three times a year, they never fail to show.

We are looking for an equally motivated and inspired group of volunteers who can help maintain the few public property landscape beds that exist on the island. First, we need another “Ada,” an inspirational leader to direct the work. Then we need a few individuals who will accept responsibility for a small landscaped bed or two to maintain. Here are the beds: Four small beds on the corners of Franklin Blvd, two on Gulf Beach and two on Pine. Three beds exist at Lighthouse Park Parking Lot, along island drive. All of these areas took a beating during Hurricane Michael. The county has waited to see if the plants would survive, but most have not. See the photo. These plants are crying out for a good trimming.

Your island needs you. Please take on the challenge.

## Election Results



Port St. Joe businessman Jason Shoaf won the seat for Florida House District 7, a ten-county district that spans more than 100 miles east and west of Tallahassee including a section of Leon County, Taylor County, and all along the Forgotten Coast of Northwest.

Rep. Halsey Beshears, a Monticello Republican resigned in January to run the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation in Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration and that left a vacancy in District 7. Shoaf, a Republican defeated Tallahassee Democratic candidate, Ryan Terrell by an almost 3-to-1 margin with 11,604 votes, or more than 71 percent of the total, while Terrell received 4,670 votes, or 29 percent.

## Support the NEST Youth Patriotic Tribute to Veterans on Tuesday, July 2 at 5 pm.

The NEST or Impact Program as it is often referred to is involved in a crucial battle to protect at risk children in our community, and need support and encouragement. Come and spend an hour with these children. Also, support them on their facebook page and consider bidding for some of the items there to help fund the program.

## Civic Club Provides Forum for Discussion of Issues that Matter to our Membership.

### We love our food trucks but how do we insure their safety?

First, let us say that there has never been a formal complaint filed against any of our well-known SGI food trucks in Franklin County. Of course, that might be because there is no official process for such complaints, since those trucks are regulated by the state, not the county. In fact, the only requirement by the county for these businesses, that serve thousands of residents and visitors every year, is that they pay a \$150 "peddler" license fee, but only if the trucks are using public land to sell their foods. If trucks are on private land, no licensure, registration, or payment is necessary. Add this lack of local oversight to the state enforcement practice of investigating food trucks only if a pattern of written complaints is received. Do we have confidence in the trucks that might appear overnight, claiming to have products that we crave? Franklin County is the only coastal, tourist-dependent county in the Panhandle that permits food trucks to operate in this manner.

Along with the SGI Business Association, whose members include local food truck operators, the Civic Club is examining the best and least burdensome regulation of food trucks on the island. We want our friends in the business to flourish. We want to encourage more entrepreneurs to offer scrumptious foods at their lower price, casual atmosphere. But we can't afford to have our SGI reputation for great food to be tarnished by vendors who might take advantage of our lack of county oversight.

Help us protect our growing food truck industry while ensuring the health and safety of our residents and visitors. Contact business association committee leader and Civic Club Secretary **Loula Fuller-Myers** ([lfuller@fuller-myers.com](mailto:lfuller@fuller-myers.com)).

### Golf Cart Safety Study Underway

The growing popularity of golf carts in our island community and across the nation has brought increasing concerns about safety. Common accidents include falling off the cart, especially rear-facing ones, and being ejected at speeds as low as 11 mph when a driver makes a turn or loses control on a sloped terrain. Nationally, over 1/3 of the injuries involve children. Many drivers and owners fail to carry adequate liability insurance for driving on public roadways or don't realize the exclusions that often affect such vehicles.

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## Forum Discussion - Golf Cart Safety, continued

And sometimes the rules themselves seem confusing and contribute to the problems, as permissible roadways are often unfamiliar to golf cart drivers.

With these concerns in mind, several members volunteered to study this issue by researching the state law and local ordinances and the best practices of other communities. The group intends to gather input from our local citizens, county officials, businesses and visitors. The study committee, led by member Gary Mahoney (gs\_mahoney@hotmail.com), will prepare recommendations for the consideration of the Civic Club membership, and if agreement is reached, ultimately, to the county commission. No specific deadline exists.

One of the research topics chosen by the group is the feasibility of creating a route that permits a golf cart to travel the length of the island, from the entrance to the Plantation to the state park. Currently, no golf carts can legally go to the state park because traveling on Gulf Beach Drive is illegal. This prohibition is also a problem for any golf cart driver who might be residing on Gulf Beach Drive, with no other access to his address.

Complicating the matter is the variety of vehicles and their specific laws that we incorrectly refer to as “golf carts.” For example, Florida Statute grants a “Low Speed Vehicle (LSV)” the authority to travel on any road where posted speed is 35 mph or less. Law requires full licensure of the vehicle, typical automobile insurance, safety equipment, and a top speed of 25 mph. Although the LSV has a similar appearance to the golf cart, it is not. “Golf Carts,” as defined by Florida Law, do not require state licensure and insurance and typically lack the safety features. Contrary to the LSV, golf carts are permitted only on county-approved roads with a posted speed of 30 mph or less. Further confusing the enforcement issue, golf carts cannot exceed 20 mph. Both vehicles have very specific, and different, equipment requirements. Other than a similar appearance, both types of vehicles require licensed drivers only. Confused?

The workgroup is also looking at the types of 4 wheel sport vehicles that can exceed 25mph some as fast as 50 mph. These vehicles are sometimes seen on SGI roads; however, they are generally only for use “off road” and not permitted on public roadways. Recently, various 2 wheel electric sport vehicles have shown up on the island, following a national trend. These include stand up electric scooters, electric bicycles, electric skate boards and Segway’s.

In addition to examining regulations and best practices for the “golf cart” vehicles on the island, the group will make recommendations for ensuring that rules are made readily visible to owners and visitors so that people can avoid inadvertently breaking the law. The goal is to create clear guidance that will help ensure the safety of everyone. Your participation is welcome.

## Eastpoint & SGI Volunteers Observe Anniversary of Lime Rock Road Fire

by Joyce Estes



Citizens from throughout the community braved the afternoon heat of Sunday June 23 to attend the one-year anniversary observance of the Eastpoint Fire. The event paid tribute to the resilient, hardworking people of the Wilderness, Ridge, and Bear Creek roads neighborhood that was most impacted by last year’s fire. Nearly 40 homes were completely destroyed or several damaged and 132 people were displaced. Some families continue to wait for permanent housing after having lost all they own.

While the state and county continue to assist in obtaining permanent housing for the area, an ad hoc group known as “Friends of Eastpoint” has focused on creating a new “heart” for the community. Literally from the ashes, community religious and service groups are fulfilling the vision of Hope Park. The multi-acre property will serve as refuge for children to play, a community center for families, and a secure space to address the community’s social needs as it continues to rebuild from the Fire and Hurricane.





## Join in the Independence Day Festivities at Island Center

The Annual 4th of July Parade is a unique traditional-non-traditional epic event on St. George Island! You won't experience anything like this anywhere else - a true Water War between paraders and watchers. This event attracts locals and tourists alike where love and water is exchanged on one of the hottest days of the year!

Parade participants don't disappoint with their lavishly designed water war machines! You'll see decked out cars, trucks, golf carts, trailers, bikes, and even boats! All prepared to soak their targets—the parade goes--and be soaked in return.

Even innocent bystanders are not left out. So relax, pull up a chair at your spot along the parade route and get ready to get wet! NO WATER BALLOONS! Just plain water flying through the air.

The route is a rectangle that takes you in a loop around the island commercial district. At 10 a.m. parade participants line up on West Pine Ave in front of The Beach Pit Restaurant facing east. The parade starts at 10:30am. The parade route proceeds east down Pine Ave through the business district before turning south at the end of the business district at East 3rd St. The parade then heads west up Gulf Beach Drive dispersing at West 3rd Street.

The St. George Island Business Association sponsors the parade annually and this year several businesses have special offers going on throughout the day. The Beach Pit serves as a Water Station, where you can refill your water gun and hydrate yourself with free bottled water and an old-fashioned hose. Island Dog Beach and

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*Independence Day, continued*

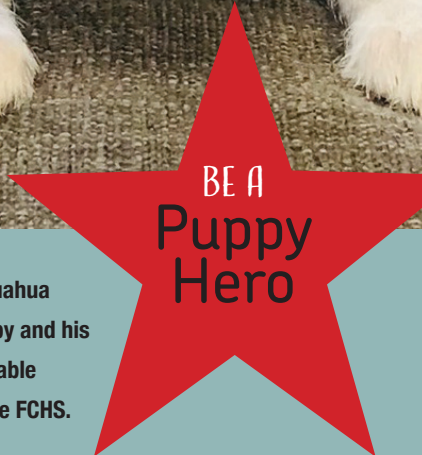
Surf Shop and Island Dog Outdoors, on the eastern end of the business district, also provide free water refills as a designated Water Station. Island Dog Beach and Surf Shop will have special treats of goodie bags for kids inside the store.

During the parade, Island Dog and Bay View Charters will be giving out free Beach Balls and Inflatable Bats to participants! The Food Truck, located in the center of the island to the west of Lighthouse Park, will have Koozies for Adults, Ice Pops for kids and \$1.00 Hot Dogs.

Doc Myer's will host the Judges' Stand where prizes await the most creative floats. At 3 pm, well after the parade is concluded, you can grab a team for the Corn Hole Tournament on the lawn of Doc Myers. There will be lots of patriotic music as we salute Old Glory SGI style.

Many more businesses in our commercial area will be participating, so be sure to look for their July 4th Specials and visit them all! You can easily walk the 3rd to 3rd, beach to bay commercial district, especially if you stop for ice cold refreshments and nice dry SGI t-shirts along the way. Stick around all day, and then enjoy festivities and fireworks display on the beach behind the Blue Parrot Oceanfront Cafe when the sun goes down.

Please join us for this unique celebration of Independence Day and what it means for our little community and for our nation. Keep your water guns full and let the fun begin!



This Terrier/Chihuahua  
3-month old puppy and his  
siblings are available  
for adoption at the FCHS.  
850-670-8417

### SGI CIVIC CLUB BOARD MEMBERS

- |                |   |                               |
|----------------|---|-------------------------------|
| President      | Michael O'Connell ....                      | MikeOconnell@sgicivicclub.com |
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| Past Pres      | James Donald. James.Donald@sgicivicclub.com |                               |
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| At-Large       | Pleas Howe .....                            | pleassgi@gmail.com            |

### COMMITTEES

- |                                 |                     |                              |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
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