



# 2020 CHARITABLE GIVING RECIPIENTS

Even though the Civic Club was unable to meet in person this year, the club was able to make increased donations. The membership voted to divide the funds in three ways:

## First Responders

- Up to \$10,000 for water rescue training & equipment based on First Responders planning

## Local Non-Profit Charities

- \$500 Kids Tag Art
- \$500 Bring me a Book
- \$1,750 Elder Care (ECCC)
- \$1,750 Franklin's Promise Coalition
- \$500 Eastpoint – Friends of the Library
- \$1,500 Franklin County Humane Society
- \$500 Big Bend Hospice

## Turtle Lighting

- Up to \$3,000 is allocated for turtle lighting at Island Park

## Letter From The SGI President, Jim Morris

Dear Civic Club Members,

On behalf of the returning Officers and newly elected, I want to express our appreciation for choosing us to serve as your leadership for 2021. We are anxious to get to work on our various island improvement goals and projects. Particularly, we look forward to seeing you all in a return to our General Dinner Meetings when the time is right. We all miss the fellowship.

The 2021 Board is comprised of officers with many years of experience with the Civic Club, who know its history and traditions. But also we have new members who bring other community experience to our organization and make up a cadre of future volunteers. Returning as VP is Bill Mills and I will again serve as President. Assuming the role of Secretary is new board member Christy Vitali. We thank outgoing member Stacy Pierce for ably handling that task during 2020. Carol McCormick is remaining as an At-Large member of the Board but relinquishing the check book to incoming Treasurer Phyllis Lewis. As many of you know, Phyllis served as Treasurer in the days before automated systems, reliance on emails and website for payment, and achieving our status as a federally and state recognized charitable organization. Erin Griffith is returning as an At-Large member, balancing the volunteer chore with her new role of Financial Director and Grants Manager for the County Commission. We are replacing long-time board member and past president Mike O'Connell with At-Large newcomer Bernie Boehnlein, who recently became a permanent resident of the island. I know this team will work hard to accomplish your 2021 goals for the Civic Club and the island community.

Most importantly, we want to thank all our members for continuing to support the organization through your dues, donations, and volunteer work. Without your ongoing support, we could not provide the contributions and leadership role to the island we love to call home.

Please reach out to me with your ideas and suggestions for how we can serve you in the coming year. [Jim.morr98@yahoo.com](mailto:Jim.morr98@yahoo.com)



## Golf Merchandise is still available.

(It's a great way to support our mission.)

Visit <http://sgicivicclub.com/pro-shop.html>



# Kudos to our VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR



Pat O'Connell heads up the Government Relations Committee, SGI 2025, has been the editor and primary writer for *The Islander* as well as helped with fundraising at the SGI Golf Tournament and Charity Fundraiser.



James Donald is the founder of the SGI Civic Club Golf Tournament and Charity Fundraiser. He has also served as club President, Vice-President and Past President. He is active in the local veterans organization as well as other county charitable organizations.

## St. George Island Civic Club Election Results

The General Membership annual vote last month resulted in the election of new officers, bylaw revisions, Volunteers of the Year awards, and selection of annual charitable giving.

The membership elected the following volunteers for 2021: Jim Morris, President; Bill Mills, Vice-President; Phyllis Lewis, Treasurer; Christy Vitali, Secretary; Erin Griffith, At-Large; Carol McCormick, At-Large; and Bernie Boehnlein, At-Large. If you want to read their bios, visit online at <http://sgicivicclub.com/officers.html>. Email addresses for each are on the contact page of this newsletter.

The membership recognized two individuals as 2020 Volunteers of the Year. Pat O'Connell and James Donald have both served the Civic Club in many ways for many years. We appreciate all that they do and congratulate them for this recognition by their peers.

Every five years, our club reviews our bylaws. Changes generally support the use of electronic communications in performing the functions of our organization. The newly adopted by-laws can be seen on our website: <http://sgicivicclub.com/about-us.html>.

We are pleased to announce that, as of the December 15, 2020 SGI Civic Club Financial Report, the SGI Civic Club charitable giving purse has exceeded our goals in funding. The membership felt strongly that we should continue to support SGI Volunteer Fire Department and First Responders as well as our traditional distribution of various local non-profits dear to the hearts of islanders. See the chart on the next page for the full list of charity recipients.



**BINGO TUESDAYS**  
**Jan 12th - Mar 30**

**ADMISSION & SIGN IN**  
**6:30 pm**

**PLAY BEGINS**  
**7 pm**

***MASKS ARE  
MANDATORY AND  
MUST BE WORN  
AT ALL TIMES.***

\* The Civic Club will provide this entertainment and fundraising event as long as we feel that the safety of our volunteers and players can be maintained. Please follow our posts because we reserve the right to cancel or add additional restrictions as necessary.

**Winter Bingo is Coming Back—at least that's the decision today!**

Yes, the Civic Club is planning to host a Modified Winter BINGO, beginning Tuesday, January 12th.

Annual Winter Bingo is a vital fundraising function for the organization, not to mention an easy form of entertainment on the island. The revenues support donations to local worthy charities, our annual Eric Roberts College Scholarship program, and special projects on the island each year that benefit the public and our island life.

We believe we can provide safe conditions even during the pandemic by Modifying our traditional approach and 1) limiting the number of attendees and 2) strictly enforcing new rules. We are social distancing a reduced number of tables and permitting only the first 45 players. We ask that groups arrive together to enter; no “saving of seats” for friends that may arrive later while others are turned away. Participants, including workers, must wear a mask at all times. Hand sanitizers will be available, and you are encouraged to bring wipes. Under state law, no children are permitted to attend Bingo games.

Bingo cards are \$1, so the “pots” are generous. We ask players to bring exact change if possible. Change should be made prior to beginning of play if necessary. We hope to offer cold beverages and snacks again for \$1. Thanks to our generous local businesses and citizens, we will again offer door prizes. Admission and sign in at 6:30 pm - play begins at 7 pm.

Volunteers are needed, so please contact Ben Mathewson 918-688-1800 benz256@mac.com or Phyllis Vitale-Lewis 850-370-6503, pj\_hideaway@fairpoint.net.

Even though we will miss you, if you are not comfortable with these requirements or if you have been exposed within the previous ten days of play, we appreciate your decision not to attend.

***To support this fundraising event anyway, donations to the SGI Civic Club, a 501 C 3 organization, can be made online or by mail to P.O. Box 451, Eastpoint 32328.***





**SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL 2020 SPONSORS**

## **2<sup>ND</sup> Annual SGI Civic Club Golf Tournament and Charity Fundraiser**

*Please tell them you saw their names as Civic Club Golf Event Sponsors*

### **Title Sponsor \$3000**

**Dermatology Associates,  
Marc Inglese, M.D., Tallahassee**

### **Corporate Sponsors**

**Capital City Consulting,  
LLC, Tallahassee \$1500**

**Donald & Associates, LLC, SGI \$1400**

**Duke Energy \$500**

**Weems Memorial Hospital \$500**

### **Triple Hole Sponsor: \$300**

**Robert & Carol Holton**

**Alan & Tami Schwenk**

### **Double Hole Sponsors: \$200**

**Bob & Kara Landiss**

**Peter Kirk & Adana Taylor**

**Campaign to Re-Elect Rick Watson**

### **Single Hole Sponsors: \$100**

**10-4 BBQ, John Solomon**

**Apalach Realty**

**Atlantis Pool Service, Steve Akins**

**Loranne Ausley for Florida  
Senate Campaign**

**Kristy Banks**

**The Beach Pit**

**Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices,  
Susan Bassett & Shelly Shepard**

**Blue Parrot Ocean Front Café**

**Campaign to Elect Steve Lanier,  
Superintendent of Schools**

**“Circle Walkers” – Stanley Colvin &  
Ben Mathewson**

**Warren Clifton**

**Coastal Interiors by Twila**

**Doug Bruce & Associates,  
LLC, Tallahassee**

**Century 21 Realty, Mason & Marilyn Bean**

**Craig & Lindlee Dermody,  
Serenity Seaside Resort**

**Doc Myers Island Pub**

**Elect Erin Griffith, Clerk of the Court**

**Joyce Estes**

**Fickling & Company Real Estate Services,  
Travis Stanley**

**Fresh Start Program, Bill Mills**

**Forgotten Coast Parrot Head Club**

**Fred & Suellen Gunter**

**Dick & Meg Huguenin**

**Ricky Jones, Franklin County  
Commissioner, District 1**

**Skip & Terry Kemp**

**Carol McCormick - In memory of First  
Responder Brian Smith**

**Jim & Barbara Morris**

**Michael & Pat O'Connell**

**Ron & Pandora Schlitt, The Naumann  
Group Real Estate, Inc**

**Raymond James Financial Services, Wyatt  
Brooks, Tallahassee**

**Campaign to Re-Elect Representative  
Jason Shoaf, House District 7**

**Re-Elect Franklin County Sheriff AJ “Tony”  
Smith Campaign**

**Suncoast Realty, Larry Hale**

**St. Joe Pool, Jeff Leavitt**

**Tiffin Furniture**

**Heather E. Wells, DO**

**Ben & Valerie Williams**

**Re-Elect Superintendent Traci Moses  
Yoder Campaign**

**Special thanks to 18 Teams and 70  
players, countless volunteers, and donors  
of cash & prizes necessary to make this  
annual event a success!**

### **2020 Event Committee Members:**

**James Donald, John Stewart, Bob Heide,  
Jim Morris, Mason Bean, Dave Allen, Cindy  
Donald, Pat O'Connell, Bill Mills, Carol  
McCormick, Barbara Morris, Phyllis Lewis,  
Jimmy Lewis, David Walker, Marie Allen,  
Meg & Dick Huguenin**

## County Commission Chair Discusses 2021 Plans with Civic Club Board

With Covid protocols in place, the Civic Club was able to bring only a small group to hear the comments of County Commission Chair/District #1 Representative Ricky Jones.

Instead of filling the firehouse with interested members at a dinner meeting, as would have been done in the past, the group, appropriately distanced and masked at the firehouse, included the current and newly elected board members and chairs of various committees. The goal of the December 15 meeting was to share priorities and identify ways to work together to improve the island. Jones was elected to the powerful post of Chair of the County Commission by his fellow members and also continues to serve as Chair of the Tourist Development Council (TDC). He remains involved in regional and statewide associations that provide information and services to the county.

Jones reviewed the status of existing island projects (restrooms/ stormwater drainage/parking/boat ramp/beautification) rising from SGI Vision 2025 Long Range Plan. [See related article for details.] In terms of his own priorities, Jones discussed the ongoing problem of road paving and infrastructure needs on the island and throughout the county. He would like to see a long range Infrastructure Plan for residential streets and the business area. The county is awaiting a RESTORE grant from U.S. Treasury for the business area, but no plan exists for the remainder of the island. First, a majority of property owners needs to agree that paving with asphalt is desirable. Second, an adequate funding source, beyond the current reliance on gas tax, must be found. Some counties, for example, have been able to create bonding programs to fulfill major infrastructure improvements and rely on pledged taxes to pay off bond debt over time.

The issues that drew the most emotional response from Civic Club members included litter, particularly on the bridge, and code enforcement. At this time, the county is operating under a short-term agreement with Sheriff Smith to perform bridge clean-up twice a month. Members agreed that twice a month is inadequate for the SGI bridge, which seems to attract litter debris daily. Funding sources currently are the Tourist Development Council and the state, since the bridge is state-owned; however, increasing the frequency of clean up may require identifying another resource. The requirements for staffing and funding will be revisited when the current agreement expires.

Other code enforcement issues of concern by members included more frequent roadside residential yard debris pickup, mandatory garbage pickup, animal control, illegal parking, and abandoned or neglected residences or businesses. The commissioner explained that each code or county ordinance is governed by a different set of rules and agency or department, with a different revenue source. Each must be addressed separately to find the most suitable solution. The County Commission will consider revisions to the existing animal control ordinance at its next meeting, January 5, 2021, during a special public hearing at 11 a.m. Some items that might be discussed are (1) requests for a dog park on the island and (2) clarifying the “voice control” language that has been used inappropriately by owners who let their dogs run free on the beach.

Civic Club members expressed concern about the status and future use of the private property that lies at the entrance to the island on the west side of the bridge. The planned use of this area is under dispute between the county and the property owner. Because the discussions are subject to attorney-client privilege, no announcements or descriptions of proposed use are available to the public. However, prior to the dispute, the property owner proposed a large RV park for the acreage that runs from Franklin Blvd to West 3rd along the Apalachicola Bay.

Commissioner Jones ended by encouraging all Civic Club members to communicate with him at his official email address [ricky@franklincountyflorida.com](mailto:ricky@franklincountyflorida.com) or join him on Facebook to receive regular reports of county meetings.



District 1 Commissioner  
Ricky Jones

**The County Commission will consider revisions to the existing animal control ordinance at its next meeting,**

**January 5, 2021, during a special public hearing at 11 a.m.**

### **Possible Topics of Discussion about the Ordinance:**

- requests for a dog park on the island and
- clarifying the “voice control” language that has been used inappropriately by owners who let their dogs run free on the beach.

## Island Capital Projects Come at Classic “Island Time” Pace

1. January 5th — SR 300/Franklin Causeway Beautification: If all goes as planned, the county will award a contract at its January 5th County Commission meeting to Landscapes, Inc of Bay County for installation of 94 trees (cabbage palm and sand live oak) and hundreds of gallons of shrubs and ground covers, including yaupon holly, purple muhly grass, saw palmetto, and Spanish bayonet. All selections were approved by the Florida Department of Transportation, which is funding the landscaping project, and are consistent with plantings that help sustain our natural environment and mitigate storm damage for the low lying area.

2. January 5th through 2021 — Restrooms: Storm Construction of Carrabelle will continue construction of Public Restrooms at Lighthouse Park. Pilings are already in place. Unlike the original structure, this facility, which will expand from four to ten water closet fixtures, will meet all local, state and federal standards for storm protection and ADA code compliance.

3. January through March — Storm Drainage Infrastructure Planning for Business District: The U.S. Department of Treasury is expected to announce approval of the county’s RESTORE (federal funds resulting from the BP Oil Spill Settlement) grant to plan a business commercial district that is free from flooding, provides more paved roads and sidewalks, and creates additional public parking to access the beach and businesses.

4. February — Boat Ramp Improvements: February is the deadline for the county’s request for a 2021 planning grant from Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC) to design improved boating access to the Bay. Construction for a loading dock and mitigating breakwater will occur in 2022.

**SGI**  
**2025**  
*Updates*

## Turn Trash to Treasure — are you up to the challenge?



Want to be part of the movement to turn trash into artwork and promote recycling on St. George Island? This multi-month project to turn trash to art will bring awareness to the marine debris issue. Are you willing to help sanitize trash to ensure the safety of our artists and art? Do you want to show the world that St George Islanders care about marine debris and litter that threatens our fragile environment? This will be the largest project since the hand-cleaning of fallen bricks to rebuild our iconic St George Lighthouse and the biggest litter awareness campaign ever approached in Franklin County.

But are you ready? We can’t do this without you. Let us know that you are “in” and committed to this project.

ANERR is looking to secure a grant so that we can create unique sculptures that will help bring attention to the issues of marine debris.

To get involved contact

[buena.brown@sgcivicclub.com](mailto:buena.brown@sgcivicclub.com)



## SGI Civic Club Supports Lighting of the Palms and the Golf Card Parade

Once again the SGI Civic Club partnered with the SGI Business association by donating over \$1000 to help fund this fun and charitable event. A good time was had by all that attended or participated this year.



## Vaccine Information for Franklin County

The Florida Department of Health Office of Communications has created a webpage for COVID-19 vaccine information for the public. Click the following link to visit the new webpage:

**<https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/covid-19-vaccines-in-florida>**.

Also, the statewide call center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can still be reached by dialing 1-866-779-6121 or emailing **COVID-19@flhealth.gov**.

The limited supply given to Franklin County has been distributed and we are uncertain when we will be allocated additional vaccines for unvaccinated individuals and are therefore not scheduling new COVID-19 vaccine appointments. For all non-COVID vaccine appointments in Franklin please dial (850) 653-2111 or in Gulf County call us at (850)227-1276 from the hours of 8:00am – 5:00pm. Please be advised that, due to heavy call volume, callers may experience longer than average wait times. Please note that we will be closed this Thursday and Friday in observance of the New Year holiday. Thank you in advance for your patience.

We encourage all patients currently scheduled for vaccinations to not arrive early for their appointment in order to refrain from overcrowding our lobbies, parking lots and waiting areas.

The Florida Department of Health in Franklin and Gulf County is committed to providing timely and important updates regarding the distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine. **To receive local COVID19 updates including information on vaccinations, please text “FranklinCV19” to 888777 in Franklin County.**

DT Simmons, MPH, Public Information Officer

Florida Department of Health in Franklin & Gulf County  
139 12th Street, Apalachicola, FL 32320

Office Phone | Franklin County: (850) 653-2111 ext. 6019 | Gulf County: (850) 227-1276 ext. 6127 | Mobile Phone: (850) 247-9032

Doses of the Moderna vaccine will be distributed to 173 hospital locations that did not receive doses in the first allocation of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. These hospital locations span 43 counties.



Neighboring Hospitals that will have the vaccine include: Ascension Sacred Heart (Gulf and Bay Counties) and Tallahassee Memorial. Weems recieved its supply from Tallahassee Memorial Hospital

## Prescribe Burns - January through March 2021

Dylan Shoemaker, Fire Management Officer with the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR), notified the Civic Club in early December that the state office plans a prescribed burn

operation on the bay side of the eastern end of the island after the first of the new year, in the state-owned land known as Unit 4. The state provides notice to residents in advance of the burn season because an actual prescribed burn can occur within that time period only when all conditions--temperature, wind, humidity—are ideal. Some residents, who suffer from respiratory conditions, prefer to leave the vicinity during the burn operation.

In recent months, the state has been busy with mowing and other mitigation preparations to reduce the fuel load within the four management zones, 4C – 4F on the attached map. These preparatory steps ensure a safe, coordinated planned burning with the support and cooperation of state and local fire officials. Total acreage to be burned is nearly 70 acres. An additional parcel of approximately 50 acres scheduled for a prescribed burn lies within the Plantation in the area known as Nick's Hole.

Local residents will recall that the eastern island zones last burned in April of 2017 as a result of a wildfire, which threatened homes with a blaze that could be seen for miles. To prevent a reoccurrence of a dangerous wildfire, the area is scheduled for prescribed burning operations every three to four years.

If you have any questions, you may contact Dylan Shoemaker at [dylan.shoemaker@FLoridaDEP.gov](mailto:dylan.shoemaker@FLoridaDEP.gov).



## SGI CIVIC CLUB 2021 BOARD MEMBERS

**President: Jim Morris**  
[jim.morr98@yahoo.com](mailto:jim.morr98@yahoo.com)

**Vice-President: Bill Mills**  
[generalmillsiv@gmail.com](mailto:generalmillsiv@gmail.com)

**Secretary: Chris Vitali**  
[clfvitale@comcast.net](mailto:clfvitale@comcast.net)

**Treasurer: Phyllis Lewis**  
[pj\\_hideaway@fairpoint.net](mailto:pj_hideaway@fairpoint.net)

**At-Large: Carol McCormick**  
[carolflys@gmail.com](mailto:carolflys@gmail.com)

**At-Large: Bernie**  
[bernie.boehnlein@gmail.com](mailto:bernie.boehnlein@gmail.com)

**At-Large: Erin Griffith**  
[erinhalegriffith@yahoo.com](mailto:erinhalegriffith@yahoo.com)

## 2021 COMMITTEES

**Communications: Buena Brown**  
[buena.brown@sgicivicclub.com](mailto:buena.brown@sgicivicclub.com)

**Winter Bingo: Ben Mathewson**  
[benz256@mac.com](mailto:benz256@mac.com)

**Gov't Relations: Pat O'Connell**  
[poconnell1414@gmail.com](mailto:poconnell1414@gmail.com)

**Fundraising & Charitable Giving:**  
**Jim Morris**  
[jim.morr98@yahoo.com](mailto:jim.morr98@yahoo.com)  
and  
**Carol McCormick**  
[carolflys@gmail.com](mailto:carolflys@gmail.com)

County Commissioners will hold a workshop **January 5th at 1:30** to hear about the federally funded Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) that will provide additional resources early in the year to the community for remaining Hurricane Michael damage and problems related to Covid-19.