

JANUARY 2014 EDITION OF THE OKALOOSA ISLAND LEASEHOLDERS
NEWSLETTER, THE OIL LANTERN

Page 1 of 7 pages

OKALOOSA ISLAND LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION, Inc.



P.O. Box 8116
FT WALTON BEACH,
FL 32548-8116

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Next Meeting: **LOCATION:** Okaloosa Island Fire Station, 2nd Floor Meeting Room **TIME:** 7:00 p.m. **DATE:** Monday, January 13, 2014.
PARKING: Please park behind the Fire Station next to the water tank

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- ◆ Message from the President - **Paula Hudson**
- ◆ Minutes (Draft) December 9, 2013 Meeting
- ◆ Architectural Committee & Island Rainfall Reports for December 2013
- ◆ Fire Dept Report – Nov 2013
- ◆ **Quintuple** Wuzzle Puzzles for the 2st Time
- ◆ **Mardi Gras on the Island – Saturday, January 18, 2014 – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR OILA FLOAT! CALL JIM SIMPSON @ 850.585.2116 or EMAIL @ sanleanna@cox.net.**
- ◆ The OIL Lantern's Very Own the "Most"
- The Most Deadly Night Club Fire
- ◆ This Month in History – **JANUARY**



**11TH Annual Mardi
Gras Parade on the
Island
Saturday, January 18**



The OIL Lantern



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OKALOOSA ISLAND LEASEHOLDERS
ASSOCIATION, Inc

P.O. Box 8116, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548, Editor: Jim Simpson, (850) 585-2116
Association Website: www.oilaweb.com

Meeting Agenda

Date: Monday, Jan 13, 2014

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: : Okaloosa Island Fire Station, 2nd Floor Meeting Room

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you speak, please state your name, address and if you are a member.

IV. MINUTES

- Dec 9, 2013 Meeting Minutes

V. TREASURER'S REPORT - Treasurer, Jim Simpson

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Architectural Committee: (see Newsletter)

B. Beautification Committee: **Dave Miller**

C. Membership Liaison: **Jim Simpson**

D. WebSite: **Bob Seitz**

E. Boat Basin: **Cathy Taylor**

F. Street Lighting MSBU: **Maryl Bednar**

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. CRA (Community Redevelopment Authority)

B. Mardi Gras Parade – January 18, 2014

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT -- PAULA HUDSON

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday and your new year is off to a good start.

I would like to take this month to remind everyone what this wonderful organization is committed to do for all property owners on Okaloosa Island. Over the last 50 plus years OILA has helped keep the island the neighbor that the original developers envisioned. It has allowed the new residents meet the longtime residents and learn the history of the island. Some residents remember when there were homes and a few two story motels along the gulf. It was like living in the country because it didn't matter if you lived by the bridge or if you were lucky enough to drive the dirt roads to the west end you were still neighbors. You stuck together to help each other in their time of need. Their children didn't have woods to roam or trees for tree houses, they had 20 foot sand dunes to climb and dig in and bushes for hideouts. I was going to say life was simple, but it wasn't.

Over the years members of OILA have struggled to keep special interest groups from controlling the purpose of OILA. At one time businesses thought they were more important than residents and wanted additional business zoning along Santa Rosa Boulevard in the multi-family area. After hurricanes in the 70's, 80's & 90's OILA helped the county establish the rebuilding of sand dunes along the gulf. When the county took over from the Island Authority OILA fought to keep our street light system. Over the years we have audited the billing for the street lights so islanders weren't overcharged like our neighbors to the north. OILA supported the formation of the island fire department when FWB threatened to stop service on the island. OILA opposes the commercialization of the old Gulf Course and supports efforts to keep it in a natural state for enjoyment. OILA works closely with the county to beautiful the island with removal and repair of unmanaged property. Over the last 6 years we have been instrumental in having at least 2 apartment complexes removed, 3 homes repaired and 2 old foundations removed.

The general purpose of OILA is to:

- **Coordinate** affairs between leaseholder members and the Board of County Commissioners
- **Preserve** the public lands on Okaloosa Island
- **Advise** and assist the county in the application of protective covenants
- **Advise** leaseholders and the public in their rights and obligations under the covenants

All property owners on Okaloosa Island need to stick together, support each area on the island and oppose any changes to our covenants or issues that would change the makeup of our neighborhood. The Okaloosa Island Leaseholders Association is the only organization recognized by the county that can speak for the island. Whether owners are \$12 dues paying members or not, every island property owner is represented by OILA.

Even though DOT has now said Brooks Bridge will be repaired and replaced in the "vicinity" of the current bridge, property owners need to be aware of any structural changes in the bridge. There is still a strong push from the City of Fort Walton and the Chamber to have a second bridge built to Okaloosa Island. If a bridge were to be built on the west end of Santa Rosa Boulevard just image all the traffic that would be exposed to our neighborhood. In order to bring any additional traffic down Santa Rosa Boulevard drainage would have to be fixed because, you know that they would not reduce their speed to 10 MPH that is required during rains storms. Strengthening and expanding Santa Rosa Boulevard to meet the needs of semitrailers might result in the loss of walking and biking paths. Not only would this be a safety issue, but would be a quality of life loss for residents and for tourists. A bridge replacement study needs to encompass both the Brooks Bridge as well as the Marler Bridge, otherwise the proverbial can is being kicked down the road.



ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR DECEMBER 2013 for permits and applications submitted to them for consideration. The following information provided by the Architectural Committee.
SPECIAL NOTICES: 1) The Committee meets every Thursday from 9:00 am to 9:30 am at the Tourist Development Center building. 2) ASK BEFORE YOU ACT.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Lot(s)</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Owner/Contractor</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
12/5	4	182, 185 208, 209	414 Santa Rosa Blvd	Vince Bruner	Pre-Construction for Marriott Courtyard	Approved
12/5	7	392	715 Sailfish Dr	Matthew McGee	Occupational License for "Livin Right Real Estate"	Approved
12/19	8	547	940 Santa Rosa Blvd – Unit 1812	Blake Woodin	Occupational License for "Blue Lagoon Pool Service"	Approved
12/19	13	25	Old Leaside Inn Property	Ozean Development	Construction of a Mixed Use Development	Approved

ON THIS JANUARY DAY IN HISTORY



January 10, 1861 - Florida became the third state to secede from the Union in events leading up to the American Civil War.

January 25, 1858 – The *Wedding March* by Felix Mendelssohn became a popular wedding recessional after it was played on this day for the marriage of Queen Victoria's daughter and the Crown Prince of Prussia.

January 26, 1784 - In a letter to his daughter, **Benjamin Franklin** expressed unhappiness over the choice of an eagle as the symbol of America, and told her his preference was the turkey.

ISLAND RAINFALL FOR DECEMBER 2013: 7.8 INCHES



Dec 4.....**0.5** inches
 Dec 9.....**0.1** inches Dec 22...**2.3** inches
 Dec 10....**0.1** inches Dec 23...**2.1** inches
 Dec 14....**0.1** inches Dec 28...**2.6** inches

Avg Rainfall for December...**4.8** inches

Totals for the Year 2013

YTD Variance to Average.....**+ 8.2** inches
 YTD Total Rainfall.....**73.3** inches
 Avg Annual Rainfall :.....**65.1** inches

YEAR 2014

Avg Rainfall for January.....**5.0** inches
 January Record High.....**80° F** (1946)
 January Record Low**4° F** (1985)
 Jan Avg Water Temperature...**64° F**

February Avg Rainfall.....**5.8** inches
 February Record High.....**80° F** (1980)
 February Record Low**11° F** (1951)
 Feb Avg Water Temperature. **64° F**



MARDI GRAS PARADE ON THE ISLAND SATURDAY JAN 18, 2014

Volunteers (walkers, throwers, decorators) Needed for the OILA Float!!!! -- If you can help, volunteer at the Jan 13 OILA meeting, call **Jim Simpson @ 850.585.2116** or email him @ sanleanna@cox.net. We will decorate the float on the Island on Friday, Jan 17 at 625 Pelican Dr. More details to follow. **P.S. IT'S A LOT OF FUN!!**

OKALOOSA ISLAND FIRE DEPT REPORTS 63 CALLS FOR NOV 2013

Fire Calls.....**1** Misc.....**20**
 False Alarms...**15** EMS, Rescue & MVA...**27**



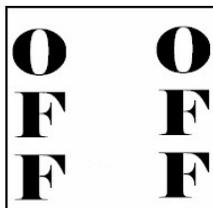
"QUINTUPLE" WUZZLE PUZZLES FOR THE 2nd TIME!

What is a Wuzzle Puzzle? It is a puzzle consisting of combinations of words, letters, figures, or symbols positioned to create disguised words, phrases, names, places, etc. Are you ready to take the challenge and figure out the "disguised" meaning of these wuzzles? Good luck. The answers are at the bottom of the last page.

Wuzzle No. 1



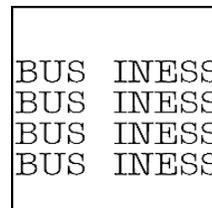
Wuzzle No. 2



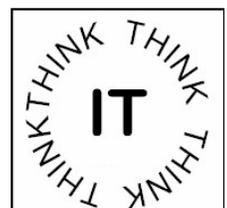
Wuzzle No. 3



Wuzzle No. 4



Wuzzle No. 5



THE OIL LANTERN'S VERY OWN "THE MOST"



THE MOST DEADLY NIGHT CLUB FIRE IN AMERICAN HISTORY



— THE COCOANUT GROVE FIRE —
BOSTON — NOVEMBER 28, 1942

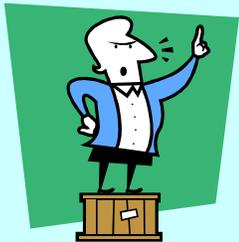
On November 28th 1942, a huge fire occurred at the Cocoanut Grove Night Club in Boston. 492 people perished in total. The Cocoanut Grove was originally a speakeasy—an illegal bar during alcohol Prohibition—and some of its doors were bricked up or bolted shut. The main entrance to the club was only a revolving door. There were flammable decorations throughout the building including cloth drapery and paper palm trees. The club had a licensed capacity of 500 people, and on the night of the fire there were about 1000 people in the building. All of the above contributed to the tragedy.

It was believed that a busboy lighting a match to see while replacing a light bulb had started the blaze in the basement *Melody Lounge*. Within 5 minutes the basement was totally engulfed and many people died stacked up at the one stairwell. The exit door at the top of the stairs was bolted shut. The fire spread to the ceiling on the first floor, and totally engulfed it within another 5 minutes. Many people died trying to exit through the revolving door—pushing from both sides and preventing escape. Some diners in the restaurant never even had a chance to leave their seats, having been asphyxiated by smoke and toxic gases.

Editor's Note: The single deadliest single-building fire in the United States occurred 110 years ago (1903) in Chicago at the then newly-opened Iroquois Theater (the space is now occupied by The Ford Center for the Performing Arts Oriental Theatre). The fire killed over 600 people.



JOIN THE LEASEHOLDERS!



LET YOUR VOICE
BE HEARD!



FOR A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION CLICK ON THE ASSOCIATION'S
WEBPAGE: WWW.OILAWEB.COM, OR

CONTACT JIM SIMPSON AT (850) 585-2116 OR BY EMAIL AT
SANLEANNA@COX.NET.

OKALOOSA ISLAND LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION MINUTES (DRAFT)

BOARD MEETING: December 9, 2013 LOCATION: Okaloosa Island Fire Station Meeting Room

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by President Paula Hudson. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jim Simpson. Twenty-seven (27) people attended, seventeen (17) signed the attendance sheet. (attachment 1)

II. ROLL: Board members present were Paula Hudson, Desley Parker, Jim Simpson, Kathy Foster, Trisha LaBahn and Tripp Tolbert.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS: President Paula Hudson welcomed all guests.

IV. GUEST SPEAKERS: **Ben Anderson**, Okaloosa County Tax Collector and **Josh Allen**, Director of Field Services (attachment 2)

Ben Anderson was first appointed by Governor Rick Scott, then elected to his position as Okaloosa County Tax Collector. His background is in real estate appraisal, he is a graduate of Florida State and his double major was in international affairs and government. He grew up in Fort Walton Beach and in 1954, Ben's family bought property on the Island in the spot where the Old Bay Steamer now stands. The family has had two lots on Bluefish and they still own property on the Island. Mr. Anderson will be the newest member to join OILA. Apparently, he was unaware of OILA's existence until recently.

Josh Allen heads the department that will be responsible for the tourist development tax collection. Mr. Allen has been instrumental in the transition from the Clerk's office to the Tax Collector's office for the collection of the Tourist Tax. New software was chosen to make the transfer of information process easier. The new software should provide better data to help property owners who rent and manage property. Once the new data has been completed, they hope to have reports on their website identifying rental properties, their locations, the management companies and/or owners who rent properties. There are rental properties in Destin, Fort Walton Beach and on Okaloosa Island that are not collecting and reporting taxes that are required by law. The goal of the new system is to gather information to bring those properties in to compliance. The County will be conducting audits to identify non-compliant properties. Experienced staff will be equipped to identify, target, collect enforce and audit rental property owners who are in violation. Managing your vacation rental home within the law is important. Mistakes or avoiding compliance can prove costly and may even lead to the loss of your vacation home. Contact the Field Services Department at 850-651-7310 or email at TouristTax@OkaloosaTax.com. Per Josh Allen, collections for September (the first reporting period for the new system) increased 2.6 percent over September 2012. October saw an increase of 11.7 percent. Okaloosa Island's October total was \$220,000 dollars. The total for the county was approximately \$670,000 dollars. In the future, these figures will be available on the website. Once the new system is completed, reports targeting specific information, will be possible. In closing, Mr. Anderson requested cooperation in reporting property owners that are not paying their "fair share". Mr. Anderson said they will work with owners to reach compliance. Ultimately, the property owner is responsible for any unpaid tax. Toll free hotline to report Rental Tax Evaders 855-489-8477 or email TaxTips@OkaloosaTax.com. Mr. Allen noted that according to the records there are at least 14,000 to 15,000 units that are not listed as rentals and are not homesteaded. Properties that are not transient rentals (more than 6 months) will be verified. Single family dwellings will also be under scrutiny. Every parcel in each district will be identified. On a side note: The new hotel on Okaloosa Island will be paying taxes. The building is an "improvement" and is a for profit business. The land may be tax exempt, but not the building or the business.

V. MINUTES: Kathy Foster made the motion to accept the November minutes as printed in the December issue of the OIL Lantern. The motion was seconded by Desley Parker. The minutes were accepted and filed. (attachment 3 - pages 5-7)

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT: Jim Simpson gave the report (attachment 4)

Assoc. Discretionary Fund Balance	\$ 31,773.50
<u>Beautification Fund Balance</u>	<u>\$ 1,615.68</u>
Total Funds Balance as of Dec. 9, 2013	\$ 33,389.18

(These figures are a summary only. Attachment 4 contains the full report.)

Mr. Simpson, who is also the Newsletter Editor, requested reimbursement for the purchase of stamps to mail the December issue of the OIL Lantern. Total reimbursement requested was \$19.32. Kathy Foster made the motion to accept the Treasurer's report and to approve the requested reimbursement. The motion was seconded by Gloria Turner. The motion was unanimously approved.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Architectural Committee: The report is in the December issue of the OIL Lantern. (attachment 3 - page 2)

B. Beautification Committee: Kathy Foster: The pine straw has been put around the palm trees in the medians, but she has not received the bill. The Garden Club has contracted the work on the first median which includes removing the overgrown bushes and monthly maintenance of the Welcome Triangle.

- The foundation slab on Dolphin has been removed.

- The two story house on the corner of Sailfish and Seahorse (Farley Street) will most likely go in to mediation proceedings. The work was to have been completed by the end of the year. An attempt will be made to contact Mr. Street a final time.

Anyone concerned about code/covenant violations on the Island can contact Paula Hudson at pnh2859@aol.com.

C. Membership Liaison: Jim Simpson: 264 members. (attachment 4)

D. Website: Bob Seitz: No activity.

E. Boat Basin: Cathy Taylor/Treasurer: No activity.

F. Street Lighting MSBU: Maryl Bednar: After reviewing the audit, it appears that the account balance has increased from October 1, 2012 until October 1, 2013 by \$12,960.00. Jim Simpson is the new member of the sub-committee, along with Mike Mitchell. The new streetlight request for the eastern end of Pelican has been sent. Kathy Foster wanted to know if the new Fairfield Inn will need a light. Ms. Bednar said she had not received a request.

2013 Fund Balance	\$201,807.55
Year-to-Date Fund Balance	\$203,345.98

(Fund Balance as reported on November 11, 2013 - These figures are a summary only – Attachment 5 - pages 1-4 contains the full report)

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Veterans Park: President Hudson attended the County Commissioners Meeting and reported that the additional parking and restrooms had been voted down and keeping the area natural with walking trails only was approved.

B. CRA (Community Re-Investment Act) Request: President Hudson, as instructed by vote, sent a letter to the County Commissioners requesting consideration making Okaloosa Island a CRA. Only one Commissioner responded with a “thank you and he thought it was an interesting proposal”. She could not remember if it was Mr. Harris or Mr. Boyles. She will keep us updated. Tripp Tolbert thought that allowing short term rentals on the residential side of the Island would increase the tax base, increase property values and “would be the ultimate long term fix”.

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Mardi Gras 2014: The date is January 18th. Jim Simpson, for the tenth year in a row, will supply the decorations for the float at his house. Volunteers are needed to decorate the float, walk the parade route, ride on the float, throw beads and moon pies, have lots of fun, etc. Jim will, for the first time, ride on the float. Something about “being 70”. The OILA float will be Number 1 again this year. Details to follow. Jim Simpson made the motion to approve a budget of \$450.00, Kathy Foster seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

B. Bridge to the Island: President Hudson has been told by the County Commissioner Chairman that “everyone” is in favor of building a bridge on the west end of the Island. Everyone being, the Governor, the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Fort Walton. The way he saw it, the bridge would be constructed at Wright Parkway, down Santa Rosa Blvd with a roundabout at Hwy 98 with a large statue in the middle. And according to him, it will increase your property value since you are no longer on a dead end road. Ms. Hudson was basically told that it “was a done deal and that it was going to happen”. The discussion that ensued included some of the following:

-Running traffic down Santa Rosa Blvd will not alleviate traffic on Hwy 98 at the east end of Brooks Bridge and slowing down to “look at the statue” will not help.

-Perhaps the powers that be should wait to see how traffic is affected by the new bypass in Niceville/Mid Bay Bridge.

-Santa Rosa Blvd will be closed after a hurricane.

-After numerous studies, other routes were suggested over the Wright Parkway/Okaloosa Island option.

-Rebuilding the existing bridge bigger and better should also be an option.

-An alternate bridge down Hollywood should be considered. Hollywood will not be closed after a hurricane. Hollywood is also four lanes.

-The Sunshine Law was mentioned.

- If it is a done deal, why more studies?

-Drainage issues on Santa Rosa Blvd.

-Putting residents, visitors and tourists on Okaloosa Island at risk with increased traffic.

-Tourists/visitors will bypass Fort Walton Beach downtown businesses.

-Put the bridge through the blighted area near the strip clubs on the north side of Hwy 98.

IX. NEW BUSINESS –B. Bridge to the Island (Continued)

-Building another bridge will not help the traffic nightmare that is Destin in the summer months.

-Bringing attention to this issue should be a community project.

The Okaloosa Island Leaseholders Association will continue to oppose building a bridge on the west end of the Island.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by President Hudson at 8:24 PM..

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Parker

WUZZLE PUZZLE ANSWERS

Wuzzle No. 1



Covered
Wagon

Wuzzle No. 2



Off sides.

Wuzzle No. 3



Travel back in
time.

Wuzzle No. 4



Open for
Business

Wuzzle No. 5



Think
about it.