

RIVER CITY DIGEST

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Your Guide to
Upcoming Events
& Festivals in
PALATKA

**LOCAL
STORIES &
COMMUNITY
SPOTLIGHTS**

Resources
For Residents
& Visitors

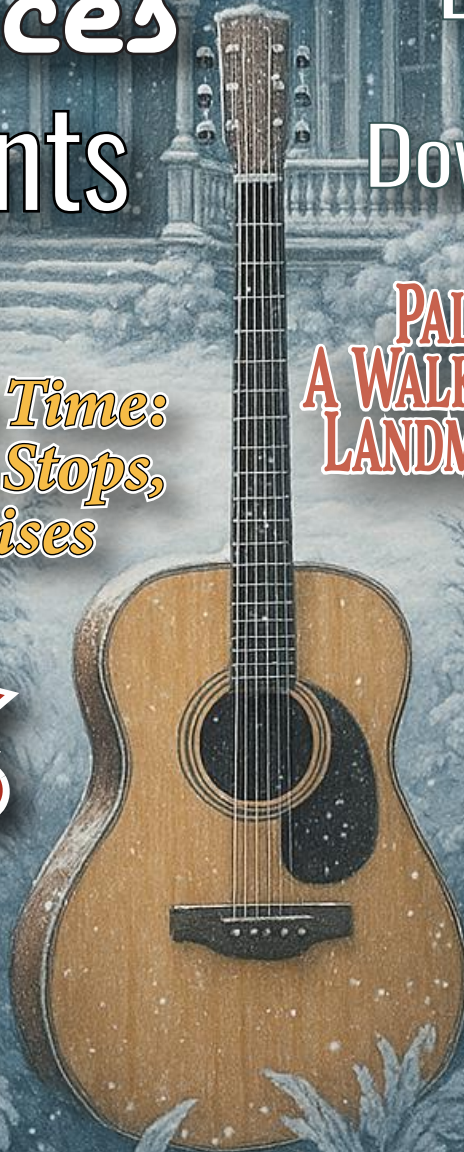
How New
Businesses are
Shaping the
Downtown Scene

*Wander Through Time:
Downtown's Best Stops,
Shops, and Surprises*

**PALATKA'S RICH HISTORY:
A WALKING TOUR EXPLORING
LANDMARKS FROM THE PAST**



Dec. 2025



**PALATKA
PORCHFEST**
music festival
2025

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RIVER CITY DIGEST

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"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus" 36

Famous 1897 editorial affirming the spirit of Santa Claus



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PALATKA PORCHFEST 2025

Saturday, Dec 6

11AM - 7PM

11 BANDS

LOCAL ART

FOOD & DRINK

FACEPAINTING



Event Schedule



11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
 ★ **The Sound** ★
Country
 603 Emmett

12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Porch 1 Southern Rukus Country 419 Emmett	Porch 2 King Eddie Reggae 422 River	Porch 3 Salty Grass Band Bluegrass 114 Dodge	Porch 4 Flashback's 50s, 60s, 70s, Dance 621 Emmett
Porch 5 Ralph Case Old Man Trio Country and Classic Rock 210 Dodge		Porch 6 Raftice and Chiappini Americana and Pop 324 River	

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Porch 7 Cold Shot Rock 409 Emmett	Porch 8 Chillula Funk Pop Rock 123 Dodge	Porch 9 Landfall Island 129 Kirkland	Porch 10 Sheeba and the Bluesman Blues 627 Emmett
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5:00 PM - 7:00PM
 ★ **Smoke Stack** ★
Rock
 603 Emmett

Porchfest Is A Free Event
Thanks To Our Generous Sponsors





Open 18 Days



Nov 28—30

Dec 4—7

Dec 11—14

Dec 18—21

Dec 22—24

Azalea City Brewing Co.

120 S 7th Street

Palatka, FL 32177

11am - 10pm

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Letter from the Editor

Thank you for taking the time to read and support River City Digest. Every issue we create is a celebration of the people, stories, and small businesses that shape our communities, and it means so much to have you here with us. Your continued interest is what allows this publication to grow, connect neighbors, and shine a spotlight on the voices that deserve to be heard. We appreciate you more than you know.

As we move forward, we want River City Digest to remain a place where the community can contribute, inspire, and participate. If you have a story to tell, an article idea, or photography that captures the heart of our area, we invite you to submit it for consideration in an upcoming issue. Please email all submissions to info@rivercitydigest.com

If you're a business owner, organization, or creative looking to share your message with our readers, we also welcome inquiries about advertising opportunities. Our goal is to provide marketing options that support local growth while helping readers discover businesses they'll love. For all advertising requests, please contact us at info@rivercitydigest.com

Thank you again for being part of the River City Digest family. We look forward to bringing you more stories worth reading.

-Speakeasy Print

Festival of Lights



Putnam's
Festival of
Lights

5:00pm-10:00pm
11th-14th Dec

Putnam County Fairgrounds
East Palatka, FL

A QR code located in the bottom right corner of the green event card.



*Robbi Correa, Marcia Carty, and Sam Deputy
Photo provided by Palatka City Hall*

*Jeanette Stanley - Grand Marshall 2025
Photo by Molly Carreras*



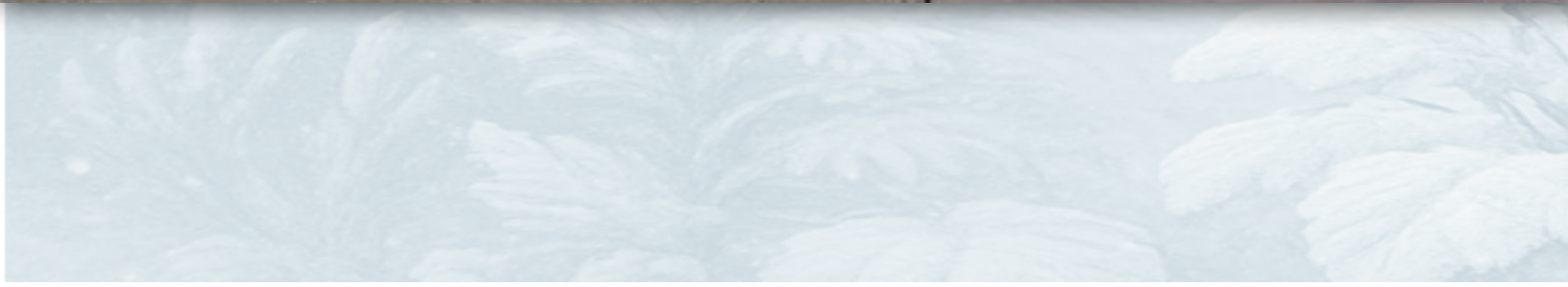
The Palatka *Christmas Parade*

Sam Deputy spent weeks preparing for the beloved annual event, which took place at 7 p.m. on the Friday after Thanksgiving, Nov. 24, following its traditional route from the city's river-front west along St. Johns Avenue. The parade, first held in 1909, has officially marked the start of the holiday season in Palatka 114 times, only pausing during world wars and pandemics. For Deputy, the event is more than just a parade; it is a homecoming where families reconnect after Thanksgiving. Adults return with their children to see friends and neighbors they may not have seen in years, while young families attend with their own children, making the parade as much a community celebration as a holiday event. Deputy's 93-year-old mother, Jean, recalled bringing her seven children to the parade when they were young. She said the tradition made Christmas feel official for her children and now continues to be meaningful as she experiences it with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, emphasizing

the unique sense of community that the parade fosters in Palatka. The parade was organized by Downtown Palatka Inc., a group of local merchants, and supported by donations from the community. Thousands of residents and visitors lined St. Johns Avenue on Friday evening to watch the parade. Many arrived early with chairs to secure a good viewing spot, eager to participate in a tradition that has brought the community together for more than a century, marking the beginning of the holiday season with friends, family, and neighbors

-David Zachary.

Art in the



the Streets



Photo by Jim Bailey

Each year, downtown Palatka transforms during the holiday season, but this year the change has been especially vibrant. Storefronts along St Johns Avenue and the surrounding streets have come alive with colorful hand painted window art created by a talented group of local artists. Their work has added a touch of magic to the city, turning an ordinary walk through downtown into a cheerful holiday experience for residents and visitors alike.

This tradition of decorating storefront windows has grown steadily, and the enthusiasm behind it is unmistakable. Dozens of businesses invited artists to brighten their windows with scenes of winter landscapes, festive characters, and imaginative holiday designs. The result is a patchwork of creativity that stretches across the downtown district, each window offering its own personality and charm.



The artists behind these displays have poured countless hours into their work, carefully planning each piece and painting through early mornings, chilly evenings, and long weekends. Their dedication has allowed downtown to shine in a way that feels both nostalgic and refreshingly new. These windows are more than simple decorations. They are expressions of joy and community spirit, created by individuals who want to give something special back to their hometown.



Shoppers linger a little longer. Families stop to take pictures. Children press their hands to the glass, tracing the outlines of snowmen, reindeer, and colorful holiday scenes. Even those simply passing through downtown find themselves smiling at the unexpected burst of color and life. The artwork invites





people to slow down, enjoy the moment, and rediscover the charm of Palatka's historic district.

Business owners have also embraced the renewed energy. The painted windows help create a welcoming environment that encourages foot traffic, strengthens local commerce, and adds to the overall atmosphere of celebration that carries through the season. For many shops and restaurants, the murals have become a highlight of the holidays, drawing in patrons who want to take in the artwork while exploring what downtown has to offer.

This year's window displays stand as a reminder of what creativity can bring to a community.

Photos by Jim Bailey



They show how art can elevate shared spaces, inspire connection, and make even the simplest outing feel memorable. Thanks to the many artists whose talent and enthusiasm brought these scenes to life, downtown Palatka is glowing with warmth, imagination, and holiday cheer.

As the season continues, the painted storefronts invite everyone to take a stroll, admire the artwork, and celebrate the spirit of a community that always finds a way to shine a little brighter during the holidays.

-David Zachary



Photos by Jim Bailey



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Peering In

There was a time when visitors approaching Palatka by steamboat could look up from the deck and see a line of grand hotels rising above the riverbank. These structures stood as symbols of a prosperous community that welcomed winter travelers from across the country. Their wide verandas, polished floors, and warm lamplight reflected an era when Palatka was a prominent destination for those seeking mild weather and Southern hospitality. Today, only memories and photographs remain, yet the story of these lost hotels continues to shape the identity of the city.

During the late nineteenth century, Palatka emerged as a significant hub for tourism in Northeast Florida. Steamships carried visitors along the St. Johns River, and the city offered fine accommodations that catered to the expectations of affluent guests. Among the hotels that defined this golden age was the Putnam House, which once stood as one of the largest wooden hotels in the state. Travelers remembered its long porches, lively social gatherings, and comfortable rooms that overlooked the river. The Putnam House became a centerpiece of Palatka's early identity, representing both economic promise and cultural refinement.

The Arlington Hotel also contributed to this distinguished landscape. Located near Lemon Street, it was admired for its architectural presence and its elegant public rooms. The Arlington welcomed business travelers, tourists, and families who arrived by rail or riverboat. For many years it served as a testament to the sophistication that characterized Palatka during its height as a river city. Like the Putnam House, its loss remains one of the significant turning points in local memory.

Other establishments such as the Saratoga and the City Hotel provided lodging for a wide range of visitors. These hotels supported the movement of merchants, railroad workers, and seasonal guests who passed through the area. Each played a role in maintaining a lively downtown where commerce and travel intersected daily. This network of accommodations helped cement



Palatka's reputation as a welcoming stop for those exploring Florida's interior. The landscape changed dramatically in 1884 when a devastating fire swept through much of downtown Palatka. Many of the grand hotels were lost in a matter of hours. The fire marked the end of an era and forced the city to rebuild under difficult circumstances. Although some structures were replaced, the scale and elegance of the original hotels were never fully restored. The event shifted the city's architectural path and set the stage for a more modest downtown. Another force of change arrived with the expansion of Henry Flagler's East Coast Railway. As new

to Palatka



who once visited Palatka began choosing St. Augustine, Daytona, and points farther south. The decline of riverboat travel hastened the transition. Without a steady flow of tourists, many of the remaining hotels eventually closed and were later demolished.

Although the buildings themselves are gone, their legacy lives on through archival images, family stories, and the city's ongoing commitment to preserving its heritage. The places where these hotels once stood continue to inform the cultural memory of Palatka. They remind residents of a time when the city served as a vibrant crossroads for travelers from across the nation.

In recent years, efforts to revitalize downtown Palatka have brought renewed interest in its architectural past. Projects that restore historic structures and repurpose older buildings help reestablish the sense of place that once defined the city's riverfront. In this way, the spirit of the grand hotels is not entirely lost. It is reflected in the pride residents show for their community and in the steady work to reconnect the present with the past.

The story of Palatka's lost hotels is a story of aspiration, tragedy, resilience, and transformation. While the buildings no longer stand, the city they helped shape continues to grow and evolve. Their memory encourages an appreciation for the history that underlies the downtown streets and serves as a reminder that the legacy of a place endures long after its walls have disappeared.

-Kerri Arrants

coastal destinations gained popularity, travelers

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The Great Fire of 1884: A City Transformed

On the night of November 7, 1884, a spark in a small downtown shop grew into one of the most devastating events in Palatka's history. Dry weather, wooden construction, and high winds allowed the flames to spread rapidly. Within hours, much of the commercial district had been reduced to ash.

The fire consumed hotels, shops, offices, and homes. Structures that once represented the height of Victorian ambition vanished almost entirely. Residents recalled the sound of collapsing timber and the glow that lit the river for

miles. The community faced the enormous task of rebuilding, not only physically but economically and emotionally.

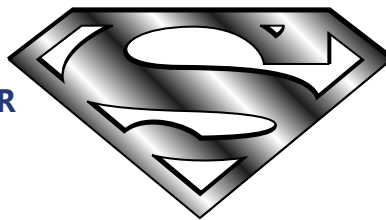
The aftermath reshaped Palatka's future. Building materials shifted toward brick and concrete, creating a new architectural character that still defines parts of downtown today. Although many of the grand hotels were never replaced, the city's determination to recover laid the foundation for the resilient community that exists now.

-Kerri Arrants



The Great Fire of 1884 - Palatka

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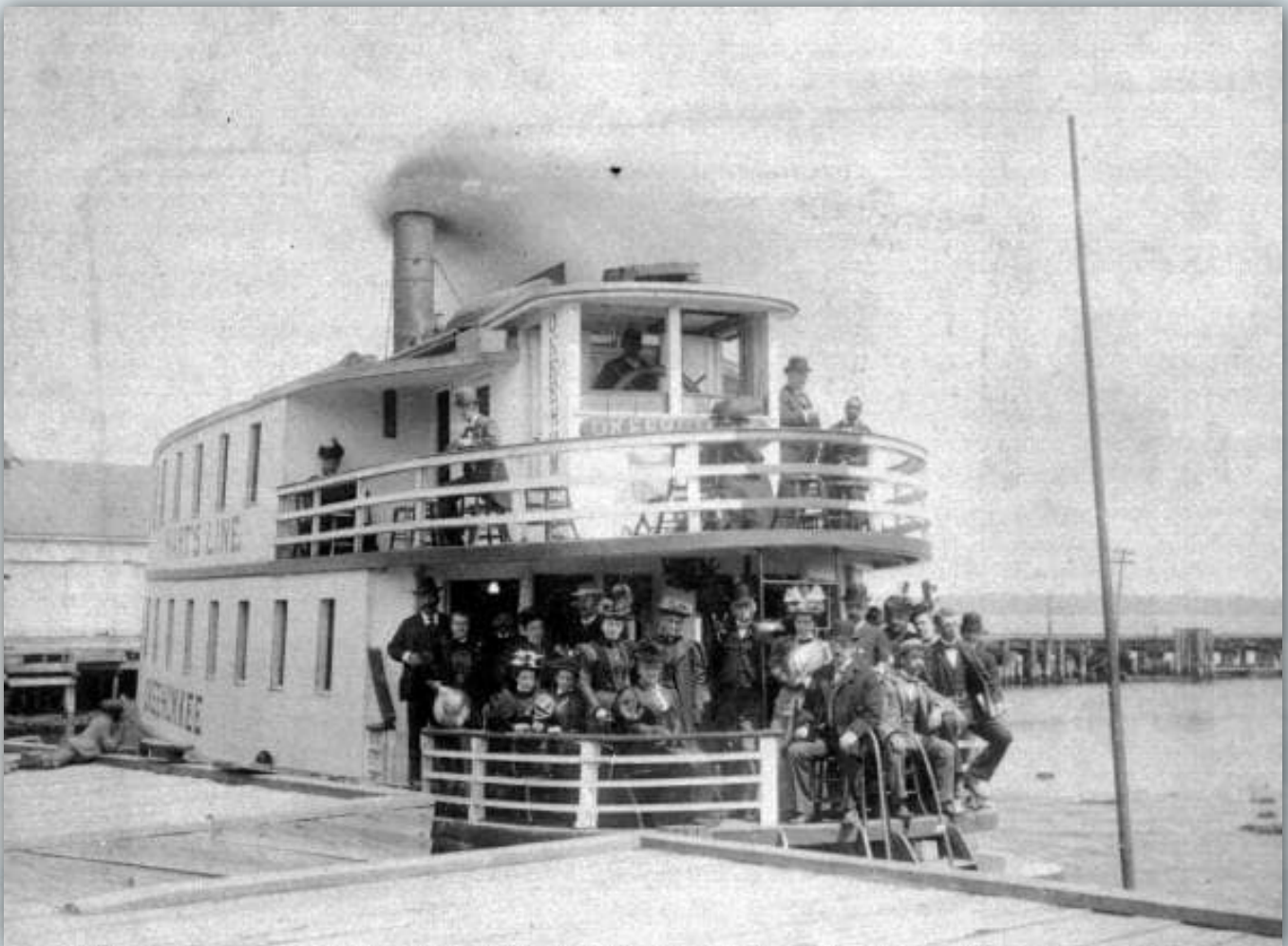
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Long before highways crossed the region, the St. Johns River served as Palatka's greatest avenue of travel. During the nineteenth century, elegant steam-powered riverboats carried passengers from Jacksonville to points deep within Florida. These boats brought tourists, merchants, and families who sought warmer climates during the winter months. For many visitors, Palatka was the highlight of the journey. Travelers stepped off the gang-planks and were greeted by the bustling hotels that lined the riverfront. Their stays often included excursions to the springs, picnics in the forests, and evenings on hotel

verandas where music drifted into the night air.

Although, the decline of steamboat travel in the early twentieth century marked a significant shift in the city's economy, the memory of those graceful vessels remains part of the local identity.

-Kerri Arrants



1870. River boat "Okeehumkee" at a Palatka dock

The Last Time it Snowed in Palatka

In 1986, an arctic cold front pushed deep into Florida, delivering one of the state's most memorable winter weather events. The unusually strong system brought snow to parts of Northeast Florida—an occurrence so rare that residents still talk about it nearly four decades later. Jacksonville received a half-inch of accumulation, while surrounding communities, including Palatka, experienced a light dusting that briefly transformed the landscape.

The National Weather Service reported that precipitation began early in the morning as a mix of rain and snow at 5:51 a.m. As temperatures continued to fall behind the

advancing cold front, the mixture shifted to all snow within about 30 minutes. By 9 a.m., Jacksonville International Airport recorded half an inch on the ground, an amount significant enough to catch widespread attention in a region unaccustomed to winter weather. For many Floridians, the snowfall created an unforgettable morning. Children hurried outside to try catching snowflakes, and adults documented the rare scene of lawns, cars, and rooftops coated in white. In Palatka, the thin

layer of snow was just enough to brighten yards and create the kind of winter morning typically seen far north of the state line. Although the snow melted quickly as the day progressed, the event remains one of Northeast Florida's standout weather anomalies. The 1986

snowfall continues to be remembered as the day the Sunshine State briefly traded its warm reputation for a fleeting but magical touch of winter.

-David Zachary



Photos released by Action News Jax

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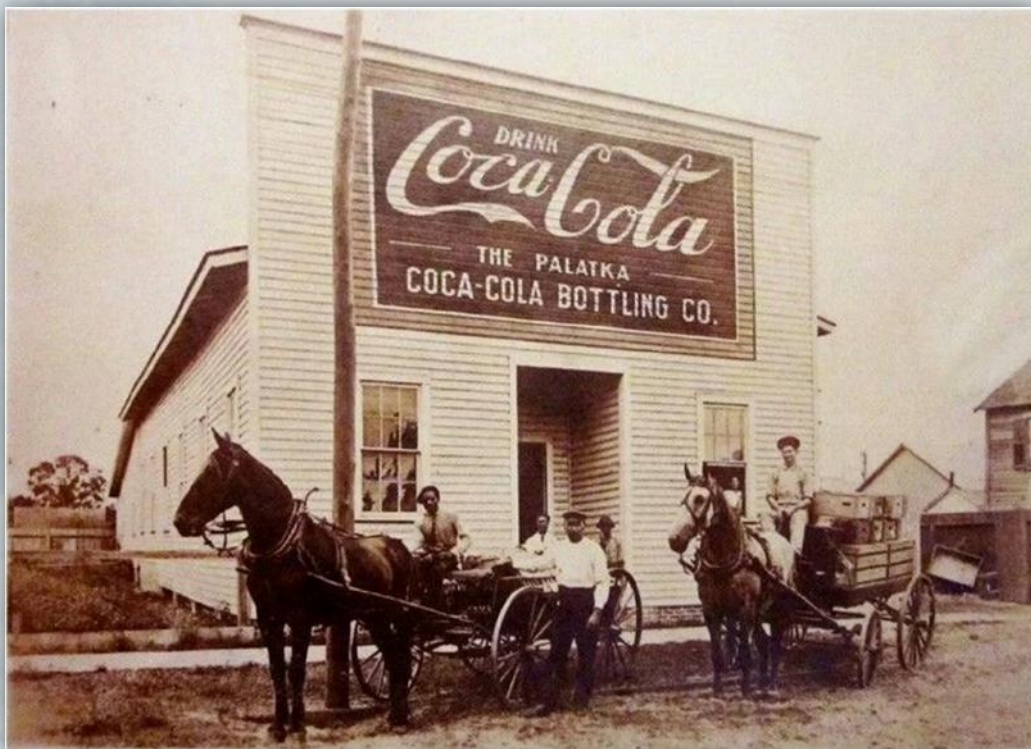
Coca-Cola

in Palatka

A long South 7th Street in downtown Palatka stands a structure whose history is woven into the city's industrial and cultural landscape. The former Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, located at 120 South 7th

Street, remains one of the community's most recognizable historic properties. For much of the twentieth century, the building served as a center of local manufacturing, its steady production connecting Palatka to one of the most iconic brands in American history.

Constructed during a period of significant economic growth, the bottling plant once bustled with machinery and the dedicated labor of the men and women who kept its operations running. Its brick walls, industrial windows, and sturdy frame reflect a utilitarian architectural style common to early



Palatka Bottling Factory, Early 1900s

bottling facilities. The structures are meant to endure time, labor, and the demands of modern production. For decades, its presence

defined this corner of downtown, providing both employment and a sense of civic pride.

After Coca-Cola eventually closed its operations in Palatka, the building sat largely quiet, its rooms and corridors preserving the echoes of an earlier era. Yet its silhouette remained a steadfast part of the downtown landscape. It is a reminder of the city's industrial heritage and of the generations who lived and worked nearby.

That long stillness shifted in 2018, when Andrea Conover purchased the property with a vision for thoughtful redevelopment. Under her leadership, the adjoining warehouse side of the structure

underwent extensive renovation. In 2020, it reopened as a taproom and brewery, transforming a once-dormant industrial space into a vibrant venue for community gathering, music, and shared celebration. This adaptive reuse brought new life into the building, reintroducing the public to its history through renewed purpose.

In recent years, restoration efforts expanded to include the original bottling-plant wing—the historic heart of the building. For the first time since Coca-Cola vacated the site, this portion is once again open to the public. Its revival marks a significant moment for downtown Palatka, recon-

necting the community with a landmark that has shaped its narrative for nearly a century.

Today, the historic wing serves as the home of the Palatka Christmas Market, a seasonal event that celebrates local crafts-

manship, tradition, and the spirit of the holidays. Open from Black Friday through Christmas Eve, the market invites visitors into the former bottling room, now filled with artisan booths, handcrafted goods, and festive displays. The market welcomes the community each week on the following schedule:

Thursdays through Sundays: 11:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Additional weekday hours are added during the final week leading up to Christmas Eve.

Within these historic walls, guests can explore a wide variety of local vendors, enjoy seasonal treats, and take part in a cherished new tradition

that honors both the past and the present. The market’s presence not only preserves the architectural legacy of the Coca-Cola building but also ensures that its halls are once again filled with life, warmth, and community.

The transformation of the Coca-Cola Building reflects a broader story woven throughout Palatka: a story of resilience, renewal, and reverence for history. Through restoration and adaptive reuse, the former bottling plant stands today as a vibrant testament to what is possible when the past is honored and the future embraced with intention.

-Kerri Arrants



Palatka Bottling Factory, 1940



The Night the River Froze

from riverfront families describe mornings when sheets of ice formed along the edge of the river and when frost coated the wooden docks that reached out over the water. Travelers who arrived by steamboat often recorded their astonishment

at seeing frozen puddles and brittle vegetation in a state known for its warmth. These accounts serve as a reminder that the region's climate, though generally mild, has always held the capacity for surprising intensity.

One of the most remarkable winters took place in the late 1800s, when temperatures dropped so sharply that residents reported thin layers of ice forming on still sections of the St. Johns. The river, which typically flowed uninterrupted from south to north, moved

sluggishly in the cold. On quiet mornings the surface appeared silver and stiff, reflecting the pale sky in a way that seemed unfamiliar. Although the ice never reached the thickness seen in northern rivers, its presence was extraordinary enough that the moment lived on in both public records and personal recollection.

These rare freezes carried significant consequenc-

Winter in Florida carries a reputation for gentleness. The season often arrives with soft breezes and mild sunlight, a welcome contrast to the storms and heavy heat of the warmer months. Yet the history of the St. Johns River tells a different and more surprising story. Beneath the calm surface of this wide waterway lies a record of winters so cold that they shaped the lives of the people who lived along its banks. Among these events is the legendary night when portions of the St. Johns seemed to freeze, an occurrence that continues to stand out in the memory of early settlers and in the written accounts they left behind. During the nineteenth century, Florida experienced several severe cold snaps that pushed far beyond the expected limits of a Southern winter. Diaries



Freezes in Central Florida, courtesy of Florida History Network.

es. Citrus groves that had thrived along the riverbanks suffered damage, and farmers worked quickly to protect their crops from the cold. Families gathered around stoves and fireplaces, conserving fuel and food as they waited for the return of warmer air. Despite the hardship, the community responded with resilience. Neighbors shared supplies, assisted one another with farm chores, and supported the workers who depended on the river for their livelihoods. The cold, though unwelcome, revealed the strength of the bonds that connected those who lived near the water. The winters of the past also brought a certain beauty. Frost settled on the reeds along the river, turning them white at sunrise. The sound of ice breaking beneath oars echoed across quiet creeks as fishermen made their way into sheltered coves. Even the steamboats moved differently, their smokestacks rising into the crisp air while their captains navigated carefully through chilled water. These moments offered a rare glimpse of a Florida transformed by winter, a landscape shaped not by heat but by stillness.

Although such events are uncommon today, the stories remain important. They provide insight into the natural history of the region and into the lives of those who endured the seasons with limited resources and strong determination. The memory of the frozen river stands as a testament to the unpredictability of nature and to the adaptability of the community that continues to live beside it. As winter returns each year and the air cools over the St. Johns, it carries a whisper of those extraordinary nights long ago. The river flows freely now, yet its past remains present in the stories passed down from generation to generation. Through these recollections, the legacy of Florida's most unusual winters continues to linger, offering a quiet reminder that even the warmest places hold their own legends of cold.

-Kerri Arrants

Freezes in Central Florida, courtesy of Florida History Network.



The Peace Wall Becomes The Peace Garden

**Honoring Ann McNamara and Her Commitment
to Community Renewal**

Every town is shaped by the people who choose to invest in it, and Palatka is fortunate to have someone like Ann McNamara doing exactly that. Ann, the owner of Moxie Moves and the owner of this building, took what was once the beloved Peace Wall and reimagined it with purpose and heart. Although her business does not operate from this location, she chose to restore and revitalize the property because she believes deeply in Palatka's growth and potential. Before its transformation, the Peace

Wall honored the spirit of John Lennons message of peace, love, and self-reflection. Its purpose was simple and meaningful:

*Look within yourself. Bring peace to the surface.
Strive to be happy.*

As time passed, the building aged and deteriorated. The message remained, but the structure no longer reflected the hope it once inspired.

Ann approached this project with vision and commitment. The building was fully renovated from the inside out. Every wall, every window, and every detail was renewed. It became a complete rebuild that gave the property new strength, new beauty, and a new future.

Today, the building stands reborn as the Peace Garden, wrapped in a striking floral mural filled



with color and life. It welcomes everyone who walks or drives by, offering a moment of joy and connection.

Inside, the transformation is just as impressive. The property includes upscale apartment units that Ann has beautifully finished and now rents to residents seeking quality living in the heart of downtown.

The commercial storefront has been brought back to life as well. Ann will soon be leasing the refreshed space to a new tenant, offering another business owner the opportunity to thrive in a renewed and inspiring environment.

Ann did not take on this project for herself. She did it for Palatka. She saw a fading landmark and imagined what it could become. She invested her resources, her creativity, and her belief that downtown Palatka

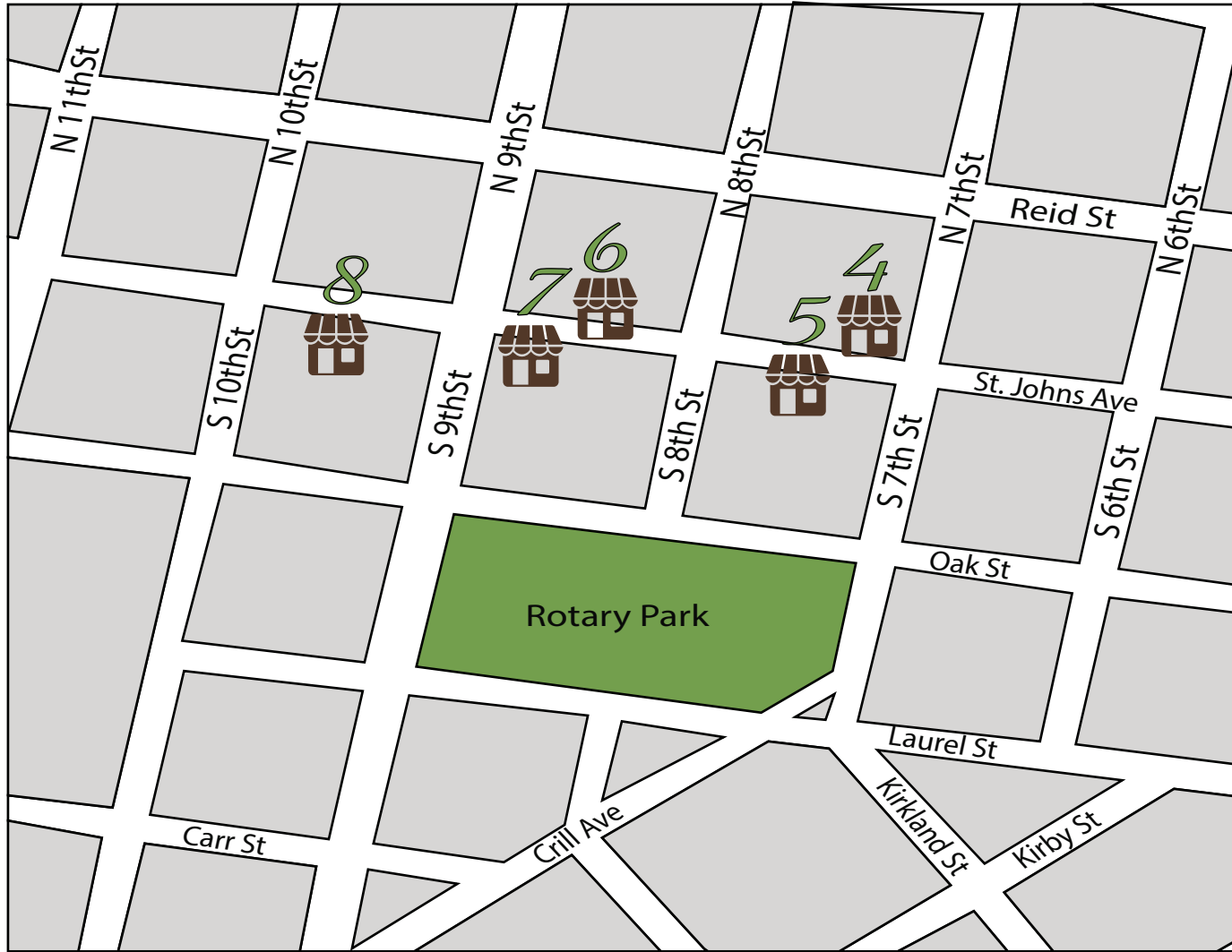
deserves beautiful, functional, and inspiring spaces.

Because of people like Ann McNamara, our community grows stronger, more vibrant, and more full of possibility. Her work reminds us that revitalization is not only about buildings. It is also about the pride and optimism that grow when someone chooses to make a lasting difference. The Peace Wall may have evolved into the Peace Garden, but its message remains. Growth is possible. Beauty can bloom anywhere. And good communities are shaped by the people who choose to nurture them.

-David Zachary



FAST



1 **Velchoff's Corner**
105 N 2nd St Ste D



2 **Angels Dining Car**
209 Reid St



3 **Mariachiles**
318 St Johns Ave



4 **This & That Cafe**
700 St Johns Ave



5 **The Magnolia**
705 St Johns Ave



6 **Cattleman BBQ**
816 St Johns Ave



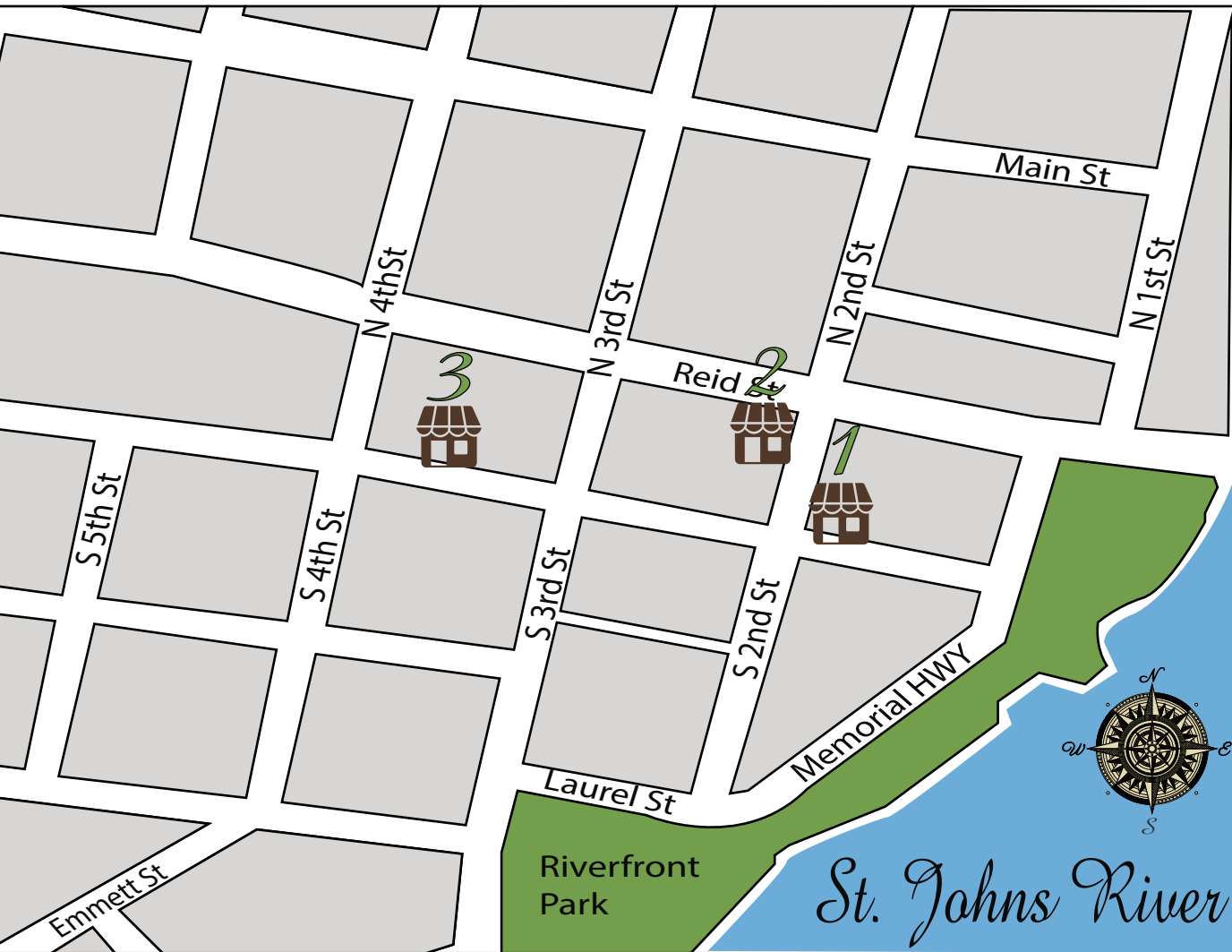
7 **Mr. JayBee's Wings N Things**
107 S 9th St



8 **Pizza Boyz**
919 St Johns Ave



Fairies

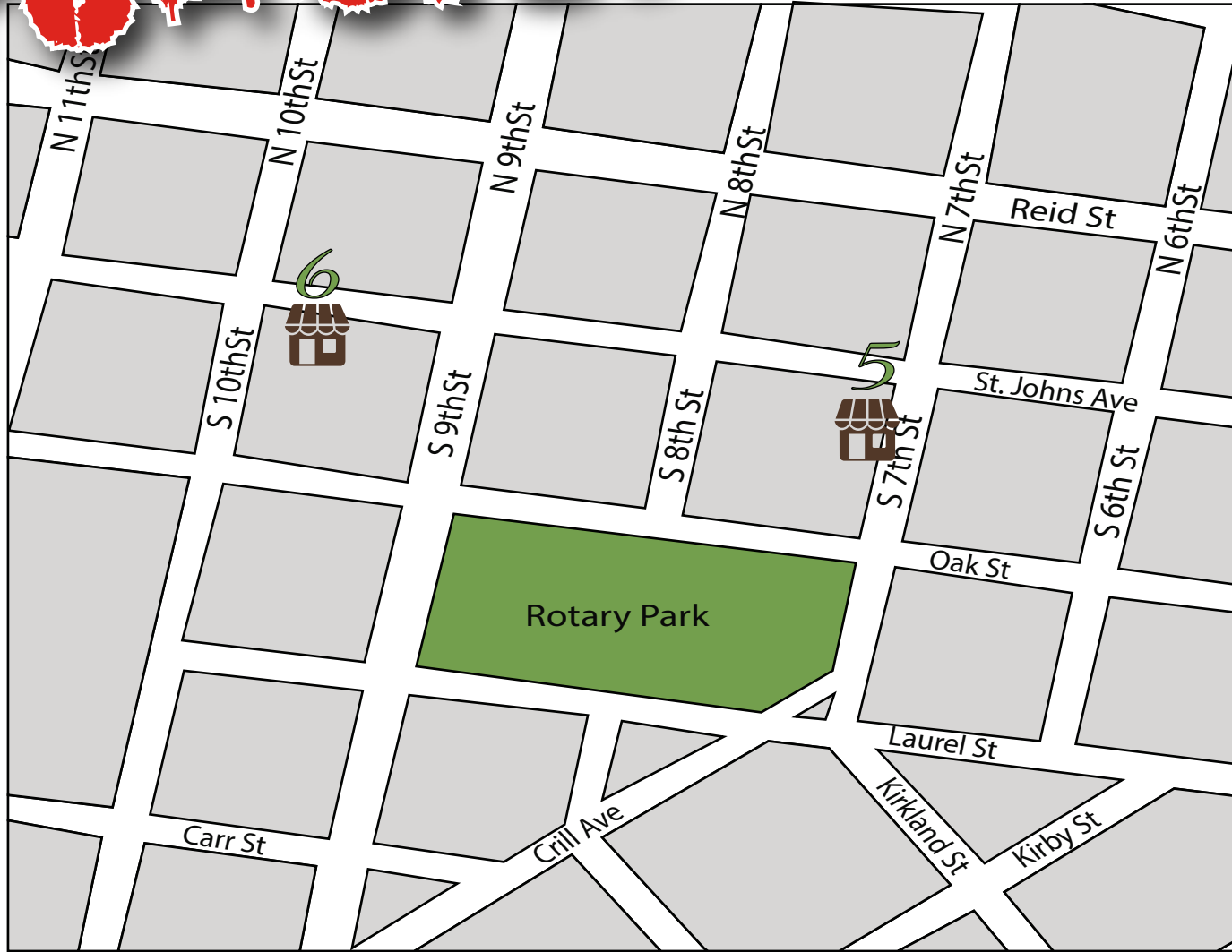


PALATKA, FLORIDA

Magnolia

all day

PUB CRAWL



1 The Oyster Bar at
Velchoff's
105 N 2nd St Ste D

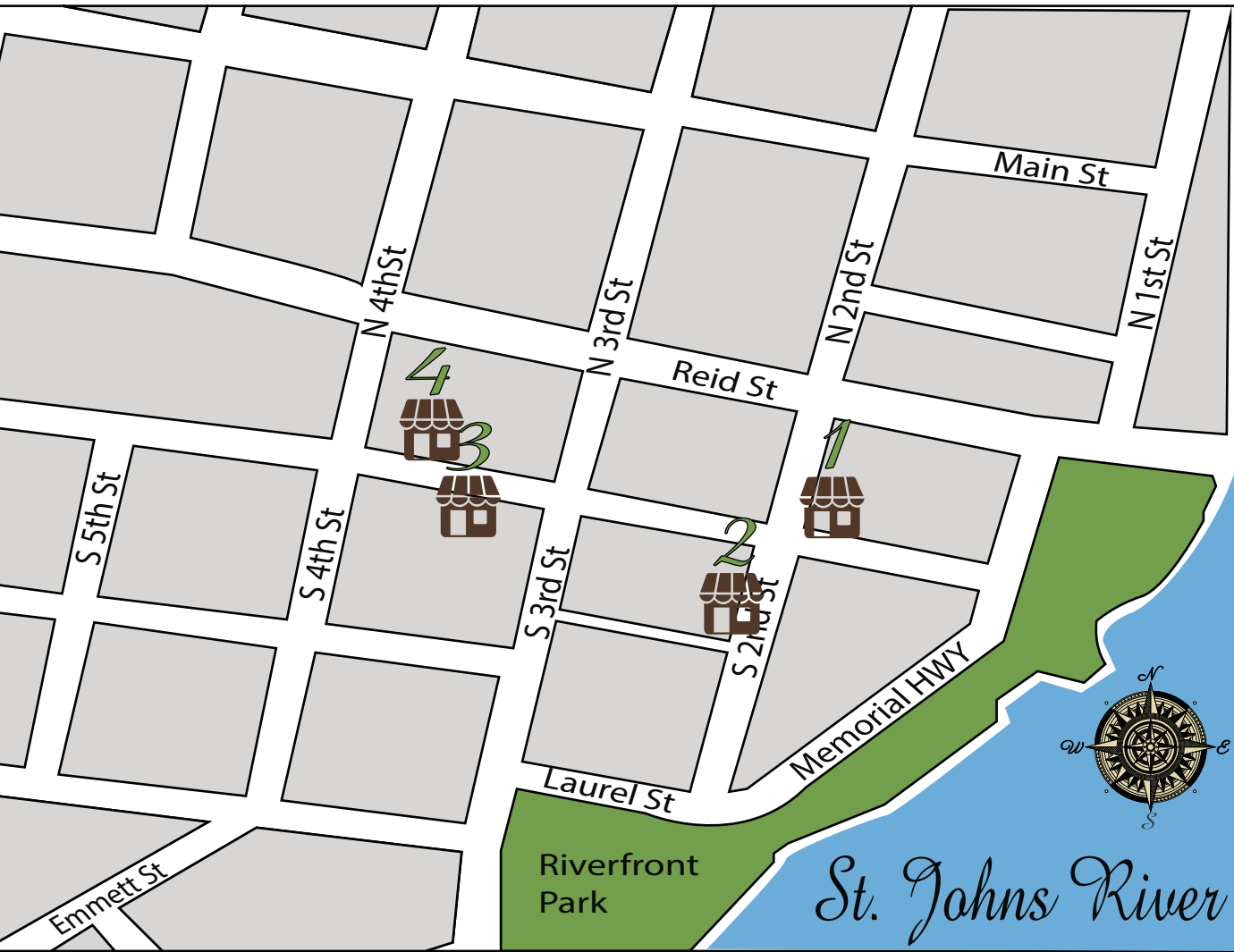


2 Uncork & Undwind Craft Beer
and Wine Lounge
114 S 2nd St

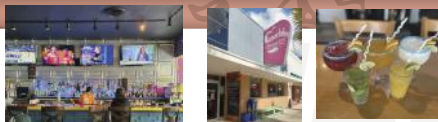


3 Steamboat Willies Gastro Pub
& Bar
309 St Johns Ave

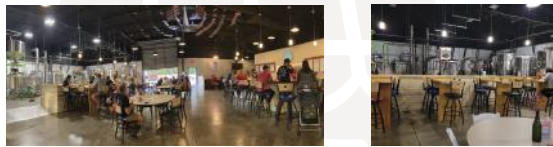




4 Mariachiles
318 St Johns Ave



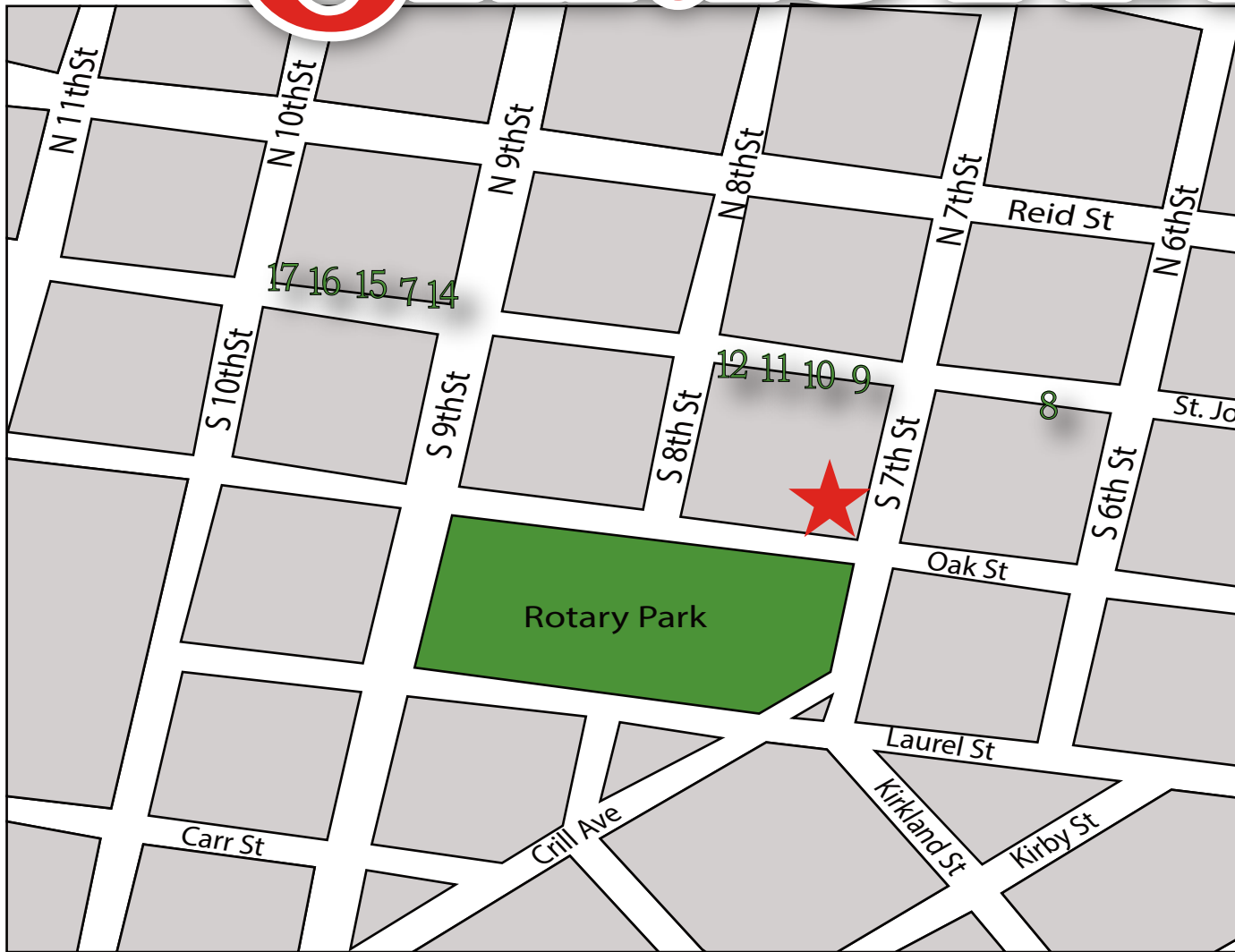
5 Azalea City Brewing Co.
120 S 7th St



6 Pizza Boyz
919 St Johns Ave



CHRISTMAS



Gifts and Decor

6 Lady Bugs
423 St Johns Ave

7 Things & Tings
902 St Johns Ave

12 Lemon Street Market
and Mercantile
715 St Johns Ave

9 Urban Farmhouse
701 St Johns Ave

8 Ralphs House of
Flowers
605 St. Johns Ave, Suite
101

1 Decor with a Twist
214 St Johns Ave

17 Birds of a Feather
918 St Johns Ave

Clothing

4 Daniel Thompson Bridals
320 St Johns Ave

10 Brownie's Boot Shop
711 St Johns Ave

5 Turquoise and Tinsel
Boutique
419 St Johns Ave, Suite 2

MAP LIST

Shopping



Books

- 15** *Needful Things*
908 St Johns Ave
- 2** *Hometown Comics and Collectables*
304 St Johns Ave

Specialty

- 16** *Rivertown Suites Marketplace*
910 St Johns Ave
- 14** *Speakeasy Print*
900 St Johns Ave
- 3** *Miss D's Quilt Shop*
305 St Johns Ave
- 11** *Brownie's Outpost*
713 St Johns Ave
- ★ *Palatka Christmas Market*





WINTER

DEC 6, 2025

Holiday Market
Eva Lyon Park,
100 S Summit St,
Crescent City, FL
32112

**Gingerbread
House Contest
at Ravine
Gardens**
Ravine Gardens
State Park, 1600
Twigg St,
Palatka 32112

**Market Place in
the Garden**
Ravine Gardens
State Park, 1600
Twigg St, Palatka

**Palatka
Porchfest Music
Festival 2025**
South Historic
Neighborhood,
Palatka

**Beck 5K
Presents:
Cookies & Claus**
301 River Street,
Palatka
(riverfront)

**Palatka Farmers
Market
(Holiday
Edition)**
410 St Johns Ave,
Palatka
(Courthouse
area)

**4th Annual
Rumble on the
River**
John Theobald
Sports Complex,
120 Carter Rd,
Palatka

DEC 7, 2025

**San Mateo
Christmas
Parade**
465 San Mateo
Rd, San Mateo,
FL

DEC 11-14, 2025

**Putnam's
Festival of
Lights**
Putnam County
Fairgrounds, 118
Fairgrounds Rd,
East Palatka

DEC 12, 2025

**Winter Jam
Series (Holiday
Concert)**
Palatka
Riverfront

**Jackpot Buckle
Series #5
(Barrel Racing)**
181 Horseman
Club Rd, Palatka

DEC 13-14, 2025

**Christmas at
First Palatka**
501 Oak St,
Palatka, FL,
United States,
Florida 32177

DEC 14, 2025

**Santa at The
Urban
Urban
Farmhouse on
Saint Johns,
701 St Johns
Ave, Palatka**

**Holiday Event
hosted by
Garden Club of
Palatka / Keep
Putnam
Beautiful
Palatka, FL**

DEC 13, 2025

**Palatka's Best
Pictures with
Santa 2025**
187 Carter Rd,
Palatka, FL

**Swap Meet and
Cookies and
Cocoa with
Santa!**
Interlachen Lake
Estates VFD
Station 17, 217
Kennedy Ave.

**2025 Saddle
Games Series**
181 Horseman
Club Rd,
Palatka, FL
32177

**Welaka
Christmas
Parade**
3rd Ave & CR
309, Welaka



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CALENDER

JAN 3, 2025

Palatka Farmers Market
Putnam County Courthouse, 410 St Johns Ave, Palatka

JAN 8, 2025

Waterways & Trails Committee Meeting
Planning & Development Conf. Room, 2509 Crill Ave, Palatka

JAN 10, 2025

Manifest Your Vision: Vision Board Workshop (Manifest & Mimosas)
Petey's Beer & Wine Garden, Putnam County

JAN 14, 2025

Fishing Fund Committee Meeting
Commissioner Conf. Room, Suite 200, 2509 Crill Ave, Palatka

JAN 16, 2025

Winter Jam Series (Riverfront Concert)
Palatka Riverfront

JAN 17, 2025

Palatka Farmers Market
Putnam County Courthouse, 410 St Johns Ave, Palatka



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WINTER CALENDER *Continued*

JAN 24, 2025 JAN 29, 2025 JAN 31, 2025

**Ranger Read
Along (Ravine
Gardens)**
Ravine Gardens
State Park, 1600
Twigg St, Palatka

**Taste of Putnam
2026 (Food
Festival &
Chamber
Annual
Meeting)**
Putnam County
Fairgrounds,
East Palatka

**Kinslee Strong
5K Fun
Run/Walk &
Family Fest**
Coventry Oaks
Farm, 104
Springside
Shortcut Rd
Palatka FL 32177

**JMG Academy's
1st Annual Golf
Tournament
Fundraiser**
1715 Moseley
Ave, Palatka, FL
32177

JAN 28- FEB 8, 2025

**River City
Players Presents
Scotland Road**

**GET YOUR HOLIDAY GIFT CARDS!
NOW ON SALE ONLINE AT PALATKAUTOSPA.COM
OR SEE A CASHIER IN-STORE.**

6 Months of Unlimited Washes \$125		1 Year of Unlimited Washes \$250		
\$20 for \$25	\$25 for \$30	\$50 for \$60	\$75 for \$90	\$100 for \$120

AUTOSPA
PASSION FOR DETAIL

“Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus” is a famous editorial published in The Sun (a New York newspaper) in 1897. It was written in response to an 8-year-old girl named Virginia O’Hanlon, who asked whether Santa was real. The editorial reassured her — and the world — that the spirit of Santa lives on through generosity, love, and wonder.

Dear Editor,

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say that there is no Santa Claus. Papa says “If you see it in the Sun, it is so.” Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia,

Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds.

All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to our life its highest beauty and joy.

Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus? You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your Papa to hire men to watch all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove?

Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see.

Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, or even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond.

Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else as real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, maybe 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the hearts of children.

Written by Francis P. Church in 1897

