

REAL SCOOP



President's Message:



Greetings to all REA members, families, and friends. We have reached the ending of another year. I hope that this Newsletter finds everyone in great health and looking forward to some cooler weather and excited about the upcoming holiday season ahead.

I have reached the end of my term as your President of the REA. I want to thank you for letting me serve you as President for the last 2 years and as Second Vice President for 6 years prior to that. I hope that I have been an asset to the REA. I will still be serving as a Past President on the REA Board.

The REA had a great Annual Fish Fry in October at the Firefighter's Hall at 618 Stockton Street. It was catered by Art Jennette of Southern Charm Restaurant. Several members and families were at this event. If you missed it, you missed a great lunch and a nice afternoon visiting with friends and City retirees.

We have had a problem with a place to hold our Quarterly meetings which has been at the Mary Singleton Center. It has been closed for renovation for the past few months. We have had one of our REA members step up and help us by letting us meet at their place of business. Thanks to Darryl Patterson for allowing us to meet at his business. It is a beautiful building and a very nice place to meet. I remember it as being the former American Arlington Bank.

The Annual Benefits Re-enrollment time will start on November 4th and will be ending on November 15th. We will have two locations to work during this event. We will be at JSO on November 6th and 13th and every day at City Hall during this event. We always look forward to seeing retirees each year during this time and, we need to recruit new members for the REA during this event. We need volunteers to help work at these events. If you can help by volunteering during this time, please call the REA office (904-353-2400).

Our last event for the year will be the Annual Christmas Party at the Firefighter's Hall at 618 Stockton Street. The date has been set for Sunday, December 15th. The doors will open at 4:00p.m. and dinner will be at 5:00p.m. The Officers for the 2020 year will also be sworn in by Judge Gary Flower. Please mark your calendar and be sure to get your reservation into the office. We always have some nice door prizes to give away. Plus, we will have the Santa Surprise drawing and sell tickets for \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. The drawing will be at the end of the evening. We hope to see you there.

Each REA member needs to let your City Council person know how you feel about the sale of the JEA. The sale of the JEA will affect everyone in Duval County in the future. Also, it will affect all our Retirees.

Also remember that Recruiting is very important to our Association. If you know of someone that is not a member, please recruit them to become a member. If you know of someone that is not receiving the REAL SCOOP, please have them call the REA office (904-353-2400) to verify that their information is correct.

In closing, please mark your calendar for the upcoming Christmas Party. Look for all the information and reservation form on page 7. We look forward to seeing you there.

God Bless You All! Pete Ison



LAW TALK by Eric Smith, General Counsel

Make No Mistake About it – Our JEA has gone Rogue! Some thoughts on “Privatizing” JEA; and, a proven way forward for Jacksonville.

Many years ago (about 52) the voters of Duval County mandated a “Bold New City of the South”. Today there is a behind the scenes; behind closed doors planning group that would hoodwink us into changing that to the “Sold New City of the South”. And not only our JEA, but also our critical water and sewer, city parking and even Fire and Rescue.

More recently voters overwhelmingly shouted a message against selling their JEA. Yet the JEA CEO and Board continues to engineer a stampeding train forward designed to keep the City Council on a “need to know basis”, and minimal opportunity for input from citizen stakeholders and business leaders. Any suggestion of transparency is a joke and an intentional lie. There has been no open, fact-based, honest dialogue. This Rogue JEA was not contemplated by the framers of the charter voters approved.

But it gets worse. Privatizing/selling the JEA would guarantee moving decisions on Jacksonville’s electrical distribution, water and sewer to South Florida, North Carolina or even a foreign country in all likelihood. And the focus will be on Wall Street not our Main Street. What kind of a future would that mean for our children and grandchildren? The corporate operatives of the purchasing entity would give first consideration to their localities, without consideration for the needs of Jacksonville citizens. In fact, local control would be gone. No more city council oversight. Enter the Public Service Commission, a most political entity 160 miles away in Tallahassee. You don’t want to see what would happen to our rates.

So, should we give up local control and ownership of our most vital, important asset, run by our neighbors and countless, faithful first responders? Not just no, but Hell No!

At last month’s REA board meeting the board voted unanimously against the sale of the JEA. Consider some facts that have not been presented which will be presented to the City Council along with a better plan for the City we love:

The Edison Electric Institute (“EEI”) (see: EEI.Org) representing all for profit utilities like FPL said in their 2018 annual review: “Electric transportation is a huge win for our industry....2018 was a watershed year for EVs (Electric Vehicles) with more than 1 million EVs on America’s roads...” EEI predicts increasing electric sales from electric vehicles alone, and notes in 2018 that U.S. electric sales went up 3% over 2017.

A big solar power plant contract was just signed delivering clean electricity to the Los Angeles utility at less than \$20/MWH! (see: pv-magazine-usa.com) – cheaper power than any existing Florida power plant. Even more decreases in solar power generation costs are projected.

Today, U.S. bond interest rates are down to their lowest level in U.S. history. (See: stlouisfed.org) JEA and the City could issue 30-year bonds today for about 2.25%, the lowest ever. JEA can refinance over \$2 billion in higher interest rate bonds for big, continuing savings. The 2017 Federal tax legislation changed how municipal tax-exempt bonds are re-financed and the municipal bond industry is using new methods to capture re-financing savings.

In my past service as a city councilman at large, I had to learn to read City and JEA financial reports, So I have studied the current ones and here’s JEA today. (see: jea.com>about>investor relations>financial reports):

- Very profitable, paying record high \$125 million contribution to the City, 50% more than 10 years ago and 100% more than 20 year ago, with many \$ millions more JEA financial benefits flowing to our City.
- Has massive cash liquidity and reserve funds available for productive investment – think for example paying way down City unfunded pension liability debt.
- Among the lowest electric rates in Florida, with current rates a bit lower than 10 years ago and stable



Leona J. Spann
Chaplain

Every Good and Perfect Gift

James 1:17 KJV. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. KJV: King James Version .

Oh, the boxes under the tree! There are so many, and they're wrapped in a variety of different types of paper. From the outside it's hard to tell what you might find, should you peek inside. But you know everyone is special, not because of the wrapping, but because you know the giver. When a "giver" gives a gift, he or she does it out of love for the recipient. That's how it was when God gave the ultimate gift of His Son. Jesus didn't come wrapped in ribbons and bows, but He was given out of love. And as we "unwrap" Him (make Him our Lord and Savior) we come to grips with the concept that this gift _God's Son_ is truly the only perfect gift we'll ever receive.

while utilities like FPL raise their rates annually (See: publicpower.com>publications and reports>electric bill comparisons)

- Has bond credit ratings better than 90% of U.S. utilities!

In summary, the JEA and the U.S. electric utilities now have decreasing costs from things like record low solar power plants costs and record low bond interest rates while forecasts from industry executives are growing electric demand from long term trends like the electrification of transportation.

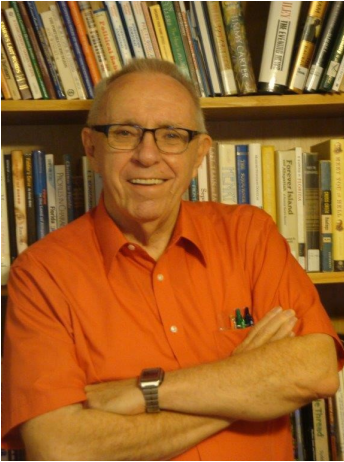
We should keep this wonderful local asset as it enters this emerging utility industry next golden era of lower costs, more revenues and profits, and low and stable rates, so we can use all the profits for our local benefit. Should we find new ways to bring in and use greater private sector efficiency in JEA and City purchasing and big project execution – of course! Sooner the better. Again, give up local control and ownership? Hell no! (Let us know if you agree.)

Instead of sell I would suggest that using proven past ways of team-working on big, bold thinking including the Mayor, City Council and JEA (combined with the trends noted above), and many other assets of our City and JEA, the next great City public infrastructure and services upgrade is possible now. Without tax or rate increases, an estimated \$2 billion in new investments is available for things like: finally bringing sewer and drainage lines to the many areas still on polluting septic tanks and still flooding, undergrounding overhead electric lines, and adding more stormwater drainage facilities where still needed, as well as other needs.

And speaking of undergrounding overhead electric lines. (a recommendation made as far back as 1929 in Jacksonville) it could be accomplished within five years. And should be! As I write this, the worst fires in recorded history rage in California; millions without power and experiencing record devastation. See with your eyes the above-ground California power lines. We owe it to our citizens to put power lines underground to protect them when the next hurricane strikes.

And we owe it to our citizens to deliver what was promised to the voters with Consolidation. Why not start in the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. I have every confidence that Council President Scott Wilson and our city council can and will do this. Quoting former President Kennedy quoting George Bernard Shaw "some see things as they are and ask why? I dream things that never were, and I say why not.?"

That's Law Talk until 2020. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year. Call me if you need me, 596-5707; eric@govinc.net. *God Bless you and your family! Eric Smith*



Hi Real Scoop readers by Harry Reagan, Historian & Real Scoop Editor

Below you'll see a comment from one of our readers. In the old days (with editorials on WJXT), we called them contrasting points of view. Viewers always seemed to enjoy them and I think our readers would too. Please consider sending us your comments - a contrasting view or something you would just like to comment on.

From Gary Newman: Hi Folks, I would like to comment on Mr. Reagan's last article in the Rea newsletter for this month (09-10 2019) I take exception to the part about restoring the voting rights of incarcerated felons. I am 77 years of age and all my life it has been that if you commit a crime and are convicted of that crime then you lose your voting rights. Now they say I am sorry but I should not be punished for committing a crime against others. You should just give me all my rights back and forget and that I committed the crime. I know the vote was to give back their voting rights, and I accept that, however I don't have to like it. I am looking what other crime will be forgotten and should when we pay for them because they were convicted of a crime. I do think Reagan is right, we need to teach CIVIC education in our schools. How many of the youth know about the History of our Nation? I want to say I enjoy reading Mr. Reagan's comments and his take on things most of the time.

Now some comments on the sale of the JEA. When this was first brought up and the people stood up and said no way, it was put on the back burner. Now they are saying unless we sell they will have to lay off a large number of employees and raise the cost of electricity. Scare tricks. In the future we will see more of these claims.



Time to check your income tax withholding for 2020 and an easy way to do it: by Greg Radlinski, First Vice President

Use the new IRS Tax Withholding Estimator. The IRS has a new online Tax Withholding Estimator to help you determine how much tax you need to have withheld. The calculator helps taxpayers estimate if the right amount is being withheld from their income to cover their tax liability. The estimator uses a simple, six-step question-and-answer format using information like marital or filing status, income, withholding, adjustments, deductions and credits.

The mobile-friendly estimator replaces the Withholding Calculator: www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator The IRS urges both **pension recipients** and wage earners to do a Paycheck Checkup now and review their withholding for 2019.

This is especially important for anyone who faced an unexpected tax bill or penalty when they filed earlier this year. It's also a critical step for those who made withholding adjustments in 2018 or had a major life change, such as marriage, the birth of a child, adoption or buying a home.

According to the IRS, people most at risk of having too little tax withheld include those who itemized in the past, but now take the increased standard deduction. They also include households with two wage earners, employees with non-wage sources of income and those with complex tax situations. In addition, anyone who changes their withholding in the middle or latter part of this year should **do another Paycheck Checkup in January. That will help ensure that they have the right amount of tax withheld for all of 2020.**

Courtesy of the Defense Finance & Account Service September 2019 Retiree Newsletter.



From Edward Tannen, Retired Assistant General Counsel:

In June my wife and I took a cruise from Lisbon to London that put us in Cherbourg on June 7, the day after the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. As a life-long student of World War II, it was a real thrill for me to stand at the Pointe du Hoc that was assaulted by American Army Rangers on D-Day, walk along Omaha Beach, and spend a little time at the American Cemetery in Vierville, just above Omaha Beach.

It was very sobering to walk along all those graves of young American soldiers who gave their lives in France. There were still ceremonies being held to commemorate the anniversary, and it was surprising to see how many authentic jeeps from WWII were still running around Europe, courtesy of military historical societies, and many people wearing replicas of American WWII uniforms. I was told that authentic uniforms are becoming so rare and expensive that they are seldom taken out of storage, so if you have the uniform of a relative who served in the war, please make sure it is properly cared for. There were a few veterans of D-Day present, and it was heartwarming to see how everywhere they went, the crowds of people parted to let them through and greeted them with applause.

Although with all of the visitors present and gridlocked traffic we were not able to spend as much time at each location as was on our schedule, I felt that I was privileged to be part of a historic event, as I doubt that there will be many veterans present in future anniversaries.



The Normandy American Military Cemetery is a 172 acre memorial park in Colleville-sur-Mer overlooking the Omaha landing beach. The military cemetery has the remains of 9,387 US soldiers. The graves are marked by 9,387 white marble headstones: 9238 Latin crosses and 149 Stars of David. The US cemetery is the largest allied military cemetery in Normandy (four German cemeteries have more graves) and was the first Second World War American cemetery established on European soil. France granted the US free perpetual use of the terrain as a cemetery without charge of taxation.

Thank You Veterans

by: Justin
Meek Elementary School
5th Grade

Thank You for the Job Well Done
Thank You for the Battles Won
Thank You for the Battles Fought
Thank You for the Freedom Bought

Thank You for the Time You Served
Thank You for the Freedom Earned
Thank Your Families for Sharing You
I Know They Miss You, They Really Do

I'm Sorry for the Lives That Were Lost
Freedom Isn't Cheap,
It comes at a Very High Cost

I Love My Freedom,
My Red, White, and Blue
Thank You Veterans For All That You Do



DOWN MEMORY LANE by John Keane REA Member & Past Executive Director of the Police & Fire Pension Fund

Retired longtime REA Member and former Jacksonville Undersheriff John C. Nelson and passed away on September 9, 2019 at the age of 91. At the time of his passing, he was battling Cancer. John spent nearly half a century serving the Citizens of Jacksonville and Orange Park. He was an outstanding law enforcement officer and public administrator.

A native of Jacksonville, Florida, John was a graduate of Andrew Jackson H.S. In his youth, he served his community as a proud member of the American Red Cross Life Savings Corps (Life Guard), in Jacksonville Beach. John was also an avid Boy Scout, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in Troop 30. In his Eagle Scout paperwork, John recounted the work the Boy Scouts were doing to help the war effort when he wrote "Scouting means to me more than ever, now an important organization because of the many jobs that can be performed to help in the national emergency. All in all, Scouting has meant more to me than any other lone factor in my life". Quite an outlook for someone just 15 years old at the time.



In 1946, right after High School, he joined the United States Navy. He served for 2 years and was stationed in Okinawa, Japan. During his military career John received many citations and awards.

In 1948, John enrolled at the University of Florida. He joined the "old" Jacksonville Police Department (JPD) in 1950. John began as a walking beat Officer. Shortly thereafter upon completing his probationary period, he requested a "leave of absence" to complete his Degree. His request was initially denied. John recently recounted the story of his appeal to the then Police Commissioner – Mayor Haydon Burns. The Mayor noted that he had been unable to complete college due to his economic circumstances, and would help John obtain his degree, approving his leave application. John was allowed to leave the agency for two years to complete his college degree at the University of Florida, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business, becoming if not the first, one of the few officers in that era with a College degree on the Jacksonville Police Department.

Later, Nelson was assigned to the State Attorney's Office for 10 years. Most notably, he was involved in a huge investigation involving public corruption. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in November of 1958 and Lieutenant on 3-4-67. John was selected as one of only 10 Officers in the United States to receive a Federal Grant to attend the University of California, Berkeley in 1967. He attended the University from 1967-1968 where he obtained a master's degree in Criminology, graduating first in his class. Pre-consolidation, he was the first officer to have a Master's Degree with the Jacksonville Police Department.

When he returned to duty from College, he was appointed to the Command Staff, first as Deputy Director of Communications on 10-25-68, then Director of Traffic and Patrol on 5-14-71, and Director of Operations on 9-11-73. Sheriff Dale Carson appointed John as Undersheriff on 12-9-75. Undersheriff Nelson retired from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (J.S.O.) in April 1987 after serving over 36 years with the Agency.

After retirement, he worked as a consultant for the Jacksonville Port Authority for a short period of time before becoming the Chief of Police and later Director of Public Safety in Orange Park, Fla. for 13 years. He retired in 2002. Upon retiring, John enjoyed spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren, as well as traveling.

Former REA President Eric Smith recalled during his years on the City Council Finance Committee "Undersheriff Nelson was a strong supporter of additional education and training for officers as well as securing funding for new technology innovations and programs that improved effectiveness of law enforcement operations".

Maybe it was his first Police assignment, a walking beat, that help form John's view of "In a larger society, when the Police can see a young person and know him by name, and smiles at him and they understand each other and know each other, then problems decrease, cooperation increases and you get the job done." While he did not know it at the time, this concept is now known as Community Policing.

John Nelson is survived by his wife (Delores Pons Nelson) of 66 years, his daughter (Karen), 2 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

REA's Christmas Party and Annual Meeting Sunday, December 15, 2019
Fire Fighter Hall, 618 Stockton Street \$10.00 per person, doors open at 4:00pm, dinner at 5:00pm

The Christmas Party again this year will be held at the Fire Fighter Hall, 618 Stockton Street. There will be a buffet catered by Woody's Barbeque from Green Cove Springs. The main course will be **Grilled Chicken and Beef Brisket along with Mac & cheese**. We will also have the installation of the REA Officers for 2020.

RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE, NO WALK-INS WITHOUT RESERVATIONS. Cost is \$10.00 for member and \$10.00 for a guest. No take outs. Please complete the reservation form below, include a check made payable to the Retired Employees Association for the number of tickets requested and mail to: Retired Employees Association, 4830 Waller Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32254.

Request for tickets **MUST be RECEIVED by DECEMBER 3RD, 2019. No more reservations after Dec. 3rd. Tickets will be mailed to you prior to the party.** If you find it necessary to cancel your reservations, please call the office at **353-2400**. If no one is available, please leave a message. Once reservations have been given to the caterer, there can be **NO** refunds.

Please send in reservations as early as you can, because of slow mail service some tickets might be given out at the door.

SANTA SURPRISE: Tickets will be sold for \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. You can buy as many tickets as you wish. At the close of the sale of tickets, the money will be counted; and split eight ways.

No. of Tickets @ \$10.00 each _____ (Limit of 2 - Member & Guest) Amount enclosed: _____	
Name of Member _____	Name of Spouse or Guest _____
<p>Return this reservation form as soon as possible with your check payable to: RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, 4830 WALLER STREET, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32254.</p> <p><u>Request for tickets must be received by December 3rd, 2019</u></p>	
Address (to send tickets): _____	
	Including zip code
Phone Number: _____	Email Address: _____

2020 REA Board of Directors

At the September 19, 2019, Quarterly Meeting the Nominating Committee, chaired by Leona Spann, submitted a list of proposed members for nominations for 2020 REA Board of Directors. The membership present at this meeting approved the following list of 2020 Board of Directors. The new REA Board of Directors will be installed at our Annual meeting and Christmas party on December 15, 2019. They will become eligible to serve in that position effective from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

President - Greg Radlinski
 1st Vice President - Eric Smith
 2nd Vice President - Rich Townsend
 Secretary - Mary Ferrell
 Treasurer - Gary Looney
 Chaplain - Leona Spann
 REA Representative on the GEPF - Terry Wood
 REA Representative on the Pension Advisory Committee for the GEPF - Cindy Gardner
 REA Representative on the Pension Advisory Committee for the PFPF - Thomas Lumpkin

Historian - Harry Reagan
 Sergeant at Arms - Darryl Patterson
 Members-at- Large - Larry Johnson, AL Saffer and Debbie Brooker
 Past Presidents - Pete Ison and Richard Wallace
 Advisory Panel - Flo Clark, Henry Cook and Tom McGivney

**Retired Employees of the Consolidated
City of Jacksonville**

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Phone: 904-353-2400
E-mail: klooney@reajax.com

Website: www.reajax.com

Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 9am - 2pm

Bring in a new member and help us reinforce our efforts to take care of our retirees.
Update your E-mail address and contact info. Send it to jking@reajax.com or klooney@reajax.com

Important!!

The REA is still looking into sending out the newsletter by e-mail to those that have e-mail. **If you did not already** notify us with your e-mail, please send this information to klooney@reajax.com or jking@reajax.com. Also reply If you would like to keep getting a paper copy or if you do not have an e-mail address call the office at 904-353-2400 Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between 9 and 2 or leave a message any other time. Thanks!

REA Real Scoop Staff

Managing Editor: Kathy Looney
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Reporting Contributors: Greg Radlinski, Pete Ison, Eric Smith, Leona Spann, John Keane and Edward Tannen.

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