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Life in Palatka has much to offer residents as well as out of towners that come and frequent this historical area. The St. Johns River is at the core of Palatka and offers much enjoyment on and off the water. The St. John's River Center is a must visit to families across the state and right here in town.

Eateries in Palatka and East Palatka and also exceptional with dozens of chain and local mom and pop restaurants. From the Magnolia Café and the Mariachiles Mexican Grill to Niko's Pizza and Pizzaboys Pizza you just won't go wrong. Across the river into East Palatka Musselwhite's Seafood and Grill and Corky Bell's at Gator Landing are among restaurants people travel to from across the state for a tasty lunch or dinner.

The rich history in the area allow many antique shoppes to showcase items from the city and region to interested patrons. Rusty Duck's antique and vintage Bakery offers tasty treats as well as beautiful collectables to visitors and Elsie Bell's Antique Mall are among several across the area that just make Palatka special.

The Ravines State Park may be the #1 destination for a relaxing walk , picnic or event. The beauty of the ravines is well worth the visit. Historical attractions including the Murals all around town make for a fun walk while sopping in the downtown area, Riverfront Park, the Bronson-Mulholland House, the David Browning Rail Museum and of course the Palatka Welcome Center.

If you live or work in Putnam County or in Neighboring County always remember to check in with the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce to find out about anything you have questions about. The Chamber can connect you to local businesses of outstanding reputation for any products or services you may be in need of as well as help you with any questions about the county events and "things to do". They can be reached at 1100 Reid Street in Palatka or by phone at 386-328-1503 or at www.putnamcountychamber.com



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ANGEL'S DINING CAR STILL SERVING UP CASUAL FOOD, FOND MEMORIES

Florida's oldest diner was opened in 1932

By Don Coble

For the most part, there's isn't a lot of parking at Angel's Dining Car. Regular diners, most known as "usuals," use the old curb service bays or squeeze between picnic tables.

The quaint eatery, which opened in 1932 and considered Florida's oldest diner, is a refurbished train car – long and narrow, cozy and comfortable with 15 seats and 12 counter stools.

The aesthetics are a flashback to when Palatka was a major hub for cattle ranching and logging. Gaslight street lamps still flicker along the St. Johns River waterfront.

There is no wi-fi or alcohol. Angel's doesn't accept reservations and doesn't deliver.

But the prices are reasonable – a party of two can usually eat for less than \$12 – and the atmosphere is laid back.

And Angel's continues to serve basic diner food, handmade burgers and old-fashioned ice cream shakes.

One of the top sellers is called the black bottom. It's a concoction that starts with a hamburger patty and bacon, mixed with scrambled eggs and anything else the cook has within reach. It's fried up, served on a bun as a mix between a hamburger, BLT and fried egg sandwich.

The restaurant was opened by Porter Angel. He quickly realized travelers needed a place to grab a quick meal on the drive between the middle of the state to the nearby beaches. John Browning, whose father once worked as a curb hop at Angel's, bought the place after Angel died in 1980.

Specials are posted on billboards behind the counter. The breakfast menu, which is served all day, includes three-egg omelet, pancakes and biscuits. Hamburgers

are the top-sellers at lunch, but Angel's also features popular items like crab cake sandwiches, the western and, of course, the black bottom.

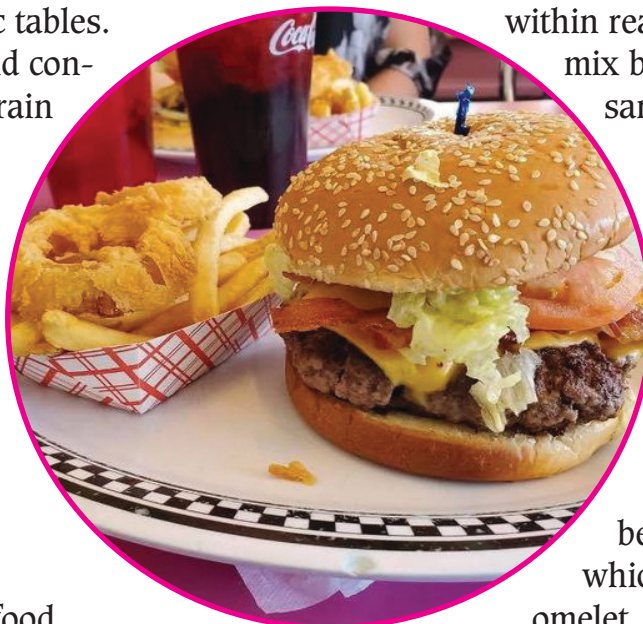
And one of the dinner selections includes fried frog legs.

The diner still offers curb service. Just find a spot and blow your horn, waitress and manager Melissa Streets told visitflorida.com.

The rich and famous have dined at Angel's, but make no mistake: the restaurant relies heavily on the return traffic of locals. And the doors are open around the clock.

Pat Boone used to be a regular. The Rev. Billy Graham ate there and became a "usual" of sorts. When Graham was hospitalized for treatment in Jacksonville, the Christian evangelist called in to-go orders for breakfast and lunch.

Angel's Diner Car is located at 209 Reid Street, just a few yards north of the Memorial Bridge over the St. Johns River.



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If you like older items that are desirable and appear to be authentic and in really great condition you might like to take a stroll down memory lane at one of the many antique stores in Palatka.

When you find an antique that catches your eye, you've probably found an item that's likely to be unique to your personal appeal and appear to be something that would appreciate in value as the years go by then you've found your precious gem!

Sometimes it's nice to find something that feels and looks like it might be a rare find. What constitutes a rarity? If none of your friends owns one, you know that it's possibly worth something. Even if the value is not incredible, if you like it, buy it!

Of course, something might be rare because it just didn't make it back in the day, when it was being sold. The item might be too big, too crazy or too odd. Still, if you like it, well, this aspect of a rare item works for you and just do it. Friends that come to your home are going to ask where you bought that and ask what it is and that's half the fun of buying antique items.

Lastly, you might see something that you had, or your mother or grandmother had, and you remember it from years ago. That warm feeling you have when you pick it up, hold it and remember times from long ago that were easy, simple and heartwarming are also rare. This also means buy it. Bottom line is that Palatka

has a fine collection of shoppes with antiques, collectables and many thrift shops that might just tickle your fancy. This makes a great day of fun along with a trip to one of many local restaurants.



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Festivals in Palatka

Locals attend on a regular basis along with visitors who come from near and far!

Florida Azalea Festival

March 6-7, 2021

The modern event is conducted by the Palatka Main Street program. The Ravine Gardens still joins in the celebration with what it calls Azalea Days. Its diverse collection and high concentration of the flower makes it a staple for those who want to get a good look at the celebrated annual blooms.

Putnam County Fair

March 19-27, 2021

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Riverfront Folk and Blues Festival

April 17, 2021

The Acoustic Circle's annual event, featuring local artists on multiple stage settings playing acoustic Folk and Blues! On this day, leave your Strat and drum kit at home, all acoustic.

Bostwick Blueberry Festival

April 24, 2021

In October of 1991, a small group of Bostwick citizens met in the old schoolhouse to form what they would call "a social club". They wanted a gathering place to hold community functions such as barbecues, covered dish meals, teen dances, children's carnivals, etc. With the support of Putman County, the club was allowed use of the old school to hold all functions and meetings. One of the first projects of the club was to redecorate the old cafeteria and raise money for a new floor. A lot of hard



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<https://www.bostwickblueberryfestival.net>

The Blue Crab Festival is held every Memorial Day weekend along the riverfront in Palatka, in remembrance of the



Join us as we commemorate the Union Occupation of Palatka in 1864. There will be Civil War Era Kids Games, Camp Life with Soldiers, Military Drills, and Cannon Fire Demonstrations. On Saturday, the Reid's Garden Palatka Historic North Neighborhood Association (PHNNA) will be selling hot dogs, hamburgers, and drinks. Of course, the Bronson-Mulholland House and the Putnam Historic Museum will be open for tours both days. We are also pleased to welcome the Florida Public Archeology Network who will be set up on the grounds.

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Feed the Need was created in 2018 to end childhood hunger during the weekends in Putnam County, providing nourishing meals to more than 800 local students when they're out of school.

The organization encourages the community to work together to make sure children don't go hungry. By doing so, it meets the urgent physical needs of children by providing food, taking action in the community and creating long-term relationships with individuals, businesses, churches and other nonprofit organizations.

The backpack program food program requires the cooperation and support of the entire Putnam commu-

Feed the Need provides needy students with nutrition, developmental support

nity, including schools, community organizations, businesses, churches, parents and children.



Denise Bramlitt played an important role in providing Feed the Need a solid foundation during its infancy by providing storage space and a forklift help load and unload as many as 12 pallets of food a day. Bramlitt, who

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along with her husband David, own Bramlitt's Plumbing and Electric in Palatka, offered a portion of their warehouse to give Feed the Need a home.

"We were blessed to have a building and a drop off place," she said. "When the teachers come, my employees at the warehouse load their cars for them. I feel this is part of being a part of the community that God's blessing us to be in for [41] years. We're giving back in that sense."

Food donations can be left at the main office of Bramlitt's Plumbing and Electric, 110 North State Road 19 in Palatka.

The organization is run entirely by volunteers and each school as a liaison who runs the pantry.

Many students receive free or reduced-priced lunch on schooldays, but too many were going hungry on weekends. Feed the Need was created to send children home with backpacks filled with enough food to last a weekend. Feed the Need was patterned after the national Feeding America program.

Nearly 30% of all children don't have enough food, according to Feeding America, and about 85% – more than 5,000 students – are on assisted breakfast and lunch programs at school.

A Children's Health Watch study found food security was pivotal for a child's emotional and physical development, as well as their future.

The study reported, "Child food insecurity creates obstacles to graduating high school and attaining higher education, impending knowledge development."

Cans of tuna, fish and chicken are most of the most popular staples, as well as jelly, peanut butter, potted meats, ravioli, dry and hot cereals, cookies, crackers, granola bars, ramen noodles, individual cans and boxes of

fruit juice, fresh fruit, macaroni and cheese and soup.

"We're kind of a backdoor organization," Bramlitt said. "Our donations are for buying food, that's our goal."

Feed the Need benefits greatly by their sponsors Waste Not Want Not, Feeding Northeast Florida and Hitchcock's Markets.

For more information, visit feedtheneedofputnam.org.

Donations can be paid directly to the organization's Amazon Smile program or at the organization's office at 110 North State Road 19, Palatka. For more information, call (386) 937-3862.

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As the Putnam County Board of Commissioners approved expansion of the existing RV Campsite at Trails End Outdoors, the buzz is out and people are booking time away in the country with adding 3 Air B&B get away sites, 18 RV sites and 10 primitive campsites. Built in 2010 by Keith Valentine and his wife Joycelyn, this local Putnam getaway is becoming more popular as the word gets out! The Trails End is just a short ride down the trail on HWY 20 at 163 Willis Road in Hollister Florida



Evenings around the campfire can also be a time to wind down and to share stories of the day or memories from the past.

The cabins custom built in a real cowboy manor from yesteryear. Choose from various styles including the John Wayne, Doc Holiday and even the Wyatt Earp Cabins. Cowboys and cowgirls will enjoy the “town bath house” to freshen up before going to the Gathering Place. A great place for a sit and visit, a ho-down, picnic, family reunion, birthday party or

Boasting over 40 acres with a laid back atmosphere and chance for folks to just enjoy the peace and quiet, ride and feed horses, see wildlife including cattle, wild geese, deer and even enjoy a paddleboat ride on the fishing pond. While they do have a swimming pool, TV and free wi-fi for those with the need for technology, the days and nights are quiet and deliver beautiful sun ups and sun downs.

event you might dream up. There is a covered pavilion for a many of activities.

The boarding house in right on main street too, a place you can rent for a few days or a week if you like. This is a three-bedroom, two bath home. Wedding couples and brides have used this when planning their wedding party here in western style.

If its horseback riding you desire, then this might be the perfect place. “We’ll get you and your family on the horses and help you learn the ropes in the safest way we can”, said Keith Valentine. Once everyone feels comfortable with the horses, we can begin our journey and explore the great Florida outdoors and all the trail riding you can find.

The focus here is relaxing and having some fun the old-fashioned way. Making lasting memories with family or friends is what you’ll do in this beautiful little western town. For more information on the Old Western Town go to www.trailsendoutdoors.com or call the office at 386-325-3008

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**PALATKA HISTORIC ROOTS
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Ravine Gardens State Park is a 59-acre Florida State Park in Palatka. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The park was constructed by the Works Progress Administration, with cypress buildings, rock gardens and fieldstone terraces. Near the park entrance is The Court of States and a 64-foot obelisk dedicated to Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Activities include viewing the thousands of plants and shrubs, picnicking, jogging, hiking and biking. Amenities include interpretive exhibits, picnic areas, gardens, hiking trails, a 1.8-mile paved perimeter loop road, and a parcours trail. Visitors can rent a large covered pavilion, auditorium and meeting rooms.

Ravine Gardens State Park is one of the nine New Deal-era state parks in Florida. The park has two ravines up to 120 feet deep with steep banks at 45-degree angles.

Unlike common gullies, trenches or sinkholes caused by temporary flooding, the steephead ravines are a permanent feature with a spring-fed creek that never dries up, called Whitewater Branch. The underground water bubbling up cuts into the bank and carries the sand and soil downstream to the St. Johns River.

Over thousands of years, the ravines have widened and deepened to what you see today.

In 1933, the ravines were transformed into a dramatic garden by the federal Works Progress Administration. Some of the original landscaping still exists as formal gardens and a unique system of trails.

Numerous picnic sites, equipped with tables and grills, are available to visitors. The Roy E. Campbell Civic Center complex features a large covered pavilion, auditorium and meeting rooms that are available for rent. Contact the park office at 386-329-3721 to obtain a quote on facility rentals and outdoor events.

The garden's peak flowering period is azalea season, January to March.

The hundreds of remaining azaleas have a "rolling bloom" and top out with about 50% to 60% of the plants blooming simultaneously. A recent survey documented 18 different types of azaleas. The season is variable based on weather conditions.



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Monday, Wednesday & Friday route runs to 5:15 pm

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Azalea Plaza | 7:15 | 8:15 | 9:15 | 10:15 | 11:15 |
| M-W-F | 12:15 | 1:15 | 2:15 | 3:15 | 4:15 |
| Barry Manor | 7:19 | 8:19 | 9:19 | 10:19 | 11:19 |
| M-W-F | 12:19 | 1:19 | 2:19 | 3:19 | 4:19 |
| Westover Manor | 7:20 | 8:20 | 9:20 | 10:20 | 11:20 |
| M-W-F | 12:20 | 1:20 | 2:20 | 3:20 | 4:20 |
| Lucky Way | 7:23 | 8:23 | 9:23 | 10:23 | 11:23 |
| M-W-F | 12:23 | 1:23 | 2:23 | 3:23 | 4:23 |
| Azalea Health | 7:26 | 8:26 | 9:26 | 10:26 | 11:26 |
| M-W-F | 12:26 | 1:26 | 2:26 | 3:26 | 4:26 |
| City Dock | 7:28 | 8:28 | 9:28 | 10:28 | 11:28 |
| M-W-F | 12:28 | 1:28 | 2:28 | 3:28 | 4:28 |
| Courthouse | 7:30 | 8:30 | 9:30 | 10:30 | 11:30 |
| M-W-F | 12:30 | 1:30 | 2:30 | 3:30 | 4:30 |
| Dairy Queen | 7:31 | 8:31 | 9:31 | 10:31 | 11:31 |
| M-W-F | 12:31 | 1:31 | 2:31 | 3:31 | 4:31 |
| Dollar General | 7:33 | 8:33 | 9:33 | 10:33 | 11:33 |
| M-W-F | 12:33 | 1:33 | 2:33 | 3:33 | 4:33 |
| Family Market | 7:36 | 8:36 | 9:36 | 10:36 | 11:36 |
| M-W-F | 12:36 | 1:36 | 2:36 | 3:36 | 4:36 |
| Housing Authority | 7:37 | 8:37 | 9:37 | 10:37 | 11:37 |
| M-W-F | 12:37 | 1:37 | 2:37 | 3:37 | 4:37 |

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Washington & 15th | 7:38 | 8:38 | 9:38 | 10:38 | 11:38 |
| M-W-F | 12:38 | 1:38 | 2:38 | 3:38 | 4:38 |
| Napoleon & 17th | 7:39 | 8:39 | 9:39 | 10:39 | 11:39 |
| M-W-F | 12:39 | 1:39 | 2:39 | 3:39 | 4:39 |
| Washington & 19th | 7:40 | 8:40 | 9:40 | 10:40 | 11:40 |
| M-W-F | 12:40 | 1:40 | 2:40 | 3:40 | 4:40 |
| James A Long Apts | 7:41 | 8:41 | 9:41 | 10:41 | 11:41 |
| M-W-F | 12:41 | 1:41 | 2:41 | 3:41 | 4:41 |
| Middleton Shop | 7:44 | 8:44 | 9:44 | 10:44 | 11:44 |
| M-W-F | 12:44 | 1:44 | 2:44 | 3:44 | 4:44 |
| Lemon Heights | 7:45 | 8:45 | 9:45 | 10:45 | 11:45 |
| M-W-F | 12:45 | 1:45 | 2:45 | 3:45 | 4:45 |
| Publix | 7:48 | 8:48 | 9:48 | 10:48 | 11:48 |
| M-W-F | 12:48 | 1:48 | 2:48 | 3:48 | 4:48 |
| Big Lots | 7:51 | 8:51 | 9:51 | 10:51 | 11:51 |
| M-W-F | 12:51 | 1:51 | 2:51 | 3:51 | 4:51 |
| Palatka Mall | 7:53 | 8:53 | 9:53 | 10:53 | 11:53 |
| M-W-F | 12:53 | 1:53 | 2:53 | 3:53 | 4:53 |
| Ragsdale Apts | 7:55 | 8:55 | 9:55 | 10:55 | 11:55 |
| M-W-F | 12:55 | 1:55 | 2:55 | 3:55 | 4:55 |
| St Johns College | 7:56 | 8:56 | 9:56 | 10:56 | 11:56 |
| M-W-F | 12:56 | 1:56 | 2:56 | 3:56 | 4:56 |
| Holly Ridge | 7:57 | 8:57 | 9:57 | 10:57 | 11:57 |
| M-W-F | 12:57 | 1:57 | 2:57 | 3:57 | 4:57 |
| Putnam Med | 7:59 | 8:59 | 9:59 | 10:59 | 11:59 |
| M-W-F | 12:59 | 1:59 | 2:59 | 3:59 | 4:59 |
| Wal-Mart | 8:10 | 9:10 | 10:10 | 11:10 | 12:10 |
| M-W-F | 1:10 | 2:10 | 3:10 | 4:10 | 5:10 |
| Azalea Plaza | 8:15 | 9:15 | 10:15 | 11:15 | 12:15 |
| M-W-F | 1:15 | 2:15 | 3:15 | 4:15 | 5:15 |

Call for pickups at the Putnam Health Dept, Dept of Children & Families (DCF), Winn-Dixie, Save-A-Lot and Palatka Train Station - 386-325-9999.

Orange Park Commuter Route

Monday - Friday, excluding holidays

| AM | PM |
|---|---|
| Palatka Train Station 5:25 220 North 11 th St, Palatka | Palatka Train Station 4:20 220 North 11 th St, Palatka |
| Green Cove Springs 5:55 Cove Plaza 1415 S Orange Ave | SJRWMD 4:35 St Johns River Water Mgmt |
| Orange Park Medical 6:25 In front of Sonny's @ Bus-stop | Green Cove Springs 5:05 Cove Plaza 1415 S Orange Ave |
| Orange Park Mall 6:32 Connect with JTA at Sears | Wal-Mart 5:20 1505 CR 220, Fleming Island |
| Island View Church 6:48 900 Park Ave, Orange Park | Island View Church 5:33 900 Park Ave, Orange Park |
| Wal-Mart 7:00 1505 CR 220, Fleming Island | Orange Park Mall 5:40 Connect with JTA at Sears |
| Green Cove Springs 7:20 Cove Plaza 1415 S Orange Ave | Orange Park Medical 5:53 In front of Sonny's @ Bus-stop |
| SJRWMD 7:50 St Johns River Water Mgmt | Green Cove Springs 6:22 Cove Plaza 1415 S Orange Ave |
| Palatka Train Station 8:05 | Palatka Train Station 6:55 |



Greetings from the Seminole Combined Cycle Facility



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Georgia-Pacific's Palatka Team Playing **BIG ROLE** in New Sustainable Packaging



Palatka's Kraft Paper Machine 1 crew are part of the team making paper for Amazon's new recyclable mailers. From Left to Right, William Parrish, Justin Boyd, Samad Green, Cedric Wright, Tim Wilkinson.

Georgia-Pacific's Palatka Mill will be a key part of the company's efforts to produce a new, recyclable padded mailer.

Earlier this year, GP announced an agreement with Amazon to produce the mailers at a new facility in Arizona. The new product reduces waste, saves fuel and offers the same recyclability as Amazon's iconic box, without taking up nearly as much space in a truck or a recycling bin.

Palatka's Kraft production team will make 100 percent

of the paper used in the new mailer.

"Our team at Palatka is excited to be part of an innovative new product that will help meet a consumer demand for effective packaging that is also sustainable," noted Palatka Kraft Business Leader Dallas Ellison.

The innovative mailer combines a unique expansive material, which contains no polystyrene, between layers of kraft paper made here at Palatka.

While Amazon is the flagship customer for the new mailer, GP's packaging team plans to offer the innovative product to a range of customers seeking sustainable envelope solutions.

"This is a win-win for GP, our Palatka team and community, and consumers," Ellison noted. "It is another example of how our team works together to meet evolving customer needs and expectations."

GP's Palatka mill employees about 1,000 team mem-

bers. It began operation in 1947 and now operates six paper machines and converting systems that produce kraft paper, bath tissue and paper towels that supply the company's global market.





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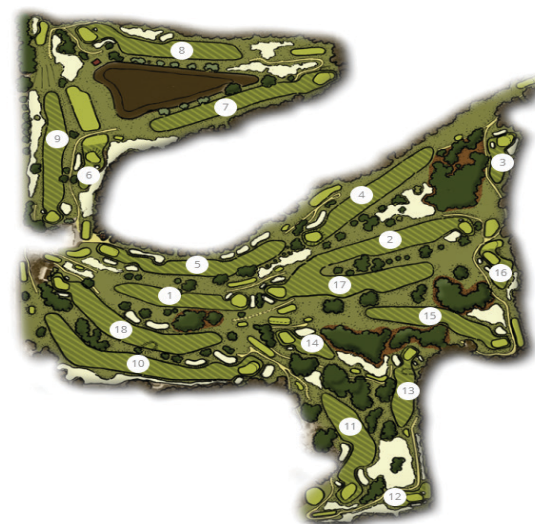
In our interconnected world, sustainability is everybody's business. By following good forestry, manufacturing and distribution practices today, we help to ensure a healthier tomorrow.

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PALATKA GOLF CLUB STILL OFFERING A 5,862-YARD WALK INTO TOWN'S HISTORY



Course opened in 1925 and remains a hub for Palatka's growth

There are some who insist Babe Ruth often hit errant shots into the sandy ridges and mossy oaks at the Palatka Golf Club when he spent winter months in town.

There's no argument golf legends like Walter Hagen, Dan Sikes, Tommy Bolt, Mickey Wright, Steve Elkington, Fuzzy Zoeller, Tom Lehman, John Daly, Tommy Aaron, David Toms, Bob Murphy and Greg Norman twiddled around the 5,862-yard layout that's carved around the rolling hills at Ravine Gardens State Park.

Designed by Donald Ross in 1925, the Palatka Golf Club offers an authentic and clutter-free round of golf. There are no sea walls, island greens, 250-yard par-3s, expansive greens or other aesthetic gimmicks common to modern-day courses. Palatka's charm is its resistance to change. It's traditional, enjoyable and affordable, and it requires a pinpoint short game and a hot putter to score, not a 300-yard drive. The course has been home to

the Senior Azalea Amateur and the Azalea Amateur since 1958. Former winners include Aaron and Sikes in 1960-61 and University of Florida All-American and 21-time PGA Tour winner Murphy in 1965 and '66.

Palatka Golf Club is managed by Bobby Weed Golf Design. Weed, a protégé of Pete Dye, specializes in design and repurposing courses. Palatka is home to more than 40 fund-raising golf tournaments that supports high school and college projects, first responders, health, churches and children's services. Ross designed several courses in

Northeast Florida during the 1920s and '30s. Weed, who designed Slammer & Squire at nearby World Golf Village in St. Augustine and the Fleming Island Golf Club, was tasked with revitalizing Palatka to keep it from becoming a forgotten plot of twisted weeds and indifference.

"I sat around and watched the Ponce de Leon [in St. Augustine] close without doing anything about it," Weed told Florida Golf Magazine. "Maybe I could have done something about that if I had gotten involved. I wasn't going to let it happen again."

Weed formed a coalition of business and community leaders to convince the course's owner, the City of Palatka, to allow him to manage the property.

Weed's design-partner Chris Monti said, "I don't know if the course was doomed to close or not, but it certainly had suffered sufficient losses to where the city was looking for alternatives. So, they issued a request for proposals from people to lease the golf course. We responded with a proposal as did several other companies, but no one wanted to lease the golf course.





All of the proposals dealt with fee for service management.”

Once on the brink of closure, Palatka golf now is an example of what Weed believes will be a rebirth of public golf in the United States.

Weed transformed the 90-acre tract into one of the true gems in Palatka. It still has its historic charm, but with some modern polish.

Fairways were re-seeded with a more-robust strain of Bermuda grass and bunkers were re-shaped and filled with fluffy, white sand. The greens, however, still are reminiscent of the 1920s – small and tricky.

And playable for all ages and skill levels.

The Palatka Golf Club is located at 1715 Moseley Ave. in Palatka. For more information, visit palatkaclub.com or call (386) 329-0141.

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Business dropping through the roof at Skydive Palatka

By Don Coble

Rochelle Cooper hugged her new husband, and before he could pull away, she reached back for a second embrace. Moments later, she was airborne with hopes of plummeting safely back to earth 20 minutes later.

For Rochelle and husband Ethan, a recent skydive at Skydive Palatka was the second major plunge they've made in a six-day stretch.

"We just got married [in Nashville] and we decided we wanted to skydive and ride in a helicopter," Ethan said after Rochelle's successful tandem jump and ahead of his honeymoon freefall.

Business is dropping at Skydive Palatka – and that's a good thing.

Adrenaline junkies, thrill seekers and those trying to purge fear from their lives keep the local business jumping – literally – at Lt. Kay Larkin Field. Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, skydivers of all level skills seem eager to climb to 10,500 feet and jump.

Jump zones aren't common. They need to be located close enough to a populated area, but not close to a major airport. Popular zones in the area include Palatka, Keystone Heights, St. Augustine and Zephyrhills.

Skydive Palatka owner Art Shaffer is a veteran of more than 14,000 jumps. Shaffer traveled to Normandy, France, a year ago to make one of the most-memorable jumps of his life. He was joined 97-year-old U.S. Army veteran Tom Rice in a tandem jump at the famed battleground – 75 years after Rice's Screaming Eagles squadron jumped into battle during the start of the D-Day invasion.

Shaffer's business continues to create bucket-list moments.

For Thomas Harvey, a pilot from Jacksonville

who ferries jumpers into the clouds for Skydive Palatka, that meant celebrating his 71st birthday with a freefall dive. Others, like the Coopers, simply wanted the adventure of a lifetime.

On a typical Saturday, Skydive Palatka will send up 11 loads of jumpers – with four to a plane, manager Nikki Manifest said.

"Business is picking back up," Manifest said. "It got a little slow there [with the coronavirus], but it's getting back to normal. That's the best part."

First-time jumpers simply need to bring their nerve and their identification to prove they are at least 18. They are required to watch two videos and sign paperwork for a tandem jump. Once payment is received and a final briefing is given, jumpers climb into their parachutes and climb aboard one of two airplanes. The entire process takes about 15 minutes, Manifest said.

Fees are based on the number of jumpers in a load. Skydivers also can buy a personal and up-close video and photos of their experience – all at nearly two miles off the ground and at 120 mph.

Skydivers also can earn their certifications at Skydive Palatka. Classes last about seven hours on the ground and requires seven jumps. First solo jumps are offered on the first and third weekend of each month.

Each jump in the Accelerated Free Fall progression adds on new freefall tasks and parachuting knowledge. According to the company's website, after successful completion of as few as seven jumps in the AFF progression, skydivers will be cleared to jump on their own and be well on the way to a USPA A-license.

For more information, visit skydivepalatka.com or call (386) 328-0606.



Palatka Water Works re-emerges as the focal point of downtown Palatka

From 1886 to 1986 the Palatka Water Works could provide up to one million gallons of water a day to the City of Palatka for local use and fire protection. When it was closed, the building and grounds fell into disrepair.

In 1999, a grant was acquired to repair the roof and re-point the outside brickwork. With additional donations from many area businesses, organizations, and individuals, the first phase of restoration was accomplished

in 2002. Since then, the interior of the building has been re-pointed, an amphitheater and restrooms constructed, an on-site nature trail developed, a large “water wall” exhibit installed inside, and a community organic garden has been established and planted. More is being planned for the future.

In 1997 a diverse group of volunteers, the Water Works Committee, started obtaining grants and donations. These funds and materials made it possible to survey the archaeology, restore the building, improve drainage, landscape the grounds, re-roof the “garden shed,” cap abandoned wells, and build sidewalks and restrooms.

The balance of the structures at the Water Works appears to date to the 1930s to post-World War II period of operations.

An unroofed concrete block structure was located at the northeast corner of the clear well. This structure, which had a single entry on the north side, contained electric transformers for the Water Works facility.

A small concrete brick building is lo-

cated on the north side of the street opposite the clear well. The building has an end gable roof with composite shingles, and a double door on the east gable end. There are small windows on the north and south sides. This was apparently a general-purpose building used for tools, storage and maintenance.

The Water Works Environmental

mental Education Center is owned by the City of Palatka. The Water Works Committee and Volunteers build trails, conduct tours, host field trips and meet regularly to review goals and progress.

The WVEEC is open to the public every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and the first Sunday afternoon of each month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. with volunteers from the Water Works Advisory Group available at the WW Building to answer questions and give guided tours of the facility.

The WVEEC supports the Putnam County and William Bartram trails network by acting as a trail hub, providing access to WW nature trails, identifying Bartram plants through appropriate signage, and displaying exhibits that describe William Bartram’s contribution to natural history exploration of the St. Johns River area.

The WVEEC provides a tranquil place for reflection, a site for community activities, and a platform for experiential learning through informative exhibits, walking trails, natural habitat demonstration areas, special projects, and community interactions.

The WVEEC promotes the conservation of clean freshwater at home, in the workplace, and as part of the local community by sharing knowledge about the historic Water Works facility, gardening

practices derived from organic gardening, permaculture,

edible landscape concepts, and the use of native plants as alternatives to water and chemical dependent exotic lawn grasses and horticulture plants. Habitat restorations on the property

provide opportunities to

demonstrate unique adaptations of plants and animals to water conservation and other physical and biological constraints presented by these unique North Florida habitats. The wetlands and upland natural habitats allow linkages to the St. Johns River and opportunities for interactions with the St. Johns River Center in Downtown Palatka.

There are five community gardens in the Palatka area with the Water Works Community Organic Garden as the only one dedicated to organic methods. For more information about participating in the organic community garden, you may contact Shann Purinton at (386) 325-9585.



BRONSON-MULHOLLAND HOUSE STILL A TESTAMENT TO PALATKA'S RICH HISTORY

Built in 1854, the Bronson-Mulholland House stands as a testament to the City's rich history. It is a stunningly furnished antebellum home sitting on 2-plus acres of greenspace overhung with live oaks and magnolias. Owned by the City of Palatka, it is available for free, guided tours as well as a rental venue for weddings and other events.

The House is fully furnished with period antiques, and the surrounding grounds have recently been restored to their historic splendor – expansive lawns and charming gardens with brick paths.

The first floor of the Bronson-Mulholland House is ADA accessible via a ramp on the left side of the building.

There are also wheelchair accessible public restrooms and a modern kitchen for use by caterers.

The house is open every Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and the first Sunday of the month from 1-4 p.m.

It can also be toured by appointment.

All tours outside of Saturday hours must be scheduled through the City via email at least 72 hours prior to the desired time and date.

To schedule a tour or to inquire about an event rental please email Winston Fletcher at wfletcher@palatka-fl.gov.

Reservations are on a first come, first served basis. Groups of eight or more people require a \$4 donation a person.

The Bronson-Mulholland House is located at 100 Madison St.



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Dr. Steve Chapman is originally from Mayfield, Kentucky. After graduating high school, Dr. Chapman attended Murray State University. Dr. Chapman continued his education at the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry. He graduated with a D.M.D. in 1975. He then served in the United States Navy for two years as a Naval Dental Officer before pursuing specialty training in orthodontics. He completed his specialty program at the University of Florida in 1979. Dr. Chapman was the first dentist to complete the orthodontic residency program at the University of Florida.



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St. Johns River State College to forge ahead with on-campus classes



COVID-19 won't get in the way of education at St. Johns River State College.

The college has welcomed students back to campus for face-to-face instruction at all three campuses, including the main campus at 5001 St. Johns Ave. in Palatka.

"We are open, and more importantly, we're prepared to ensure the students will feel safe, secure and at home," said President Joe. H. Pickens said.

The decision to add more on-campus instruction comes many classes moved online and after much deliberation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and understanding the students' need for more course options.

"Moving forward with on-campus classes will give students better access to classes that fit their preferred style of learning. Face-to-face in-

struction provides the enrichment and learning environment many have missed since the College transitioned to online classes in April," Pickens said. "It will also help students who struggle with computer and internet access, as well as those who are experiencing social isolation."

Workforce and teacher education programs that rely heavily on field experiences and hands-on practicums will continue with on-campus instruction. Resources such as tutoring, counseling, financial aid, and the library will also be available on campus as well as online. The baseball

and softball teams are also expected to return to the field for home games.

Pickens said adjusting to a new normal means implementing proper social distancing and smaller class sizes, as well as a reduced audience capacity for athletics and cultural art events. Preparations to welcome students on campus continue with the college following state and federal guidelines to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and employees. Those measures include enhanced cleaning, accessible hand sanitizer stations, and protective barriers. Face masks will also be required on campus.

"This is also the ideal time to encourage students to not be derailed by the pandemic, and to continue working toward their academic and career goals. We have dedicated faculty and staff who are here to assist students through these challenging times. Now is not the time for postponement, as the College has announced a new grant created to connect qualified residents with career and technical education and support" Pickens said.

For students and residents who are unemployed, underemployed or furloughed due to COVID-19, opportunities include the recently announced Rapid Credentialing grant program. The program aims to assist participants in getting to work faster, affordably and with in-demand credentials.

For students who wish to remain online, the spring remote classes will include traditional online, hybrid and "live online." The "live online" classes were introduced during the fall and allows students to interact in real time with professors and classmates. Hybrid courses combine face-to-face instruction with online instruction. Traditional online classes allow students to be flexible with the timing of your participation.

Students are encouraged to visit the College web site at www.SJRstate.edu for details and to apply and register for classes.



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