

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## In defense of the Faith docents

**To the Editor:**

To put it mildly, I take great umbrage at the explanation provided by the JIA to correct the "absence of programming" for visitors of Faith Chapel.

While I have not met Bruce Piatek, I understand from those who have, he is "nice Guy," likable, forthright and well spoken. I'm certain this is true.

Upon reading the Letter to the Editor

he submitted to *Jekyll's Golden Islander*, one is to conclude that visitors will now, "learn about the charming chapel, while delighting in the architectural whimsy of its animal carvings, terra cotta gargoyles, and Tiffany and Armstrong stained glass windows."

Apparently previously docents were discussing the weather and other innocuous topics, while ignoring Faith

Chapel.

Further it is explained that the "Historic Faith Chapel Experience" will be guided by a "professionally trained staff" which, "will provide a consistent and professional interpretation of the building, its artwork and its place in the Jekyll Island Club's history."

It may be noted that volunteer docents in the past were almost all college graduates, some with advanced degrees, even PhD's. Many, retired school teachers (who know more about communicating and listening), business professionals, published authors, retired newspaper executives.

All are residents with a passion to share our Island with those who want to listen and learn. We all spoke from the same book and wove the same story consistently and from the heart. Only a tape recording can guarantee consistency.

Yes, we all take umbrage, give us our due, do what you are determined to do but do not denigrate the value of what we do. We are volunteers, our payment is satisfaction in job well done, proffered gratuities are deferred to the donation box. We did not look forward to a W-2.

**Marge & Frank Mirasola,**  
Retired docents  
Jekyll Island Resident

## Little to be gained and much to be lost

**To the Editor:**

At its Jan. 19 board meeting, the JIA announced that, beginning Feb. 1, there will be two "free" hours for prayer and contemplation at Faith Chapel, from 8:00-10:00 a.m., and a \$5 per person entry fee for the remainder of the business day. At first glance, this seems to be a reasonable decision since the original plan did not include the "early bird special" for the spiritually-minded. But the JIA's insistence on collecting a \$5 fee from visitors for the bulk of the day is still puzzling.

An article in *Jekyll's Golden Islander* about the JIA meeting stated that "critics" were caught "off guard" by the modified proposal. While the revised plan may have come as a surprise, I doubt if it softened the critics' objection to fee-based entry for Faith Chapel. The reference to "critics" reminds us that in recent years, there has been a tense, almost adversarial relationship between the island's governing board and many members of the public. Isn't Jekyll Island a state

park, owned by the citizens of Georgia? Isn't a seat on the Jekyll Island Authority Board a public service role? The recent pattern seems to be arbitrary board decisions, followed by PR intended to convince the public that these are the right decisions.

Let's be reasonable. There is little to be gained and much to be lost by collecting a \$5 entry fee for guided tours of Faith Chapel, which, by the JIA's own admission, is not expected to generate much revenue. The JIA is generous when it comes to subsidizing luxury hotel developments and bankrolling university studies of the island's deer population. Yet this same board is stingy when it comes to the island's tiny historic chapel. These actions reflect poorly on the JIA's priorities, and create a negative impression for Jekyll's visitors who have just paid a \$6 fee for the privilege of enjoying the island.

Longtime Jekyll visitors are grateful for the work of the chapel's volunteer docents, who have faithfully served for three decades. They were more than just babysitters for a building. These people loved Faith Chapel, and spent many hours researching and sharing its unique story. After all these years of love and labor, was a word of thanks offered to these folks at the board meeting?

If the Jekyll Island Authority spent as much time listening to Jekyll's visitors as it spends trying to justify unpopular decisions, the island would not look quite the same as it does today. Jekyll's friends would still see the state park they learned to love for its charm and simplicity. The interests of the "plain people of Georgia," for whose benefit the state park was founded sixty-five years ago, would still shape JIA policy, Faith Chapel included.

**Greg Lowery**  
Cadwell, Ga.

## Saddened by changes

**To the Editor:**

I recently read with sadness about the changes in admission policy at Faith Chapel on Jekyll Island. I have been an annual visitor to Jekyll Island for over 20 years, and I have visited Faith Chapel frequently. I have always had some time on the island when I have not been entertaining guests who come for short periods of time, and a visit to the chapel always put me in touch with an island resident who was warm, welcoming, and interested in talking about the chapel and often about faith.

As a pastor, I enjoyed the opportunity to enter the chapel for a few minutes of peaceful meditation. My visits to Jekyll Island are always spiritually renewing, in part because of the peaceful

beauty of the island in general, and because of vigorous morning walks on the beach and quiet afternoon walks through the village, which always include a dessert at the Club Café and usually a few minutes in the chapel. I have been in the chapel so often that I do not need, or want, a docent led tour. It was the quiet, welcoming charm of place and siter that I found meaningful; that nourishment of soul feels swallowed up by the plan for more intellectually based (and economically driven) tours.

So much of Jekyll is changing, and I sometimes wonder if there is an unspoken agenda to create a "Millionaire's island."

**Rev. Susan L. DeHoff, PhD**  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

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Golden Isles Tide Chart						
- Times are for St. Simons Sound Bar -						
St. Simons Pier & Jekyll Pier - Add 25 Minutes		Two Way Marina - Add 2 Hours				
St. Simons Marina - Add 50 Minutes		Sea Island Marina - Add 40 Minutes				
Brunswick Dock Hwy 17 - Add 1 Hour 20 Minutes		St. Marys Entrance - Add 15 Minutes				
Hampton River Club Marina - Add 35 Minutes		Crooked River State Park - Add 1 Hour 23 Minutes				
Pine Harbor Marina - Add 1 Hour 35 Minutes		Sapelo Island - Add 00 Minutes				
FEBRUARY 2016						
DAY	HIGH TIDE				LOW TIDE	
	TIME	FEET	TIME	FEET	TIME	TIME
11	10:01am	7.4	10:21pm	7.3	3:57am	4:27pm
12	10:53am	7.1	11:15pm	7.1	4:47am	5:15pm
13	11:47am	6.7	-	-	5:41am	6:08pm
14	12:15am	7.0	12:47pm-	6.5	6:38am	7:04pm
15	1:15am	6.8	1:47pm	6.2	7:43am	8:06pm
16	2:16am	6.7	2:49pm	6.0	8:53am	9:12pm
17	3:19am	6.7	3:51pm	6.0	9:59am	10:15pm
18	4:21am	6.7	4:53pm	6.1	10:59am	11:13pm
19	5:20am	6.8	5:50pm	6.2	11:54am	-
20	6:13am	6.9	6:40pm	6.4	12:07am	12:42pm
21	7:00am	7.0	7:25pm	6.6	12:55am	1:27pm
22	7:42am	7.0	8:05pm	6.7	1:41am	2:08pm
23	8:21am	6.9	8:44pm	6.7	2:23am	2:45pm
24	8:58am	6.8	9:21pm	6.6	3:03am	3:20pm
25	9:35am	6.6	9:58pm	6.4	3:40am	3:53pm