

[Narrator] You've tuned in to another
edition of The Breakroom, a

weekly conversation about how
the City of Saint Augustine

works from those who do the
work every day. Hosted by the

City of Saint Augustine's
communications director Melissa

Wissel. The Breakroom offers a
closer look at the different

city departments and provides
updates on current and upcoming

projects and events and now
your host Melissa Wissel.

[Melissa] Welcome to The Breakroom.
Thanks for tuning in. We're

back in the break room this
week to follow up with the

conversation that we are had
with miss Kay Burtin. She is

one of the 23 recipients of the
Order of La Florida Award, the

Order of La Florida. Criteria
to be awarded states that an

individual over a long period
of time has unselfishly devoted

time and talent to the welfare
and betterment of Saint

Augustine Citizens and Heritage
who has exemplified the finest

qualities of citizenship and
has contributed extraordinary

services to the community. Kay
Burtin has been involved with

the Saint Augustine Art
Association since the late

nineteen 80s, we had a
conversation and I wanted to

follow back up. So, Kay,

welcome back to the break room.

[Kay] It's a pleasure to return. [Melissa] I do
want to recap for the folks who

might have missed the first
interview. So, if the listeners

who know this would indulge us,
I do want to talk about your

beginnings with the Art
Association. Tell us about that

history if you will back when
you got started with the Art

Association. [Kay] Well, as I had
mentioned, as a child I used to

come to all of the affairs that
the Art Association did. And

that was long before we ever
had a building. The building

was built in 1953. And at that
time I lived in Pennsylvania.

So I I was not part of it. When
I came back when my husband and

I decided to return to Saint
Augustine. It was 1972. And the first stop
we made was to visit the

gallery. And he Walked in and
with difficulty because he was

a paraplegic but he walked in
and he looked around. He talked

to the president who was
outsweeping the porch and he

said, okay, we're going to live
here. This is it. We have a

good art association. So, that
was the beginning of my re

association. [Melissa] He was he was an
artist. [Kay] Oh, yes. Yeah. My first

husband was a very fine artist,
portrait artist and he taught

drawing an anatomy at the what

was then called the Museum

College of Art in Philadelphia.

It's changed his name so many

times. I don't know what it's

called now but anyway, that was

his job until he had his

accident and became a

paraplegic but at any rate, he

and Doctor Gibson and Enzo

Torcoletti started the Monday

evening sketch group at the Art

Association almost in the

beginning, almost as as we got

here and there was no teaching.

It was just that they had a

live model who would change

positions every five or 10

minutes and they just everybody

would be in there just

sketching as fast as their
little hands would go. No talk,

no chatter, just work, hard
work and this became an

institution and it is still,
I'm very proud to say, still

going on and it's a big drawing
card. It's one of the best ways

for an artist to keep sharp.

[Melissa] Wow. And Enzo Torcoletti I'll

just put out there. I believe
Enzo Torcoletti if I'm not

mistaken designed the Lions on
our our Adelaide Sanchez Award.

[Kay] Well. [Melissa] Those Lions. Is that
correct? [Kay] Enzo is a world class

sculptor. Besides being a
wonderful friend. But as I say

we've known Enzo since nineteen
seventy-two and he has taught

many many many wonderful
students at Flagler. [Melissa] What a

wonderful thing though to be
able to here today and say that

that sketching program
continues. [Kay] Yes. [Melissa] To live on.

That's wonderful. [Kay] Absolutely.
[Melissa] And the building itself. Let's

go back and talk a little bit
about the building. You were

you have been very instrumental
to get that building rehabbed

and also to work with Les
Thomas who is also one of our

local architects. [Kay] Yes. [Melissa] Uh to
improve and expand that

building. Tell us a little bit
about that. [Kay] Well actually when

I became president in 1979 of

the Art Association Enzo was

the retiring president not Enzo

excuse me Les Thomas and Les

Thomas wanted to be sure that

the Art Association would

continue so I was on the board

he was on the board and we had

several as a matter of fact

ultimately we had Lynn Weeks on

the board and it it was just a

a very difficult struggle

because we had almost no

members and we Had to fix the

roof so it didn't leak and then

we had to encourage people to

bring their artwork and hang

it. And people were really

afraid in the beginning. But

gradually we put out a

newsletter and people began to
come and it became a wonderful

place to meet and greet. [Melissa] And
then you had your sister. [Kay] Yes.

[Melissa] And brother-in-law helped and
your mother [Kay] my sister and

brother-in-law Faith and Joseph
Tiberio gave the money build

the two wings on the building
which had been part of the

original design. And Len Weeks
built the wings. And then Faith

and Ty dedicated one wing to my
mother Margarita Phillips. And

the South Wing was then named
for them. The Faith and Joseph

Tiberia wing. So we now have an
additional wonderful exhibit

space. And it also gives us
enough room so that we can have

classes and workshops and it
has just been a different whole

different association since we
added the wings. [Melissa] It's a it's a

very very pretty building. The
the chamber has some of their

monthly meetings there and
we've we've had the they've

invited some of our city
officials sometimes to come and

speak in there and it's a
beautiful building and the

artwork is always on display.

[Kay] And we are very very proud that

every year we have new artists
who come to the area and are

drawn by the fact that we have
an art association and they

have a place to exhibit their

work. [Melissa] Are you involved with the

plane the plain air as well? Is
that part of the art

association programming? [Kay] Oh
absolutely. Uh. [Melissa] Now we see

people sitting around city hall
every now and again. I'm like

oh must be plain air time. [Kay] It
is Plan Air Time. Plan Air

usually happens in May and it's
the way our art association

began. The original artists who
came were people who just sat

outside on a chair and painted
and that everybody kind of went

indoors after that. It was it
was during the time between the

founding in 1924 and
the time we had the gallery. It

was hit or miss. They would
exhibit artwork whenever they

could find a place where they
could hang it and pay only 50

cents rent. [Melissa] Really? That's how
[Kay] yes. [Melissa] Wow. [Kay] 50 Cents would would

rent you a room for a week and
the Lightner Museum provided

rooms from time to time for us
to exhibit artwork. It's it's

been a a growth effort in the
city but the city has always

attracted artists. [Melissa] And we have
you to thank for keeping all of

this alive. [Kay] Well I I did keep
the building going. I will say

that. Yeah yes thank you. [Melissa] If
you are just now tuning in

you're listening to The Break
Room. I'm Melissa Wissel

communications director for the
city and I have the honor this

week again of sharing the
studio with Kay Burtin. She is

one of our two recipients of
the Order of Law Florida Award

this year and before we go, I
also wanted to talk about

because we didn't get to talk
about this the last time. You

were also a member of another
organization. You were we

talked about Emma. So, you'll
have to go back and listen to

the previous interview if you
want to hear about the starting

of Emma but I want to talk
about the Pilot Club because I

know that's something else that

is near and dear to your heart

as well as the Pilot Club and I
will confess when you and I

first started talking about I
said what did I say? Uh when

did you learn how to fly? You
said oh dear it is not a flying

club. So I'll be the first to
admit it's not a flying club.

It's not the pilot's club. It
is the pilot club. Yes. So

please tell us about that. [Kay] Well
I'm I'm thrilled to the pilot

club was founded. Also in 1921
the year the women got the

power to vote. And it was an
outgrowth of a women's

movement. They wanted women to
become involved in their

communities. They looked at
Rotary and Kiwanis and they

said oh well we need a club
like that for women. So the

Pilot Club International Pilot
International was founded and

it is an international
organization. We have many

chapters in Japan and quite a
few chapters in Canada and the

Bahamas. Um we're always
looking for ways to expand.

However, the word pilot refers
to a pilot's wheel on a ship.

And the motto is true course
ever. One of the first things

our pilot club did was to
assist in the establishment of

the Blood Bank of Saint Johns
County. We then had a wonderful

member, Nance Wilson, who
established the Welfare Society

in Saint Johns County and built
view and then we established

the call line lifeline so that
people could live in their own

homes and have a way of getting
emergency help by simply

pushing a button and that was
something that we did. We

installed the first switchboard
in the emergency room of old

Flagler Hospital on Marine
Street. [Melissa] Wow, it kind of sounds

like the the beginnings of a
dispatch of a dispatch,

emergency dish batch if I could
say it, dis patch system. [Kay] Well

that's exactly that's exactly

what it was. But eventually the

Lifeline decided to take back
the idea that it could be a

community effort and they just
do it commercially now. So

we're no longer involved in
Lifeline but it was a very

important thing in the late two
thousands. [Melissa] And you're still

active today? [Kay] Yes. As a matter
of fact on Memorial Day

weekend, if you happen to pass
by the Lightner Museum and see

5000 flags, we're the people
that put the flags up to honor

everybody who is a first
responder or who serves or has

served in the military and.

[Melissa] It's a beautiful, it's a

beautiful display. [Kay] And there is
no charge ever for the flags.

[Melissa] And it's not for people who
have died necessarily. Can be

living? [Kay] They're living. [Melissa] Okay.
[Kay] Very definitely living.

Although, I must say, I comb
the obituaries every day to be

sure we don't miss anybody. So,
if somebody passes on, they'll

get a flag too. [Melissa] It's a
beautiful display. The flag is

up on the building but to to
drive by and to see all those

little flags in the in the lawn
and to know that that

represents someone. [Kay] That's
right. Every flag has a little

tag on it with somebody's name
and every year we add a few

more flags. It's it's a
wonderful tradition. [Melissa] It's

beautiful and one last thing
before we go, you also are the

the bell ringing. Tell me about
the bell ringing. We got about

a minute. Tell me about the
bell ringing. [Kay] The 17th of

September is the anniversary of
the signing of the United

States Constitution. And every
year the daughters at the

American Revolution have the
bells in downtown ring

simultaneously at four o'clock
to commemorate that signing.

And I must say I am a
descendant of a signer. Mhm.

[Melissa] All things near and dear to

your heart. You're very

involved. You love the
community that you live in. I I

made the comment to you when we
are walking down here. You're

very involved and you said
what? Gotta stay busy. And you

love the community. [Kay] My my work
that I have done and I don't

consider it work. I consider it
a privilege. But whatever I

have done has done more for me
to keep me happy and well than

it has for the people who
receive the service. [Melissa] Well we're

we're thrilled to have you in
our community and your legacy

will continue as we've heard
all of the things that you're

involved with. So thank you for
coming and spending some time

with us. [Kay] It's my pleasure.

Thank you. [Melissa] If you missed part

of this broadcast and want to
go back and listen from the

beginning, you can find us on
your favorite podcasting app.

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Until next time. Thanks for
tuning in. [Narrator] You've been

listening to The Break Room, a
weekly program addressing

projects and program offered by
the City of Saint Augustine.

Join us each week as the city's
communications director,

Melissa Wissel, has in-depth
conversations with the people

who make our town work to meet
the needs of our community. The

Break Room is produced by
communication specialist for

the City of Saint Augustine,
Cindy Walker. See you at this

time next week for another
edition of The Breakroom.