

[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. I'm Melissa Wissel, Communications Director for the

City of St. Augustine. March is not only Women's History Month

but it's also Archaeology

Month. So, who better to

represent both of those

categories than City of St.

Augustine's very own

archaeologist Doctor Andrea

White. Andrea welcome back.

[Andrea] Thanks Melissa. I always enjoy

getting a chance to chat catch

up and chat. [Melissa] It's our one year

anniversary of the last time. I

feel like. [Andrea] By how time flies.

[Melissa] Um I hate to say it but I this

is literally like the only time

that you and I catch up. [Andrea] It's

sad isn't it? [Melissa] You're busy. I'm

busy. [Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] So in let's see in

like twelve and a half minutes

or less. Ready, set, go. [Andrea] Yeah.

We're going to catch up on the

whole last entire year. [Melissa] Let's
start with Spanish Street. [Andrea] Oh,

everyone loves to talk about
Spanish Street. Yes. Um so,

just for those listeners who
may not be as familiar with how

awesome Saint Augustine is and
how seriously we take historic

preservation, we do have an
archaeological preservation

ordinance in the city that's
one of the oldest in the

country and it really allows us
to do the work that we do, us

being archaeologist, the team
of archaeologists that we have

but Spanish Street because it's
a city project and of course,

it's in downtown where we know
people have been living for a

long time even predating the
street grid the Spanish street

grid we had a chance to review
that project and work with the

engineering department and
other contractors when we got

to go out and do basically
archaeological monitorings what

we did with the street because
[Melissa] and that's digging? [Andrea] it is

digging it is digging it's a
lot of digging but it is also

working with the contractors
that are out there while

they're doing a lot of the
digging they. So [Melissa] you're not

there by yourself? [Andrea] No. [Melissa] which is
what you prefer? [Andrea] Well, I think

it's ideally, we'd like to go

in, do our testing and

investigation before the
contractors start because it's

easier for them, it's easier on
us. We don't have to be like,

whoa, can you stop for just a
minute during your lunch break

and let us hop in this trench?

[Melissa] Too many cooks in the kitchen.

[Andrea] Yeah and it's also just in
terms of scheduling. It's a lot

easier for them to be able to
schedule their work when we're

not there and don't have
unanticipated discoveries but

with street work, a lot of the
times we would have to stop

stop [Melissa] Right. [Andrea] Excuse me. Stop

close the street down to do our

investigation which means the
streets going to be closed for

even longer. [Melissa] Longer. [Andrea] And that
is not fair to residents or

businesses in the area. So. [Melissa] And
Spanish Street was a tough one

because there is it's not a
large it's not largely

populated with residents but it
does have residents. [Andrea] Mm hmm. [Melissa] So

it's not just a matter of
businesses that maybe have

normal hours. [Andrea] Right. [Melissa] People
living their daily lives. [Andrea] Yeah

and there was even night work
that happening. [Melissa] Ugh. [Andrea] Yeah.

Yeah. Which we got to be a part
of too so. [Melissa] And we're I believe

it's finished. [Andrea] I certainly hope
so. That's what I hear. [Melissa] Yeah. [Andrea] I

have not gotten a chance to
take a stroll down the street.

Looking [Melissa] It's beautiful. [Andrea] Ooh
exciting. [Melissa] I it is the brick you

know it's the continuation of
the other part of Spanish

Street. So it's the end that
didn't get the brick work.

[Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] And it's it's really
lovely. So the burning question

what did you find? Did you find
anything? [Andrea] We of course found

lots of things We knew we
would. Um there's sort of a

myth that when you're doing
work in the street, there's

nothing archaeologically that's
going to be there anymore. So

many utility lines have come
through and destroyed whatever

might be there but that is
never the case especially here

in Saint Augustine and also
with the construction work,

plans have to change. A lot of
times you find new surprises or

things that need to be amended
in construction documents and

so in this instance, there
actually had to be not just

work in the street but also
stuff that into what we know is

the Talamato parking lot. So we
not only monitored the

archaeological work in the
street where we found several

early 1700s colonial wells and

brick and not brick, Coquina

Foundations that there were
buildings that extended much

further into the street because
the street grid hasn't always

been there and the street
itself was probably a lot

smaller during colonial times.

[Melissa] So if you're digging up Spanish

Street and you're seeing you're
going into Talamato you

actually have to redirect
something that you're replacing

and then put it back. [Andrea] Right.

Okay. [Melissa] Well and. And not you but

the. [Andrea] Right. So in this instance
there was so many other

utilities within the street. Um
some which were not well

documented. So it was a surprise to everyone. [Melissa] Oh! Look!

[Andrea] Yes. So in order to get what we're all very concerned with

here is flooding right? So part of the street improvements

includes storm water management and so being able to increase

the flow. There was no stormwater lines in that

street. So, stormwater is important and it's also very

important that you have the right slope so that everything

flows away. [Melissa] Yes. [Andrea] So, they had to cut across Caddy Corner

across the parking lot and so that was an area that we know

was occupied by historic properties and buildings and we

knew we were going to find
things. So, we pretty much hand

dug in a very slow and
scientific manner where the new

storm drain was going to go and
so we found evidence of both

colonial occupation starting in
the early seventeen hundreds.

That area was often a area that
there was Spanish soldiers that

were marrying native women that
were living in that area. So we

found evidence of both the
foundations of their houses but

trash pits and a lot of
colonial wells as well. But

also later on in the colonial
period during the British

period the area became known as

the Menorcan Quarter. So when

many Menorcan residents
migrated up to Saint Augustine

from New Symryna and other areas.

That was where they were able

to settle. So, we have found
trash pits and other things

associated with their
occupation as well extending

well into the late late 19th
and to into the earliest 20th

century. [Melissa] Okay, so I have to ask
because I'm going to I'm

going to make you tell our
audience because it was kind of

funny. Um so, one of you,
you've told me in the past that

one of your favorite
discoveries or funny things was

all the straws. [Andrea] Yes. [Melissa] At the deck at Scarlett O'Haras. [Andrea] Yes.

[Melissa] What did you find? [Andrea] So, Part of the archaeology process is not

just documenting what we might think as old things but also

the recent history because eventually that will become old

too and we had a running joke among our staff that you're

never a true urban archaeologist until you have

documented a pair of underpants in your profile wall. [Melissa] Okay. [Andrea] So,

we did have a nice pair of cotton boxers that was sticking

out of our profile. Um we're guessing maybe Circa 1990s or

early 2 thousands. [Melissa] Oh, modern. [Andrea] So, yeah. Um it was in a

plastic disposable bag that we
used today and there was also [Melissa] I

thought it was a pair of like
breaches you know like colonial

breaches [Andrea] oh no no this was very
modern oh and there was also a

pair of rusty scissors with it
so I'm not sure what was going

on there we didn't investigate
further [Melissa] we don't know that we just know what is we don't
speculate [Andrea] right and [Melissa] it just

the facts [Andrea] we felt that we had
documented it well enough and

there was no need for further
investigation yeah [Melissa] well if

you're just now tuning in you
are listening to the break

room. I'm Melissa Wissel and
this week I have Andrea White

in studio. She is the City
Archaeologist. It's Women's

History Month. It's Archaeology
Month and we have a few minutes

left. I'm going to switch gears
a little bit. I know that

you've got a lot of projects
always going on. I do want to

ask you to share with us. You
got a new staff member. [Andrea] Mm hmm.

[Melissa] And I haven't seen or heard a
whole lot about your your

volunteers. I used to see them
out with their sifters and

their shovels and their
trowels. Are you guys still

active? [Andrea] Oh, yeah. We still have
35 wonderful volunteers. We

have a waiting list for
volunteers. Um we have a lot of

folks that are doing field work

but now we've really started

bringing volunteers first into
the lab and the lab has become

immensely popular and I think
it's really a great way to

introduce people to what we're
really finding in the

archaeological record like what
it's going to look like when

it's coming out of the ground.

I think people have these

grandiose ideas of maybe whole
plates or stuff you know that are

I don't know yeah and it's it's
little tiny bits of things but

once we clean them up and look
at them we've really began to

stitch together a better

understanding of our past I

mean we're often finding
straight pens we've been

working on two different black
school sites where we've been

finding pencil ferals which are
the ends of the pencils between

the wood and that what holds
the eraser. [Melissa] Okay. [Andrea] So all sorts

of small things that you just
wouldn't think that much about

or you may be like oh this is
just garbage. But yes it's very

important garbage that tells us
a lot about past human occupation here in

the city. [Melissa] So I'm going to ask
you right now. Uh can we get

you for some archaeology lab
tours maybe during City

Government Week? [Andrea] Yes we'd love
to. We did that several years

ago. It always creeps up on us.

[Andrea] It does. So let's try to [Melissa] you

heard it here first. Uh City

Government Week is in October.

[Andrea] It is. [Melissa] So we'll that means we
have a date in October to talk

about that. Okay. Okay. [Andrea] We'll
do our best. We are very busy

in the field We had two great
part-time staff archaeologists

this summer to help us with
Spanish Street. Um we also have

a brand-new staff
archaeologist, Kate Gaines,

who's with us and so we are
have all of our archaeologists

not by design but just by
experience and talent have been

females. So, we are an
all-female archaeology team

which is great especially for
Women's History Month. [Melissa] Yeah.

So. What where does now so
that's you've got Katie and

Catherine. [Andrea] Mm hmm. [Melissa] And are they
pairing up together. They both

doing different things. [Andrea] They're
doing different things. Um

Catherine was originally hired
Catherine Sims to really

sort of handle the lab because
the lab work is almost 75% of

the archaeological process. So,
we really need somebody in the

lab. We can't have volunteers
in there unless we have a staff

member. Same thing for the

field. So, the idea is to sort

of put Kate in the field a
little bit more and then keep

Catherine back in the lab
handling all of the things that

are coming in in the lab.

[Melissa] Documenting, cleaning, [Andrea] all the

process of the of the
artifacts. They come in. They

need to be cleaned. They need
to be sorted. They need to be

analyzed. There's also
documentation. There's curation

that happens. Every single
piece of paperwork we have has

to be gone through. It has to
be scanned, filed. We have tons

of electronic documents.

There's GIS. There's a whole

process that happens in the lab

for us to really be able to

tease out and understand what's

happening. We can dig something

in the field and have a rough

idea of maybe our

interpretation but it's not til

we get back to the lab clean

everything up, really analyze

it, and then start even doing

analysis like, when was this

manufactured? Oh, okay. That

tells us when this foundation. [Melissa] You research?

[Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] I mean, you're on the

internet a lot. Research. [Andrea] I

shouldn't say this but I'm

kind of surprised that

sometimes the Google searches

that IT hasn't asked a lot.

We've been doing a lot of

research on beer manufacturing

dates based off bottles that

we've been finding. [Melissa] Okay. [Andrea] So,

yeah. It's all part of the

process. [Melissa] And they haven't

blocked you? [Andrea] Not yet. I hope

that doesn't mean they're

going to start looking at my

search history. [Melissa] Well, that's

really fascinating. I imagine

that there's such a an

intriguing story. Um I know the

lab on the one hand, it's not

very sexy but it's really a

cool space but you guys were

hoping not quite yet where

we're going to get a new lab.

[Andrea] That's still up in the air.

Yeah. We did have a generous

donation that will definitely

help put us on track but we've
done a vast improvement with

the space that we have with new
fixtures and we've also been

investing in tech which is
technology is a big part of it So,

we're working on an artifact
database which will be very

great and very important for us
to do all sorts of queries and

things like that to figure out
what exactly do we have in the

lab. [Melissa] How about 3D printers? [Andrea] We
have partnered with the Florida

Public Archaeology Network here
that's based at Flagler College

for some 3D printing. They have
scanned some of the artifacts

we have and have printed those
for us. So, they're great for

show and tell and. [Melissa] Right. [Andrea] You
don't have to worry about

breaking things when they're.

Right. 3D printed. [Melissa] And your lab

is located? [Andrea] At 30 Pellicer Lane.
[Melissa] And I'm I'm going to also tell

folks it's right near the glass
recycling. [Andrea] It is. The glass

recycling is very startling
when when people dump things in

there every first time it
happened. We thought somebody

had crashed into the building.

Um but you know we definitely

support recycling as well. [Melissa] Yes.
So. So if you do if you use the

recycling that's on Pellicer and
you see that it's a [Andrea] it's a

metal brown metal building.

[Melissa] Yeah but what's the word I'm

looking for? The the trailer.

What do they call them for the

schools? The anyway, it's it's

a double wide. Isn't it? It's

kind of. [Andrea] Oh no. It's it's much

bigger. [Melissa] It's much bigger. [Andrea] Yeah.

But it's [Melissa] It's a modular. [Andrea] No,

it's actually not a modular.

It's over 50 years old, the

building. [Melissa] Well, I take all that

back. Sorry. It has a funny

look to it though the way it

sits on that property. [Andrea] Yeah. It

was the old actual the old

warehouse for the city. [Melissa] Well,

there you have it. [Andrea] Yeah. [Melissa] Well,

so old the old oldest

archaeology building in City.

The Doctor Zoo Middleton. [Andrea] Yes.

[Melissa] Archaeology Center next to the

Glass Recycling. [Andrea] Mm hmm. [Melissa] On

Pellicer. [Andrea] Yes. That's where

we're at. [Melissa] I know you've got

other stuff but we ran out of

time. [Andrea] Uh we always run out of

time. [Melissa] But we're going to have

you back to talk about City

Government Week and we're

going to get those lab tours on

the calendar. [Andrea] Okay. Oh we put

it down. Pencil it in. It all

depends on how many projects we

have come in. Often we don't

have a chance to we don't

control the projects that come

in so. [Melissa] We're going to hope for

it but we can't make any promises. [Andrea] That sounds good.

[Melissa] Okay. Thanks for coming. [Andrea] Thanks

Melissa. [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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former podcast plus this one.

We want to keep you informed

about what's happening in and

around the city. Follow us on

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time. Thanks for tuning in.

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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. See

you at this time next week for
another edition of The

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