Happy 4th of JULY
Resident
RIVERSIDE
ORTEGA
AVONDALE
MURRAY HILL
COMMUNITY NEWS
JULY 2013 – Volume 7, Issue 7

The push is on

Locals lobby for increased bike and foot traffic safety in 5 Points

Allan DeVault, president of the 5 Points Merchants Association and managing partner of the Black Sheep restaurant on Oak Street, is one of the main figures in the association's push to make the historic commercial district more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. To see more about the efforts to make improvements . . . . . .Page 4

Mike and Charity Fisher enjoyed a bit of both rock and culture at a recent performance of "La Caroline", a rock opera written by Jennifer Chase.

Culture of Rock

Groundbreaking and contemporary rock opera steeped in North Florida and European history, is performed at home of Dr. Wayne Wood

.....See more page 27

Willowbranch Creek project cited for noncompliance

Construction dams break one week after warning

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

The city claims "acts of God." Local residents say it's shoddy work and lack of compliance with environmental protection standards.

On June 26, both of the construction dams blew out at the Willowbranch and Riverside construction project, sending a significant amount of dirt into the creek. "They still have not done a good job managing the site, even after all of the scrutiny," said Jimmy Orth, executive director for the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

The city's Public Works Department had contracted with Touring Company, Inc. to widen the Riverside Avenue bridge over Willowbranch Creek and add sidewalks. The project originally began earlier this year then was stalled for more than eight weeks while the project plans were being redesigned to accommodate a conflict with utilities.

Shortly after recommencing construction, two storms came through in June and washed tons of dirt and sand into Willowbranch Creek, adding about 18 inches to the creek bed, according to Eric Reagan of Willowbranch Terrace.

See WILLOW on page 6

Your favorite park could be a winner!

Coca-Cola is looking for America's favorite park and it could be a Jacksonville public park, a Florida state park or a national park located in Florida. The winning parks are eligible for up to $100,000 in grants, which can be used to help restore, rebuild or enhance activity areas in parks.

Memorial Park in Riverside is on the list of parks to vote for, and a major grant could go a long way toward restoration. Riverside Park is also on the list and winning a grant could help with the proposed dog park.

To vote, go to https://parks.livepositively.com/ parks/index.html. Register, enter ZIP Code 32204, and choose Memorial Park or Riverside Park. Contest ends July 15 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

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COMMUNITY PAPERS good for Community SOUL

By Lorrie DeFrank
Resident Community News

A recent national survey validating that community newspapers effectively engage residents and enhance neighborhoods supports the consensus of Resident Community News readers.

Standing features such as Movers and Shakers, Business Profile, Social Register, Go Givers, Jr. Residents and The Way We Were confirm that the monthly publication provides a vital service to people in its trendy, thriving neighborhoods – information that is relevant to their lives.

The survey for the National Newspaper Association (NNA) conducted by the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri School of Journalism showed that readers of community newspapers with a circulation of up to 15,000 prefer their local papers for getting their news and information. *The Resident*'s two editions each have a circulation of 15,000, with an estimated total readership of 60,000.

NNA President Merle Baranczyk said the survey numbers indicate the level of connectedness people have with their community papers. "From year to year, the studies have shown that people believe in their local papers, for the news they need and the advertising they rely on," he said.

Co-publishers Seth and Pamela Williams founded *the Resident* Community News Group after moving to Avondale and sensing a need for more community connection. "We knew we had a great area and a preservation group," Seth said. "But we could use a community newspaper."

Having previously owned the *Ponte Vedra Recorder*, Pamela knew the value of a local paper as a conduit to the community and the process to publish one. With experience in reporting and photography, Seth also possessed the skills to make it work. The couple launched the Riverside/Avondale/Ortega/Murray Hill edition in January 2007 and started the San Jose/San Marco/St. Nicholas edition in March 2008.

"People embraced it. Advertisers were getting responses. Readers say they read the paper from cover to cover," said Seth Williams. "We more or less cover the good news and things that pertain to their lives. It plugs them into what is going on in their back yard."

Community papers also give readers a voice in local issues and provide the information they need to make informed decisions. "Even if one person disagrees, their opinion matters," Williams said. For example, "Our paper helped to shape the dialog and conversation on the Mellow Mushroom debate. People may not have known about the impact the new restaurant was going to have."

"It keeps me connected. I don't always agree but at least I know what's going on," said Frankie Yow, a retiree who lives in the Fishweir neighborhood. In addition to staying informed of area events, Yow said she appreciates the ads, particularly to clip restaurant coupons and keep up with the housing market.

Advertising is critical to *The Resident* not only because its revenue finances the direct mailing of the free paper to all residents of five ZIP Codes, but also because businesses play a major role in building communities through the services they offer.

"People create homes, homes create neighborhoods and neighborhoods create communities. The heartbeat of our community is amplified by having a community newspaper owned and operated by community members," said Realtor Anne Burpee Rain, Director, Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty, Avondale. "We are connected with each other through our paper when we read the stories about our neighbors and when we advertise our businesses." An advertiser since *The Resident*'s beginning, Rain said business she received through the paper has been outstanding.

Bill Hatchett, owner of A-Coin on St. Augustine Road, recalled acquiring a rare old local bank note as a direct result of a story that ran in *The Resident*. "A local paper reaches out better. It's not just good for a day or week; people will put it on a coffee table," he said. "It's a good mode of advertising. I like it and will continue to use it."

"We probably will always have an ad in *The Resident* because the response we had was crazy," agreed Paul Riley, partner with Shane Tanner in Swimming Yesterday Seafood in Murray Hill.

Loyal reader John Glover, CEO of Century Ambulance Service, Inc., on Rosselle Street, credits *The Resident* for helping pack Boy Scout Troop No. 2's annual spaghetti dinner and for providing historical perspectives of his Avondale neighborhood. He reads it to learn about cultural events, community issues and his neighbors' achievements. "The content has all those features, stuff you like to read about people you know," he said.

In this era of technology, Glover believes local papers trump electronic media for building communities. "In the palm of your hand you have a device that gives you information from all around the globe," he said. "Yet something as simple as a newspaper that discusses local activities says a lot about how humans are still interested in making and keeping connections with neighbors. *The Resident* is not just pretty pictures; it's a story of our neighborhoods."

"We are the original social media. Before Facebook and Linked-In, community papers were linking people together," said Williams. "They will never be something that people will let go of."

Billionaire businessman and philanthropist Warren Buffett agrees.

"Whether the news is about the mayor or taxes or high school football, there is no substitute for a local newspaper that is doing its job," he recently wrote in his annual letter to stockholders explaining his acquisitions of community papers across the country – 63 last year alone.

"Warren Buffett is a savvy investor," Williams said. "If he is trending something it's not something to be ignored."

However, Williams acknowledged that a newspaper is only as successful as the community it serves, both being strongly tied to the other.

"We are blessed to serve two excellent communities. Being so close to the core of downtown, they help shape the history of our city," he said. "Our readers can dig into their community paper and say, 'Look at all that is going on. This is my community.' We are a reflection of their actions, work and achievements."

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RAP, 5 Points merchants plan for city for infrastructure improvements

By Stephen Kindland
Resident Community News

Members of the 5 Points Merchants Association and Riverside Avondale Preservation are joining forces to produce a "concept plan" to bolster their chances of receiving $750,000 from the city to help solve infrastructure problems in the 5 Points business district.

The two groups want to use the money to redesign the iconic five-point intersection from which the district gets its name, repair and upgrade a stretch of sidewalk along Lomax Street, and make numerous other improvements that ultimately would make the area more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Motorists approaching the busy 5 Points intersection aren't always sure of the rules, according to several members of the 5 Points Merchants Association and Riverside Avondale Preservation, two organizations that are making a push to have traffic flow restructured without losing the icon intersection's historic value

Merchants association president Allan DeVault, managing partner of the Black Sheep restaurant on Oak Street, says reconstructing the historic five-point intersection where Park, Margaret and Lomax streets converge is "long overdue."

He said the current traffic control system – which resembles a quasi-roundabout with stop signs and flashing red and yellow lights – is dangerous and confusing, especially to motorists who are new to the area.

Refiguring traffic flow would be "a good, small starting point where we'd have something to show for our efforts," DeVault said. "At the end of the day, it's all about improving 5 Points while keeping up the character of the 5 Points area."

He also said the time is right to seek improvements because Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown's is continuing his push for Downtown redevelopment, including new construction in Brooklyn, an urban core area situated between 5 Points and Downtown.

"Development of the Brooklyn area results in 5 Points becoming a 'hook-in' to Downtown," DeVault said. "The timing is perfect to balance business interests and neighborhood concerns – to take care of concerns before they become [major] issues."

City Councilman Jim Love, whose District 14 includes 5 Points, Riverside and Avondale, already has pledged his support for the proposed projects. Love stated in a recent letter to RAP executive director Carmen Godwin that he will request money from the city, but encouraged the two groups to continue raising funds to demonstrate their resolve.

"I think that the 5 Points area is overdue for an upgrade, and my commitment to the RAP board [of directors] is to work with the Mayor's Office and the City Council" to place $750,000 in the city's 2014-2015 fiscal year budget, Love wrote. "It is impressive that the neighborhood organization and the merchants association are willing to invest private dollars in public infrastructure projects, and I will do everything I can to facilitate the construction."

Love said he plans to join RAP representatives and members of the merchants association in a "visual walk through" later this month.

The councilman, who has owned and operated an insurance agency at the corner of College and King streets near 5 Points for the past 30 years, says the current mix of businesses that cater to different lifestyles gives the historic 5 Points area a metropolitan flavor.

"It's an eclectic mix that I really enjoy," Love said. "In the past 30 years, I've watched [5 Points] deteriorate and get a heck of a lot better. We need some money to improve the infrastructure in that area."

Stephen Tocknell of Tocknell Planning Services, the Jacksonville-based firm that has been hired to draw up the plan, says it's vital that his company gains a consensus among business owners, local residents and city officials on what improvements and restructuring should be made – and why. He said that a community forum also will be held in the coming months.

"We're going to look at this together," Tocknell said. "There are a lot of things you can do to make 5 Points more pedestrian, bicycle and even motorist friendly. We need to do it before someone announces a decision that everyone else has to live with."

RAP – a not-for-profit organization that was established to protect the historic value of area neighborhoods – is using $36,000 left over from previous fundraisers to pay for the study.

Godwin said she and other RAP members are looking forward to participating.

"It's always great when we can come together and resolve any issues," Godwin said. "I personally really want to see repairs made to Lomax Street," from Park to Post streets.

"It doesn't look cared for," she said. "It can be so much more vibrant; it would make a world of difference."

Other areas scheduled to be addressed in the study include:

- The intersections at Park and Post streets; and at Margaret and Post streets.
- The crosswalks at Park Street, mid-block between Lomax and Post streets; and at Margaret and Oak streets.
- Street segments on Margaret Street, from Herschel to Lomax; and from Park to Post.
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St. Johns Avenue development hearings deferred

Developer asking for time to refine plan

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

After earlier public statements about having to adhere to strict schedules for submission of the proposed redevelopment of the Commander Apartment and the adjoining retail/office center, Attorney Steve Diebenow, applicant on behalf of Chase Properties, requested a two-cycle deferral for the public hearings, which were scheduled to begin June 11 before City Council.

Part of the need for the deferral was the lack of a report issued by the Planning Department, which has asked the applicant for more information. Until some holes are filled in, the Planning Department cannot render a report.

Since both ordinances (2013-0341 and 2013-0342) had been put on the June 11 City Council calendar prior to the request for deferral, public comment on the legislation was accommodated. Unfortunately for the five residents who attended in opposition to the current development plan, the issue did not get recognized on the floor until 11:40 p.m. Avondale resident Jeff Graf, who was unable to stay for the duration of the long meeting, said that during the session's General Comments period Diebenow requested the deferral because the developer needed more time to get feedback from Riverside Avondale Preservation and the immediate community, to complete the proposals with actual drawings, and to hold another community meeting.

That community meeting, described as a town hall/discussion meeting, has been scheduled by District 14 Councilman Jim Love for Wednesday, July 17, at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at the FSCJ Kent Campus on Roosevelt Boulevard.

One of the issues that must be addressed, for example, according to Graf, is the lack of concrete information about the structures, including elevations and the exact square footage for the proposed residential, non-residential, parking garage(s), and flat lot parking. "Until that exists," he said. "There's no way to tell what they're looking for." Another issue, he said, "is the gross overreach in size of what was requested – 595,000 square feet with over four times the density on the two parcels now." That square footage includes all structures, including a five-story parking garage.

> One of the issues that must be addressed... is the lack of concrete information about the structures, including elevations and the exact square footage.

Nearby residents want to see a plan that complies with the Riverside Avondale Overlay, including its 60 foot height restriction, and complements the historic neighborhood. According to the proposed plan, development – including structures, surface parking and pool – will result in 85 percent lot coverage of both parcels. Residents are concerned that the applicant's high density and proposed lot coverage will not afford the scale of buildings and amount of green space that would be complementary to the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Although the deferral was granted, two more previously scheduled meetings allowed both the applicant and the public to speak about the two ordinances. A Planning Commission meeting on June 13 and a Land Use and Zoning Committee meeting on June 18 were attended by a representative of the applicant and several Avondale residents.

Unless deferred again, after the July 17 town hall meeting, the next critical dates include a public hearing before City Council on July 23, in which the applicant will make a presentation and the public will be given the opportunity to speak for three minutes per ordinance per registered attendee. There will not be full discussion by City Council about the ordinances at this meeting.

After that, on July 25, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing, which includes the same presentation and public comment period, followed by questions from and discussion among the commission, and a vote or a deferral to vote. If the Planning Commission takes a vote, they can approve as presented, approve with conditions, approve with amendments recommended, deny, or defer it again, so there is a delay in moving forward.

Two more meetings are currently scheduled for August. The first will be a public hearing before the Land Use & Zoning Committee on Aug. 6, following the same format as with the Planning Commission public hearing, with the possibility of delays. The second and final meeting will be a public hearing on Aug. 13 by City Council on matters underlying the bill, which includes both ordinances. They can vote for the bill as is, with amendments or defer it again, so there is a delay in resolution.

All noted meetings are subject to change and if they are deferred, the subsequent previously calendared dates may still appear on the agendas, giving the opportunity for public comment. As previously noted, there may be additional City meetings at the Planning Commission level, the Land Use and Zoning Committee level and at City Council, so there is a delay moving forward at each level. These matters could take months to resolve.

For more information residents can visit a neighborhood website,

http://commander-rezoning.com for a copy of the proposed PUD, updates on meeting schedules and outcomes, or refer to the City calendars and agendas for the Planning Commission, Land Use & Zoning Committee, and City Council. You can also call the City's Planning Department at (904) 255-7800.

Despite the four to five week reprieve, Graf remains skeptical that the current deferrals will be adequate. "There still may not be enough time to get this information [from the developer], assess it and then get back to him with recommendations," he said. "The most important thing is that we need adequate time for a constructive back-and-forth before the decision-making bodies can take it up again."

WILLOW continued from **1**

"I've been observing this for quite some time; in the days leading up to [Tropical Storm] Andrea I noticed they weren't doing anything to cover up the big mounds of dirt and sand," Orth said. "When the rains finally came, nothing was done to divert the water to keep all the dirt from the creek."

Orth jogged by after the hard, heavy rain on June 14 and noticed the steep gradient of exposed dirt along the sides of the creek and that the inadequate sediment fences around the construction site had been washed away.

"They [Touring Company] should have done a much better job of stabilizing the bank and managing the site. Instead, they've been running heavy equipment right up next to the trees. There is nothing in front of the storm drains," Orth said. "They are creating a mess, and violating the law."

The Florida Stormwater Erosion and Sedimentation Control Inspector's Manual issues best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control. According to the manual (Section 3.2.3) "The operator is ultimately responsible for…implementing appropriate pollution prevention techniques to minimize erosion and sedimentation from stormwater discharges during construction." The manual goes on to say that the contractor's stormwater pollution prevention plan must ensure the implementation of best management practices that will be used to reduce the pollutants in stormwater discharge associated with construction activity.

When questioned on June 21 about the project site and the aftermath of the storms, Thomas McKnight, project manager, supplied a statement on behalf of the city, which stated, "The two storms in recent weeks both fall under the category of 'acts of God' (unforeseeable) where it is not possible to provide a cost-effective means of prevention. In other words, the storms were so large and infrequent that it was not anticipated. In both instances, the contractor worked immediately to stabilize the site and to re-establish the erosion and sediment controls. There were no sediment discharges from the site other than the two storm events."

Apparently, that's not what nearby residents are experiencing.

According to the Riverkeeper's office, the contractor dammed off the river from either side of the bridge to stop the flow of the creek, so that they could de-water the area between the dams where construction is taking place. Then, on the night of June 26, both dams blew.

Instead of stabilizing the bank and managing the site, the contractor has been running heavy equipment right up next to the trees – Photo by Sarah Nan

"They are supposed to filter the muddy water that they remove rather than sending it down the storm drains or into the creek. The contractor should have taken much better precautions to prevent runoff. There was a lot of exposed dirt, the storm drains were not covered," said a frustrated Orth. "It doesn't cost that much for a contractor to comply with the law but it can be devastating for our creeks. Sedimentation can diminish property values, smother aquatic plants, and create turbidity that kills wildlife and aquatic organisms. These type of violations can have significant ecological and economic impacts."

Touring Company Inc. will also feel the financial impact. Along with the Department of Public Works and CES Consultants (an environmental consultant), Touring Company was officially cited the week of June 17 with failure to maintain erosion and sediment controls, as required by Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board Rule 3.604A. According to Debbie Delgado, City of Jacksonville, the contractor faces remediation requirements plus could be fined up to $10,000 per each day that the problem is not resolved. At this time there is no indication whether a fine that steep would be incurred.

After the late June dam blow-out it was obvious that whatever measures the contractor put in place between the June 14 storm and the breach 12 days later, it wasn't enough.

Residents on Willowbranch Terrance are frustrated, disgusted and very concerned.

Kathleen Murphy said of the whole project, "When I first heard about it I thought it was a great idea to widen the bridge over Riverside and add sidewalks on either side. The first red flag was the amount of time it was taking to complete the project. But…most recently, the new issue is environmental."

She continued, "The amount of runoff and silt that has accumulated in the creek is unacceptable. It runs into our canal and then into the river. It's been frustrating. I'm not an expert in that area but even I can tell that something's not right. Let's not make more of a mess. What they've done so far is like putting a bandage on a huge wound. If that cypress tree makes it, I'll be surprised. They've over-dug, which creates more erosion."

One resident who is somewhat of an expert with soil management is Reagan, who was a Seabee (the U.S. Navy's Construction Battalion) and also worked for excavation companies.

Reagan knows contractors are held accountable by the Environmental Protection Agency for mitigating soil runoff. "They need to cover the dirt with plastic tarps and put in conduit to keep soil from running into creeks and waterways. At best, they did a haphazard job," he fumed. "Tons of dirt and sand ran into Willowbranch Creek for days, now going on two weeks (as of June 21). They still have not done all the proper things, but did finally put up an earth dam. I'm not sure how they're going to remove that from the creek when the project is done."

On June 26 the dam broke at the Willowbranch Creek construction site, a week after the project was cited for failure to maintain erosion and sediment controls – Photo by Jimmy Orth

Reagan reached out to Water Branch of Environmental Quality Division after the June 14 storm to see what could be done. And he's not the only resident concerned about what's going on – or not.

Sarah Nan, who lives close to Willowbranch Terrace, said "I am very concerned with the City of Jacksonville's Public Works Department that is currently working on the Willowbranch Creek project. They appear to lack the ambition or knowledge to use Best Management Practices and procedures that are recommended and required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency. The contractors are not protecting some of the storm drains from construction runoff, there are dirt piles that are uncovered, the site is very sloppy, the water is often turbid. Dirt from this site often flows to storm drain inlets and ultimately is discharged into Willowbranch Creek and as a result could possibly harm the ecosystem and clog up the creek and cause flooding during a rain event.'

Nan continued, "A failure to protect waterways from construction runoff may result in costly damage from a financial, aesthetic value, and environmental perspective, with us (as taxpayers) stuck with the bill to restore an area that has been damaged by careless or ignorant behavior. Construction site pollution prevention can reduce pollution into our rivers, streams, and nearest waterways and would be appreciated if practiced by the city of Jacksonville's Public Works department. The city should lead by example and show how protection of our natural resources are important and they know better (or I would hope) about how important it is to protect our waterways."

Nan observed that one of the first rules discussed during Stormwater Management Classes is "never let dirt leave your site."

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What's to like about Jacksonville?

New website aimed at residents to spread the good word

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

One of the city's most enthusiastic newcomers is eager to share his excitement about Jacksonville with everyone. So Paul Astleford, the new president and CEO of Visit Jacksonville, along with Patty Jimenez, Communications Manager, recently rolled out a new campaign that introduces Jacksonville to its residents.

Quantities of informational coasters were hand delivered to more than 100 restaurants, bars and hotels, introducing a new website and encouraging them to spread the word.

According to Jimenez, www.OnlyInJAX.com, is a place where local residents and businesses can go to find out what makes Jacksonville so unique, use that information to attract new clients, new visitors, and be informed as to what is going on in Jacksonville.

"We want locals to be ambassadors for the city and help us spread the message to the rest of the world that Jacksonville is a unique, vibrant and eclectic destination," Jimenez said. "To do that we need to be sure that they know what makes Jacksonville a unique, vibrant and eclectic city."

The website has information on the history of the city, what products are made here, where to get the best drink, what recognitions the city has received from magazines and studies, what parks are the best ones…the list of great information in OnlyInJax.com is really extensive, according to Jimenez.

It wasn't hard for Astleford to be persuaded to move from Columbus, OH back in January. "Experiencing Jacksonville for the first time in March of 2012, my wife and I fell in love with what she called Florida's natural water wonderland and felt that we could both live here the rest of our lives," said the Epping Forest resident. He shared that he was figuratively scratching his head about how a destination like Jacksonville had so little image presence in the national or global marketplace. "Add to that my love for a challenge and to see the potential that Jacksonville holds and to feel that its leaders were poised and intent to transform its image and project it to the world, how could I not accept the invitation to participate in that collaborative community mission?"

Visit Jacksonville's 2011 visitation report showed that the city welcomed 3.6 million overnight visitors. Each visitor saves Duval County residents $463 in taxes each year, making tourism an important industry and economic engine in the area. Visitor spending supports nearly 43,000 Duval County jobs – that's 11 percent of the local workforce.

Astleford, who attended every JAX2025 workshop, is ready to be part of the city's future. "The sense that I – and Visit Jacksonville – can play a role in the economic and cultural transformation of our community in a way that will create a new level of prosperity and quality of life for all who are blessed to live in this wonderful place on earth," he concluded.

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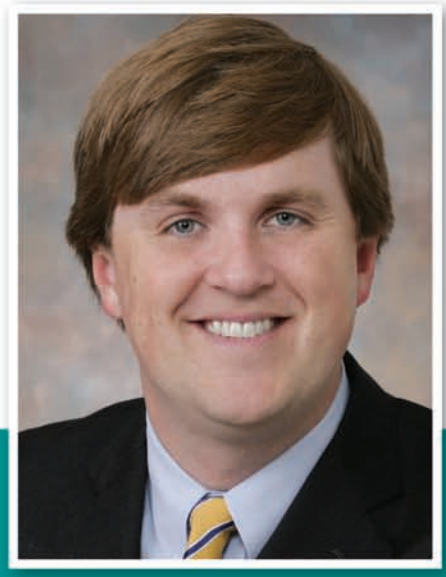

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Less about available parking, more about bad behavior

Residents and business owners alike unhappy about situation

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Success has its price. Especially in the Riverside Avondale historic district – and that price is driving residents mad.

Members of the Riverside-Avondale Area Parking Steering Committee – both residents and business owners – voiced concerns about the side effects of that success at the second planned meeting on June 10 after hearing preliminary results of the parking study from Martha Moore of Ghyabi and Associates.

Andrew Beh, a resident near Post and King, said it wasn't just the inability to get in and out of his own driveway, but the lack of respect for homeowners' properties from patrons of nearby bars and restaurants. "There's real road rage on these narrow streets," said Beh. "A lack of patience. We have people driving on our lawn and parking in the front yard," in addition to blocking his driveway most Thursday through Saturday nights.

"Our driveway gets blocked on a regular basis," echoed Jennifer Madaychik, who lives at College and King, behind The Salty Fig. "We've dealt with trash on the lawn, items stolen from our porch, people urinating on the lawn and our own car was totaled because we had to park in the street."

Avondale resident Cassie Norris, who lives on Pine Street, noted that ignoring four-way stops and speeding through the narrow streets is also an issue. She's concerned about emergency response vehicles that can't negotiate the streets with parking on both sides. During events which draw large crowds, like Christmas in Avondale, Norris has taken to parking on the street herself just to ensure that she can get out.

Tom Merton said his biggest issue wasn't parking availability near Merton House, his bed and breakfast inn at Post and James streets. "My biggest concern is the noise at two and three o'clock in the morning from boorish drunks." Merton recently felt compelled to give a guest a free night's stay because she couldn't sleep due to the incessant beeping of cars being unlocked. He's also had his car sideswiped while parking on the street to save the inn's off-street spaces for his guests.

The area shop owners aren't taking these issues lightly. "I feel like I have a target on my back," said Ed Salem, owner of Kickbacks and soon, Guzzlepipes and Guttyworks. "But the increase in business has helped raise property values. We need to find a way to keep businesses open in the historic districts." He noted that recent new homeowners have specifically bought in the Park and King location because there was a lot of activity in the area.

From Avondale's Biscottis, owner Barbara Bredehoeft expressed dismay over hearing about unruly visitors but noted, "We don't have control over our customers."

One of the findings of the study was the number of employees who used prime spots in front of or nearby the businesses. Soliman Salem, of the City of Jacksonville's Planning and Development Department, was present during the three-day parking analysis in the Shoppes of Avondale. He noted that 20 to 25 per cent of the vehicles parked in front of restaurants were there during the entire evaluation period, seeming to indicate that they belonged to employees.

Noted Bredehoeft, "We need a place to direct our employees to park that's away from the business. I think they will, but we don't have it." Though 35 of Biscottis' 55 employees travel by car to work, parking in the alleys behind the shops is not an optimal choice as there have been reported thefts from cars parked in those dark, less traveled alleys.

Although the analysis for the Park and King area had not yet been conducted, Andy Zarka, the owner of the European Street Café, thought an informal study of the population in Riverside and Avondale would reveal that many residents who lived within walking distance still would drive to shop or dine. "I would like to see more folks walk and free up parking for visitors from outside those areas," said Zarka.

That may be a pipe dream. During the Avondale analysis, clipboard in hand, Salem was approached by curious shoppers who then provided him with complaints about lack of parking immediately in front of a shop or restaurant. "People don't want to walk another 50 feet [from a parking spot]," said Bill Proctor, a Pine Street resident.

The Brick Restaurant's owner Steve Kunz asked "How do we blend the need for commercial enterprise with the needs of the residents…who also frequent these shops? How can we maximize parking for everybody?"

Just across St. Johns Avenue, Diane Garcia of J. Ashley Boutique, and president of the Shoppes of Avondale Merchants Association, shared "We definitely want to work this out. The merchants are ready to put valet parking in place." Garcia said that Prudential Network Realty may agree to allow staging of the valet service on their lot, but that parking spots were still to be determined. She hoped that valet parking would be put into place before the end of June.

Kay Ehas, committee chair, noted that one of the solutions may be to develop partnerships with "day time" businesses that have off-street parking lots, allowing evening patrons to use those spaces. District 14 Councilman Jim Love, whose insurance business has a small 10-space lot, cheerfully allows customers to nearby Kickbacks use his lot after 5 p.m.

The steering committee will meet two more times in July (the 15th and the 22nd) in the Ed Ball Building prior to holding community meetings tentatively scheduled for early August. Area residents will be presented with the results of the study and given an opportunity to express their own concerns or solutions at separate Avondale and Park and King meetings, dates, times and locations to be determined.

Valet Parking in Avondale?

Let The Resident know what you think about valet parking in the Shoppes of Avondale. Would you use it? If you have used it, how was the experience? Is it a viable solution? Send your comments via email by July 22 to editor@residentnews.net.

Tree trimming gone awry in historic district

Residents heated for several reasons

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

If last month's 90 degree temperatures are any indication, residents in 5 Points are going to get hotter. As if they were not already hot under the collar over the JEA's recent tree trimming initiatives.

Seems that every two years or so, the shade trees lining the streets in the 5 Points area, are scheduled for trimming around power lines to reduce potential outages when branches touch the lines.Normally the process calls for notification to the residents on the designated streets. Unfortunately, the landscape contractor began trimming – butchering, according to residents – the trees prior to door hangers being distributed.

The issue, according to resident Paul Bremer, who is also on the board of City Beautiful, is that national standards are not acceptable in historic districts.

"The homes here are on very small lots, set close to the street. The trees provide significant shade for the homes," Bremer said. "But butchering the tree canopies does major damage to the trees." Reducing the shade also increases the energy consumption from air conditioning, and it's unsightly as well. Bremer calls the victims "alphabet trees" for the vee-shaped notches that are created when huge sections of branches are removed. In addition, improperly trimmed trees can become unbalanced and vulnerable to wind damage.

According to Bremer, there are other alternatives that have been proposed to the JEA.

The first is converting to underground utilities but, says Bremer, "the JEA screams at the expense."

Neighborhoods can choose to be charged for underground utilities, which reduces maintenance and the costs associated with repairing outages. Going underground will pay for itself in about 15 years, noted Bremer.

The second alternative is aerial bundled cables (ABCs), which has a much shorter return on investment, less than five years. Bundled cables are insulated to protect them from tree branches, and the technology has improved since the 1970-80s when the JEA had bad experiences with ABCs.

An example of poorly trimmed trees

Bremer said it's worth noting that tree trimming, according to national standards, costs $2,495 per mile of power line and there are 3,500 miles of power lines in Duval County, although certainly not every mile of line is surrounded by trees.

The current contracted service is through Trees, Inc. According to Bremer, many of those employees were with Lewis Tree Service, who held the last contract. "They may know how to operate the equipment but when it comes to trimming trees they vaguely follow the guidelines," he said. "Even if they were cutting to national guidelines, it's not acceptable."

The tree trimming remaining in that area was suspended immediately upon request by Councilmember-at-Large Robin Lumb. A response from JEA's CEO Paul McElroy said they would look into alternatives, and get back to the Riverside Avondale Preservation Society as soon as possible. William Brinton, president of City Beautiful Jacksonville, is also looking into previous studies regarding utility undergrounding.

In the meantime, residents like Bremer and Lumb, will be trying to keep cool this summer without the benefit of nature's shade.

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Funds appropriated for Northbank Riverwalk Extension

Much needed cosmetic, structural improvements to be made

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Riverside and 5 Points residents may soon see an urban park in the area.

At the request of the Office of the Mayor, City Council voted, although not unanimously, to appropriate $2 million in Florida Department of Transportation funding and to re-appropriate over $3 million from the Northbank Riverwalk Renovations project to provide $5,425,000 for an Artist Walk Extension project.

The Northbank Riverwalk Artist Walk Extension project, as shown in the conceptual rendering, may consist of hardscape improvements such as sidewalks benches, lighting, fountains and trash receptacles to extend the Riverside Arts Market concept under I-95 from the riverfront to Riverside Park at Park Street in 5 Points. Improvements would be made to turn the existing dry retention ponds into wet ponds with fountains.

"We're thrilled about the expansion of the Artist Walk and the additional connectivity it will provide from Downtown along the Riverwalk, through RAM and on to Riverside Park and the 5 Points Shopping District," commented Krysten Bennett, director of RAM. "We'll be exploring options for the Market's potential growth over the next few months and are hoping to utilize the space in a way that enhances the experience of visitors to RAM and to our vibrant neighborhood."

The bill, introduced Apr. 23 as Ordinance 2013-249 and then amended June 11, amended the 2012-17 Capital Improvement Program to reduce funding for the Northbank Riverwalk Renovations project and to increase funding for the Artist Walk Extension project. City Council agreed with the bill's findings that deferring the CIP amendment to the next budget cycle would be detrimental to the best interests of the community because the FDOT grant funding agreement needed to be executed prior to the end of the state's fiscal year on June 30, 2013.

The bill also provided for carryover of the funds into subsequent fiscal years to complete and maintain the new Artist Walk. The City's Public Works Department is currently waiting for the executed contract from FDOT.

Intolerant neighbors put an end to fundraising events at local brewery

Intuition Aleworks fined for noise violations

According to a press release from the Intuition Aleworks, a residential neighbor filed complaints about the noise coming from fundraising events in the craft brewery's open-air space at 720 King Street.

Cari Sanchez-Potter stated in the release, "It is with heavy heart that we announce that we are no longer able to host events of any size in our open-air brewery space. After recently receiving a substantial fine for a noise violation and dealing with the stress of frequent visits by JSO, code enforcement and the Environmental Quality Division, all due to complaints made by our residential neighbor, we have made the extremely painful decision to permanently close the brewery area."

Since opening in November 2010, the space has been used for community events to celebrate Oktoberfest, the brewery's anniversary, St. Patrick's Day, the release of Underdark and many, many other festivities.

"But perhaps the most heartbreaking outcome will be that we will no longer be able to host charitable events at Intuition. Over the past two and a half years, we have donated over $60,000 in beer and merchandise to nearly 100 local charities," the release stated. "Through our $1 per pint program, we have donated $20,000 in cash from beer sold during events. On top of all that, we always allow the host charity to use our space free of charge, a substantial in-kind donation."

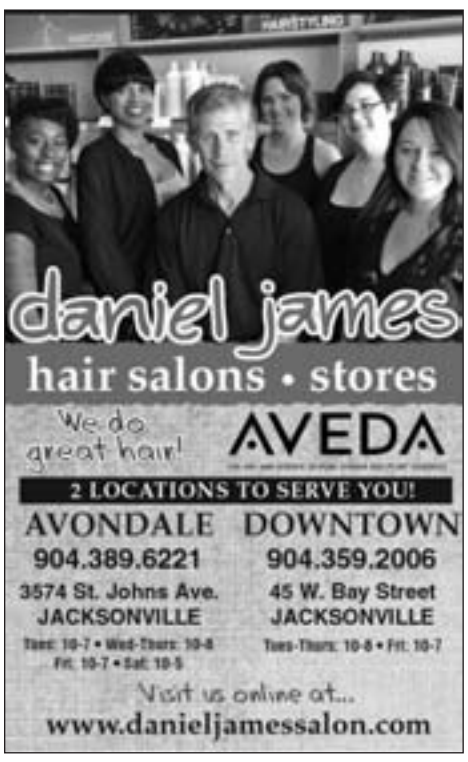
The brewery said that it made every attempt to rectify the zoning, parking and noise situations, but the obstacles to operating a unique, mixed-use business in an historic district proved insurmountable. It was noted that District 9 Councilman Warren Jones understands the challenges and supports Intuition Aleworks in moving to a new location where it will be able to operate business to its fullest potential, which includes being able to open its space as a venue for community and charitable events.

Update on construction at The Cummer

Construction plans are on schedule at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, according to museum curator Holly Keris. The next visual the public will see, said Keris, is the entire sidewalk on the east side of Riverside Avenue torn up to start the process to widen it.

In the meantime, prep work on the front garden has been in progress as the contractor gets ready to pour footings and put conduit in place. Keris noted that an old transformer was relocated and a glass doorway at the center of Art Connections was removed.

Parts of the project are running on a parallel timeline as precast columns for the sculpture garden are being fabricated offsite. "We're still on schedule for a late summer, early fall completion and opening," said Keris.



Hen owners crowing over draft legislation

Four hens per acre better than one for the pot

By Lara Patangan
Resident Community News

The town once called Cowford is one step closer to sharing a new commonality with the progressive metropolises of Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco, but not with an urban amenity – instead by reconnecting with its rural roots and the chickens that historically clucked upon them.

Last month Ordinance No. 2013-415, which would allow single family homeowners to have up to four backyard hens, was filed, delighting hen advocates who have long pleaded for City government "to give peeps a chance."

"I'll be ecstatic when this is over and done," said Riverside resident Genora Crain-Orth, who has been involved in the campaign to legalize backyard hens. "Decades ago, local residents, both rural and urban, depended on hens to produce eggs to nourish their families. There is no reason that we should not have the same rights today to take advantage, right in our own backyards, of the benefits of these wonderful pets."

The legislation sponsored by Councilmen Don Redman and Doyle Carter states that no more than four hens will be allowed on a single family dwelling unless the property is larger than one acre. For such properties, four additional hens are permitted per each additional half acre. Roosters, the animals notorious for their boisterous crowing, will only be allowed in agricultural and rural residential districts.

The draft legislation also requires hen owners to provide a shelter for their flock, cautioning against allowing chickens "to run at large upon streets, alleys or other public places, or upon the property of any other person." The City would deem such runaway chickens as a nuisance and their owners would be subject to standard nuisance laws.

According to minutes from the June 11 meeting, Councilman Redman does not anticipate any problems as long as chickens are kept on their owner's property.

Lauren Trad, a San Jose resident who founded Hens in JAX, the non-profit grass-roots group organized to change the existing ordinance to legalize backyard hens, said she believes people shouldn't be restricted from doing something that doesn't cause any problems.

"Having hens doesn't cause an issue. This ordinance is written to protect the animals and the neighbors," Trad said. "People should be given the opportunity to do the right thing – they should be given a chance to follow the laws."

The legislation sponsored by Councilmen Don Redman and Doyle Carter states that no more than four hens will be allowed on a single family dwelling unless the property is larger than one acre. According to minutes from the June 11 meeting, Councilman Redman does not anticipate any problems as long as chickens are kept on their owner's property.

Crain-Orth agrees. "Noise and odor ordinances already exist to protect neighbors should negligent hen owners not properly manage their pets."

The ordinance is scheduled for review by the Land Use and Zoning Committee on July 16. Trad said she is optimistic that things will move quickly and smoothly from this point.

"I would have never thought this would have taken this long or been this hard," said Trad. "Large cities all over the country are allowed to keep hens and are doing it without any problems. People want these rights."

If all goes as planned, Jacksonville will soon join the ranks of other big cities, simply by coming home to roost on its rural origins.

Visit the Hens in JAX Facebook page to stay informed about the proposed legislation.

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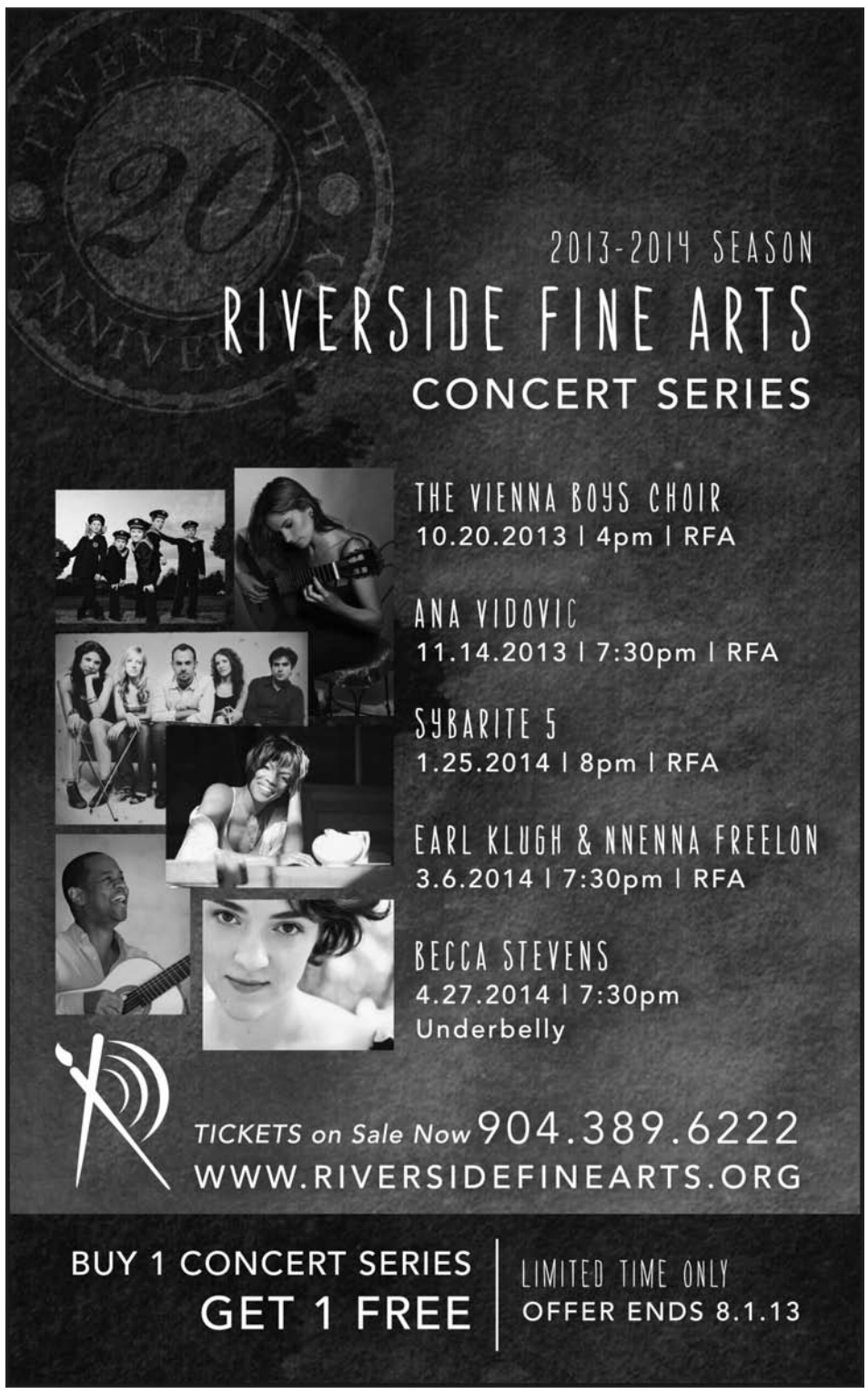
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Area churches help take the sting out of being a homeless family

Ortega Methodist members at the dedication of the Family Promise transitional house that they furnished and decorated

By Beth Mixson
Development Director
Family Promise of Jacksonville

At 5 a.m. each week day morning the Family Promise van quietly pulls up to a local church. Despite the early hours, the van driver Jim McKenney cheerfully greets the families waiting for him. These homeless families have spent the night at the church with volunteers as part of Family Promise of Jacksonville.

Family Promise is different than the traditional emergency homeless shelter. It provides shelter to three families staying at churches and three families at City Rescue Mission. In addition, five families live in its transitional houses.

Mark Landschoot, executive director, explains, "After entering our shelter, one group of our families moves week to week to different churches. Each family is provided its own space for sleeping and volunteers prepare dinner for the families every night. The second group of single mothers and children stay in the family shelter at City Rescue Mission."

During the day all families return to a day center housed at the First United Methodist Church. Working with the case manager, the adults seek employment while the children attend school. Family Promise also partners with other social service agencies that provide job training, childcare, health services and more.

One quarter of the church partners are in Riverside, Ortega or Southside. Ortega Methodist Church has been one since the beginning in 2006. Volunteer coordinator Kathy Nipper shares one of the most memorable host weeks.

"It was Christmas 2007 and the family arrived with a newborn baby boy. It was just an incredible way to remind us why we volunteer," she exclaimed. She added that being part of Family Promise has encouraged the church to do even more in the community. "Every group in our church helps during host week – families, singles, seniors, teenagers," she said.

Christmas week 2009 was the first time that St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lakewood hosted. "We weren't suppose to start until 2010 but Family Promise called and asked if we could take Christmas week," said Lynn Doiron, the church's volunteer coordinator, "We were debating if we could pull it off until someone quoted 'no room in the inn'. Then we committed!" She describes hosting "as the best thing we do". St. Mark's became involved when the church realized a homeless man was sleeping in its dumpster. The pastor and congregation decided to help homeless in Jacksonville and Family Promise was the answer.

"Being a host church has fundamentally changed our understanding of the homeless," said Bruce Jones, pastor of Southside United Methodist Church. "It allows us to develop relationships with hard working, honest people who have had a hard time." He compares it to a mission trip that doesn't requires traveling and believes that the experience helped Southside to become more mission driven.

"People have turned into leaders and become more confident about their contributions to the mission," said Kristin Adams of Riverside Baptist Church, "It has helped us to broaden our ability to gauge what is really important." She confessed to being nervous the last week that the church hosted. "We had to house one family downstairs because the teenage son had a broken leg. We are in the midst of a renovation and I was concerned about the mess. The family didn't care. They were just happy to be together."

Landschoot explains, "One critical difference from other shelters is we keep families together at all times." He added, "Even shelters that accept families require them to separate by gender in living and sleeping spaces. Fathers and teenage boys are housed separately from women and children even if they are a family. We are in the only shelter in Duval County that accommodates single fathers with children."

Anita Renfroe

Family Promise was founded more than 25 years ago in New York City. Today there are more than 180 affiliates across the country. "Nearly 40% of the homeless are now families with children," said Landschoot, "That's in contrast to the mid '80s when families were only 1% of the homeless." Every Duval County Public school has at least one homeless student. With Florida leading the nation on foreclosures, the situation will not change soon.

In Duval County the five agencies serving homeless families have a total of 158 emergency shelter beds for them. Among these agencies, the wait list exceeds more than 100 individuals on a year round basis.

"We receive a minimum of government funding," says Landschoot, "We rely on community funding to keep our doors open."

Help Family Promise and have fun doing it

Anita Renfroe became a viral hit four years ago with her YouTube video singing everything a mom says in a day to The William Tell Overture. This Christian comedian nails the funny side of life and parenting. Her only Florida show this year will be Friday, July 12 at 7 p.m. at CrossRoad Church. Tickets are on sale and can be purchased at www.familypromisejax.org or call 354-1818. Seating is limited, so don't wait!

CrossRoad Church is also the setting of Family Promise's Cardboard City November 15-16. Participants spend the night outside in cardboard boxes, tents or in cars to raise awareness of the homeless in Jacksonville while also raising money for Family Promise.

To learn more about Family Promise and how you can help homeless families, visit www.familypromisejax.org or call (904) 354-1818.

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Bicycling in Jacksonville not for faint of heart

Avid cyclists want safe, dedicated bike lanes

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

For a city that has one of the nation's most eclectic neighborhoods with environmentally-friendly residents and those who can be considered minimalists when it comes to bicycling over driving, Jacksonville has a terrible reputation. In fact, it has been rated the worst city in the U.S. for bicycling and the third highest for bicycling fatalities, according to the website Transportation for America.

In May 2010, Bicycling magazine named Jacksonville one of the three worst biking cities in America, along with Birmingham, AL and Memphis, TN. City Planner and Bike Coordinator James Reed said the article was unfair. At that time, according to the article, Reed said the city needed to brag about its cycling successes more.

But ask serious cyclists, like Drew Johnson of Avondale, whether Jacksonville is a cyclist-friendly city and the answer is a resounding "No!"

"Over the past several years I have seen multiple road projects in Jacksonville that have not provided bike lanes, or made it more dangerous for cyclists," said the owner of World Famous City Cycle on Park Street. "The S turn on St. Johns Avenue in Avondale was redesigned without bike lanes, and removed the median that cyclists used. The redesign and construction of San Marco Boulevard (a major bicycle route that connects the only bridge over the St Johns that bicycles can use) did not include bike lanes on San Marco or on the bridge."

Johnson also noted that the construction in front of The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens removed a lane and made it very dangerous for cyclists on a primary road connecting Riverside, the Arts Markets, and the Northbank Riverwalk to Downtown.

"In every case they [city planners] responded with poor excuses as to why they did not do their job correctly," said Johnson. "In all of these cases, bike lanes were not even considered, which is why Jacksonville has been rated the worst city in the U.S. for cycling."

There are many cyclists in the area, particularly the Riverside Avondale area, and the potential for many more, as long as there are adequate bicycle lanes.

Unfortunately, city planners and the Florida Department of Transportation have said "no" to bike lanes, according to Johnson, who said they did not put any effort or consideration into adding bicycle lanes. He added that such a stance violates Florida Statute 335.065, which states "Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities, including the incorporation of such ways into state, regional, and local transportation plans and programs. Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, or other change of any state transportation facility, and special emphasis shall be given to projects in or within 1 mile of an urban area."

There are three provisions for not requiring bicycle and pedestrian ways to be established: Where their establishment would be contrary to public safety; when the cost would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use, and where other available means or factors indicate an absence of need.

> "Over the past several years I have seen multiple road projects in Jacksonville that have not provided bike lanes, or made it more dangerous..."
>
> **Drew Johnson**
> Owner – City Cycle on Park Street

However, it seems that it's not just bureaucrats leaning on law who stand in the way of dedicated bicycle lanes. There are even some bicyclists that present obstacles.

At a Riverside Avondale Preservation meeting in May, a group of cyclists which included City Planner James Reed, Steve Tocknell, chairman of the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Jeff Holstein, First Coast Chapter Director of the Florida Bicycle Association, gave a presentation advocating against dedicated bicycle lanes, declaring them dangerous.

Instead, according to Johnson, this group promotes riding in the road alongside vehicular traffic (see www.iamtraffic.org). "They are extremists who believe they have the right to be in the road, and want to teach everyone how to ride in the road safely, with cars," said Johnson. "I have nothing against teaching everyone how to ride in traffic better, but I do not want to, and most people do not want to. We want to be as far away from cars as possible."

Fred Dale, one of Johnson's customers at City Cycle, attended the May 22 meeting as a member of a sub-committee working on a neighborhood parking pass proposal. He thought that the informal vote for shared lanes (sharrows) instead of dedicated bike lanes was not a good move. In a letter to Johnson, Dale shared, "I do not believe that most motorists understand or follow those shared lane signs. This is not just wild speculation; I've had a number of motorists yell at me to get off the road, while I was following the law. If the motorists are not paying attention now to an area already designated as share lane, that makes all of our neighborhood roads, in essence, shared lanes already, and this is a dangerous prospect."

In the meantime, back at City Hall, a position was approved back in February 2012 by the Special Committee on Context Sensitive Streets for a Planner III level bicycle/pedestrian coordinator.

According to Johnson, "We were told at the BPAC meeting in May it [the job opening] would be announced, and it was not. It was not announced at the June meeting. We did not find out the job was posted until 4 p.m. the last day it was accepting applications on June 13. I was told that they would give James Reed this position."

Reed, as readers will recall, was one of the three people who gave the presentation against dedicated bike lanes at the RAP meeting. At time of press, Reed had not returned a call from *The Resident* asking for confirmation or denial of the position.

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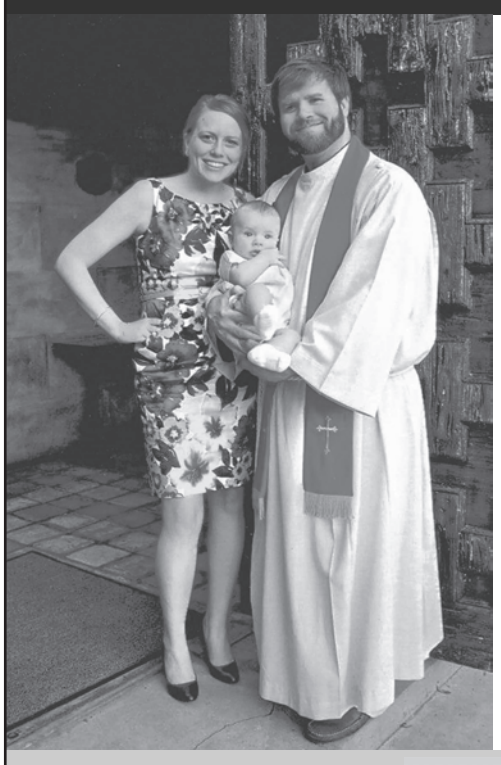

We are happy to introduce our new minister, Reverend Brock Adams, his wife Kristin and 6-month old son Henry Brockman Adams. Beyond his role at Riverside, Brock teaches Humanities, Literature, and Religion at Florida State College at Jacksonville and Jacksonville University. We invite your visit to hear our new voice and to add your voice to a beautiful Sunday Worship experience.

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Advocates 'blown away' by attorney's suggestion of giving trees, rivers legal rights

By Stephen Kindland
Resident Community News

St. Johns Riverkeeper Lisa Rinaman spoke out at the forum regarding adverse effects of the approval of the water-use permit.

Avondale resident Jennifer Virzera expected to hear the latest information about the future of Silver Springs when she attended a recent public forum at the Wyndham Hotel in downtown Jacksonville. What she came away with is a notion that is almost too good for many environmentalists to believe could ever become reality.

Virzera and many of the 275 other concerned citizens who took part in the June 17 forum were blown away by a concept introduced by attorney Patricia Siemen, one of several advocates who are protesting Adena Springs Ranch owner John Stronach's request to pump 5.3 million gallons of water a day from Silver Springs, Florida's first major tourist attraction and one of the largest artesian spring formations in the world that springs experts say is in decline.

Stronach wants to use the water for irrigation and to raise 15,000 head of cattle on about 25,000 acres of his ranch in Marion County, situated between Ocala and the Ocala National Forest.

Attorney and Dominican Sister Patricia Siemen was among several Silver Springs advocates who spoke to more than 275 people during a public forum held in June at the Wyndham Hotel in downtown Jacksonville – Photos by Stephen Kindland

Environmentalists who spoke during the forum believe that if the St. Johns River Water Management District approves Stronach's request, the effect would be devastating not only for Silver Springs, but the Silver River, the largest tributary on the Ocklawaha River that ultimately feeds the St. Johns.

Virzera already was familiar with the issue, but it was a concept presented by Siemen that caught her attention. Siemen, a Dominican Sister from Michigan and director of the Center for Earth Jurisprudence at the Barry University School of Law, introduced the notion of granting legal rights to natural entities such as trees, rivers and waterfowl that "blew her away."

Virzera said the concept gained credibility when Siemen said that Ecuador's Constitution has been protecting the rights of nature since 2008; and that the Whanganui River in New Zealand was given new life after being granted "personhood rights" last year.

"When she talked about Ecuador I got goose bumps," Virzera said. "This is the first time I've heard about something like that."

Alicia Smith of Riverside had a similar reaction.

"I'm happy to hear about the [idea]," Smith said. "I mean, a river is a living being. Why not fight for a river?"

After calling for a revamping of the American legal system in which "all living things" would have legal standing and could be represented by guardians, Siemen quickly placed into perspective that such change would is radical by pointing out that 150 years ago, "People thought slaves should have no rights."

But, she said, "Our current legal system will never get us out of the mess we're in."

Smith said she felt somewhat empowered by the concept, but conceded that "it's a good idea on paper" and would take a great deal of time and effort to materialize.

"Everyone was nodding their head," she said. "We were all thinking the same thing. It's a great concept, but how would you make that happen?"

Until then, environmental protection agencies such as St. Johns Riverkeeper will continue their fight against the Adena Springs Ranch water-use request.

Riverkeeper Lisa Rinaman, whose privately funded not-for-profit agency in downtown Jacksonville serves as a voice for the St. Johns River, said before the forum that the Silver Springs issue "is at the tipping point of disaster" and could have adverse effects locally if the water management district approves the water–use permit.

"Silver [River] makes its way to the St. Johns and it will hurt us," she said. "We have to look at the big picture. The stakes are high on both sides."

Speaker Robert Knight agreed.

"Silver [Springs] is going down fast," said Knight said, board president of the Florida Springs Institute that he helped to establish after state legislators all but abandoned their support of Silver Springs. "The death knell could be in our life time."

Knight, who also is an adjunct professor in the Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences at the University of Florida, said that most people are surprised to hear that those who pump water from Silver Springs are getting the water free.

"We shouldn't be doing that," he said.

Knight said during a previous forum that the time is now for concerned people to act.

"We all think we can do something about it," he said during a recent forum on the same topic. "We think by yelling enough and shining a bright light on these issues and putting facts out to the public that something will change.

"It's going to take a lot of public opinion changing to get our leaders to change what they're doing because everybody's…trying to build the economy; but we're doing it at the expense of Silver Springs.

"The threat to Silver Springs' future is a very big one a very real one," Knight said.

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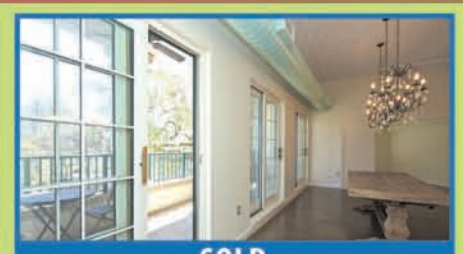

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1661 Riverside Ave # 201

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1843 Challen Ave - $939,000

4/3/1-3,968 sqft. Gorgeous brick home located just 3 houses from river. Downstairs offers a welcoming foyer with hand-waxed wallpaper, formal living room with fireplace & dining room overlooking private backyard.

SOLD

5040 Ortega Forest Dr

4/2/1-3000+ sqft. Enjoy the spectacular sunset views over the Ortega River from the expansive back yard of this waterfront home on almost 3/4 acre fenced lot. Large screened atrium with lush plants to enjoy the breezes. Fabulous oversized 3-car garage plus large storage room.

NEW PRICE

3255 Oak St - $745,000

4/3/2-5,107 sqft. Wow! Built in 1924, this gorgeous Mediterranean welcomes you home from the minute you step through the front door into the grand entry. Beautifully renovated, this home offers everything!

4338 Davinci Ave - $250,000

3/2-1608 sqft. Looking for a great home in a great area? This is it! Location and charm combine in this sweet gem. Great curb appeal and a lovely landscaped front yard replete with picket fence and arbor entrance greets your guest.

SOLD

4639 Iroquois Ave

4/3/1-3,017 sqft. This is a beautiful home in the heart of Ortega Terrace that has room for everyone! Formal living and dining rooms, huge family room, sun porch - the list goes on.

1537 Talbot Ave - $225,000

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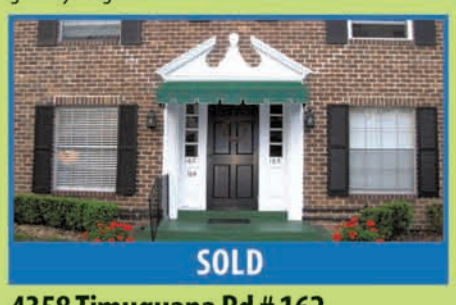
2970 Saint Johns Ave 10E - $220,000

3/2 - 1,822 sqft. Direct river views from almost every room. This estate condition original floor plan E unit has a large entry foyer, living room/dining room combo and a 3rd bedroom that can be fully opened to the living area, and a large balcony that overlooks the trees and river.



SOLD

4358 Timuquana Rd # 162

2/1-809 sqft. This desirable ground floor 2 bedroom brick unit is located in the private setting at the back of the complex just steps away from the laundry facility. The unit is light and bright with neutral décor.

3644 Richmond St - $3,995,000

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1348 Ingleside Ave - $200,000

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2064 Herschel St - $185K-$275K

Chelsea Lofts are now selling in 5pts. 4 units available in various sizes all with 2 full baths. Construction quality is high and fees are low. Walk to just about everywhere you would want to go!

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1158 Wycoff Ave - $120,000

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SOLD

2970 St. Johns Ave #1A

3/2-Beautifully updated first floor unit. Custom floor to ceiling shutters. The 3rd bedroom has been converted into a den. You can hear the river!

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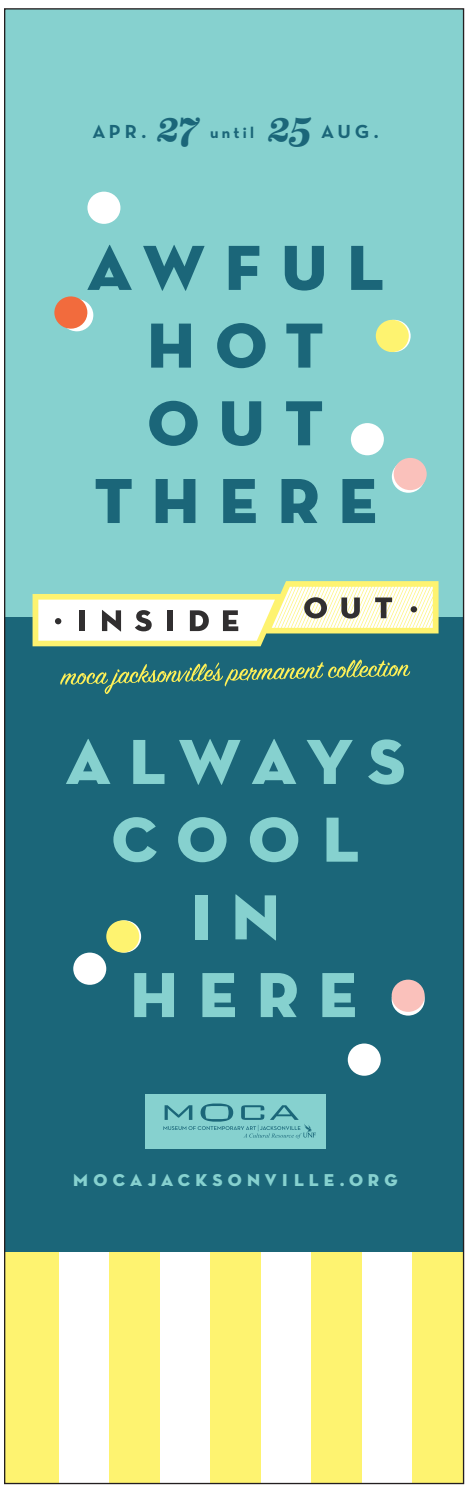

Jessie Ball duPont Fund to repurpose the Haydon Burns Library

Downtown building to provide green home for nonprofit, philanthropic organizations

By Nancy Lee Bethea
Resident Community News

The Haydon Burns Library, located at the corner of Downtown's Ocean and Adams streets, housed books, periodicals, music and more for four decades. Now it holds collective memories of generations who grew up watching puppet shows or fingering their way through wooden drawers of a card catalog.

With the due diligence review of the Haydon Burns Library completed June 19, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund's plans to repurpose the structure into a hub for philanthropic and nonprofit organizations are moving ahead. The building may be ready for occupancy in late 2014 or early 2015.

The 90-day review revealed no cost-prohibitive environmental issues with the building, according to Sherry Magill, President of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, but there are some mechanical considerations.

Converting the structure built in the mid-1960s into one with a light carbon footprint will be challenging, Magill said. Preliminary plans include transforming the roof proper into a 'cool' roof, installing low-flow toilets and faucets to conserve water and using energy-efficient lighting to save money. "The garden on the Forsyth Street side can be used to help recycle water," she added.

Bringing the Library up to speed technologically is another consideration. A building-wide technology strategy will be developed along with plans for construction, interior design and occupancy.

In a broader sense, the Library's downtown location with its proximity to the St. Johns River, the local business community, the local government and the Chamber of Commerce will benefit the nonprofit sector, Magill said.

In addition, the community at large will profit from investment in Downtown. "We hope to contribute in our own small way to the restoration of what clearly could be a great place to live, play, and work," Magill said. "We hope to also illustrate that downtown Jacksonville matters a great deal, and that it is a neat place to be. It's beautiful. The historic buildings are incredible and worth repurposing," she added.

Still, downtown Jacksonville battles for positive public perception. A dearth of free parking is one factor, according to Magill. "We have more [parking] than we need," she said, "but it's not free."

Crime is another factor keeping people in the suburbs, Magill said, yet crime rates are down. In fact, statistics from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office show a decrease in violent crimes from 8,032 in 2008 to 5,168 in 2012 and in property crimes from 46,198 in 2008 to 34,674 in 2012.

Potential tenants of a repurposed Haydon Burns Library are yet to be determined although the duPont Fund plans to survey interested parties next spring before space planners tackle the interior, Magill shared. The duPont Fund, now housed in the Wells Fargo Building (formerly the Independent Life Building), will move into the Haydon Burns.

Magill sees the Haydon Burns as a future center of thoughtfulness and planning where nonprofit organizations, which represent up to 10 percent of the work force, will co-locate. "Does everyone need their own kitchen? No," Magill said figuratively. Co-locating is beneficial because it can produce efficient operating budgets which can yield more money for use in the community.

To Magill, the building will give the area's 'idea people' time and space to work together for the public good.

"I've heard from a range of people, and the sentiment is the same," Magill said. "They've come out of the woodwork to say, 'Thank you for saving that building,' or 'Oh please, buy that building!'"

"The public owned it," she added, "and this too will have a public purpose."

Willowbranch library, among others, in jeopardy of closing

Brett Waller, a volunteer for Save Jacksonville Libraries, gathered petition signatures for the straw ballot campaign in front of the entrance of Willowbranch Library. With him is Riverside resident Jonathan Rogers

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

As popular as electronic readers are, not everyone embraces e-books. Some folks can't afford them, especially large families because, of course, every reading child would need to have his or her own. Others still enjoy the page-turning pleasure of a paper book. Some people like visiting the library on a regular basis and others need the free online services offered at public libraries.

Unfortunately, to comply with a budget cut ordered by the Mayor's Office, the Jacksonville Library Board is planning to close six libraries, end Sunday hours, reduce Main Library hours by eight hours a week and reduce the materials budget by $251.000. The final decision will be made by City Council for the budget which takes effect Oct. 1.

Unless help comes from somewhere, the cuts, in order of priority, are to first reduce Main Library hours and end Sunday Library service throughout the city. Next, close Maxville Library, Brentwood Library, San Marco Library, Willowbranch Library, University Park Library and Beaches Library and, finally, reduce materials budget by $251,000. Closing a library means removing all of the books, shelves, etc. and leaving an empty building, presumably to be used for some other purpose or sold.

The City Council of Neptune Beach passed a resolution on June 17 to formally notify the City of Jacksonville that closing the Beaches Library would violate a previous Interlocal agreement mandating the provision of library services. Unfortunately, the other five libraries don't have such an agreement.

Public reaction to these drastic steps could bring some change before the Mayor presents his budget to the City Council in July.

Straw ballot campaign underway

As part of its advocacy activities in support of libraries, Save Our Public Libraries, Inc. is supporting a straw ballot campaign to determine if there is public support for the creation of a Duval County Library District, similar to the successful independent districts in Alachua County and Orange County, Florida.

Nearly 26,000 petitions from registered voters are being sought to place this nonbinding straw ballot on the ballot in 2014. As of June 30, there were over 13,000 signatures collected.

The campaign has the support of the governing boards of The Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library, Inc. and the Jacksonville Libraries Foundation, Inc. To get on board with the campaign, visit www.savejaxlibraries.com.

Leadership Jacksonville taps new leaders for yearly program

Leadership Jacksonville, an organization that develops youth and adult leaders in Northeast Florida, recently celebrated the graduation of its 2013 class, pictured, including area residents Jonathan Cantor, Angela Gieras, Michael Miller, Jamie Shelton, Nicole Thomas and Rollin Isbell.

The year-long program brings together approximately 50 leaders from throughout the community to learn about the First Coast, build relationships with other leaders and analyze major areas of community concern.

"Like all of our previous classes, this year's graduating class is comprised of some of the best and brightest leaders in Northeast Florida," said Justin Terry, executive vice president at Harden and president of the Leadership Jacksonville Board of Directors. "The Leadership Jacksonville program not only provides opportunities for open dialogue between those with diverse perspectives, it also examines leadership styles and promotes a network of community trustees committed to the greater good of Northeast Florida."

Leadership Jacksonville also selected its 2014 class, which includes residents Michael Maguire, Dana Kriznar, Linda Levin, Michael McCoy, Richard Schart, Valerie Stanley and Alexander Sifakis. They will participate in two weekend retreats, one in August and one in May, nine day-long programs and independent course work. The opening retreat provides structured exercises that explore the dynamics of the urban society, leadership styles and decision-making through group process.

"The Leadership Jacksonville program serves as an excellent opportunity for all those involved to learn about Jacksonville's assets and its potential in critical areas, leading to a deeper understanding of the community at large," said Jill Langford Dame, executive director for Leadership Jacksonville. "We applaud our 2013 graduates and look forward to working with the 2014 class."

A conscientious effort is made to select participants who will represent a cross-section of the community in terms of sex, race, age, income level and occupations. Classes are carefully balanced to represent the composition of the community. To learn more about Leadership Jacksonville and its programs, visit www.leadershipjax.org or call (904) 396-6263.

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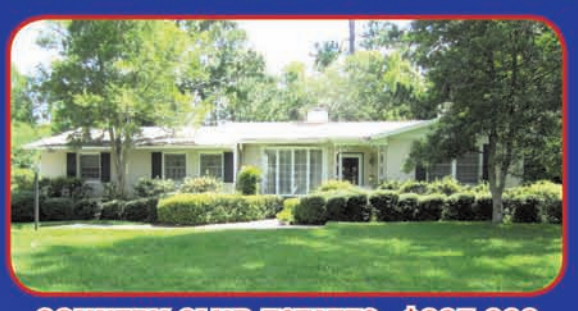

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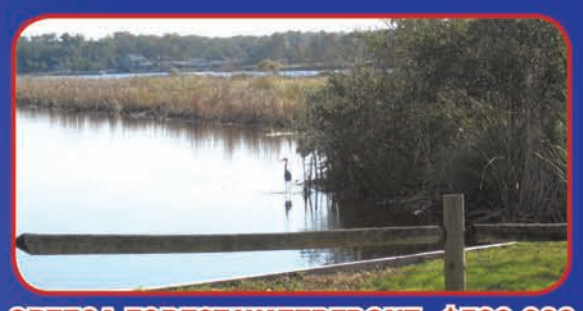

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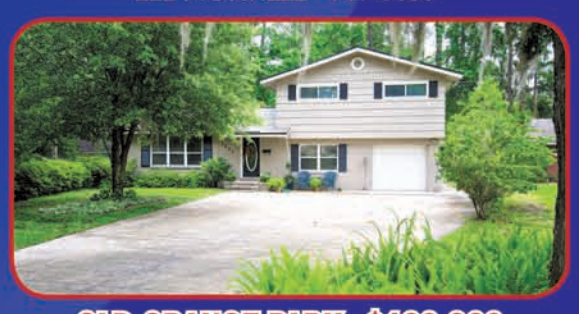

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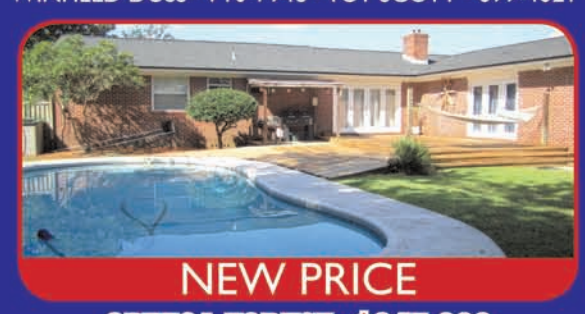

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Agencies and businesses work together to save homeless pets

Front, Nikki Harris, ACPS, Dione Garnand, FOJA, Nancy Williams, Haskell; back: Becky Hamilton, FOJA, Kelly Warren, FOJA, Jill Mero, FOJA/Watson Realty, Margie Yarborough, FOJA, and Kim Pugh, Haskell

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Nancy Williams of The Haskell Group, who is also a volunteer with Friends of Jacksonville Animals, recently invited Riverside area businesses to a luncheon for the purpose of getting information out about Animal Care and Protective Services (ACPS) and what the area businesses can do to help in the animal shelter's foster and adoption programs.

When it comes to caring for animals without homes, Jacksonville is unique, according to Nikki Harris, shelter manager for ACPS, who has worked in shelters in other cities. "To see this many agencies cooperating without badmouthing doesn't happen in other places. We have good partners who are not competitive."

Harris shared that, as a city organization, the shelter cannot apply for or receive grants, but partners, such as Friends of Jacksonville Animals (FOJA), can get grants to hire and place animal care givers at the ACPS shelter. She noted too, that the Jacksonville Humane Society, recently received a grant from Best Friends Animals which enabled the JHS to take overflow animals from ACPS.

"Since October (2012), we've saved 90 percent of animals that have come through our door," said Harris. "We take in about 20,000 dogs and cats each year and so far in June (as of the 19th) we've admitted over 900 and not even 50 percent have been adopted."

The shelter manager also said that while they strive to be a no-kill shelter, they are not. "We expect to euthanize between two and four thousand per year," Harris continued.

ACPS lost 18 employees through budget cuts in 2012 and are facing more in October. The current staff of 40 is stretched thin, so volunteers are critical. Any time, even as little as a 15-minute walk with a dog or two, is appreciated. "Dogs are only guaranteed one walk per day," Harris shared.

Becky Hamilton, vice president of the heartworm program at FOJA, said that FOJA completely funds the heartworm treatments at the shelter. The all-volunteer, nonprofit group includes professionals such as Jill Mero, a realtor with Watson Realty of San Marco, and Kelly Warren, director of Student Life at Florida State College-Jacksonville. Warren is both a foster volunteer and photographs the animals for marketing. Margie Yarborough, one of FOJA's founders, was at the luncheon.

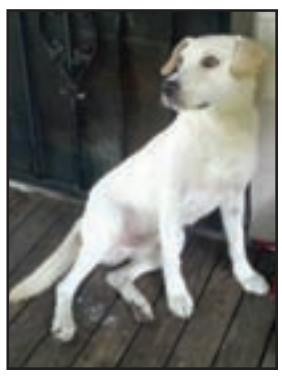
The luncheon was held on June 19 at the Haskell Building. Several businesses were invited; those who sent representatives included Bryant Miller Olive, CSX and EverBank. Kelly Kinney represented CSX, which has an animal advocacy group. The Haskell Group has also hosted onsite animal adoptions for homeless pets being fostered.

Samantha Collins and Janice Love of The Jacksonville Landing were also present and spoke about the spring and fall Yappy Hour events that encourage BYOD (Bring Your Own Dog) and offer a pet expo, dog contests, live music, giveaways and more. Follow YappyHourJax on Facebook or www.JacksonvilleLanding.com for more information.

Lost senior dog in Avondale area

Missing since Monday, 6/10/13
Female – shepherd cross called "Angel", 8 – 9 years old, that weighs 60 pounds. Mostly tan with a few white markings. She lives in the 3800 block of Walsh Street. Seen just after midnight on Thursday, 6/13/13, near the Boone Park tennis courts, and on Friday, 6/14/13, on Herschel Street and Edgewood Avenue (near Grace Church). Last spotted on Tuesday 6/18/13, near Park and Stockton. Please call 384-6056 if you see her! There's a reward for her safe return.

Good with children and other animals; needs a home



This un-neutered male yellow Labrador mix was found two weeks ago in the area. The person who found him hoped to find his owner, but she cannot keep him any longer. The dog was taken to Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services at 2020 Forest Street on July 2. The animal shelter is over-capacity right now, so that is a dangerous place for him to land. You will have to visit the shelter to rescue him.

It is estimated that he weighs about 40 - 45 pounds, appears healthy, and is likely about 1-2 years old. He has been good with a child and another male dog, but will need a yard with a solid fence, as he is an escape artist.

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Sweet reality show set in historic Springfield

Peter, Allison and Daniell Behringer of Sweet Pete's Candy at the reality show premiere

Jacksonville, more specifically, historic Springfield, has a new celebrity in town. From Peter and Allison Behringer, the folks who brought you sea salt caramels and other delectable organic candies, comes a new reality show, Sweet Pete's The Show.

According to Behringer's publicist Chris Sams, Sweet Pete's The Show is visually stunning programming with a full dose of drama and excitement, often featuring family-friendly messages. "It's candy insanity rolled into a reality series about Jacksonville's very own confectionary genius whose all-natural sweets are handmade in a magical setting surrounded by his sometimes unpredictable, yet good-natured partners, staff and customers," said Sams.

The Resident reached out to Allison Behringer for insights on the experience.

Q. Were you surprised by the turnout at the premiere?

A. We knew that the premiere was booked and we had to turn people away that called the Shoppe and wanted tickets. Daniell (10) was excited about all of the hoopla although he is still playing it cool.

Q. Having film crews around while trying to take care of business must have been a challenge. Were there times you felt like dunking someone's head into a vat of chocolate? How did you cope with constantly being "on"?

A. The show is unscripted so we just do what we do and the cameras capture the fun. The hardest part is that candy is very time sensitive so if the cameras miss a great shot it is hard to replicate. Pete struggled at times with trying to make sure the candy came off of the stove, hook etc. at a time the cameras were ready. In terms of being on, we tried to forget the cameras were there. We want the show to be real. The realness of small business in any industry is that people are not always on, there are highs and lows. Luckily, everything ends sweetly with candy!

Q. Are you hoping this takes off for national syndication? If so, what kind of film schedule would be required to fill a season's worth of shows?

A. We are hoping the show is picked up nationally. Our Executive Producer, Michelle Bazhaw, is working toward that goal. In terms of scheduling we are in a very predictable business. We know each year which days are our busiest. We also do many events that bring in large crowds. We will schedule filming around these busy days/weeks.

Q. Finally, has the show created a spike in business?

A. Absolutely, we are having a great time meeting new customers who found out about Sweet Pete's because of the show. We have also booked more parties and field trips. Kids are excited to see us on television and then come in and have a party.

For a glimpse into the crazy, madcap business of making candy, take in the program, which airs on Sundays at 8 p.m. on CW 17.

Match made in media heaven

Ilyssa Trussel and Joe Drumm covered a lot of stories together but their favorite is the one that didn't make the evening news – their personal love story.

Trussel came to Jacksonville in 2007 as a reporter for Action News where Drumm was working as a videographer. Drumm says he had his eye on the blonde reporter right away, even though she was focused on her new job.

A few days after Trussel started at the station, the two were paired up to cover a story in Brunswick, GA. Trussel said she recalls being nervous because they were the lead story at 5 p.m. Drumm, a Philadelphia native who is known his care-free and laid back personality, had a way of putting Trussel's mind at ease while standing on the other side of the camera. For several months the two were nothing more than co-workers and friends. But eventually, their relationship blossomed into something more romantic, and Drumm eventually asked his co-worker on a date.

Trussel now works in Marketing and Communications at St. Vincent's HealthCare. Drumm is still in the TV news business and works as a special projects videographer for WJXT, Channel 4 News. The two live on the Southside and make the drive to San Marco and Riverside each day.

They exchanged vows during a seaside ceremony at Serenata Beach Club in South Ponte Vedra Beach on April 13 and the Drumms honeymooned in Hawaii. Ilyssa and Joe's story may have just begun – but so far the two say it's the happiest and most memorable one they've covered.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Weather Engineers celebrates 50 years in Riverside

Weather Engineers Inc., located in Riverside since 1963, is celebrating 50 years of service this year to the local communities in North Florida and Southeast Georgia.

According to daughter-in-law Patty Griffin, "Weather Engineers was started by James Griffin, Sr. with one truck and one desire: to be the best A/C and heating company in Jacksonville. Today those dreams have been accomplished with more than 40 trucks and 90 employees serving long time residential, commercial and industrial customers."

Griffin Sr. is living and his son Dan (aka James Jr.) is now at the helm and serving as the current CEO and president. The third generation, grandson James III (23), a technician, and granddaughter Kayla (21), in accounting, are currently active and will be in leadership roles before long. "They are poised to take over the company in the future," said Patty. "We have a large following of customers and are known for giving back to the community in various forms and proud to be a part of Jacksonville's heritage of a thriving local company."

Channel 4 viewers are most likely familiar with the commercial's tagline: "We're your inside weather guys"…"and gals, too, Dad!" For more information call (904) 356-3963 or visit www. weatherengineers.com.

Terry Vereen Plumbing celebrates 30 great years

Terry Vereen Plumbing, Inc. is celebrating 30 years as a family plumbing business based in Jacksonville. The company specializes in residential and commercial plumbing repairs, re-piping and remodeling, providing Jacksonville, Orange Park and the surrounding areas with quality plumbing repairs and service at fair prices since 1983.

"No job is too big – or too small," said Alyce Smith, office manager. "Our plumbers are knowledgeable and experienced in all types of plumbing, from repairs to whole house re-piping."

Terry Vereen Plumbing offers Saturday service at weekday rates (until 3 p.m.) as well as 24-hour emergency plumbing service. Call (904) 384-5661 for details or just to say, "Congrats!"

Baptist Health adds four new members to Board of Directors

Baptist Health Foundation announced four additions to its Board of Directors, including Avondale resident Dan Edelman, CPA, managing partner of the Florida practice of Dixon Hughes PLLC. A certified public account with 30 years of experience, Edelman concentrates on general business consulting. He also serves as chairman of the Jacksonville Public Library Foundation Board and on Kipp Jacksonville Schools Board of Directors.

The other three directors include William Mason, Ed.D, FACHE, President Emeritus of Baptist Health; Jane Rollinson, president and CEO of Criterion Consulting Solutions where she heads the Healthcare Division; and Terry West, president and CEO of VyStar Credit Union.

Riverside woman winner of international photo competition

Roxanne Henkle accepts her new Dahon Vitesse bicycle from Mark Fetzer, co-owner of Lakeshore Bicycle

Roxanne Henkle's winning photo in the Dahon 30th Anniversary International Photography Competition

Roxanne Henkle, Riverside resident and employee at Inky Fingers in 5 Points, is a serious cycler. It wasn't enough that she already had a Dahon folding bicycle as well as several others, but she just had to win another Dahon bike.

The international company sponsored a photography competition last year in celebration of its 30th anniversary. Henkle was the first place winner in the Americas category (North, Central and South America) for an artistic photo of her Dahon folding bike against a mural at the Wynwood Walls in Miami.

As a Dahon dealer, Lakeshore Bicycles, 2108 Blanding Blvd., was able to provide Henkle with her prize last month.

Rev. Proctor joins St. Mark's Episcopal as Associate Rector

Tallahassee native the Rev. Richard Proctor joined St. Mark's Episcopal as Associate Rector for Youth and Young Adults. His wife, the Rev. Emily Proctor, was hired at Lakewood Presbyterian Church as Interim Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults.

Proctor attended the University of the South and graduated from Florida State University. He earned his Master of Divinity Degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA in 2009, which is where he met his wife. After completing a yearlong residency as a hospital chaplain in Atlanta, Proctor earned his Master of Sacred Theology degree in Anglican Studies at the General Theological Seminary in New York in 2011. He served at St. John's Church, Western Run Parish in Reisterstown, MD for the past two years.

Proctor is excited to be moving back to his home state and looking forward to raising a family here. His friends call him Proc and he has asked that the youth call him Father Proc.

Ortega woman receives Excellence in Education award

St. Mark's Episcopal Day School and the Board of Trustees named Beville Anderson, Director of Christian Education, Service Learning Coordinator, and Guidance Counselor, as the 2012-2013 school year recipient of the Nancy N. Wood Excellence in Education Award. Anderson was nominated for her positive attitude and active support of students, faculty and parents of the school.

Anderson has a Bachelor's of Art in Communications from Vanderbilt University, a Master's of Science in Counseling Education from Duquesne University and has been with St. Mark's for six years. She has been selected to present on the topic "Serving to Learn, Learning to Serve" at the Florida Council of Independent Schools conference in November.

In 2001, the Board established the award to recognize and reward teachers or staff members who consistently and unselfishly go above and beyond normal expectations of time, energy, and devotion in working with students. Named in honor of retired, past Headmistress Nancy N. Wood, the award is presented annually to a faculty or staff member who personifies quality in their teaching and in their influence on student learning.

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Carroll's Original Meat Shoppe more than just meat, it's an experience

For quality fruits, vegetables, seafood and, oh yes, meat…the place to go is Carroll's Meat Shoppe, 6861 St. Augustine Road in Lakewood. Be prepared to spend time browsing the baskets and bins of seasonally fresh fruits and vegetables, then tear yourself away and head for the meat counter at the rear of the store, where you'll find choice cuts of beef, pork and poultry and you can get it fresh, smoked or fresh frozen.

Since 1966, Herman "Smitty" Shuman has been a tradition for at least two generations of discerning meat lovers, beginning with his Pearl Street shop at a time when Shuman worked for the City of Jacksonville in the Parks Department. After 25 years he retired in 1976 to devote himself full time to bringing quality meats all the way from Iowa to Jacksonville households.

At the June 1 ribbon-cutting for the new store in Lakewood, John Rose (president and husband of Shuman's granddaughter Krista) had this to say about the founder: "He is the most loving man I have ever met and I think that's why he's done so well. Over 350 people showed up for his retirement from the City in 1976; that's how well liked he was."

New, full-service salon and day spa opens in the Shoppes of Avondale

Blush Beauty Salon and Day Spa is open for business at 3653 St. Johns Avenue in the historic Shoppes of Avondale. Owner Cortesa Coleman offers "everything hair", facials and makeup, mani- and pedicures and more. Having started an online cosmetics company two years ago after working many years in the healthcare industry, Coleman wanted a physical location for that business plus more. "Beauty has always been my passion and I wanted to follow it and get out of the corporate environment,"said Coleman. "I like this area and when this space became available, I knew it was the right thing for me."

Coleman's products are organic and she serves all hair types and ethnicities. The shop is open Monday through Saturday. Call (904) 370-3326 for an appointment; walk-ins welcome!

Business offers means for smooth sailing for area sailors

After more than 25 years in the biomedical industry, Tom White wanted a change of pace. Eight years ago, White decided to follow his passion for sailing and learn how to sew.

"I had four sisters who sewed so I knew I could learn, too," said White. He took four weeks' vacation from his job and learned to sew sails from a shop in Washington. After quitting his job as a biomedical technician, White opened Winddancer Sailmakers on San Juan Avenue, renting a small building. When a larger building came on the market just across the street, White didn't hesitate. He bought it for its bigger space, taller ceilings and…air-conditioning.

As the only sailmaker in the Jacksonville area, White enjoys the challenges of selling, servicing and sewing. And, when he has the time, sailing his own Hunter 320.

Winddancer Sailmakers is located at 4746 San Juan Avenue; phone is (904) 384-3102.

Jacksonville Bar Association elects Gillam new president

Outgoing president Ray Driver with new Jacksonville Bar Association president W. Braxton Gillam, IV

W. Braxton Gillam, IV, Esq. of Ortega Forest was sworn in as president of the Jacksonville Bar Association on June 14. An attorney with Milam Howard, Gillam is Board certified in business litigation and has practiced law for 16 years. He has served on the JBA Board of Governors for nine years, the JBA Young Lawyers Board of Governors for five years, and also served as president of the JBA Young Lawyers.

"Having the opportunity to serve as the president of this organization for the coming year is a very humbling experience, but I am excited to get started," Gillam said.

The Jacksonville Bar is a voluntary organization made up of over 2000 members. This year the JBA sponsored over 27 separate continuing legal education opportunities, organized training for volunteer attorney ad litem training, assisted in fundraising and promoting volunteerism for legal aid organizations, managed the residential mortgage foreclosure mediation program for the Fourth Judicial Circuit, and partnered with Duval County School Board to assist with the reintroduction of civics education to seventh grade students in public school.

Gillam received his law degree from Florida State University with honors and was an Ausley Scholarship recipient. His undergraduate degree was earned at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was a John Motley Morehead Scholar.

Avondale office welcomes top producing realtor

Prudential Network Realty recently welcomed top producer Nicole Dana to its Avondale/Ortega sales team.

Dana has been a REALTOR® for 13 years, working in the sales and marketing of five luxury hi-rise condominiums from Ft. Lauderdale to Jacksonville. Most recently she has been the top producing site sales/rental representative at The Peninsula Condominiums in downtown Jacksonville. When not selling real estate, Nicole devotes her time and energy to working on the board of directors of Don't Miss A Beat, a non-profit benefiting the children of the Brooklyn Community in Riverside. "I enjoy making people's dreams of living in The Peninsula a reality," shared Dana. "I am so happy to have worked hard and to now be able to say that the sell-out of the Peninsula is 100% complete. Downtown Jacksonville is becoming the place to live. The growth and development that the city is experiencing is exciting to watch and I am proud to be a part of it and excited to join the Prudential Network Realty team."

"We are very excited to have her professionalism and expertise added to our team," added Sheron Wilson, broker/manager of the office.

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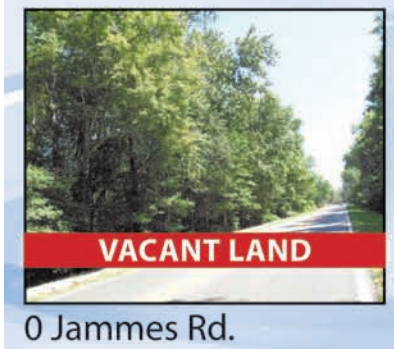

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FINEST OF THE CF FINEST MAKES $5,000 DIFFERENCE

Ryan Switzer and Chase O'Steen

Brooke Adams and Andrea Hartley

Whitney Roberts of San Marco proved to be the finest of "Jacksonville's Finest" during a recent dinner held at the Omni Jacksonville Hotel to honor dozens of young professionals who helped the local chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation meet its financial goal during the agency's 16th annual fundraiser.

Roberts used a letter campaign, social media and personal phone calls to raise more than $5,000, well above the minimum commitment of $1,500.

"It's pretty awesome," said Roberts, who has been working with cystic fibrosis patients at Wolfson Children's Hospital since moving to Jacksonville from Annapolis, MD two years ago. "It's an honor to help find a cure.

"I don't think a lot of people realize how devastating cystic fibrosis is," she said. "I've lost a few patients already."

Chapter officials used the theme "Jacksonville's Finest" to recruit dozens of young professionals, all of whom helped the chapter meet its goal of $75,000. Development director Lynn Betros said she was delighted with the results, given that her agency has undergone a major restructuring and did not hold a fundraiser last year.

"It went very well," Betros said. "They all did a phenomenal job, and I'm so proud of Whitney. She's got a lot of passion about cystic fibrosis, and it shows."

FRIENDS AND PATRONS ENJOY ROCK OPERA AT HOME OF HISTORIAN

Dr. Wayne Wood and Douglas Coleman teamed up to help local author, playwright, singer and musician Jennifer Chase bring to life the rich history of the French in Jacksonville.

Musical excerpts of Chase's rock opera "La Caroline" were performed live by the fabulous cast and band at the Riverside home of Dr. Wayne Wood on June 29 while guests enjoyed French wines served by Doug Coleman, executive director of Jacksonville Sister Cities, and eclectic Euro/Florida cuisine prepared by Elaine Wheeler. Funds raised will support the local and international productions in Jacksonville and its Sister City Nantes, France.

"I'm excited about the opportunities to show how we can contribute to our city," said Chase, a professor of creative writing and English composition at FSCJ. "I'm a custodian of what I value in this city and uncover the connections with other cities. This play covers the best and the worst of us as human beings."

La Caroline is a groundbreaking and contemporary new rock opera steeped in North Florida and European history, written by Chase, with music by John E. Citrone. It is the story of the founding of the first French Colony, by French Huguenot René Laudonnière in 1564, and his interactions with the Timucua people. Through history and different characters' perspectives, the play examines relevant social issues in today's world as well. The play and its writers were awarded a residency for development at the prestigious CAP 21 Musical Theatre Conservatory in NYC.

Barry Parker, Hila Head, Ali Wade and Chris Bartkowiak

Kathleen King and playwright Jennifer Chase

Host Wayne Wood with Sheila Kloc and Francois Kloc, Consul Honoraire de France

Sharon Whipple and Michael Cerni

Vernon Myers, Mayor of the City of Palatka, with Mary and Douglas Coleman

Daniel Austin, Ryan Arroyo, Brandon Mayes, Ron Shreve

JCCI FORWARD HOLDS PROM WITH A VENGEANCE

Keith Davidson and Molly Wahl

Katie Ross, Alexis Lambert, Diane Donaldson, Megan Liss

WJCT Studios jumped in to save the day when JCCI Forward's original location for its 3rd annual prom event had been double booked with a high school prom. The event celebrated the organization's mission with style. Forward brings Jacksonville's emerging leaders together to learn about the community, engage in problem solving, and act to make positive community change.

According to Michele Simkulet, director of JCCI Forward, almost 100 grownups bought tickets to support JCCI Forward and shake their money makers to the sounds of '70s, '80s and '90s tunes. Attendees came dressed in prom garb from the past, the tackier the better. Sponsors were Vestcor, Watson Realty/Juliette C.D. Vaughn, and BroadBased Communications. Munchies were provided by On the Fly and Le Petite Cheri Cupcakery while Team Black served up crisp cold Intuition Aleworks beer.

GUILD PRESENTS BIG CHECK TO JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY

The San Jose Country Club was the place to be on June 4, when the Guild of the Jacksonville Symphony celebrated the installation of new officers at its annual luncheon. In addition, outgoing president Alberta Hipps presented a check for $40,000 to Symphony president David Pierson and Chairman of the Board Richard Pierpont. Two scholarships were given to Andrew Callahan and Michael Kuhn, members of the Youth Orchestra.

The new 2013-2014 Guild officers are Allene Groote, president; Monica Boccieri, secretary; Pat Teems, treasurer; Jane Estes, special events treasurer; Wendy Catucci, vice president Ways and Means; Marge Burgess and Dorothy Nutant, vice presidents, Membership; Hope Ferrigno and Marcia Gardini, vice presidents, JSA Activities; Sue Ashby, Kathy Cosnotti, Susan Kelley and Suzy Wolff, advisory committee; Pat Manko, parliamentarian, and Sandi Hibbard, public relations.

Outgoing Guild President Alberta Hipps presented a $40,000 check to Jacksonville Symphony Board chairman Richard Pierpont, left, and president David Pierson, right, far right, Peter Wright, principle clarinetist

Ask a Pastor

The Gospel at St. Lillian's

Local minister shares faith and a beer

By Peggy Harrell Jennings
Resident Community News

Food, fun and fellowship. Sounds like the makings of a good old Methodist dinner on the grounds or a not-so-typical evening at Lillian's Sports Grill in Venetia.

On NFL Draft night the place was packed with sports enthusiasts as Pastor Mike Hudson of Ortega United Methodist Church answered questions of a theological nature surround by pool tables, Corona light ads, energetic cheers, laughter and secular entertainment. Not exactly the kind of conversations one expects to find as kids run in and out of the game room, people joke (and cuss) as they throw back a few beers.

There is something for everyone at Lillian's – good food, drinks, great service and now a place to find the answers to life's most perplexing problems or at least get headed in the right direction to find answers.

It was "Ask the Pastor Night" and Hudson had his work cut out for him competing with giant flat screen TVs hailing the selection of various football heroes. Someone in the "congregation " said he might have had better attendance if it weren't for the competition – after all football and football players are revered as much as the Lord himself in some instances. Just check out church attendance on Jaguars Sunday!

Straining to be heard and for those in the "congregation" straining to hear, Pastor Mike was bombarded with questions that put him in the hot seat.

"If God loves us why do we suffer?"

"Do you believe everything that's written in the Bible?"

"Why should I care about gay marriage?"

"Why would God let a child die?"

As a messenger of God's love and concern for us and as a guy who enjoys friendly conversation what better place for a minister to speak than in a place where everyone has a sense of common ground? Interestingly, the church folks who attended had a lot of questions. One would think they got their answers at church but as one fellow remarked, "On Sunday morning you go to a service, listen to a sermon, sing, pray and go home. There's no question and answer period."

Another man commented that he thought Hudson was pretty courageous to put himself into the midst of the bar and try to talk over the raucous laughter, blaring televisions and clinking glasses, especially on NFL night.

How wonderful and courageous that Lillian's was open to hosting this "Ask the Pastor" event.

No one was rude or disrespectful although one guy did a rather amusing parody of genuflecting. People interviewed said that they like being with friends in the laid back atmosphere of Lillian's and it is easier to ask questions while in your comfort zone. One guy noted "especially after I've had a few beers."

Jesus himself hung out with some Biblical desperados…despised tax collectors, women of ill repute and drunkards. He did not have a church building but did his sermons outside, at friends' houses, while fishing or while changing water into wine at a wedding.

Pastor Mike's casual good humor and open manner make it easy for people to feel comfortable asking questions which might otherwise not be addressed with a minister.

He affirms that each of us was made deliberately; we have inherent worth because we are made in the image of God. We are all broken in different ways or we may have broken the covenant but we are loved and we are cherished beings worthy of redemption.

Lolly Mahns, manager of Lillian's, says she received nothing but positive feedback from Pastor Mike's visit. Even if the regulars didn't join in they were engaged and listening. Mahns says it gives a new meaning to what church is all about: "It's not all a bunch of don'ts…you can eat some wings, have a drink and not be a bad person. Mike is such a nice man. It shows that you can be a Christian and still be a cool guy."

She is looking forward to his next visit so keep your eyes open for the next Ask the Pastor Night at Lillian's and come for some good old Methodist fellowship, food and fun.

John Fox summed it up by saying that "Mike is ready to get into the pit" and he probably means that in more ways than one. As a NASCAR fan Hudson would love to be in the pit or in the driver's seat! Look for Pastor Mike at Lillian's. As Jesus said to the tax collector, "I'm coming to your house."

"We're hoping that soon it will become routine practice," McRae said.

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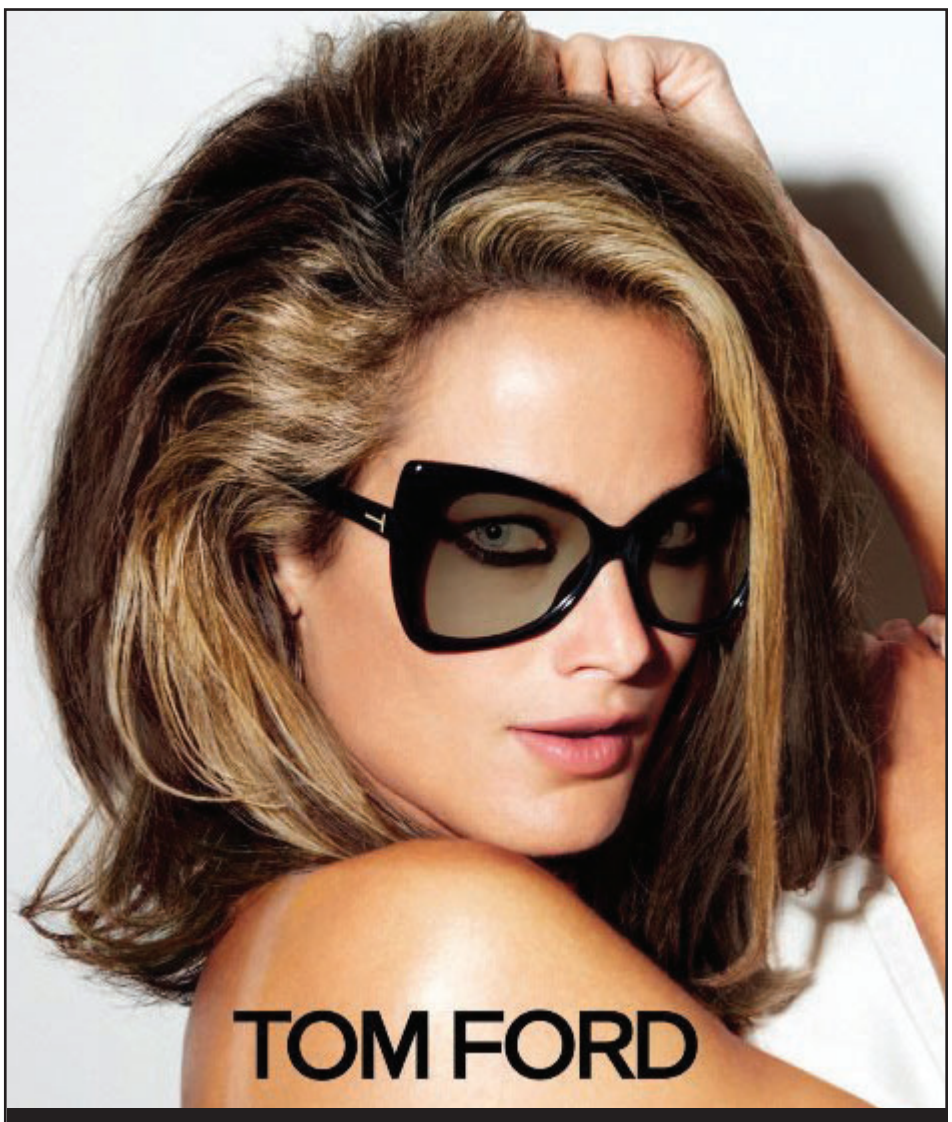

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Donald Edward Barton

May 12, 1930 – June 8, 2013

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

From some standpoints, the motion picture industry and Godliness are about as far apart as, according to the Psalms, "the East is from the West." Unless, that is, you happen to be reminiscing about Jacksonville's own Donald E. Barton, co-founder of the Florida Motion Picture and Television Producers Association and former president of Barton Film Company.

Barton's legacy is deeper than the numerous awards for excellence in documentary production. He will be remembered most, according to family and friends, for his strong and abiding faith.

Shirley Barton, who married the former filmmaker on Sep. 3, 1955, said of her late husband, "His faith was his strongest motivation. I've never seen 10 priests at the altar unless it was some type of diocesan event, but they were there at the funeral."

Barton was two years ahead of his future wife when they attended St. Paul's Catholic High School, the forerunner to Bishop Kenny High School, but they didn't date until their college years. Shirley's first impression of Don was that he was quite respected by the other students. "They called him the 'old man'; he wasn't a typical teenager, he was very mature," she said.

Lifelong friend Stella Parsons echoed Shirley's remarks about faith. "Don Barton really was amazing...I've known Don all my life; our families were friends. Don was a kind and gentle man. He made us all look pale compared to his spirituality. He and Shirley attended daily mass, he was a lector and helped with many ministries in our parish. He was head of his family both physically and spiritually. This world of ours needs more Don Bartons."

Dick and Emma Spence, close long-time friends, spoke highly of Barton as well. "He was a good man. His goodness came through in all areas of his life," said Emma. "I've known him all my life; our mothers were the best of friends. I went to grade school and high school with Don, and Shirley was my college roommate."

"He was quite religious and it showed," said Dick Spence, while Emma added, "he was a very, very dear friend and loved his God and his family."

She went on to share that "he was always a person with an active mind, always thinking of what he could do next. One year when his kids were young, on Christmas Eve he asked Dick to bring over bolts at midnight to put a swing set together. He had wonderful intentions. He was very creative."

"But he was not a very handy person with tools," said Dick. "He could hold a flashlight pretty well."

Shirley talked about their nine children, who were all born at St. Vincent's, as was Barton. "They loved him and had such great respect. He was always kind and understanding. Our son John said he never heard his parents have cross words; we didn't argue, but I probably bit my tongue some. Don worked really hard but spent time with the kids when he got home every day. He would give them all one sip of his one beer."

Barton was a good friend to many. "He was always happy, kind and loving. He always had something good to say about everyone and was never too busy to lend a helping hand," said Bibbie Riley, who knew Barton for more than 30 years. "Don and I shared a birthday and on our last one he was upset that there wasn't room for me to sit next to him in church so we could stand up together and be recognized on our day."

In 1984 Barton left the film industry – leaving his company in his sons John and Michael's hands – and became Vice President of Marketing at St. Vincent's Health, and later Executive Director of the St. Vincent's Foundation until 1999.

Jane Lanier, president of St. Vincent's Foundation, said that Barton loved all things St. Vincent's, the Sisters, the employees, the physicians, the community people who advise and serve on the boards. "He loved every part of that and mostly loved the mission to provide the healing of Christ to everyone who comes to our doors, the sick and the poor," Lanier commented. "So many people recognize his contributions of time, talent and treasure to further the mission of St. Vincent's. We're just really going to miss Don." She noted that he remained active after leaving employment, continuing to be a friend to the Sisters.

In his retirement, he and his wife Shirley founded and administered Holy Spirit Communications, a non-profit company dedicated to world peace through prayer and the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Riley said "Don started Holy Spirit Communications in the hopes of getting everyone to pray to the Holy Spirit for world peace. He and Shirley worked tirelessly to accomplish this."

Don Barton is survived by his wife of 57 years, Shirley Hodge Barton; four sons, John (Robin), Michael (Katie), Mark (Cathy), Paul (Gay); five daughters, Elizabeth Till (Quentin), Anne Petty (Patrick), Mary Ellen Sanchez (Mark), Catherine Sanneman (Bruce), Teresa Campbell (Kirk), and 23 grandchildren.

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The Way we Were

Neil Presser

(Epping Forest resident)

Avondale Liquor & Wine Family Business

By Julie Kerns Garmendia
Resident Community News

Jacksonville and its beaches have always drawn Northerners eager to leave the cold behind for sunshine and better opportunities. That was exactly what motivated the first of Neil Presser's relatives to relocate to Jacksonville during the Great Depression.

"My late mother, Lillian Fink Presser, had two brothers, Ben and Charlie Fink, who moved to Jacksonville during the Great Depression to start businesses. They were drawn to the warmer weather and lower cost of living compared to New York. Plus my Uncle Charlie loved to go fishing and the Jacksonville and Atlantic Beach piers quickly become favorite spots. Ben opened a swanky downtown men's clothing store and Charlie opened a chain of liquor stores...the brothers were happy and successful here," Presser, 78, said.

Because of his brothers-in-law and their success in Jacksonville, Presser's late father, Mac, also decided to relocate his family from New York with a plan to start a business in Jacksonville.

"My dad was selling men's hats for a chain of stores in New York City and part of his job was to travel to open new store locations. As the Depression worsened, his job became terribly difficult because he was then responsible for going back to all those stores and closing them down," Presser said. "In 1937 he moved us to Jacksonville for a new start, where the family would be reunited and could help one another through the difficult times if necessary. We lived in the Riverside area near Park Street and the whole family worshipped together at what was at that time the Jacksonville Jewish Center downtown. Dad opened Avondale Liquor & Wine and mother helped by doing all the bookkeeping. It became a very successful business where he worked every day for the next 25 years."

There are many happy memories of those years when the Fink and Presser families were building their lives in Jacksonville. Presser fondly recalls that, just like his uncles, his mother and father loved to go fishing at Atlantic, Jacksonville and Ponte Vedra beaches. He vividly remembers the thrill of fishing from the piers and staying in a small dilapidated "shack" at the beach during long, lazy summers.

"Mom would take us boys straight to stay at the beach for weeks right after school let out and dad would come weekends or whenever he could...those were wonderful times," he said. "I caught a lot of trout but didn't like hooking those catfish; they were so dangerous and can sting...not my favorite seafood!"

Presser and his older brother Edwin graduated from the Bolles School and the University of Florida. The brothers both served in the military. Neil was a lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve where he served as a communications officer aboard the ammunitions ship USS Mauna Loa. He completed many transatlantic crossings between the U.S. and Europe, with wonderful experiences exploring Europe, particularly Spain and France. Edwin served in the U.S. Army.

The brothers went on to enjoy successful professional careers in Jacksonville: Neil as a certified public accountant who founded the accounting firm Presser, Lahnen & Edelman, from which he retired in 2008. Edwin was an attorney with Goldman, Presser, Lewis & Nussbaum until his death in 2004. They were very close, worked long hours and during free time especially enjoyed going out in Edwin's boat, Eupohria – his pride and joy – onto the St. Johns River together.

Presser is especially proud of his children: Sheryl Presser, an attorney in New York; Pamela Presser, a drug representative in Jupiter Beach; and Jeri Presser, owner of a graphic design studio in South Miami. Besides enjoying his family, Presser is a keen tennis fan who likes to walk through his neighborhood down to the St. Johns River. He is a classical music buff who spends time reading and attending cultural performances: Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Alhambra Dinner Theatre, Theatre Jacksonville in San Marco and movies.

A lifetime member of the Jacksonville Jewish Center and founding member of the Jewish Community Alliance, he continues to serve on their investment committee. Presser also serves on the Jewish Community Foundation of Northeast Florida Board of Directors.

For 11 happy years, Presser's best friend was his Sheltie, Rusty, who passed away in 2008. He said they did everything together and Rusty is greatly missed.

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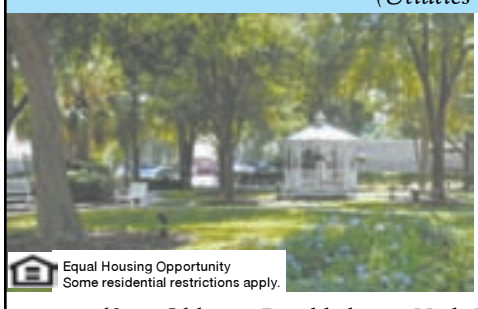

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When you're Betsy Miller, it's a compliment to be called "two-faced"

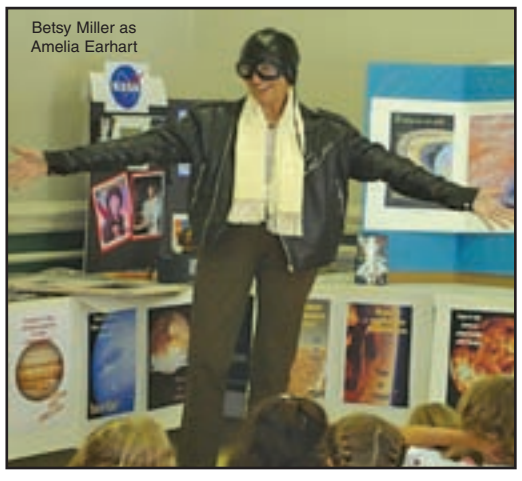
By Peggy Harrell Jennings
Resident Community News

To all who come calling…let it be known that Avondale resident Betsy Miller has many faces. You may not recognize her at first.

Recently at Ortega United Methodist Church Arts Camp she appeared as famous aviatrix Amelia Earhart. The audience was enthralled as she related how she became a pilot and what she carried with her on her famous trans-Atlantic flight (a toothbrush, comb, tomato juice, pemmican and a thermos of coffee – not even a change of clothes!). She encouraged all persons, especially women, to pursue their dreams even in the face of adversity.

Wait! Look again! That's not Amelia Earhart, it's another of Betsy's personas, Berthemia Lou Boyer, from the historic novel The Strawberry Girl by Lois Linski. Relating tales of life in Plant City, Florida in the early 1900s, she assumes the character so convincingly, her melodious Southern accent authentic, that the audience believes she is a present living person and not someone from 100 years ago.

As a grandmother, former kindergarten teacher, director of the after school program at RPDS and former teacher and Director of St. Johns Presbyterian kindergarten program, Betsy has a lot of experience with children. An avid reader, historian, Certified Master Naturalist gardener, bird steward at Hugeunot Park, and student of all things, Betsy keeps her mind agile by researching her characters and finding authentic costumes and equipment to make her presentations believable. Although she used dramatic skills to some extent while teaching, it is in her retirement that her talents are being honed.


Betsy Miller as Amelia Earhart

Betsy's enthusiasm is contagious to all who know or see her. She says, "I'm comfortable doing public speaking even though it's hard to keep it all together sometimes when you're in front of an audience. I get so geared up! When I research the character, I feel like I've learned more than anybody else does!"

When not preparing for a "character role" she acts in another role – that of assistant to husband Gunnar Miller. Gunnar, whose loss of sight three years ago has barely slowed him down; he stays busy practicing law, being a financial advisor, socializing and sharpening up his store of witticisms! During the day Betsy assists him by reading aloud his technical information and in the evening instead of watching TV, reading for pleasure.

Betsy's first "enactment" was "The Night Before Christmas" and her recitation is in popular demand during Christmas time at schools in the community and even with her adult friends. In stocking cap, Betsy's version is a fun, funny and joyful interactive experience. Oh to be a reindeer or jingle some sleigh bells! Hearing a grown man yelling out,"Let me be Santa, come on, let me be Santa", in a voice reminiscent of a nursery school tot adds to the jocularity.

Who knows what faces Ms. Betsy will assume next? Queen Elizabeth? A Westward Ho pioneer woman? Whichever roles she assumes will be carefully researched and convincing in details. Betsy Miller is two faced – multi faced actually - and in her case that is a very good thing!

102-year-old bell ringer's dedication felt throughout her entire life

Perhaps Mary Johnson's Red Kettle bell ringing for The Salvation Army was just practice on earth for her final destination. The 102-year-old resident of Riverside Presbyterian Apartments died June 11 at St. Catherine's Nursing Home.

Last November The Salvation Army of NE Florida found a creative and successful way to increase its volunteer pool for the 2012 Red Kettle Campaign by targeting a special group of seniors in the community, including Johnson.

According to a Salvation Army newsletter, Johnson had one thing to say as people walked past the kettle at the Publix in Riverside last December. "I'm 102 years old and still find the time and energy to help out," said Johnson. "If I can get out here and do this, you can help too!"

To many people, Johnson's words hit home. People would smile at her and then drop a few dollars in the bucket. Johnson viewed bell ringing as an enjoyable and simple way to give back to the community. "I don't drive anymore and I can't lift too many things," Johnson explained. "That's why ringing this little bell is a fit for me!"

It's most likely still a perfect fit for her in her new home.

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Go GIVERS

Mary Beth Ridderman

By Julie Kerns Garmendia
Resident Community News

Mary Beth Ridderman spends many hours each week as a volunteer at Hubbard House domestic violence shelter, works fulltime and will complete her second Master's degree (in mental health counseling) at the University of North Florida in Spring 2014. Her first Master's, also from UNF, was in sociology. Ridderman needed an internship to complete her degree, had read and studied domestic violence and decided to work as an intern/volunteer at Hubbard House. The shelter was named for the Springfield street where it originally opened in 1976 and is the only shelter serving Duval and Baker Counties.

"Mental health counseling was always something I wanted to do," Ridderman said. "I provide individual counseling, facilitate a support group for 8-20 residents and assist elsewhere as needed. It is important for residents to be able to work through their emotions and examine what is happening in their lives."

Ridderman's studies of domestic violence and her volunteer work at Hubbard House have shown her first-hand the tremendous need within the community for parents and children in danger to have emergency access to safe shelter and a variety of informational and educational support.

"Hubbard House fills such an important need in the community for victims of domestic violence and abuse. They need all the community support possible to continue to help so many. It's just like a great big home and they need the same things we all need in our homes. The difference is they need such large quantities of necessities every single day. A typical grocery shopping trip for Hubbard House would be about three shopping carts full of food...they also need volunteers, group and corporate sponsors for financial support, in-kind contributions, hosts for holiday activities and special events, help with fundraising, preparation and delivery of meals. Someone could take over the Baby Closet to keep donated items organized for infants or the Professional Clothing Closet so that residents have appropriate clothing to wear for job interviews or work. The Teen Room could use new games and furnishings. My wish for them would be a much larger, or additional, facility to shelter more victims, with more staff and services," she said.

Victims and their children sometimes arrive in the middle of the night with nothing. The Hubbard House uses donated items of all kinds to help residents put their lives back together and begin to work toward healing and normalcy. Ridderman said that it has been her privilege to work as a volunteer with these victims, but that it is extremely painful to see their hurt and emotional pain, especially the children.

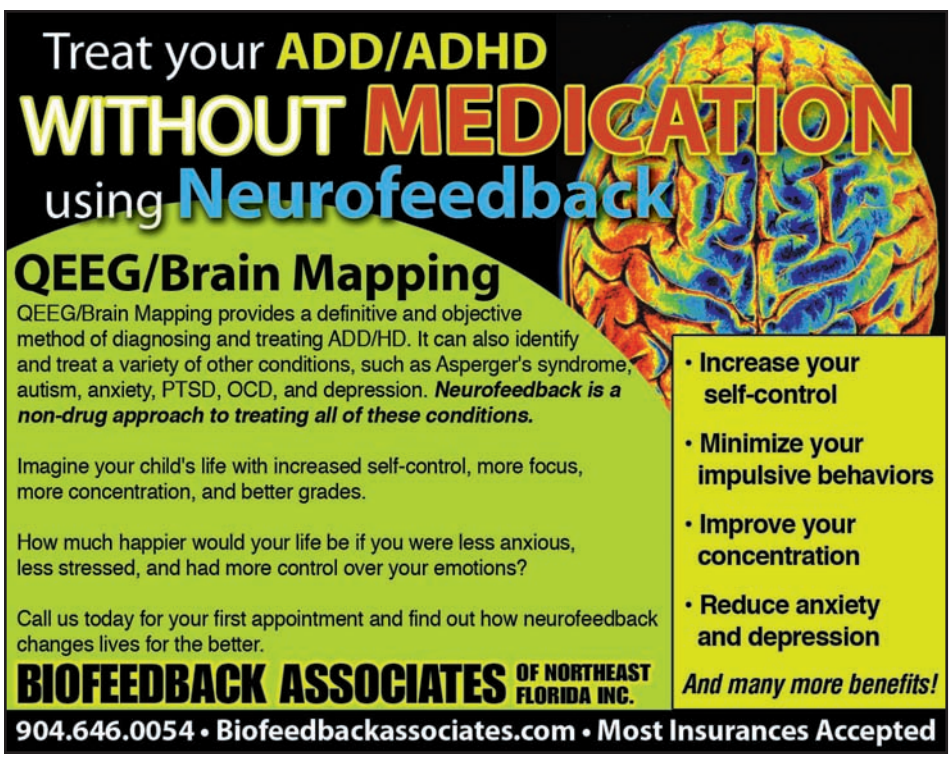
"It hurts to see what they go through, but I have also seen the kindness and caring of so many who are moved to help. The simplest example was when I was in line buying groceries for the shelter. I recognized a former resident in line behind me. We spoke and although she was only buying one onion, she offered to help pay for the food because she knew it was going to feed families at Hubbard House," she said. "People deeply care about this place and those who need it so much. Many former residents return to help or volunteer."

Hubbard House provides safe shelter for up to eighty women and children and offers a variety of services for abused men, including assistance finding safe housing. They work to empower victims through counseling, classes and support and work for social change in the community through education and advocacy. They cooperate with many other local non-profit organizations and maintain a 24-hour emergency hotline, (904) 354-3114.

Domestic abuse is often a silent, hidden crime because the victim may be too terrified to seek help or leave the abuser. There are four main types of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse. Abusers and their victims are from every age, educational and economic background.

U.S. domestic violence laws focus on violent acts, but there is often a pattern of controlling and abusive behavior. Abusers may be sociable, friendly and outgoing outside of the home. They often appear to be genial neighbors and co-workers. No one may ever suspect and may not believe that they are abusive.

Ridderman, whom shelter manager Kay Davis said is an "integral part of the case management team whose knowledge and compassion have helped so many clients," encourages adults of all ages to visit the Hubbard House website for donation and volunteer information. She said that she will continue to volunteer because it is so rewarding and that there are many opportunities for individuals or groups, those with little or a lot of time to volunteer. Volunteer training is provided, but there are jobs that require no special training.



Starbucks for Charity!

Regulars at the Roosevelt Square Mall Starbucks have probably been wondering where employee Zacha Ortiz has been the past two months. The barista's baby son Julian, born in April, is suffering complications from lack of oxygen at birth. She has moved to the Southside to be closer to Julian at Wolfson Children's Hospital.

In the meantime, Ortiz' manager, Marissa Felton, came up with a fundraising idea and, with gracious permission from the concessionaire at the Murray Hill Athletic Association, Starbucks put up a lemonade tent during the 10U/12U Invitational Tournament last month.

Co-workers from the store and other area Starbucks baristas took turns mixing strawberry and raspberry flavored lemonades on a scorching Saturday, raising more than $300 for baby Julian.

Misty Fuller, Shane Highley, Kristin Scott, Devan Leonard and store manager Marissa Felton

Community Hospice treats nursing assistants with lunch

Elaine Simpson, Healthcare Relations representative, Mitzi Saul, Senior Marketing Coordinator and Wayne Richardson, volunteer at St. Catherine Laboure Manor

In celebration of Nursing Assistants Week June 13-20, Northeast Florida Community Hospice picked up the lunch tab. The 2nd annual Great Food Truck Round-Up was held at eight locations that provide care to patients with advanced illnesses, including St. Catherine Laboure Manor in Riverside. Brucci's Pizza food truck was stationed in the parking lot over the lunch hour to serve up a free, hot lunch to nursing assistants. Said Mary McElroy, Vice President of Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer, "This is an awesome event. These people take such good care of our patients; it's our turn to take care of them. This is their week!"

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Local companies help create prosthetic lab in Haiti

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Haiti continues to be a challenge, with hurricanes, mudslides and cholera, according to Dr. John Lovejoy, a retired orthopedic surgeon who lives in St. Nicholas. But due to the support (to the tune of more than $250,000) from local companies such as Atlantic Marine, Suddath Van Lines, Jack Becker Distributors, Exact Inc., Lambs Yacht Center, All Saints Episcopal Church, the Meninak Club, Advanced Prosthetics and others, the prosthetic lab is a shining star in a dark sky.

Lovejoy

Lovejoy, as many readers may recall, has been volunteering for more than 10 years at the Hôpital Sacré Coeur in Milot, Haiti. He and his son, Dr. John Lovejoy, III, were part of a response team when the 2010 earthquake devastated so much of the Haitian community.

To continue the work of supplying prosthetics to amputee victims, an old insulated shipping container that had been converted into an office was purchased and then transformed into a state of the art prosthetic shop. "There were so many amputees from the earthquake and, as the medical team later realized, over 1,500 untreated amputees in northern Haiti," said Lovejoy. "With a population of more than a million, there were no certified prosthetists to treat them, and it is not just a matter of making a one-time prosthesis because each one needs to be serviced and replaced every year or two."

To make the lab sustainable, the CRUDEM Foundation, which supports Lovejoy's volunteer efforts, needed to train Haitians to become certified prosthetists. This required enrolling them in a university, and the University of Don Bosco in El Salvador had such a program designed for Central America and the Caribbean. "Eventually we found Oscar, a certified prosthetist from El Salvador, who had trained in the UDB, worked in Haiti after the earthquake, and was willing to come and work and teach students," Lovejoy continued. "In a very professional way, he developed a screening process and exam for potential students. The response to the announcement was overwhelming, but he narrowed it down to two students.

Dantus and Daniel have proved themselves by passing the first of six sections to become certified with the highest marks. This is a real tribute to Oscar's tutelage and involvement in their education."

The first year is near completion, according to Lovejoy, and he says that Oscar has agreed to stay on for another year. The program takes three years and has six modules the students have to pass. "So far we have been able to support the project with donations to CRUDEM designated for the prosthetic lab. It is expensive, about $26,000 for the educational component, $22,000 for operational expenses and $31,000 for the prosthetic components annually – we do not charge the patients anything. When you consider what it costs in the U.S. for prostheses, tens of thousands of dollars per patient, we are providing a service at a phenomenal price. So far this year the lab has produced 42 artificial limbs, 15 orthosis (braces), 20 repairs or replacements of existing prostheses and has a waiting list of 10 patients who need prosthetics,"
he concluded.

The students agreed to stay on for three years after getting their degrees to teach three more students. With continued support, says Lovejoy, "hopefully it will be an ongoing project. It is near the end of the year and any financial support you would like to give to the prosthetic lab would be a blessing."

To help, visit
http://www.crudem.org/give/

Lambs Yacht Center was one of several local companies and nonprofits, including All Saints Episcopal Church, that helped get a shipping container turned into a prosthetic lab in Haiti

Florida Bar honors attorneys for 50 years of service

Nichols

The Florida Bar honored 165 attorneys for 50 years of dedication to the practice of law during a luncheon at The Florida Bar's Annual Convention at the Boca Raton Resort & Club. Local attorney Robert Carlton Nichols, Esq., of Ortega, was among eight honored from Jacksonville (the 4th Circuit).

Nichols is part of Nichols and Pina, LLLP, a small law firm in downtown Jacksonville, consisting of himself, his son, Eugene B. Nichols, Esq, and Theodore S. Pina, Jr. After graduating from the University of Florida School of Law, he started law practice in Jacksonville on May 1, 1963, with the firm of Smith, Elliot and Schwalbe, which today is Smith, Hulsey & Busey.

Other Jacksonville attorneys noted for 50 years of practice include Kenneth George Anderson, John Gall Grimsley, Joseph M. Ripley, Jr., Barry L. Zisser, and Edward Alfred White.

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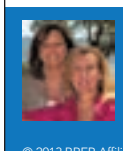

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Business Profile

European Influences at THE JOHN GORRIE a condominium

Ruiz stands under a Mediterranean Revival Style arch at The John Gorrie

The historic neighborhood of Riverside Avondale is known for its diverse and extensive collection of architectural styles ranging from Queen Anne to Prairie to Colonial Revival and beyond. The Mediterranean Revival Style is particularly prevalent throughout the neighborhood, and notably displayed at The John Gorrie a condominium, Jacksonville's premier condo community. John Gorrie resident Javier Ruiz was drawn to the condominium for this very reason.

"I am originally from Spain and now a naturalized U.S. citizen. I moved to The John Gorrie because it reminded me of the building where my parents live in Spain," Ruiz said. "Plus, as someone who grew up in Europe, the neighborhood seems to me a lot more fun and eclectic than your usual condo development or suburban residential area."

Residents of The John Gorrie can walk to nearby parks, restaurants and shopping, and enjoy numerous festivals and markets throughout the year. Five Points, a trendy nearby entertainment district, offers nightlife options and Downtown Jacksonville is a short drive away.

Ruiz, who works in Nuclear Medicine at Wolfson Children's Hospital, also enjoys the short commute to and from his job.

"Working at a hospital can be arduous and stressful. Being able to hop in your car and be home in five minutes is a godsend," he said. "And as a nuclear medicine professional, I LOVE the fallout shelter plaque at the entrance of The John Gorrie, with its yellow and black radioactive sign. It's silly, I know, but I think it's really cool."

The John Gorrie a condominium boasts modern upgrades such as GE appliances and CaesarStone countertops in the kitchen.

The John Gorrie is located in close proximity to a number of medical facilities including St. Vincent's Hospital, Baptist Medical Center, Nemours and more.

Other favorites of Ruiz's include his home's huge windows, wooden floors, designer cabinetry and modern appliances. He also appreciates how elegant, quiet and solid the building feels and that each unit is distinctive in its own way.

"The classic design of the building is very welcoming and has given me a chance to interact with my neighbors. Everyone I have met so far is really nice. It's a great community."

Residents of The John Gorrie can walk to nearby parks, restaurants and shopping, and enjoy numerous festivals and markets throughout the year.

For more information about how you can be part of The John Gorrie community, call (904) 383-3688 or visit www.TheJohnGorrie.com.

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BUSINESS PROFILE

Weather Engineers, Inc.

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Working at Weather is a family affair - Dan Griffin has been joined by his children Jamie and Kayla - who recently became part of the team.

If you're like most homeowners you probably don't spend much time thinking about your heating and air conditioning. In fact, you most likely don't consider it at all until it doesn't work…on the hottest day of the year!

"The best reason for properly functioning, well maintained A/C is to avoid breakdowns when it's needed the most," says Dan Griffin (James Junior), president of Weather Engineers, Inc. "Most manufacturer's warranties, for the compressor, are 10 years, but if you stick to a maintenance schedule you can get 12 to 15 years out of a typical unit."

Griffin knows what he's talking about, having grown up in the 50-year-old business that his father, James D. Griffin, Sr. started in 1963. According to a book that the founder published in 2009, Griffin and his sister Cathy have been part of the business since their high school years.

James D. Griffin, Sr. started the business in 1963

The siblings learned well from their father, known as Griff. Quoting from the book, an old friend of the family, Roy Colson, said "That's where they got their training. That's why they're successful. Work ethic. That's all it is."

Coupled with a strong work ethic, however, is honesty. "We're a trustworthy, stable company," Griffin shares. "Many of our commercial customers go back to the beginning of the company, and we've had residential customers for over 20 years, maybe close to 30."

And it's not just the clients – like the City of Jacksonville, the U.S. Navy, the Duval County School Board, local hospitals and more – who are loyal to Weather Engineers. Of the 76 employees currently in the company, many have been there over 15 years and the lead service technician will celebrate 30 years with the company in 2014.

Two of the most recent additions to "The Inside Weather Guys" are Griffin's son James III (Jamie) and daughter Kayla, who is known for her rejoinder "…and gals, too, Dad!" in television commercials.

Admittedly, air conditioning, heating and refrigeration isn't every young adult's idea of an exciting career, but Griffin's two children, plus three of five nephews, are committed to the family business.

"I enjoy doing the work and learning the trade," Jamie notes. "I worked here through high school, apprenticed in service and now I'm a technician with my own truck."

Their 76 employees have experience and knowledge, many have been there over 15 years.

While big brother (by two years) is learning the outer workings of "weather inside", 21-year-old Kayla is focusing on the management side of the business. While attending FSCJ, Kayla started as a dispatcher for the duct cleaning division and is now learning the ropes in accounts receivable.

Clients include City of Jacksonville, the U.S. Navy, the Duval County School Board, local hospitals and more

"I love being with family," says Kayla. "Although there was some sibling rivalry when we were younger, working at Weather Engineers has brought us closer together."

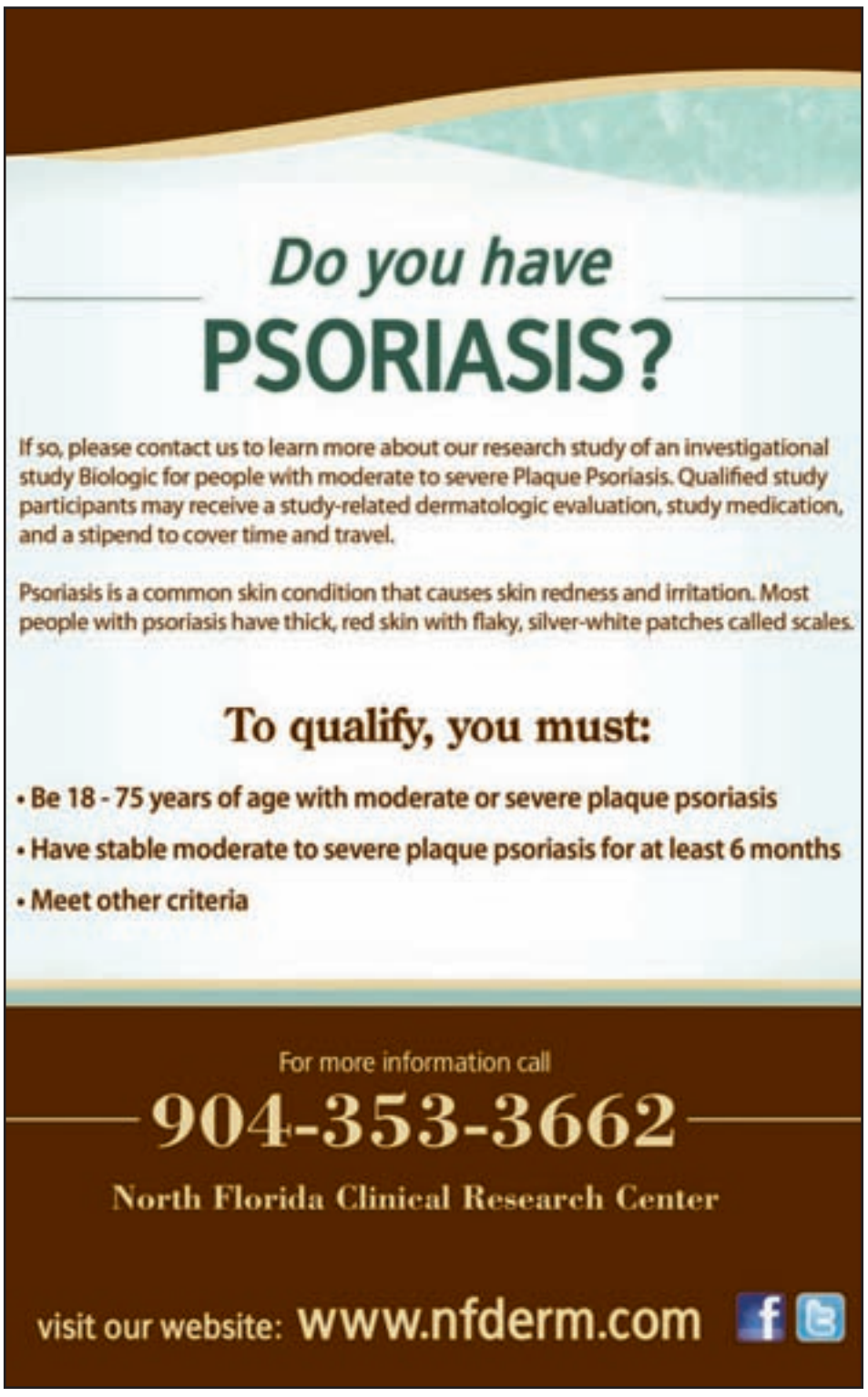
Clients are happy to hear that this third generation company has plans to be in business for a good long time. Several residential customers sing the praises of Weather Engineers for relieving severe allergy

Offering both installation and repair of residential and commercial units.

symptoms. According to Ed Fleming, he feels very fortunate that the firm's environmental cleaning program enabled him to overcome respiratory allergies and improve his quality of life. "My allergies improved enough that I no longer require any medical treatment," wrote Fleming in a letter.

Customers are also impressed with the conscientiousness of the service technicians. Said Melody Mallett in a letter to Griffin last fall, "I have to say, it is very refreshing and satisfying to have service people (especially young ones) be so focused and committed to their work!"

Contact the clean air professionals – Weather Engineers, Inc. – at (904) 356-3963 for an estimate on duct cleaning, HVAC maintenance or a new inside weather system.



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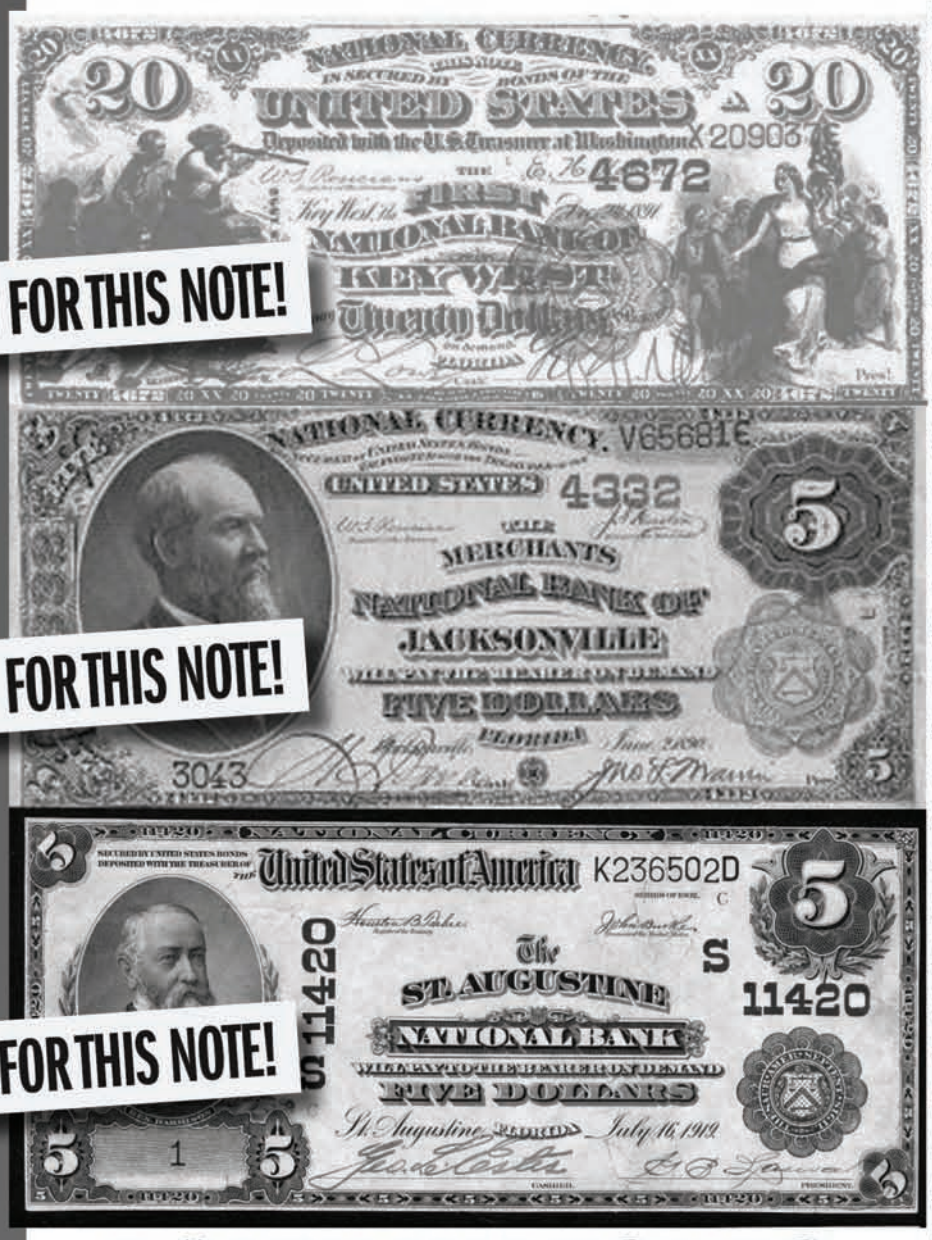

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3rd Annual Ortega Floatilla a popular event once again

There are many ways to enjoy the St. Johns River, including an organized float! For the third year, the Ortega Floatilla brought out over 200 people on more than 50 boats, jet skis and dinghies on a sunny June 1 Saturday. Organized by Chip Osteen, friends come from far and wide, including Fernandina, St. Augustine and even Houston, TX. “We like to drop anchor and raft boat to boat for the day,” said Osteen. “Everyone has a good time and I’ll keep doing this as long as everyone stays safe.” Osteen hosted a dozen on his 38-foot Fountain powerboat.

Riverside resident competes in national swim meets

Eric Wendorf of Riverside, and coach of the Piranhas Swim Team, recently competed in two swim competitions. The first was at the National Championship in Indianapolis and then in early June at the 2013 Pan American Masters Championship in Sarasota. Wendorf swam and medaled in five events, with his best win a third place in the 100 meter butterfly.

The former 1988 Olympics competitor currently trains at the Cecil Field Aquatic Center. “My goals for the remainder of the season are to participate in local age group meets by swimming in the open events and to consider competing in the Masters World Championships in Montreal, 2014,” shared Wendorf. “I’m hoping that my accomplishments will also bring on more swimmers to our Piranhas Swim Team where we focus on quality of each stroke not quantity of laps each practice.”

Fishing tourney a 6th year success with 80 boats registered

Ortega resident Captain Jeffrey Crabtree receives $500 from In River Or Ocean – pictured with President Gary Roberts, Crabtree won third place with a flounder

Top honors in the 6th Annual Clay Roberts Memorial Inshore Slam Fishing Tournament, sponsored by In River Or Ocean, went to the D. J. Cabler’s team whose Clay Roberts’ record slam weighed in at 16.46 pounds. Terry Sturgeon’s team placed second in the slam (14.27) and Tom Riley placed third (14.06).

Gary Roberts, of Roberts Pharmacy in San Marco, considered the tournament “a complete success. Eighty boats registered for the competition. Half of the teams weighed in fish. Nineteen slams were weighed in. Four Junior Anglers weighed in.”

Other winning results include: Bob Morris weighed a 7.46 pound red, Ron Schurr weighed a 6.10 pound trout and Deedo Nelson weighed a 3.69 pound flounder. Kyle Mullaney of San Marco won the “Yellow Bread Award” given for the Bishop Kenny alumni with the biggest catch.

The sixth Clay Roberts Memorial Scholarship winner, Hunter Parry, along with three previous scholarship winners – Sean Brown, Thomas Lemmon and Brendan Coster – all fished this year’s tournament.

All proceeds from the tournament will be added to the Clay Roberts Memorial Scholarship Fund at Bishop Kenny High School. As next year’s dates are not set determined, mark your calendars for June 14 and June 21, 2014 (one date to be announced) and plan to participate in the Seventh Annual Clay Roberts Memorial Inshore Slam Fishing Tournament.

Ortega resident Captain Jesse Rain and his teammate won the second place Red Bass category and received a check for $750

First place slam winners Captain D.J. Cabler and his teammate received the Grand Prize Slam and a $1,500 prize. The slam was a Clay Roberts record slam, weighing in at 16.46 pounds.

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The GREAT outdoors

Creating memories on the Bahamian waters

By Nathan & Ted Miller

With summer here, and family vacations in full swing, I wanted to share a summer vacation our family recently took.

Many months ago, we began planning this trip with my wife's parents and brothers and all the nieces and nephews and cousins. It was to be 17 people total, but we ended up only 15 – missing two key members. We missed them greatly.

The trip was planned for the Abacos in the Bahamas, a place where my wife's family spent many vacations over the years.

My wife and oldest daughter were to fly over on Saturday with my wife's brothers, their wives and kids. My wife's parents were making the crossing earlier in the week. My plan was to cross over with my youngest daughter (10) on our 25' boat alongside another family on their 30' boat on Friday.

As luck would have it, Andrea, the first named storm of the year, was building in the Gulf of Mexico. Rain bands and high winds were forecasted to be crossing south

Mark Hutto with an Abaco Wahoo

Kat Miller, Matt McAfee with an Abaco Durado

Florida and into the Atlantic later in the week, so our crossing window was becoming narrower by the hour. If we delayed, it could be many days before the seas would calm enough allowing us to make the 180-plus mile run from West Palm Beach to Elbow Cay.

The marine forecast showed Wednesday morning tolerable for a crossing in a small boat, but also showed the seas building throughout the day. Thursday, Friday and Saturday looked worse, so we knew that if we did not get underway Wednesday morning, we could be looking at a Sunday or Monday crossing.

So phone calls were quickly made to make sure business affairs were taken care of and our cars were packed and boats put on trailers in record time.

We left Jacksonville on a Tuesday evening with a goal to launch in West Palm Beach sometime early the following morning and beat the building weather.

Due to several unforeseen delays Wednesday morning (a blown trailer tire being one of them) we were not able to launch and exit the Lake Worth inlet in West Palm Beach until around noon. By then, the rain bands had already reached the east coast of Florida from the Gulf, and the seas were beginning to build.

With our first waypoint being West End, Bahamas (only 60 miles away) we decided to proceed with caution.

This first leg of the trip on a good crossing day should take no more than two hours. But with the short sequence of the three- to four-foot easterly swells coupled with the choppy conditions from the wind we experienced, it took over four hours.

We eventually made it to West End a little after 4 p.m. By the time we made it through customs, it was 4:30 and the weather had gotten worse. We had no time or daylight left to make the next leg of the trip (100+ mile run to Green Turtle), so we checked in to Old Bahama Bay, got cleaned up and went up to the restaurant to get some dinner and decompress.

The following day, we woke up to more unfavorable marine forecasts. Although our run through the open ocean was behind us, the Bahamas bank (while only 10 feet deep for the most part) is still open water and can become very choppy in windy conditions, making for another wet and long run.

We departed West End around 11 a.m. on our way to Green Turtle. To keep from running aground, the route from West End to the Abacos in which we would need to follow consisted of running in close proximity to a number of waypoints like Indian Rock, Mangrove Cay, Great Sale Cay, Carter's Cay, and Crab Cay just to name a few. The run to Green Turtle was bumpy, but we successfully made it in about five hours.

Our plan was to stay on Green Turtle for two nights, as our rental house on Elbow would not open up for two more days. At dinner we ran into an old classmate of

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mine, a dentist from Melbourne and his family. They joined us for dinner, where they shared their fresh yellowfin tuna catch that the restaurant was preparing for them. The next two days were spent exploring New Plymouth on Green Turtle in golf carts, being hosted by my classmate for dinner the following evening, buying and storing key lime (heavy on the meringue) pies, and counting down the days in which I would see the rest of my family.

After a couple of great days on Green Turtle, Saturday morning came. We loaded our two boats once again to make the final 20-mile run east from Green Turtle toward our final destinations of Elbow Cay and Tahiti Beach. We exchanged emails and wished my classmate well as they were heading west back to the states.

We made it to Sea Spray Marina around noon, and began the fun task of transporting the provisions via golf cart from the boats to the rental house. Boat runs were made from Elbow to Marsh Harbor throughout the afternoon to pick up family members flying in. One flight was delayed by three hours. By 8 p.m. everyone was safely there (with the exception of two loved ones who stayed home).

June is a great time to be in the Abacos. Although the pelagic fishing season was winding down, we managed to get there in time to catch the tail end of it. Many boats were still releasing a good number of billfish and we were seeing a lot of mahi and wahoo were being brought to the dock.

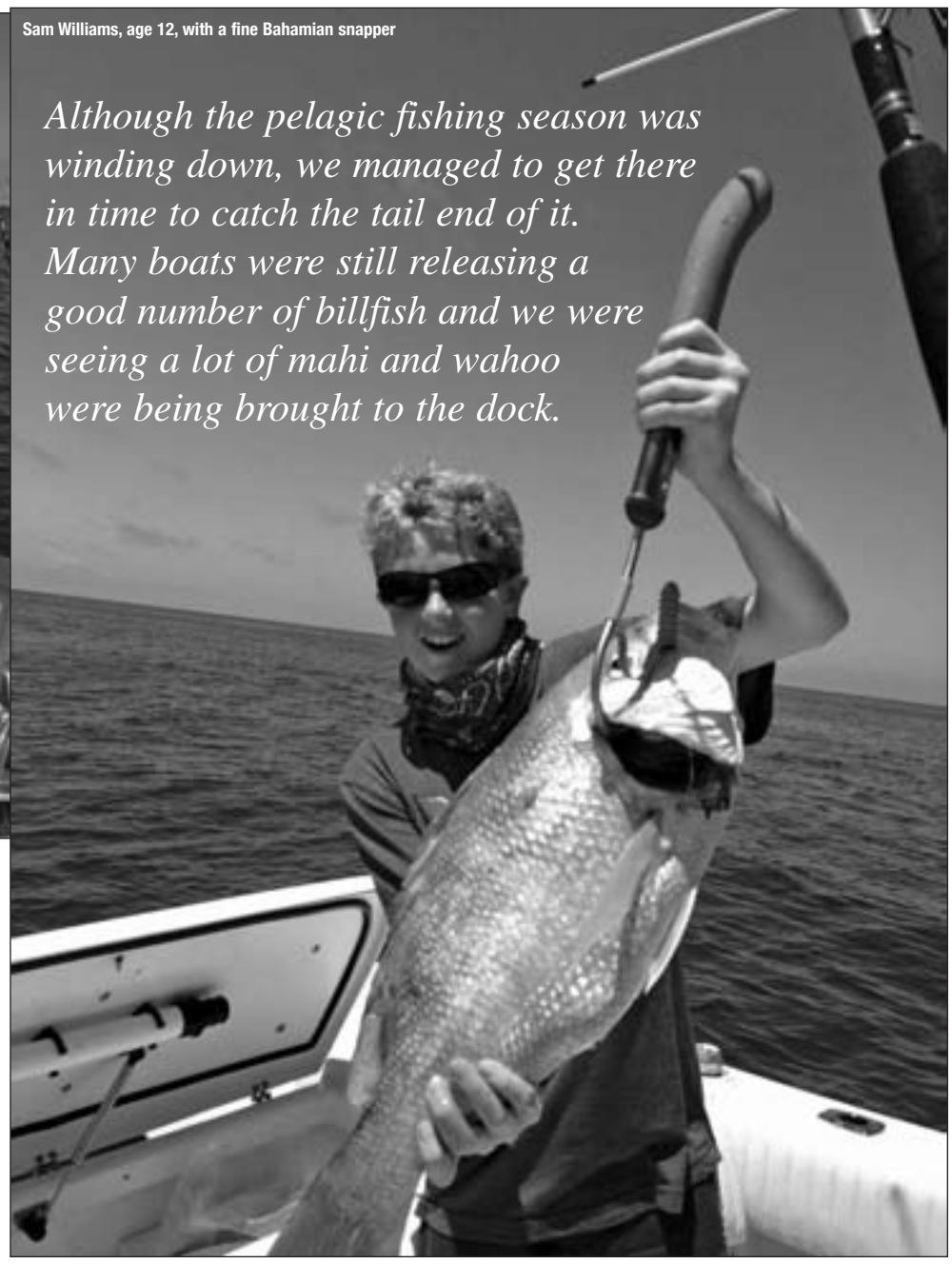
Each family in our group had agreed earlier on to be in charge of several dinners during our stay. My wife's and my dinner commitments were centered around catching and preparing edible fish. We managed over the next several days (with the help of Mother Nature) to make the short run offshore to 1000+ feet of water and catch our share of mahi and wahoo. Fishing the reefs for bottom fish like snapper, grouper, almaco jacks and trigger fish also proved to be extremely
productive.

With plenty of fish to eat, we shifted our focus to billfish.

The first day we targeted billfish, we fished my father-in-law's boat the Blue Max. We made the run through the south Man O War cut, successfully navigating the reef and made our way to the 1000 foot depth. There we began trolling.

Once we had our lines in the water and with a few modifications to ensure the baits looked natural, the waiting game began. It did not take long.

Heather Gardner and Andrew, age 11 hold up a pair of snapper destined for the dinner plate



Sam Williams, age 12, with a fine Bahamian snapper

Although the pelagic fishing season was winding down, we managed to get there in time to catch the tail end of it. Many boats were still releasing a good number of billfish and we were seeing a lot of mahi and wahoo were being brought to the dock.

At the time, I was watching the baits running directly behind the boat in the prop wash. A thick-striped back with a rigid dorsal followed by a tall fluorescent-blue tail fin came from my right-to-left and hit the starboard side bait. Line began peeling off the reel. We picked the rod up from the transom and were in the process of moving it to the chair when the line went slack. She had spit it. We immediately changed the drag setting on the reel to free-spool to allow the bait to fall in the water column in close proximity to where the bait was released. This would allow the fish to eat again. We waited about eight seconds and tightened the drag once again. The line went tight and she was back on.

After a few seconds, she jumped once, spit the hook and she was gone. She was a large blue marlin, barely able to get half her body out of the water. Seeing her jump once was well worth the effort.

Several days later, I took my wife, sister-in-law and four kids trolling targeting billfish. Within minutes of reaching the 1000 foot depth, we had a fish on. It hit the port side outrigger and immediately began jumping. Within 20 minutes we had a white marlin boat side. While keeping the entire fish in the water, we removed the hook, took a few pictures and watched her swim off. This was my first marlin successfully caught, and first billfish on the MaryAnn.

After a few more great days of island hopping, the family vacation came to an end. Many family members went back to the airport for the short flight home. My youngest daughter, brother-in-law and I returned home by crossing on Friday. Fortunately this time, we had a beautiful and very calm day. We made the entire 180 mile run back to West Palm Beach in just a few short hours and made it back in Jacksonville that evening.

Many other family vacations were going on around the same time. Other families from Jacksonville were enjoying the gulf coast of Florida.

Later on in the summer, some are heading toward cooler temperatures in the mountains, while others are heading to the Keys in quest for lobster.

Regardless of the destination, *the objective of the family vacation seems to be the same: Spend quality time and to share in new experiences together. And in the process, create memories along the way that will last a lifetime.*

Send your pictures, stories and favorite destinations to The Miller Brothers at Nathan@FredMillerGroup.com or Ted at Ted@FredMillerGroup.com.

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Steilberg is on a mission to Build Romantic Relationships that last a lifetime

It's not a dating service. Nor is it a "step" program. It is, however, life changing. It is SALT concepts. "Salt is a natural element needed daily in small doses to survive," says owner Renee C. Steilberg. "When applied topically, it sometimes stings, but also heals." SALT concepts does the same for relationships. Sometimes holding on to a relationship means letting go of fear, anxiety, grief or anger. The emotional and relational healing process can be uncomfortable but SALT concepts offers unique services in a comfortable environment. You may be a single person seriously looking for a committed relationship or a couple looking to recharge and refresh your marriage or partnership.

Read on to see how SALT concepts can help you build a lifelong romantic relationship.

Serious Singles

Have you tried online dating services, singles groups, blind dates and well-intended set-ups, with little or no success in meeting that special someone with whom you want to spend the rest of your life?

Perhaps it's time to consider a membership in SALT concepts. According to Steilberg, many men and women shy away from marriage or long-term relationships because of fear. "You may be wary of meeting new people or venturing into a social situation that's out of your comfort zone," says Steilberg. "Or, maybe you're recovering from a failed relationship and fearful of getting hurt again."

Members who have joined SALT concepts join for different reasons, but the top two are first, the desire to get over dating fears or to better understand the obstacles to committing and second, to date in settings that pique or already meet an interest, such as the opening of an art exhibit.

The great thing about Serious Singles is that you don't have to go it alone. Steilberg has the gift of developing interpersonal relationships, building confidence and removing fears, and she works one-on-one with singles that are serious about preparing for a future spouse.

Couch Talk and Date Night

Are you married or in a committed partnership, but some erosion has occurred and the idea of marriage counseling is a hard sell for your significant other?

Steilberg takes the stress and fear out of opening up to your significant other, with or without a licensed expert to help. Either pre- or post-ceremony, SALT creates a structure that will establish and ensure communication for a life time. "Our Couch Talk membership offers relationship classes and one-on-one time with a pre-marital counselor (for engaged couples), a marriage mentor, or a marriage and relationship expert ... plus much more," Steilberg explains.

Or maybe it's just a matter of getting up and out of the home environment and reconnecting in a place that's free from distractions. Whatever the reason, SALT concepts offers a Date Night membership that puts together packages at upscale venues in Jacksonville or get-aways to fun and romantic places to keep the romance alive.

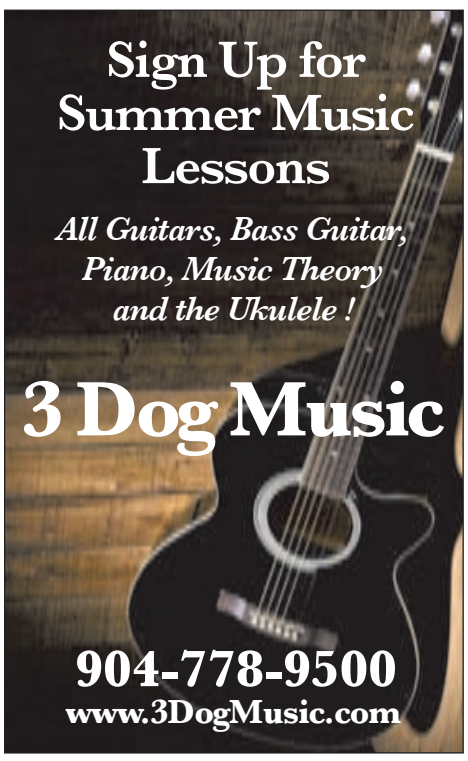
The Difference Is...

SALT concepts isn't a sterile office environment. When you walk into The OASIS, SALT concepts' new location in Riverside, your senses are enveloped in beauty. Every detail is taken care of, creating an environment to bring out the best in singles and couples either looking to create or strengthen that significant romantic relationship in their life. Members have secure access to a beautifully renovated historic Dutch colonial house in Riverside. Downstairs, guests can lounge in a well-appointed parlor or have a cocktail in a bistro-like setting. The second floor has a private, relaxing room for meetings with Steilberg or any of the other relationship experts, and a small ballroom for intimate parties and dancing. On the third floor you'll find The OASIS, where magical makeovers occur, photo shoots are taken and where couples can enjoy a massage together.

Steilberg and her SALT Team help individuals fortify their self confidence and faith to build healthy relationships designed to last a lifetime.

SALT concepts was carefully orchestrated to enhance your time together. Not convinced yet? Set up a free meet and greet today with Steilberg or any of the SALT 'family', and they will gladly assist you with a tour and share more details on membership packages.

Founder and President of SALT concepts, Renee C. Steilberg, can be reached at (904) 923-SALT (7258) or visit at www.saltconcepts.com. The club is located at 1662 Stockton Street in Riverside



How does your garden grow?

In the GARDEN

Summer gardens are fascinating. Some provide staples for cost-conscious families. Others are good objective lessons for kids. And some are just plain fun to take care of and watch what comes up. *The Resident* reached out to local gardeners to see what they're growing this summer. Join us for a quick tour of what your neighbors might be cultivating in their yards.

Laddy Monahan, Ortega

My garden has collard greens still from last October, cabbage, bee balm and different herbs: chocolate mint, orange mint, peppermint, rosemary, bee balm, basil, oregano, dill, sage and parsley. I have had the best luck with banana peppers. I grow Meyer lemons, and special Owari Satsumas that we bought in Mobile, Alabama. Everyone raves about how good they are, and each one has no more than one seed. I maintain the gardens and the kids help me weed. Their favorite job is to pick the caterpillars off the tomatoes which they used to feed to the chickens when we still had them. Of course, they like to harvest too. That's the best part of having a garden! I give away any surplus to friends, family and neighbors. I make a rosemary tea that is delicious. I want to pickle the banana peppers one day. I think that would be delicious!

As far as gardening tips, I put lime in the hole when I plant cucumbers and that helps a lot. For caterpillars, I just check every day and pick them off or use an organic dust.

Ben Townsend, Age 11, Avondale

I have a small garden and grow herbs, strawberries, corn, beans, and cantaloupe. I take care of it by myself. My parents helped me build and plant it in the beginning, but I am doing all of the upkeep. I water it once or twice a day. I used Miracle Gro-soil in the beginning. Occasionally I use manure from the chicken coop to fertilize it.

It's already growing big. My corn is about 2 and 1/2 feet tall. The beans are growing really well too. Everything's awesome. It's my first time having garden and it gives me something to do. I have to weed it often. I think I will like the results the best. I hope to sustain myself one day by growing my own food and catching my own fish so this gives me a chance to see what that's like. The hardest part is waiting for it to grow.

Tracy Miller, Avondale

I am not growing anything exotic: basil, cucumbers, tomatoes, thyme, rosemary and an unknown variety of squash as one of my kids took the marker. The herbs I grow constantly. I mostly take care of it because I am the most interested, but the kids often will plant the plants or clear out the garden after the growing season. I cook a lot, so I tend to use everything I grow, but this year, I think my tomatoes are going gangbusters, so I have given some to our next door neighbors. I have no tried-and-true methods of doing anything, but I do keep a daily eye on the garden for anything that might be going on.

Gourmet food every day is no illusion

Delivered to your door, saving time and money

While having a gourmet dinner delivered to your home in the middle of a hectic week may seem like a fantasy, The Phantom Chef is no illusion.

The San Marco-based company provides an array of services including traditional catering, prepared meals, and personalized chef services, all of which provide an excellent culinary experience for The Phantom Chef's clientele.

Executive Chef and Owner Michael Isacco caters traditional events including weddings, family reunions and holiday parties, but it is his focus on personal relationships with the client that is the unique allure of The Phantom Chef.

"I provide a real, personalized service. I always do an initial interview with my clients to discuss their food preferences, any allergies or dietary requirements," Chef Michael explained. "Then I tailor the menu based on those conversations."

Chef Michael is in the business of delivering tasty meals to private homes in order to make the lives of busy, working people more manageable. As most families try to keep up with their hectic schedules, often left behind is the time it takes to prep and cook healthy meals for the family- not to mention cleaning up afterward. Time is at a premium in most households these days and the service helps to defray the typical routine of shop, prep, cook, eat and then clean up.

A typical meal might be a piece of fish, a side of risotto and some asparagus. "I love to cook with fresh seafood," Chef Michael said. "We are so lucky to live in this part of the country where we can literally cook seafood that was just pulled out of the ocean."

The meals, delivered to your door, are designed to be simple to rewarm and have a three-day shelf life. "In fact, some customers prefer to only order meals for three days a week, finding it provides a certain flexibility as well as convenience.

"All of the ingredients I use are fresh," Chef Michael promises. "Nothing you get from me is ever going to be a processed food product."

The cost of most meal ranges between $14 and $19. "I think people see the value in it," Chef Michael said. "By the time you factor in the time and cost associated with a grocery store run, the time it takes to prepare a healthy, satisfying meal and the time it takes to clean up the mess afterward, it's more than a reasonable expense. A lot of people are beginning to realize the true cost of their time and they're making decisions to allocate their money towards things that make their time more efficient."

Aside from catering and meal deliveries The Phantom Chef provides personal chef services for people in their homes. This service is targeted toward customers who want to host a gourmet quality meal for smaller groups to celebrate holidays or special occasions in the privacy of their own home. "I come in and prepare a meal or an array of heavy hors d'oeuvres," Chef Michael explained. "These experiences are often interactive, and clients and their guests really seem to enjoy the show and if they really paying attention they might even learn a little something."

The Phantom Chef takes care of everything. "I bring in the fresh ingredients, cook the food and even wash the dishes when I am done," Chef Michael said. "Sometimes people pull out their fine china the way mom did at Christmas, and sometimes the events are more casual, either way, people always have fun."

The Phantom Chef

Let the Phantom Chef create a delectable gourmet meal for your family or your next gathering. Call (904) 378-5335 to enjoy the personalized service of The Phantom Chef.

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5th Graders dedicate mosaic mural at John Stockton

What should have been a year-long project at the John Stockton Elementary School was fast-tracked, according to art teacher Pam Patterson, and completed in less than five months. “I’d been admiring Kate Garcia’s mosaic at the West Riverside Elementary School for some time,” said Patterson. “And when parent Angie Morales stepped up to assist with the project, I knew we could do it.”

While the clay, tile and mirror mosaic was the art project for the 5th grade, all students at the Ortega Forest magnet school were able to participate. “The fifth graders created the houses and the personalized pavers,” mentioned Morales, whose son David is in that class. “Other grades created the people, the animals, the fish.” There’s even a section of the Ortega River Bridge on the left portion of the mural.

Other parents also got involved, helping procure a local construction company to install the 24 foot wide x 3 to 4-1/2 foot high mural, while parent (and former student) Charlie Sandusky framed it in time for the Jun. 5 ribbon cutting.

Honor Society dance raises money for cancer to honor former secretary

St. Paul’s Catholic School junior Honor Society hosted Dance Your Teal Off to raise money for Ovarian Cancer and the Phyllis Graham Scholarship Fund. Graham was a long-time St. Paul’s member and school secretary who died this February from ovarian cancer.

Photo of long-time school secretary Phyllis Graham and the plaque in her memory

Navy-Ortega League team wins Murray Hill championship

The NAS Blue Angels 8U All Stars won the Murray Hill championship on Father’s Day against the Argyle 8U All Star team. They played tough defense and shut down the Argyle 8U team to win the championship. Jake Barker, Devin Herring, Carlos Vargas, Anthony Scarpino, Ethan Schopp, Pierce Shirk, Cole Durham, Jack Pruden, Thomas Gibbs, Mason Miller, Rollin George and Victor Garcia all had huge hits to the outfield. Ethan Schopp had a clutch hit to the outfield on two outs, hitting in two game-tying RBIs. Cole Durham made a nice double play at second and first base to throw the runners out, his second double play of the tournament. Pierce Shirk ran hard to catch a foul ball hit far left of first base. Devin Herring, Rollin George and Anthony Scarpino each caught high pop-flys for outs, and Cole Durham caught two pop-flies, one of which ended the game and sealed a victory for the team.

Boost Summer Reading – Let Children Choose the Books!

Sylvan Learning centers present five tips for parents to encourage summer reading

As summer vacations tempt the nation's students away from their books, Sylvan Learning centers in the Jacksonville area are bringing parents some hopeful news: With a little nudge, children do not have to fall victim to summer learning loss.

Research shows that summer months that go by without engaging in learning activities present a real academic risk for school-age children, particularly for those from low-income families. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the National Summer Learning Association found that 77 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students who participate in a summer learning program are better prepared for school in the fall.

Summer reading is the key to avoiding this learning loss. But when summer fun calls, reading often suffers. According to a new Sylvan Learning survey, conducted online by Harris Interactive among 1,190 youths ages 8-18 from March 14-21, less than half of American youths identify reading as a favorite summer activity.

Playing video games ranked highest as a favorite summer activity among boys (83%), while reading books ranked 6th, with just over one-third (34%) saying this is a favorite thing to do in summer. In contrast, girls are almost twice as likely as boys to report that reading books is a favorite summer pastime (64%), and it ranks 3rd on their list.

That's the bad news. The good news, according to the survey, is that the vast majority of those youths - 94 percent - report that they like reading when they can choose books themselves. And they are also more likely to read when those books align to their interests.

"The overwhelming majority of teachers agree that summer reading is key to overall academic success," said according to Richard E. Bavaria, Ph.D., senior vice president of education outreach for Sylvan Learning. "Summer does not have to be a time when children lose important reading skills.

Research indicates that children will read when they choose books themselves."

Five simple tips for students and parents

- Browse your community library
- Combine favorite activities with reading
- Negotiate a reward
- Get an e-book reader
- Use those movie-book tie-ins

Sylvan Learning is the leading provider of tutoring to students of all ages, grades and skill levels with over 30 years of experience and more than 800 centers located throughout North America. Sylvan's trained and Sylvan-certified personal instructors provide individualized instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, study skills and test-prep for college entrance and state exams. For more information, call 1-800-31-SUCCESS, visit SylvanLearning.com.

Lakeshore team at bat in tourney

The Lake Shore Athletic Association baseball team participated in the 12U Invitational Tournament, under the direction of coaches (rear, left to right) Jimmy Davis, Dean Anderson and James Williams, at the Murray Hill Athletic Association ballpark in early June.

Westside boys seek national title

The Westside U14 Soccer boys will be representing the club, Florida and the Southeast as one of the final four teams in the country to compete for the 2013 National President's Cup in Auburndale, FL July 11-14th. The boys pulled off a historic weekend last month by defeating South Texas, North Texas, Oklahoma, and North Carolina to set up a final against Group winner Tennessee. The boys saved their best for last as they controlled the run of play to clinch the win and bring home the title with a 3-0 victory.

Bishop Snyder student is Softball Player of the Year

Sydney Wright of Bishop Snyder High School was chosen as the 2012-13 Gatorade Florida Softball Player of the Year. Wright is the first to be chosen from Bishop Snyder High School in The Gatorade Company's 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes and is a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Wright as Florida's best high school softball player. The 5-foot-9 senior right-handed pitcher posted a 27-5 record in the circle along with a 0.51 ERA this past season, leading the Cardinals (28-5) to the Class 3A state championship game. Wright struck out 288 batters and walked 47 in 220.2 innings pitched with 18 shutouts and three no-hitters. At the plate, the two-time Florida Times-Union Player of the Year batted .443 with 10 home runs, 46 RBI and an .821 slugging percentage.

Wright has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally at a nursing home, as a youth softball coach and as part of a fundraising campaign to assist the Wounded Warriors Project. Wright has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Arkansas this fall.

Jr. Residents

Episcopal lineman signs with Hampden-Sydney College

Football player Thomas Vinyard signed this spring to play for the Tigers of Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. The 6'2" 270-pound lineman recently graduated from the Episcopal School of Jacksonville. Vinyard was a three-year Varsity letterman and team Captain for the Episcopal Eagles. The Ortega native stated that, "Hampden-Sydney, founded in 1775, will provide me with extraordinary academic opportunities. I also look forward to being part of the college's winning tradition on the gridiron."

Episcopal grads pole vaulting for Air Force Academy

Emily Smithwick, Ortega, Episcopal Class of 2012, will be pole vaulting for the Air Force Academy next year. She is transferring from Tufts, and will start at the AFA as a freshman.

While at Episcopal, Smithwick and Paige Shirley (San Jose, Class of 2010) won three individual pole vault state titles in four years; Smithwick in 2012 and Shirley in 2009 and 2010.

"We are extremely proud to have two alumni athletes competing at the Air Force Academy – one of our country's most challenging higher education institutions – in 2013-2014. Emily and Paige were both strong student-athletes while at Episcopal and I am confident that they are prepared to meet the academic, athletic and leadership challenges of the Air Force Academy," said Andy Kidd, Episcopal's Director of Athletics.

Episcopal Class of 2013 Salutatorian from Ortega Forest

Sally Van Cleve and her aunt Sis Van Cleve-Miller with Virginia Smith

Virginia Smith, of Ortega Forest, and Episcopal High School Salutatorian was honored at her Senior Honors Convocation with a number of awards, including the Episcopal School of Jacksonville Foundation Award for Excellence of Character, the English Department Award, the President's Education Award for Merit and was also named a National Merit Scholar Commended Scholar. Smith was also the recipient of the top academic awards for five of her six classes and will be attending the University of Virginia in the fall.

Smith and her best friend Sally Van Cleve were honored together for their volunteer service to Jacksonville and abroad, as the recipients of the Episcopal Parents Association Service Scholarship (a $500 college scholarship) for giving the most service hours in their graduating class to the community, both in Jacksonville and abroad.

The girls worked together at area food shelters, mentored special needs children and served in the mission fields of Costa Rica.

Van Cleve was also the recipient of the President's Scholarship from Queens College, where she will be attending.

Children's Enrichment Workshop wins award

The Children's Enrichment Workshop (CEW) was a recipient of the prestigious Commissioner's Business Recognition Award, recognized from among business organizations throughout Florida for their contributions of time, resources and personnel to improve the quality of education in public schools.

The Workshop has been serving West Riverside, Central Riverside and Fishweir Elementary schools since 1998. CEW brought together all five of the schools' faith-based business partners to provide afterschool children's activities, weekly PALS mentors, the Angel and Caring Tree at Christmas, and sponsorship of the annual field days. They also provide basketball for boys and girls, dance, swimming, and a variety of music programs. The collective efforts of the five churches in the CEW program have been instrumental in building a sense of community and providing positive examples for parents and neighbors to model.

The five churches also sponsor a luncheon before school starts for all teachers at the three elementary schools. Each teacher is given a large bag of supplies that they cannot get from the school system and would otherwise have to supply for themselves, according to program director Beverly Davis, program coordinator. The congregations from each of the five churches sponsor this event from love offerings or other giving programs.

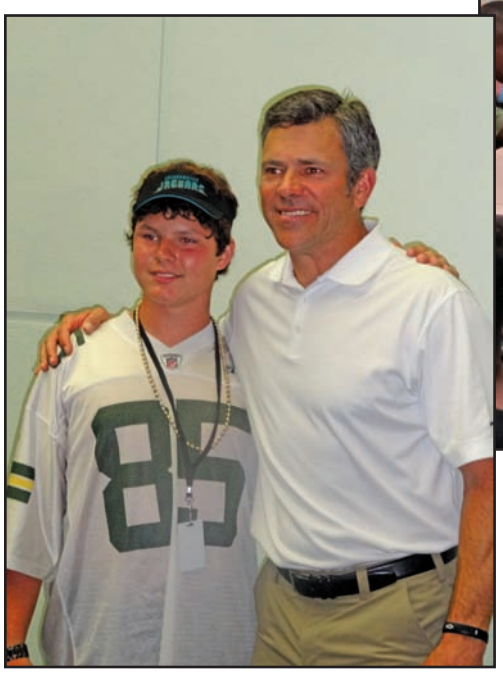
Rev. Robert Kinley, of Trinity Lutheran, and CEW Board Chair, accepted the award for CEW at the Florida Education Foundation's 26th annual awards program on June 13 in Tampa.

Local SPORTS

Brunell hosts ‘Camps for Champs’

By Lara Patangan
Resident Community News

In his off season from coaching Episcopal High School’s football team, Mark Brunell is proving once again to be as much of a champion off the field as on it. The former NFL quarterback for the Jacksonville Jaguars teamed up with Family Support Services and the Florida Department of Children and Families to host Camp for Champs for nearly 100 local foster care children.



“It is good to be back in Jacksonville and good to be coaching football,” said Brunell. “This is my first year being involved in the camp and I am very excited about it.”

The five-day, four-night camp sponsored by the Mark Brunell Foundation and Wells Fargo was held at the University of North Florida last month. A group of Wells Fargo employees who volunteered at the camp participated in a leadership program that looked at different ways to support non-profits. “The group wanted to focus on youth that had been challenged in some way and chose Camp for Champs,” said Connie Smith, a San Marco resident and Community Affairs Manager with Wells Fargo.

Brunell, whose foundation is committed to helping families that are going through tough times whether they are physical, emotional or even financial, enjoyed participating in activities and getting to know the children. “It helps give kids in foster care hope,” Brunell said. “It is a real privilege to be a part of it.”

Foster children, ranging in ages from six to 15 years old, were able to participate in one of two community-offered summer camps. While kids were able to participate in traditional camping activities like arts and crafts, swimming, and canoeing, the camp experience is intended to linger long after the summer heat fades.

“Going to sleepover camp is a wonderful learning opportunity for children,” said Lee Kaywork, FSS chief executive officer. “Our Camp for Champions is much more than just games; it’s a life experience. The camp will give our children an up-close look at college campus that we hope will excite and inspire them.”

Harry, age 14, one of the participants who has been in a foster home for the past two years, said at first he was hesitant to attend camp. “Now I love it,” Harry explained. “I made a lot of friends. I feel like I belong here.”

Brunell gave a talk to camp participants the first evening of camp, and it was a homerun. Literally, he talked about baseball. In particular, George Herman Ruth’s legendary accomplishments of winning seven pennants and four World Series.

With football highlights playing in the background, Brunell threw the children a classic curve ball. Babe Ruth was a foster kid.

“He went on to greatness and there is no reason that you can’t too,” Brunell encouraged. “Don’t think for a second that because of where you are in your life that you can’t be great. Don’t think that you can’t make a difference…believe that the future is bright, that God has a plan for you. Have hope.” Spoken like a champ.

To Be Young & INDEPENDENT

In honor of our great country, young and struggling for independence in 1776, ***The Resident*** *would like to share a few profiles on local Young Independents. From entrepreneur to small business owner to corporate professional, these young men and women talk about their work/life balance, taking risks and what they like about working and living in Jacksonville.*

Taylor Danson

Murray Hill, age 29

Co-Owner, For the Love of Cake

When Taylor Danson graduated in 2006 from Flagler College in St. Augustine with a degree in graphic design and advertising, she knew the last thing she wanted was a desk job. "I applied for a position at a local bakery in the cake department. Even though I knew very little about cake at the time, I ended up developing such a passion for it!"

But it was not a big leap to use what she learned about design and apply it to cake decorating. "I like to think of cakes as edible forms of art, so it's not too far a stretch from graphic design," Danson said. "My art degree definitely plays a big role in the creativity involved in coming up with fun and unique cake designs." And she says she was inspired by "the amazingly talented Margie Chambers from the very beginning."

Danson feels that Jacksonville is a great city in which to own a business, but finds that its size makes it "more difficult to reach potential customers on the opposite side of town." She also says that it's a tough battle keeping boundaries drawn between her personal and professional life. "I have a tendency to work or reply to emails until midnight or later. Even though it's hard, I try to keep the days we are closed as my time to catch up on life outside of the cake shop."

Jeff Crabtree

Ortega, age 20

Owner, Right Spot Fishing Charters

"Working in the fishing industry has always been a life goal and dream and I couldn't think of a better time to start than being fresh out of high school," said Jeff Crabtree, who gives a shout out to fishing guide Tony Bozzella of TBS Jigs and Charters. "He helped me along the way through the long process of becoming a guide. When I was little I always dreamed of being like Tony."

When he's not spending time on the water, Crabtree takes classes at Florida State College Jacksonville and is an assistant high school football coach at his alumni, Bishop John Snyder High School. "I was lucky honored enough to be hired almost immediately after I graduated. I enjoy football and basketball and outside of that I spend my time with a core group of friends that are more like family."

Crabtree says he's an educated risk-taker. "In the fishing world people say that they would rather be lucky than good, especially in tournament fishing where the stakes are very high. I am VERY competitive in everything I do. I want to win. I want to be the best. That's it. And you have to be smart when knowing to take risks. You have to be educated enough to know when a risk is smart or just plain dumb. But you have to be gutsy and fearless when it's time to follow your gut and take a serious risk, which could sometimes mean making a 50-70 mile run in a tournament where you are susceptible to striking out. You have to be smart, but you also can't be scared to take a big risk."

The young fishing guide loves owning a business in Jacksonville because "It's in a prime location for clientele, because everyone in Jax loves the water and enjoys fishing."

Jennifer Simmons

Riverside, age 29

Fund Development Manager, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council

Armed with a degree in advertising from the University of Florida, Jennifer Simmons headed straight into nonprofit work. "I wanted to do something creative and helpful, and learned more about development after graduating from college. I have worked at several non-profits and chose to work at Girl Scouts [of Gateway Council] because it is a wonderful organization doing great things for girls in our community," she said.

"I like that I work for an organization that helps develop girls into leaders. Girl Scouts is for all girls, and instills confidence and character – something that's so important for children," continued Simmons. "Jacksonville has been a great place to work and live for me."

She especially enjoys that there is no struggle with maintaining a healthy work/life balance. "The Girl Scouts is a wonderful place to work and everyone here is so supportive that work in itself is balanced." In her free time Simmons bicycles, gets together with friends, takes her dog to the dog park, reads and does yoga. She considers her father to be her mentor in both life and work. "He gives thoughtful and smart professional advice and good life advice as well," she said.

Jennie Crosby Hugo

Ortega, age 27

Owner, Crosby Designs for Hugo's Fine Furniture and Interiors

Graduating from Flagler College with a degree in fine arts and also having "intensely studied art history", Jennie Crosby Hugo says she didn't choose to be an interior designer. Instead, "I think I have recently come to terms with my profession choosing me. It's in my blood and I've been 'working/living' in the field since I was in high school, sneaking away to go to High Point Market, driving my father crazy with showroom changes, and drawing ads for the Times Union," said Hugo. "However, there is no better way to learn interior design than being in the field. I don't believe talent or style is something that can be taught."

The young designer says her father, Richard, is her biggest mentor, along with Terrell Bowman, a designer at Hugo's main location. "Without Terrell's endless knowledge of everything design related and Dad pushing me to learn, excel and challenge myself, I don't know where I would be."

Leaving work at work is difficult for Hugo. "Honestly, having a balance life is hard right now…but I don't see that as a bad thing! You have to work extremely hard when owning a new business to really make it successful," she noted. "When I'm not working, I love sneaking away to Highlands, NC or just up to Savannah! If in town, I love visiting the Cummer Museum or MOCA or treating myself to a Planters Punch by the pool at the Yacht Club!"

Hugo is trying to move the interior design needle in Jacksonville. "I love being here in Jacksonville as it my home town and where our legacy began, but I do think Jacksonville is a tad behind on today's interior design. We are excited at the response we are receiving here at Crosby Designs. Transitional is the new traditional and I love seeing people jump out of their comfort zone and making their home represent them! We tried to bring a little bit of Atlanta's design flare to Jacksonville and we see it working already!"

Share your favorite vacation!

Was your summer vacation out of the ordinary this year? Did you pack the family off on a serious hiking expedition or explore the many things that Jacksonville and Northeast Florida have to offer? The Resident wants to know about the memories you made this summer! Send your best vacation photo with a 100-word caption to editor@residentnews.net no later than July 15. Perhaps you'll convince your neighbors to try your summer getaway next year!

(No guarantees of publishing; first come first considered.)

UFHealth

UF&SHANDS IS NOW UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA HEALTH

We've changed our name to better reflect who we are as the Southeast's premier academic health center: UF Health. And while our name has changed, our commitment to conducting innovative research and delivering unsurpassed patient care remains the same.

UFHealthJax.org

This is my smile story...

Last fall, a friend tagged me in a photo on Facebook with my son from a Halloween party. In looking at the photo, I was shocked and embarrassed at the stains, discoloration and shape of my teeth. I was never happy with my teeth, but somehow seeing my imperfect smile on Facebook motivated me to achieve the perfect smile I always wanted. With my whole life ahead of me, there was no better time to act.

After researching various cosmetic dentists, I chose Dr. Jacqueline West. With Dr. West's 240 hours of continuing cosmetic dental education and her ability to set my mind at ease with this life changing decision, I felt confident I had chosen the right dentist.

With my new smile, I am no longer self-conscience about being tagged in photos. My smile finally reflects the person I am and want to be.

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