



JFCS Gala honors those making a difference

Honorary Co-Chairs Jay and Deanie Stein, Colleen Rodriguez, and Ellen Rosner, alongside Kimberly and Richard Sisisky. See photos on page 23.



Girls just want to have fun

Runners came from all over Northeast Florida to participate in the San Marco Wine and Chocolate 5K. These gals put a little color and a lot of fun into their race. More on page 37.

May 2015

Resident

Community News

San Jose — San Marco — St. Nicholas



www.ResidentNews.net

Fiercely Local News ... Fiercely Loyal Readers

Vol. 7, Issue 05



Mishayla and Michael Schmidt

Cummer Ball highlights local collector

Patrons enjoy an evening of artistic expression. See more on page 22

A new house for Mr. Pickles



Jim and Susan Towler of San Marco have spent a small fortune renovating their 1920s-era Granada neighborhood home into the house of their dreams while preserving the essence of its historic past. When they move in this fall, their whole family will enjoy expansive new digs, including their French bulldog, Mr. Pickles. To read more about their renovation project, turn to page 10.

Bulldozers clear way for Baptist-MD Anderson Cancer Center

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Bulldozers were out in April tearing down bungalows along Palm Avenue and Childrens Way, as Baptist Health begins the process of clearing land so that a new state-of-the art cancer center may be built.

On April 17, Baptist Health signed a partnership agreement with The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to join forces in transforming oncology care in Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia. The institutions plan to create a joint cancer program in order to allow patients in the North Florida region greater access to MD Anderson's treatment protocols, clinical trials and translational research. MD Anderson is currently considered one of the two best hospitals for cancer care in the United States according to US News and World Report's annual "Best Hospitals" survey.

The new Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center will open this fall and will be initially housed in the Baptist Outpatient Center on San Marco Boulevard, where the Hill Breast Center is currently located.

A new medical director will be hired for the cancer center and new staff is currently being recruited. The new venture will add a significant number of jobs to the local economy, said Melanie Husk, senior vice president of marketing and communications for Baptist Health.

An architectural firm will be selected in May to design a new building that is



A San Marco bungalow on Palm Avenue is demolished to make way for the new Baptist Health-MD Anderson Cancer Center, which is due to be built by 2017.

anticipated to require between 175,000 to 200,000 square feet and will be located in the block bordered by Palm Avenue, Gary Street, Children's Way and San Marco Boulevard, between the Baptist Outpatient Center and Nemours Children's Specialty Care. The expected open date for the new cancer center is 2017. Baptist Health will absorb the costs of building the cancer center, but the co-branded name once it is built will be Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.

The dedicated facility will be designed to serve a full continuum of cancer-care needs including screening, diagnosis, treatment and survivorship. In building the center,

Baptist Health plans to replicate the MD Anderson model of care so that cancer patients and their families can receive the highest level of care close to home.

Although the design process for the new building has not begun, Baptist Health "is committed to keeping the community informed and sharing plans as they are developed," said Husk. "An important design goal of the new center will be to enhance and complement the surrounding neighborhood as we increase the community's access to world-class cancer care here in Jacksonville.

See MD Anderson Cancer Center on page 9 >>>

Temple dedicates land expansion



Sid Gefen, long-time Temple member, cut the red ribbon at the dedication of Congregation Ahavath Chesed (The Temple) land purchase on April 19. With support from more than 135 Temple families, the congregation was able to purchase the two acres of land immediately south of Temple's parking lot.

Bill Block, Land Campaign Co-Chair explained, "This land purchase was a vision of my father, Max Block. He taught me that land is always a good investment. While he did not live to celebrate with us, he was alive when we signed the papers. His dream was fulfilled." Jeff Edwards, Land Campaign Co-Chair, recognized the support from all the Temple families. He paid special tribute to Sid Gefen, whose 95th birthday was celebrated as part of the recognition event.

AT A GLANCE

- Residents ponder park upgrades. *Page 4*
- Baptist-JCA open Wellness Connexion. *Page 7*
- San Marco real estate market heats up. *Page 13*
- Meet San Marco's Super Moms. *Page 32*

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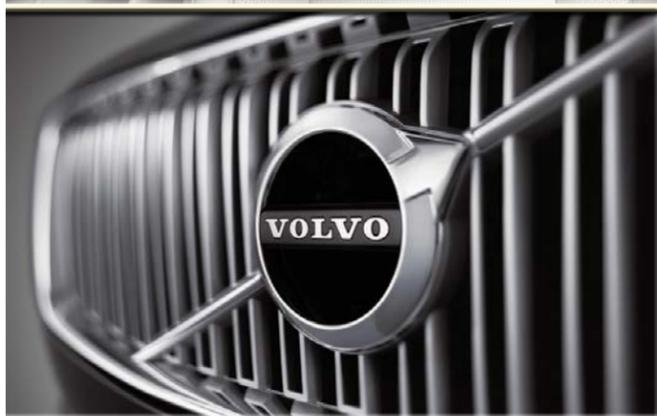


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New restaurant group brings fine dining businesses together

San Marco resident Fraser Burns and his business partner Jacques Klempf announced the formation of Forking Amazing Restaurants, a restaurant group that comprises Ovinte at the St. Johns Town Center, Bistro Aix in San Marco, and the Cowford Chophouse in the Bostwick Building downtown.

“We are passionate about creating amazing guest experiences, and we like to put our own unexpected twist on each restaurant,” said Klempf. “Operating as Forking Amazing Restaurants will help us solidify the relationship between Ovinte, Bistro Aix, and the Cowford Chophouse, while letting our guests know that they can expect the same high culinary and service standards at every restaurant operated by the FAR group. Our goal is to help make Jacksonville a dining destination through our diverse portfolio of



Aundra Wallace, CEO, Downtown Investment Authority, District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer, Oliver Barakat, DIA Chairman, Mayor Alvin Brown, and business partners Jacques Klempf, Fraser Burns of Forking Amazing Restaurants

restaurant concepts.”
A Certificate of Appropriateness application for exterior work on the Bostwick Building was approved by the

city last month and building stabilization is expected to begin this month. The Cowford Chophouse is expected to open in summer 2016.

Signs of change

John Livengood, a sign installer with Don Bell Signs, attempts to beat a storm heading toward the Southbank last month. He and others were in the process of installing new signage at Nemours Children’s Clinic, which underwent a name change to Nemours Children’s Specialty Care. According to Medical Director Michael Erhard, MD, the rebranding came about in response to consumer research to reflect what Nemours does in Jacksonville. The signage change on the 11-story building began in mid-March. Nemours, which has been in Jacksonville for over 30 years, is home to more than 110 physicians, providing services to more than 56,000 children each year.



Corrections

The Resident regrets the following errors in the April 2015 issue:

In a story on the Hendricks Avenue Baseball League, we incorrectly identified Todd Osburn as Tom Osburn, a local architect who is also the league president. In addition, the \$100,000 donated for services included ALL architectural, civil engineering, mechanical and electrical engineering fees for the project.

A story about the 2015 Environmental Awards included a photo of St. Johns Riverkeeper Volunteer of the Year Peter Welch, who was incorrectly identified as Dr. Quinton White.

A news brief about the elections for mayor and sheriff stated that the Fraternal Order of Police did not endorse a candidate for the unitary election, however the FOP did endorse Jimmy Holderfield. The FOP has not endorsed a candidate for the general election on May 19 as of press time.

Painting with a Twist

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Gearing Up For Summer Sales

It is a lovely Saturday afternoon in the neighborhood. The azaleas have pretty much come and gone but they in their joyous colors once again reminded me how lucky I am to be a tiny part of this beautiful southern neighborhood. As I sit here doing paperwork, I reflect on how nicely things have been moving forward this spring. Our appraisers seem to be in better spirits now that they have some excellent comparables, our sellers are tickled pink that their homes are selling quickly and our interest rates keep dropping which makes buyers happy to buy - what more can we ask for? Life is good in the hood.

I expect this trend to continue into a steady summer market. Pre-election years are generally good real estate years so keep cleaning your closets and countertops preparing for your move. The more your home 'shows like a model', the more money you will get. Buyers buy with emotion and it's hard for them to see their own emotions if your emotions dominate the space. 37% of Realtors believe a staged home's sale price increases between 1-5% while 22% say it increases by 6-10%. I'm never sure how these polls shake out, but bottom line, when a seller prepares their home prior to marketing, it always sells faster and for more money. Never be in a hurry to sell. Take your time to prepare for marketing. It pays.

It's because of you and your beautiful homes that I love my job. If you are thinking about making a move, why not try me? I listen and I learn from each of you. This is my life and I love it.

—Anne Rain

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Proposed improvements to Whatley Park draw ire from neighbors

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Few dispute that improvements need to be made to San Marco's Brown Whatley Park, but exactly what upgrades will be made and when is apparently still up for discussion.

The San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) shared several proposed renovations to help bring the park in sync with American Disabilities Act regulations during its Wine Down in the Park fundraiser April 18.

SMPS has approximately \$40,000 at its disposal due to money left over in the city's capital improvement budget for parks and recreation in District 5, said Andrew Dickson, incoming president of the SMPS. The money became available when a soccer field was not built in another area of the district, he said.

The Society had planned to start work on its plans this summer, but due to the negative response from some residents, the proposal is up for further discussion, said current San Marco Preservation Society President Mary Toomey.

Until the Society presented its plans at the Wine Down event there hadn't been much feedback on the proposal, she said. "It's sparked more interest in the park," she said, noting the Society wants to work with the surrounding neighbors and build a "consensus."

Dickson said there are no worries about losing the city money if the project

isn't started in June. The money has been allocated to Whatley Park, he said. "The money stays in place as long as the project stays in place," he said.

The Society proposed to install a winding concrete walkway that will extend the length of the park from Broadmoor Lane to Hendricks Avenue so people "can cross the park without getting their feet wet," said Dickson. The walkway would help make the park "wheelchair accessible," he said.

Other proposed improvements include the installation of low-intensity "historic-style" lampposts, new benches, and the replacement of the handrail on the footbridge with a more attractive "historic-style" railing. Installing low-intensity lampposts to illuminate it at night would make the park safer, and deter "campers," he said.

Also proposed is the planting of commemorative trees alongside the path. Donations are being accepted to cover the cost of the trees and benches at \$750 per tree and \$1500 per bench, which will include a commemorative plaque. Anyone wishing to donate these items should contact Dickson, Toomey or Courtney Reilly at the Preservation Society office.

"We want a uniform design for all the parks (in San Marco)," Dickson said, noting the benefits of the Society's proposal are fourfold: to enhance the park's beauty, to increase its accessibility, to elevate property values and to



These photos of Belmonte Park illustrate the kind of concrete path, benches and trees that will be installed in Whatley Park if the San Marco Preservation Society's proposed plan is accepted.

bring the community together in an aesthetically unified neighborhood.

Poor drainage is also an issue in the park, Dickson said. A poster displayed at the Wine Down event explained the reasons why the park often floods during storms and why water in the creek is orange.

Years ago JEA capped the natural spring in Alexandria Park, which feeds the creek allowing the water to become stagnant. The storm drain downstream is placed

15 inches above stream level to prevent tidal intrusion from the St. John's River. The rise prevents water from draining quickly from the stream allowing the park to flood during downpours. A 2012 water quality study showed that iron-loving bacteria take advantage of the iron-rich groundwater in the creek. It metabolizes dissolved iron in the water creating a rust color. The water is not polluted and

Continued on page 5 >>>

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Local agencies celebrate Children's Week

More than 50 staff members of the San-Marco based Family Support Services joined over 200 child advocates in walking from City Hall to the Jacksonville Landing to show support for making Jacksonville a child-friendly city through awareness, advocacy and support of local children and families.

Several FSS staff members were also on the event planning committee, which also included workers from the Players Center for Child Health at Wolfson Children's Hospital. The children's reading corner was a part of the post-walk festivities at the Landing, which included information booths and entertainment.

During the fair, staff at the Family Support Services booth concentrated on recruiting adults who might be willing to participate in their foster parents program. "We're looking for new substitute parents willing to help kids who are looking for a safe place to stay," said Linda Collins of FSS. Anyone interested in becoming a foster parent should call the Foster Parent Hotline at (904) 421-5864.



Deborah Gianoulis Heald, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership in St. Nicholas, reads to children during Jacksonville's Advocacy Walk and Family Resource Fair on March 19. Heald also served as emcee for the community event.

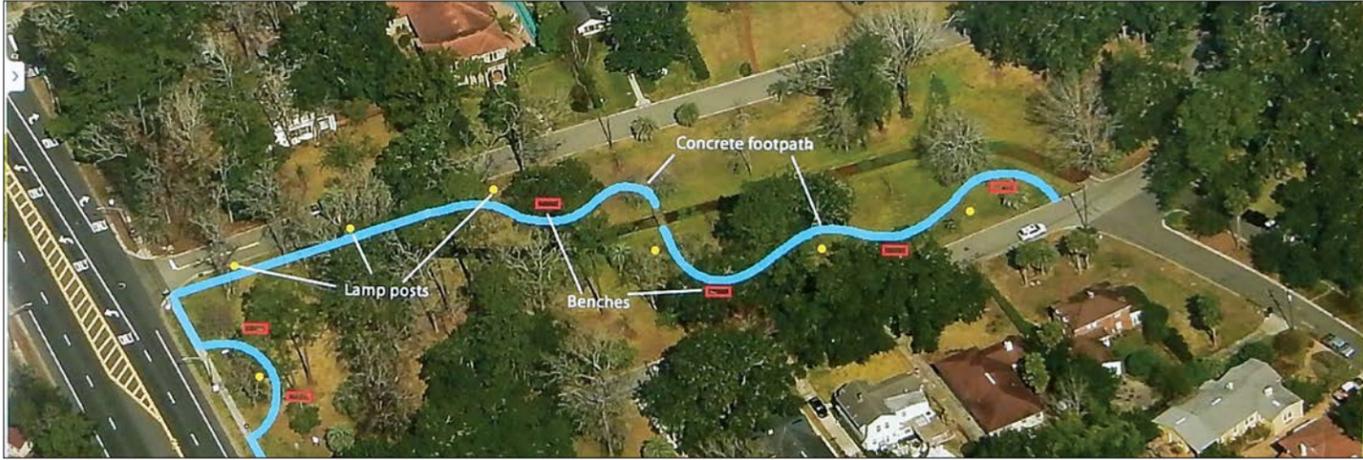
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This rendering depicts where a proposed concrete path would be installed in Whatley Park.

supports small fish and frogs.

Fixing the drainage problem would cost six figures, Dickson said, adding that removing the concrete bed and restoring the stream to its natural state would cost seven figures. The city does not have capital to fix the drainage at this time, he said, noting some money raised from the Wine Down fundraiser will fund a study to recommend innovative and cost-effective ways to improve drainage and the creek's appearance.

Differing opinions

Mimi Pearce, who lives in a home adjacent to the park, said several neighbors disagree with some aspects of the proposal. Drainage is the main issue and any available money should go to finding a way to alleviate the problem, she said.

Pearce also said there were objections to installing a concrete walkway the length of the park, as was shown on the map displayed at the Wine Down event.

Belmonte Park is a "landlocked park" bordered on two sides by homes and is only accessible to the public on two ends, she said, noting it makes sense to have a concrete path in that park.

In contrast, installing a path in Whatley Park would divide its large open grassy expanse and distract from the park's main focal point, the stream, she said. Because Whatley Park is horseshoe-shaped and bordered on all sides by public streets, a path is unnecessary; the park is already accessible on all sides, she said, adding the cement might be undermined by groundwater when the park floods. "They say the sidewalk will help keep people's feet dry but it won't, she said. "It will be covered when the park becomes a lake."

Also at issue is the proposed lighting and planting of trees. Installing lampposts is unnecessary because moonlights have already been placed in the trees years ago; they need only to be repaired, Pearce said. The park already has plenty of "mature" trees," she said. Planting the trees to

form a canopy over the concrete path would only detract from the openness of the green space, she said, noting she is amenable to the Society's plan to replace the railing and add new benches.

Dickson said the moonlights in the trees have already been restored but that they don't have much impact because they are underpowered and too small.

"Because of this lighting in the park we don't have to install electrical conduits (to position the additional lampposts). All we have to do is tie into what's there," he said. And some of the mature trees are in poor health because park maintenance over the years has been "haphazard," he said.

"We want to approach this in a thoughtful way with attention to detail, design and safety," he said. "This park was designed as a passive use park and will continue to be a passive use park. It will continue to be an open green space. We want to make it a beautiful centerpiece to a beautiful neighborhood."

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3973 GADSDEN RD - \$265,000
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1021 SORRENTO RD - \$850,000
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1738 MORO AVE - \$365,000
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4173 BIRMINGHAM RD
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3748 RUBIN RD
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10524 TANGLEWILDE DR WEST
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JCA and Baptist Health join forces with Wellness Connexion

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Consider it a melding of two leaders in the field of health and wellness within the San Marco/San Jose community.

Baptist Health and Jewish Community Alliance have joined forces to establish a new Baptist/JCA Wellness Connexion in the lobby of the JCA facility on San Jose Boulevard. The Connexion will give the more than 5000 members of JCA an opportunity to gain a better understanding of their current state of health and the lifestyle changes that might be necessary to meet their wellness goals.

The Wellness Connexion Center, a room off the lobby at JCA, represents an on-site marriage between the fitness center resources of the JCA, which supplies trainers and equipment, and the medical expertise of Baptist Health, which will staff the center with two full-time wellness coaches. By banding with Baptist, JCA is aiming to receive a national designation as a medical fitness center, said Catherine Graham, a resident of San Marco, and an administrator at Baptist.

To gain the medical designation, JCA will have a physician's advisory board and the Baptist wellness coaches will be registered nurses who will often leave the confines of the Connexion Center in order to work one-on-one with members within the JCA facility. "The idea is for them not to stay just behind those two glass doors," Graham said. "Building relationships is what the JCA wants to accomplish."

"This is a perfect match-up," said Richard Sisisky, an Epping Forest resident, who is a member of both the JCA and the board of directors at Baptist Health. "This fulfills what we are trying to do at Baptist – change health care for good."

"JCA touches people at all aspects of their lives, from birth to the late stages," he said, noting that JCA offers a vast number of programs including preschool,

after school and senior care, as well as fitness programs, fine arts and summer camp. "JCA is not just a gym and fitness club. A lot of people pass through the portals of the JCA."

Myron Flagler, Executive Director of the JCA agreed. "Both Baptist and JCA are committed to helping build better lives for our community members," he said. "The responsibility for enhanced wellbeing of the community belongs to everyone. We're just one other vessel for people to do this and do it in a meaningful way."

The two organizations celebrated the merger with a reception in the lobby of the Jewish Community Alliance on April 14. Speaking at the reception were Sisisky, Flagler, Adam Frisch, president of the JCA, and John Wilbanks, Baptist Health executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Cheryl L. Meyer is one of the wellness coaches hired by Baptist to serve as a full-time wellness coach. In addition to being a registered nurse, she is also a certified diabetes prevention lifestyle coach and a certified American Lung Association Freedom from Smoking facilitator. The other wellness coach has yet to be announced. Ali NeSmith, a trainer at JCA, will assist with the members' fitness needs.

The Wellness Connexion Center will provide a private location where JCA members can meet with the wellness coaches to discuss their health and fitness needs. At the center, members can receive health-risk assessments, screenings, and assistance in finding out more about the resources available to them at JCA. The wellness coaches will provide health-care education such as helping members understand their blood pressure and body-mass index. The JCA will also offer group talks on various medical and illness prevention topics as part of this initiative.

To kick things off, JCA is encouraging its members to participate in a free, confidential online personal wellness



Lior Spring of JCA; Nancy Green of JCA; Patrice Dickman of JCA; Julie Schafer of Baptist Health; Melanie Husk of Baptist Health; Ali NeSmith of JCA; Hollie Arnold of JCA; Catherine Graham of Baptist Health; Katie Kight of JCA and Myron Flagler of JCA



Catherine Graham of Baptist Health; Richard Sisisky of Baptist Health; Adam Frisch of JCA; Hugh Greene of Baptist Health; John Wilbanks of Baptist Health and Myron Flagler of JCA

assessment, which was developed by the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. A computer is available at the Connexion Center to take the assessment. From the data gathered, a summary report will be generated to inform participants of their current state of health in relation to others their age and gender and give recommendations. Members are free to follow up with their own doctor or consult a Baptist Health wellness coach for a referral. The information in the wellness assessment is confidential, and

JCA staff will have no access to members' health information. Establishing the Connexion Center fits in perfectly with Baptist Health's mission, Sisisky said. "We have a ring of hospitals, 47 primary care offices, an emergency facility in Clay County, Wolfson Children's Hospital and an affiliation with Care Spot and the YMCA," he said. "This is just one more area where we can touch people where they live and work. It's another way to make us relevant in health care."

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Cyclists cautiously optimistic about city progress

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Anything is better than nothing is the general feeling among some avid cyclists in San Marco regarding the city's response to Mayor Alvin Brown's initiative to make Jacksonville a safer city for both bicyclists and pedestrians. A few San Marco riders articulated optimism, saying the city is heading in the right direction, while still conceding that there is still much more to do.

"They've started with small steps to get there, but there's still lots of work to be done," said Christina Groger of San Marco.

Chris Burns, another San Marco resident, who is chairman of the city's Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, agrees. "I'm optimistic because some positive steps have been taken but at the same time many more important initiatives need to occur before we have a safe and inviting environment for people who ride bicycles and walk," he said.

This sentiment is also shared by Scott Gross of Open Road Bicycles in Miramar. Gross commutes to work by bike. "It's come from nowhere to stagnant," he said. "It's not done but it's moving forward." The city is finally beginning to "think down the road. Attention is being paid to make sure it is done properly. It takes time to do it right," he said.

Since last fall, when Mayor Brown initiated a multi-agency coalition to look into the problem, some progress has been



Motorists parallel parking along Hendricks Avenue near the Southside Tennis Courts must be aware of potentially dangerous encounters with bicyclists when opening their doors. Optimally, bike lanes should be well removed from parking lanes.

made. The Federal Highway Administration has designated Jacksonville as a "pedestrian focus city" making it eligible to receive "technical" assistance due to the high incidence of pedestrian and cycling fatalities.

The city hired Denise Chaplick, its first-ever bicycle-pedestrian coordinator, and, at the urging of councilmembers Lori Boyer and Don Redman, funding has been approved for an updated Jacksonville Pedestrian-Bicycle master plan. Also, the Federal Department of Transportation has agreed to construct a separated pathway across the Fuller Warren Bridge to connect Riverside with San Marco. The pathway is to be used jointly by cyclists, runners and pedestrians and is scheduled to be

May 15 is Bike-to-Work day

Jacksonville Bike-to-Work Day will be held Friday, May 15. Cyclists are encouraged to either ride on their own or join a group from the following locations:

- For those coming from the west: LakeShore Bicycles, 7 a.m., joining those at Open Road Bicycles in Avondale, 7:15 a.m., and moving on to City Cycle in Riverside at 7:30 a.m.
- For those coming in from the east: Meet at Open Road Bicycles on Hendricks Avenue, 7:30 a.m.

Both groups will meet up at the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts at 8 a.m. and proceed together to arrive at Hemming Plaza by 8:30 a.m. There will be a brief recognition of the event at Hemming Plaza in order to show support for a "bicycle-friendly" Jacksonville before the cyclists part ways and head to work.

completed in early 2017.

The city painted bike lanes on San Jose Blvd. between University Blvd. and Baymeadows, which local cyclists are "raving" about, said Burns. "The bike lane on San Jose is so nice," said Groger. "It's an excellent place to ride. There's enough space so that you feel safe."

But even with sharrows painted part-way down Riverside Ave. near the Acosta Bridge, Burns contends that Riverside Ave. is still one of the "most dangerous" roads in the city. He also points to Atlantic Blvd. under I-95 in San Marco as treacherous, and says to attempt to cross Atlantic and Beach Blvd. in an effort to get to Episcopal High School or Bishop Kenny in St. Nicholas is high risk.

"There are facilities for people to safely bike," he said. "Any location that allows motorists to travel at high speed within the same travel lane as cyclists is very dangerous. With vehicles traveling at 45 miles per hour, if there is a collision with a pedestrian or cyclist, the odds are extremely high there will be a death. We must lower the speed of certain roads in Jacksonville. The extra travel time for motorists will be minimal. The improve-

ment in safety for pedestrians and cyclists could be immense."

Currently Jacksonville is listed as one of the most dangerous cities in the United States for biking and walking, Burns said. Serious cyclists desire better road infrastructure, such as segregated lanes and signage on busy roads such as Atlantic and Beach Blvd. Until the separated pathway alongside the Fuller Warren Bridge is built, there is no safe connection between the east and west sides of the river, he said. "One of the biggest challenges in Jacksonville is to find better, safer access to the bridges going downtown."

At present the Fuller Warren, Mathews and Hart Bridges are closed to cyclists and pedestrians, Burns said. Although many cyclists, runners and walkers use the Main Street Bridge, it is problematic for cyclists to share the "narrow" pathway with pedestrians who are often oblivious to the cyclists because they wear headphones. Because the Main Street Bridge vehicle lanes are constructed of open metal grating and are narrow, riding a bike in the vehicle lanes is dangerous, Burns said.

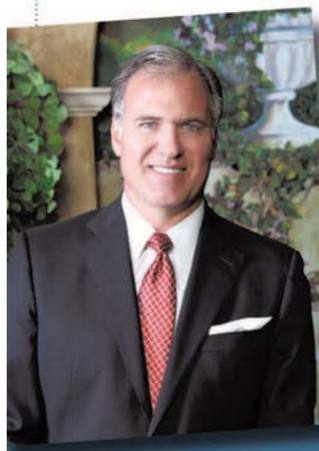
On the Acosta Bridge the FDOT first

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painted shared-lane markings in the wrong location but has since corrected the problem, Burns said. But the bridge is not optimal because the lane accommodation for cyclists is incomplete, and non-existent as one exits the bridge on the San Marco side. Also the gradient of the bridge is "too severe" for many novice cyclists, and the bridge's shoulders collect debris, which is a hazard for cycling, he said.

"Without at least one bridge with well-designed bike lanes, we might as well have put a fence around downtown for cycling commuters," Burns said.

Even when the Fuller Warren's separated multi-purpose pathway is built, access to downtown will still be difficult on a bike. "We love that it will go into Riverside, but the remaining problem is opening the access to downtown," Burns said. This is because most commuting cyclists only bike three-and-a-half miles or

less per trip. "Most people who commute by walking or bicycling don't go extreme distances," Burns said. "If you need to go to Riverside first to get downtown it won't happen. You can't get downtown from San Marco without crossing a bridge."

One solution to the problem is to engineer and construct safer roads, Burns said. But other things can be done to help resolve the problem. The city should promote events, which encourage safe walking and biking, he said. All who use the roads – motorists, cyclists and pedestrians – should be educated on how to safely co-exist with each other. Police should enforce traffic laws for cyclists as well as motorists, particularly the three-foot passing law of bicycles, which has never been enforced in Jacksonville. Also the city should evaluate and plan better, comparing statistics from year to year to mark improvement, he said.



A cyclist hauls a baby trailer along San Jose Blvd.

MD Anderson Cancer Center FROM PAGE 1

Looking for land

Baptist has been actively working to obtain the land required for the new cancer center. On April 15, Burkhalter's Wrecking Service tore down a bungalow at 1323 Palm Avenue, and a week later Burkhalter's crew flattened the home at 917 Childrens Way, which in March had been sold to Baptist by Dr. David Sall and his wife, Patricia Stacey Sall.

Although the Salls also sold Baptist their building next door, 1357 Palm Avenue, where they house their active

psychiatric practice, they have no plans to leave anytime soon. Their deal with the hospital allows them to stay until sometime in "November or December," said Patricia "Trish" Sall, who works alongside her husband as a licensed clinical social worker. Trish Sall wished to assure their patients that the same high level of care they are currently receiving at the Palm Avenue location will continue unchanged as they work to secure alternative office space nearby.

"We've been affiliated with Baptist for 39 years," Trish Sall said. "We knew for

a long time that they wanted to expand into this area."

Moving to accommodate Baptist's burgeoning need to build new facilities is nothing new to the Salls. They've moved their offices twice before when Baptist tore down the buildings their practice was in to put up newer facilities.

The Salls have been at their Palm Avenue location since 1984, when they shared the practice with Dr. James Larsen. In 1993, the Salls dissolved their partnership with Larsen, and he moved the practice to Orange Park while the Salls took ownership of the two buildings in San Marco. They renovated the house at 917 Childrens Way and rented

it. During the last four years it was home to the Sall's son and later to David Edwards, a good friend.

Sall said she had "mixed" feelings when she stood on the back porch of her practice building and watched the house next door be demolished. "It was a really neat old building," she said.

Sall said she and her husband had the house on Childrens Way on the market for a year and had entertained other offers before deciding to sell both properties to Baptist. "We realized it would be awkward for us to stay here (with the big building going up nearby)," she said. "They (Baptist) were very reasonable and made it as easy for us as possible."

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH JACKSONVILLE

House renovation takes “best of the past and brings it into the future”

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

When Jim Towler and his wife Susan decided to renovate their historical home in the Granada subdivision of San Marco, they knew it was going to be expensive.

“It would have been more economical to tear the house down,” Towler said. “We could have built a brand new much larger house for the same amount of money.” Or it would have been cheaper to buy a new house somewhere else, he said.

But the Towlers never considered moving. The couple had lived on San Jose Boulevard for 20 years. They loved their Spanish Revival-style home, their next-door neighbors and their neighborhood, which has special features such as antique lampposts, manhole covers imprinted with the words “the Suburb Supreme,” and curbs originally painted “Granada” pink, though faded.

The Towlers wanted to continue to raise their 14-year-old daughter Emma there, but they could see the house as it was would not meet their needs when they grew older.

“We were at a cross roads. We needed to think of what we were going to do for the future,” Towler said.

“We loved the bones of the house and the history of the house. People always say the house has good karma,” Susan said.

“So we decided to try to take the best of the past and bring it into the future,” Towler said.



The 2800-square-foot “box,” which was the Towler house before renovation.

Home’s first life was office

Towler had bought his home 28 years ago when he was single. The house had been originally built as the real estate office for George and Lawrence Howard’s “dream” subdivision in the early 1920s. At first it was a single-story building, with a circular driveway in the front, but through the years a second story was added as well as a mish-mash of smaller renovations, the last being completed in the 1950s. This left the house at 2800 square feet with three bedrooms, two full baths, a small “working” kitchen, a living room, dining room, den and small carport out back. At the time Towler purchased it, the windows “didn’t close,”

he said. He replaced most of them, but only made cosmetic changes after that.

“We didn’t have a backyard. It was a long driveway with a carport suitable for one car and two storage bays on either side,” Towler said, noting they had to walk outside the house to bring groceries in.

“I didn’t like getting wet in the rain,” Emma said.

Towler and his wife grew up in Arlington when it was the “Mandarin of the ‘70s,” he said. His father lived in the same house until he was 94 and moved to assisted living. Towler said he and his wife hope to be at least that old before they have to make a change. “I guess it’s in our gene pool,” he said.

But watching their parents grow older made them realize their house needed adjustments if they wanted to live comfortably in it another 40 years.

The Towlers called architect William Leuthold of Riverside, who specializes in historic homes and worked with him for two years figuring out exactly what they wanted their dream home to become.

“Bill is a visionary. He knows how to take the old and bring it into the future. He has helped us maintain the architectural character of the house so that it still fits into the neighborhood and has the look of the past,” Towler said.

More living space inside and out

The new plan added 1000 square feet to the inside of the house including a 15-foot, two-story extension on the side of the building. It creates a spacious open

living space downstairs including a larger kitchen, which will flow into a family room with a new marble fireplace. When the new house is finished it will comprise three bedrooms with walk-in closets including a master suite downstairs, three and a half baths, a laundry room, living room, dining room, office and a hard-wired computer network as well as Wi-Fi.

Outside will be a 700-square-foot covered “living” area that overlooks the backyard. A covered breezeway for entertaining extends the length of the property ending in a covered outdoor kitchen and bar. The breezeway will include ceiling fans and special infrared heaters. “The heaters will heat you and not the air, so we can enjoy it year around for those two nights a year that it gets cold,” Towler said.

The breezeway connects the house to a new 1200-square-foot three-car garage. The garage will include a bathroom, refrigerator, potting shed and a large storage area for bikes and a work bench. “I’ve always longed for a garage,” Towler said.

A new 8-foot stucco wall surrounds the backyard and replaces the wooden shadowbox fence that separated their property from the neighbors in the back. The wall includes a wooden door for access between their property and that of their close friends next door. The porch replaces a small outdoor patio and will overlook a rectangular yard similar to a “croquet court” with landscaping around it. The Towlers plan to use native plants and trees in their new yard.

In the front of the house the circular driveway will be reinstated, and a walkway made of pavers will lead from the driveway to the house. Connected to the breezeway on the side between the house and the garage is a small courtyard with a gate opening to a fenced-in side yard, where their dog, Mr. Pickles, can roam.

“We were blessed with a big enough lot,” Towler said. “We had a big enough footprint to work with.”

Respecting the past

The Towlers gutted all but two rooms – the original 1920s dining room with its cornices and recessed niches and the guest room upstairs. Susan said she felt like a detective going over certain elements

Continued on page 11 >>>



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The backyard includes an open porch with 700 square feet of living space.



Spanish-style rafter tails surround the new roof.



Side courtyard between the house and the garage.

of the old construction especially the bathtubs and sinks, looking for clues about the house's history. Before the new drywall was installed, Susan went around the house writing small messages on the studs and concrete walls. "I wrote that we bought the house in 1986 and that we lived here, so that people will know who owned it. Hopefully whoever buys it after us will care about its history," she said.

The Towlers kept the original front doors but the 80-year-old terracotta-tile roof was replaced with new tile. They donated the old tiles as well as the windows and a cast-iron bathtub to Eco-Relics. "If we lived in Riverside we'd probably have had to use the old tile, but economically that did not make sense," Towler said, noting San Marco does

not have the rigid historic restrictions Riverside has.

The style of the original Spanish rafter tails has been retained with more than 200 new ones cut and placed under the eaves surrounding the house, breezeway and garage. The house has also been re-plumbed, reinsulated and rewired. "We wanted to redo everything so we would know it was up to standard," Towler said.

Leuthold recommended several contractors and the Towlers settled on Carlton Builders, a company that had "good financial management tools," Towler said. "They were willing to work with us, and not just in a cookie cutter way. If we need them to move an (electric) outlet three inches they can do it. We knew we were in it for the long term. We didn't

want to build it for 10 years. Everything has to last at least 30 years or more."

They also hired designer Stephanie Jarvis of 5 Points to help them catalogue their antiques and bring a light airy feel to the interior. "She has a respect for the past," Susan said.

The Towlers moved out of the house Sept. 1, 2014 and, if all goes as planned, expect to move back in five months. For the past year, they have been housesitting for their neighbor Kathy Quinn, who conveniently decided to spend a year in Australia around the time the Towlers' project began. "When we told her we were doing a renovation, she said, 'Why not live in my house?' So we moved into her house across the street and just moved our clothes," Towler said. All their

other belongs are in "deep" storage.

Towler said it is important to remember that it is a "team effort" when you do a renovation. Signing on the right architect, contractor, designer and landscaper are essential. "You need to be patient with everyone involved," he said. "They need to understand your vision of what you're trying to accomplish."

"The hardest part is getting it off the ground," he said. At the start there are "more steps than you think," he said. "Looking at a drawing doesn't always relate to how you will live." Spend time reviewing the space (at the planning stage) as to how you will use it, he said. "You need to do due diligence on the front end," so it will come out right on the back end, he said.

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Farm to market vendors know their soil

By *Kate A. Hallock*
Resident Community News

Not content to rest on its fresh-leafed, homegrown laurels, the Riverside Arts Market entered its sixth season last month with significant changes to Farmers' Row. Visitors accustomed to making RAM their one-stop shop for all their produce, whether locally grown, in season or not, may now notice that there are some items they can't buy on their Saturday morning trip to the canopy of the Fuller-Warren Bridge.

"We've only had two emails from customers who are disappointed that we don't have the breadth of farmers we've had in the past because it will not be a one-stop shopping trip for them," said Krysten Bennett, RAM director. "We don't want RAM to be about convenience necessarily, we want the RAM experience to be unique in the urban core."

Bennett explained that in response to an extensive visitor survey conducted last season, they learned that a growing percentage of visitors look to RAM as a trusted source for truly local, seasonal produce. "We'll be the place you can come to because you have the confidence that the produce you buy is local, seasonal. If you need something not in season, not local...not found at RAM...Publix and Fresh Markets are close by."

Beginning with this year's market, Farmers' Row will be more produc-

er-focused, locally grown and seasonal. Distributors are, for the most, out.

"A huge majority [of the visitors] were under the assumption that everything they were getting there was locally grown, directly by the farmers from whom they were purchasing. That was not always the case," Bennett said. "It showed us that our visitors were looking for truly farmers' market experiences rather than a produce experience. We wanted there to be more transparency in the market and for the Farmers' Row guidelines to be in line with the artists' guidelines, that they hand make what they sell."

Katie Delaney, RAM's new farmer liaison, will oversee Farmers' Row and interact with both growers and visitors. She has made site visits to many of the growing list of farmers who participate, whether they do so every week, once a month or when their specialty produce is in season. On Saturdays at the Farmers' Row booth, Delaney will have information about the farmers and will be able to help educate the community about sustainability, sharing with them the benefits of seasonal produce and local foods.

"It's a growing trend that people are becoming more interested in knowing where their food is coming from. They are asking more questions. There is a perception that what is on the table is actually what is seasonal and that is not always the case," said Delaney. "People in Jacksonville are interested in what is

local... going to local artisans, getting local breads, listening to local music, and I think the produce is a big element of that. We want to make it an all-encompassing experience."

RAM has a growing number of local farmers with two new ones this season and Delaney is going to fill up the 18 stalls in Farmers' Row. According to Delaney, Congaree and Penn Farm & Mills is the first rice farm in Jacksonville in over a hundred years. Right now they have about five rice products and are expanding into apple saplings and eventually into cider production. The other new farmer, Fresh Start Produce LLC, from Starke, has an all-natural type of farm experience, collaborating with other farms.

One of the challenges that RAM faces is that the growing season isn't year-round in northeast Florida. "Heading into summer we'll have much less variety and we do plan to make allowances for farmers to bring in produce sourced from other farms with which they might work, but we must have knowledge in advance and they must be clear through labeling what piece of ground that produce came out of," said Bennett. "If they can't do that, they don't belong with RAM. When it comes to produce, we're cutting out the unknown."

Bringing Delaney, a San Marco resident, on board part-time enables the RAM staff to focus on the other 200 vendors while Delaney serves as a sounding



Katie Delaney, new RAM farmer liaison

board for the farmers.

Farmers who grow it themselves will be given precedent when there are applications with similar products, but there are going to be circumstances that need to have exceptions but are still viable within the goal of local farming, Bennett noted.

"We want our visitors to create relationships with the farmers," Delaney said. "Understanding how much love goes into growing, it makes it taste much better."



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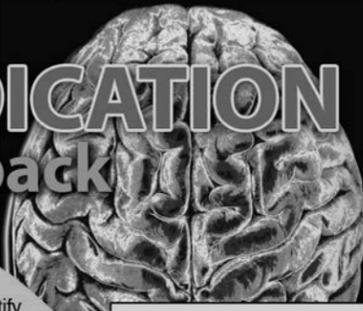
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Realtors optimistic about trends in real estate

Win-win for buyers, sellers

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

It's not just the weather that's heating up in Jacksonville's historic districts.

If the real estate market trends the way the Old Farmer's Almanac is predicting weather for Northeast Florida, home buying will be hotter than normal this spring and summer.

Local realtors overall are expressing optimism about the state of the real estate market during the busy spring season and into what is typically the summer doldrums.

"The San Marco residential real estate market has consistently shown the peak selling season to begin early in the month of March and remain active through the end of May," said Barbara Swindell, founder of RiverPoint Real Estate. "This year will be no exception."

In fact, the buying trend is so warm right now that realtors are cautioning buyers who want more time to think about whether it's the right house for them. Because of low inventory on the market, particularly in the \$200,000 to \$500,000 range, sellers often get multiple offers and are less likely to wait for uncertain buyers to make a decision.

For that reason, Steve Light, vice president and managing broker, Watson Realty Corp., offers good advice for prospective homebuyers. "If you fall in love with a home in this area, don't tell your realtor that you want until tomorrow to think about it, because someone else saw it yesterday and wanted until today to think about it," he said. "I've seen too much heartbreak over losing the home of your dreams in such a market. If you love it, don't hesitate in today's real estate market."

"Many buyers looking for the same size and style home leads to multiple offers and with multiple offers someone leaves the negotiations disappointed that they did not get the property," said Sheron Willson, broker/manager at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. "One way that we are combating the low inventory issues are to represent the buyer in searching for a home that is not currently on the market."

Time for sellers to make move

Sellers on the fence may also want to consider the facts to help make the decision to list their homes. According to the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR), its March report noted that 12.1 percent of homes for sale went for a price higher than the original listing.

The median sales price for Region 1, which includes San Marco and San Jose, was up 7.1 percent over last year. Couple those higher prices with low inventories and it's a seller's market for sure.

"According to Northeast Florida MLS the San Marco real estate market inventory is low with less than 6 months of inventory," noted Willson.

At 9,487 homes on the market, Jacksonville had a 12.8 percent drop in available home inventory compared to the same time one year ago, the NEFAR report stated. Although new listings were up 15.8 percent in Region 1, the total inventory of homes was down by 9 percent in March 2015 from a year ago.

These trends might mean this is an optimal time for seniors to make a move into a retirement community, leveraging the equity in their homes for the guarantee of comfortable golden years. Single family homes, especially those in good condition, are a hot item.

Carrie Atkins, a third generation REALTOR® of RiverPoint Real Estate, noted "We believe single family homes priced between \$400,000 and \$600,000 will be in highest demand. The \$200,000 to \$300,000 market is quite active with adequate inventory as well as homes priced over \$1,000,000."

Condo resurgence

Prospective buyers shouldn't forget that condominiums present an intriguing alternative to single family homes, and local realtors feel the tide may be turning for the condo market as well.

"The condo market is stronger than it has been in a long time but the residential resale and luxury market is also blossoming," Willson said. "Real estate offices are

very busy working all types of properties from the single family residential for first time home buyers to the luxury market in both condos and single family detached."

The number of condos available for sale is more than 10 percent lower than it was a year ago and the median sale price was up 2.8 percent (March 2015 over 2014), implying there is a scarcity of those types of properties for interested buyers.

"For the few new condo communities just coming out of the ground or just being announced as opening for sales, there is no lack of interest," said Vikki Robbins, Victoria Robbins Realty, Inc. "This is because there are so many empty nesters and move-down buyers as well as younger and very busy working professionals who want the condo lifestyle."

If Old San Jose is any measure, luxury condominiums are indeed scarcer than hen's teeth.

"We have sold all of our condominium coach homes in Old San Jose and have been sold out of the high rise condo building since 2013," said Robbins, listing agent for the property. "We have resold a few of those condos since then and we

have a list of people who want to hear from us if anything comes on the market either in the high rise riverfront building or one of our coach homes."

According to Robbins, Old San Jose is a unique location and has attracted a lot of interest as a result. "It is located in an area that hasn't seen any new construction in more than 25 years," she explained. "It is very close to major transportation corridors, downtown, historic San Marco and San Jose, major hospitals and medical centers."

Another reason for a pent-up demand for condos are the restrictive banking rules in Florida and the difficult, time-consuming process for Fannie Mae mortgage approvals, which affect potential developers and buyers.

"The problem we continue to deal with in Florida is the lending climate, which places special restrictions on new condo building and development as well as rules pertaining to mortgages available to our purchasers," said Robbins. "Until these restrictions are eased, it will continue to be a challenge to build and sell or sell and build new condo projects."

"If you fall in love with a home in this area, don't tell your realtor that you want until tomorrow to think about it, because someone else saw it yesterday and wanted until today to think about it, I've seen too much heartbreak over losing the home of your dreams in such a market. If you love it, don't hesitate in today's real estate market."

— Steve Light, Watson Realty Corp



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Puttin' on the ritz with Gambling and Glitz

More than 100 people enjoyed a step back into the Roaring Twenties during the "Gambling and Glitz" annual fundraiser to benefit the Symphony Guild at Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club, April 10.

Adding to the Gatsby-like atmosphere were two antique cars, parked near the front of the duPont Mansion, a silver Rolls Royce owned by Jane and Tommy Entenza of San Jose, and a green 1937

Packard owned by Noel Dana. Guests enjoyed cocktails, heavy hors d'oeuvres, dancing, live and silent auctions, gambling and a cigar and brandy corner during the black-tie event. Morgan Stuart serenaded the guests on his classical guitar. As they exited, patrons enjoyed a coffee bar and were gifted with a mock-up of the *Times-Union* dated April 10, 1926.

The event was "hugely successful," said Symphony Guild President Allene Groote. "Everyone had a wonderful time, and they can't wait for us to do it again."



San Jose residents Tommy and Jane Entenza with their 1964 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud II



Bill Deas with John Hurtubise, Ric Goodman and Alex Deas



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Andrew Moore, Zydeco Zinger, Abandoned Six Flags Theme Park, New Orleans, 2012. Archival pigment print, 50 x 60 inches. Copyright the artist and courtesy of Jackson Fine Art.

Two generations making Jacksonville greener



City officials gathered last month to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Greenscape.

The Greenscape of Jacksonville Board of Directors was presented with a City Council Resolution in recognition of four decades of planting, promoting and protecting trees in Jacksonville's urban environment and neighborhoods.

The resolution, sponsored by District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer, noted that Greenscape has raised funds and mobilized volunteers to plant over 300,000 trees in the past 40 years. The nonprofit was founded by Ann Baker and Susan Fisher in 1975 and since then two

generations of students have been taught to plant a seed for a greener future.

Executive Director Anna Dooley said "Our mission to plant, protect and promote trees is very rewarding in itself, but having the recognition of City Council for our work is very much appreciated. We thank Councilwoman Lori Boyer for this honor."

A luncheon celebration is planned for Thursday, May 21 at The Candy Apple Café, 400 N. Hogan St. To purchase a ticket, call (904) 398-5757 by May 19.

Speakeasy Soiree, annual auction and gala

The Museum of Contemporary Art was transformed for the annual Speakeasy Soiree, an auction and gala to support San Jose Episcopal Day School. The April 18 event raised over \$66,000 from school staff, parents, grandparents and friends. One lucky raffle ticket holder won a loose cut diamond and Emcee Al Emerick kept spirits high as patrons took their chances at blackjack and craps, vied for items in the silent and live auctions and enjoyed cocktails and dinner, and posing with an old Ford Model A car.



Hala Salman, co-chair, Julie Pyburn, chair, Jenny Clarke, Director of Development and Marketing



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Great opportunity in San Marco. Newest home in this gated community. Great open floor plan with tile floors in living areas. Master suite downstairs plus a second suite upstairs. Office/bonus room off Family Room. Large patio. Side entry garage. This is a unique home and you don't want to miss it. \$559,000 MLS#746492 Dream Home Team 904-472-0726



Century old majestic moss-covered oaks surround this exquisite, professionally decorated riverfront masterpiece. Panoramic, breathtaking river views from most rooms. Marble countertops with custom cabinets and moldings, wine chiller, gas cooktop, hardwood floors throughout, a 128 foot bulkhead, boat dock and lift and much more! \$1,695,000 MLS#753725 Joseph Poletto 904-738-6446



Views Galore! This stunning lake front home features many upgrades including: updated plumbing, ductwork, HVAC system, new cabinets in the kitchen and baths, countertops and much more! The newly painted dock is perfect for the fishing and boating enthusiast. Call today before it is too late to set up a showing! \$149,900 MLS#743627 Charles Anno 904-993-7487



Waterfront townhouse style condo with 2 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms. Unit has private access to onsite nature walk & flowing pond views. Pool, clubhouse, tennis courts are on site. Two enclosed sun rooms with sliding glass windows, fireplace, & open concept kitchen dining, & living room. Washer & Dryer included. Move-in ready & plenty of parking! \$139,000 MLS# 766949 Jennifer Grunewald 904-608-8410



Big Family? Love to Swim & Entertain? This is the perfect home for you! This home has 6 bedrooms, 3 baths & 2 half baths under brand new roof. This brick beauty features a breathtaking infinity pool, large family room w/brick fireplace, chef's dream kitchen with KitchenAid built-in ovens, desk & cooktop, marble tile counters & brick accent wall and much more! \$595,000 MLS#766798 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



All brick 4/3 home, in the heart of Mandarin! Custom built home nestled amongst beautiful mature trees on large lot. This majestic home offers 2757 heated & cooled sqft. Including a Sunroom addition. Soaring 12 ft ceilings, tons of windows allow natural light to fill home. This home is a must see! \$325,000 MLS#757519 Don Raines 904-421-6955



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Everything is new in this wonderful move-in ready 2 bedroom 2 bath condo located in Villages of San Jose. Villages of San Jose is a desirable beautifully maintained gated community with neighborhood lakeside pool, security gate/guard, & tennis courts. Great location near Bolles School, San Marco, Downtown Jacksonville & San Jose Country Club. \$119,000. #746609 Transition Team 904-535-8686



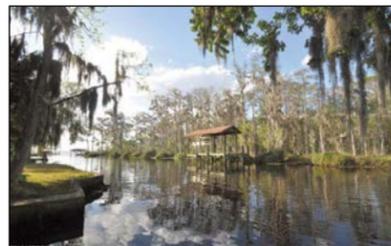
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Unbelievable views! Premier location in San Marco offering fabulous view of the St. Johns River. This 5th floor, 2 bedroom 2 bath condo is centrally located near Baptist hospital, Nemours Children's Clinic and the shops and restaurants of San Marco. Call today before it is too late! \$200,000 #757489 Charles Anno 904-993-7487



Spacious 3 bedroom home with a large fenced backyard, perfect retreat to relax & entertain adults & kids. Fully equipped kitchen with eat-in area, tiled counters, stainless steel smooth top range, and much more \$150,000 MLS#768052 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



Calling all boaters! Come see this 3 bedroom 3 bath home on a deep creek front, bulk headed 1/2 acre lot. Home features a dock, oversized boathouse, 2 car garage, long paved driveway, plenty of room for an R.V., large and open back patio, perfect for grilling today's catch... Partial St. Johns River views! \$440,900. #746055 Don Raines 904-421-6955



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HOME SWEET HOME 4/3, spacious throughout, 4th bedroom/home office, beautiful yard & pool, near Bolles School. \$350,000. #762383 Transition Team 904-535-8686



Perfection on a Preserve Lot! Beautiful & immaculate Worthington II open floor plan features: formal dining & living rooms, separate office, huge gourmet kitchen and much more! \$350,000 MLS#766694 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



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Harold Matthews is one of the most trustworthy and respectable men you can come across these days. He shows it through his work, his family and by giving

back to his community. Although Harold is constantly involved with sponsorships for children's activities and Brook's Rehabilitation programs it doesn't keep him from his family who is his top priority. His wife Abbey, son Gabe and triplets, Greenley, Minka and Jaggar are his world. They are ultimately the driving force in his success as a business owner as well as a father. Go see Harold today for all your powder coating needs!

If you still can't think of anything you might want to powder coat then let's move onto the furniture department. Atlantic Powder Coating can also refurbish your worn out patio furniture by repairing, powder coating, re-strapping or reupholstering. They even offer pickup and delivery for added convenience. So think again before you throw out and replace anything old because with Atlantic Powder Coating it can be all worth saving! Why buy new when you can re-do?

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Restaurant opening helps grow house that love built

The Red Shoe Crew, a group of young philanthropists who serve Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville, hosted a fundraiser at one of San Marco's newest gastropubs on March 31. The Kitchen on San Marco supports Culinar, the Culinary Institute of Virginia College, and opened its doors to the charity event, which supports the expansion campaign "Growing The House That Love Built."

"We raised nearly \$2,500 through the grand opening event and through the generosity of a private donor to our expansion those funds will be matched to support our campaign," said Annie Tutt, Ronald McDonald House director of development and marketing. "Everyone was excited to get a sneak peek of San Marco's newest restaurant and were impressed that Kitchen on San Marco took this special opportunity to support our House."

The grand opening of approximately 100 attendees included members of the Red Shoe Crew, community members, RMHC Jacksonville staff and members of the RMHC Jacksonville Board of Directors.



Ribbon cutting for the Kitchen on San Marco



Katy Hurtig, Fries With That Wine co-chair, Julie Jacob, Red Show Crew chair, Nicole Fisher



Nicole Cuschieri and Melissa Gregory



Christina Mershell, Ronald McDonald House administrative assistant, Beth Calvert, Annette Dukes



Jeremy and Bethany Pope with Manya Stone, Ronald McDonald House Family Services manager



Wayne and Annie Tutt, Ronald McDonald House director of development and marketing



Dennis Guidi, Debra Braddock

Change of Command at Epping Forest

The official change of command at Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club occurred in an evening ceremony on the banks of the St. John's River March 27. During the ceremony, Immediate Past Commodore Debra Braddock relinquished her command to current Commodore Dennis E. Guidi, and other flag officers and club members changed roles.

Guidi expressed appreciation for Braddock's tenure at the helm. Being commodore is "a lot of fun," Guidi said, and he enjoys attending club events and meeting other members. The Guidis own a small sailboat, which they keep in the marina, and are on the water mainly because of his wife's passion for sailing.



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MOVERS & SHAKERS



Pride in the past: remembering the Mayflower

The Richard Warren Colony, Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Florida, which is one of 56 colonies around the state, held one of its three yearly luncheon meetings on April 18 at the San Jose Country Club. Dr. Tom Graham, professor emeritus of Flagler College and author of Mr. Flagler's St. Augustine, was guest speaker.

The colony boasts 71 members from throughout Northeast Florida as well as several prospective members. All members have documented their

lineage to be directly descended from one or more of the Mayflower passengers. In the photo are Colony Captain Ernest E. Wilkes, who is related to Mayflower passenger John Howland; Colony Historian Mary Ellen Boyd, who is descended from William Brewster; Colony Governor John G. Howland who is also descended from John Howland; Colony Deputy Governor Alice Clark, who is descended from William White, and guest speaker Dr. Tom Graham of St. Augustine, who is not a member of the colony.

Catering head celebrates first anniversary



Linda Henry

Time flies when you are having fun, and Linda Henry has fun every day at work. As Director of Catering Sales, April marks Henry's celebration of her first year working at Gate City Hospitality group's River Club and Epping Forest Yacht Club. It is a job she is passionate about.

"The year has gone by very quickly," Henry said. "I'm excited for what lies ahead."

Henry has more than 25 years catering business experience behind her. She first cut her teeth working with her family in Philadelphia at a Hyatt Hotel with a ballroom that accommodated 2000. "It was a little like working a small city," she said. Later she held several positions in catering with Hyatt, Doubletree, Embassy Suites and a Philadelphia country club before taking a job in St. Augustine as lead Catering Sales Manager at the Casa Monica Hotel.

Henry said she loves her current job because in addition to weddings, which she focused heavily on at Casa Monica, she can facilitate all kinds of parties – bar mitzvahs, engagement, retirement, anniversaries, birthday – and other business functions.

She enjoys working at the two Gate City locations, which she calls "hidden gems" because she "gets to know people more intimately in a club setting." At the River Club and Epping Forest Yacht Club, events are more "personalized and intimate," Henry said. "It's your own place for the day. It's exclusive rather than working in a high tourist location."

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1878 South Epping Forest Way – Beautiful home completely updated by Frank Gamel. Gorgeous kitchen with pale wood cabinets and granite counters, huge island with breakfast bar. Lovely first floor Owner's Suite with Saturnia stone bath and huge closets. Library off entrance foyer. Upstairs features three bedrooms and two baths, loft overlooks living room. Three car garage. **\$1,250,000**

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12865 Cannington Cove Terrace – Wonderful concrete block construction with a boat slip with access to Julington Creek. The home has all the room and features for family fun and entertaining. Upstairs bonus, bedroom and bath for in-laws, teens or whatever your need, with 4 bedrooms on the main floor. Screened pool with covered eating space and summer kitchen. Your own dock with lift that will accommodate boats up to 10,000 LBS. **\$650,000**

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Assumption honors 40th anniversary

The parish of Assumption Catholic Church will enjoy a trifecta of celebrations on May 16 with Father Fred Parke as a double honoree. On that Saturday at 4 p.m., the congregation will observe the 40th anniversary of Father Parke's ordination into the priesthood, as well as his 67th birthday. After the special mass, the groundbreaking for the \$4.3 million Early Childhood Learning Center will be held.

Father Fred, as he is called, said that he wanted to be a priest since his days at St. John's Catholic grammar school in Binghamton, N.Y., but took a detour into education when he received a bachelor of science in education from the University of Tennessee.

"In the 8th grade I seriously wanted to go to a high school seminary and my parents said that I was too young," said Father Fred. "I think it was the influence of the priests and sisters at St. John's who 'planted the seed' of priesthood."

While in graduate school, he said that seed sprouted, and enrolled at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester, N.Y., where he received a Master's in Divinity. Following his ordination in 1975, the priest served at three parishes in Syracuse, N.Y., before moving to Florida in 1987, where



he was stationed at St. Joseph's in Mandarin. Then, after 11 years as pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Palm Coast, Father Fred came to Assumption in 2002.

"I was privilege to found a new school (St. Elizabeth Seton School) and build a 1,500-seat church there," he said, "and at Assumption I have seen a new gym/classroom building, a remodeling of the church and soon we will break ground on a 30,000 sq. ft., 24-classroom facility."

Father Fred noted that his greatest blessing was to come to Florida and see the church alive and growing here. "To be able to walk in faith with people of faith through these 40 years, it has been a blessing to work with the staff here at Assumption – especially the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother," he shared. "Assumption is a very devotional parish and it has been a blessing to minister here, and hopefully in the future."

Pi Kappa Alpha installs chapter at JU

Pi Kappa Alpha, one of the largest Greek Social College International Fraternities has installed its newest chapter at Jacksonville University with 74 members. The chartering banquet was held April 11 at Hidden Hills Country Club. The group of scholars, leaders, athletes, and gentlemen are mostly all involved with various sports including football, baseball, soccer, basketball, cross country, rowing, lacrosse, swimming, tennis and golf and hold overall GPAs of 3.4. Clarence W. Gooden, Executive Vice President

Sales & Marketing, CSX Corporation, is the Honorary Executive Alumni Advisor for the chapter.

A \$25,000 Leadership Scholarship was established by JU alumnus John L. Layton, making it possible for a member to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship each year. At the banquet, Nathan J. Diehl was awarded the 2015 scholarship for his dedication to the new chapter. Diehl, serving as Treasurer of Pi Kappa Alpha, is a member of Green Key Honorary Jacksonville University Leadership Society that includes the top 10% of the student body. He has also received the JU Academic Scholarship from JU president Tim Cost. Diehl plays most sports, especially football.



Jessica Parker, center, is Pi Kappa Alpha Dream Girl. She is a member of Alpha Delta Pi.

Craft beer shop opens in San Marco

Beer:30 has opened its doors at 1543 San Marco Blvd. as the first franchise to the popular craft beer store on King Street in Riverside. Owned and operated by 25-year-old Kevin Burns and his father Jeff, the store will offer its customers the opportunity to "try before they buy" from the assortment of domestic and foreign beers. The shop offers customers a "curated approach" as they will have a Cicero-certified beer expert on the premises



Kevin and Jeff Burns

at all times. "We will be trying to build our niche in the community alongside the other folks who are focusing on wine and liquor," Jeff Burns said.

Formerly longtime San Marco residents who lived in the Granada neighborhood for 21 years, Jeff Burns and his wife Susan now live in Riverside. Kevin, who will be managing the store, is a San Marco resident.

Jeff Burns said he and his son picked their San Marco Boulevard location primarily for its visibility in the community and for its spacious parking lot out back. "Sufficient" parking is very important, he said. "This building is great because we believe our busiest hours will be the opposite of the other tenants." Eventually, they hope to have a "miniature beer garden" in the back, with outdoor seating.

After considering a beach location for their franchise, the Burns settled on San Marco because they were familiar with the community and it provides them with an easy commute. In a few years they may expand to have several franchise locations in North Florida. Alongside San Marco's vibrant youthful population is a large community of older folks that the Burns hope to introduce to a new variety of beer. "People of my generation have had to drink bad or mediocre beers all their lives," Jeff said. "Now we have more of a selection open to them."

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San Marco resident honored by Leadership Jacksonville



M.C. "Ceree" Harden, Connie S. Hodges, Cleve Edward Warren

Leadership Jacksonville hosted Celebration 2015, which honored community trustees M.C. "Ceree" Harden, Connie S. Hodges and Cleve Edward Warren for their leadership roles throughout Northeast Florida.

Harden, a San Marco resident who has been active in organizations such as the JAXChamber, Jacksonville Civic Council and Baptist Health Systems, said "My organization has a core value of community stewardship and Leadership Jacksonville has been a significant part of our ability to inspire and engage in the community. We are better people and our community is better as a result of the actions inspired by Leadership Jacksonville."

Hodges served 16 years as president of the United Way of Northeast Florida and continues to serve with other nonprofit organizations. "It was a spectacular evening of mission, purpose and passion,

which I will always treasure," said Hodges. "To be recognized by an organization that I respect and have had a great experience with was a humbling honor."

Warren is a founding member of the Jacksonville Civic Council and serves on the boards of Baptist Health Foundation and the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, among others. "I was very humbled by the honor," he said. "It's important for me to set an example to my children of what it means to be engaged with the community, and I'm proud to be counted in that number."

The 20th anniversary of the annual event was held on April 9 at the Hyatt Regency with more than 400 in attendance. Funds raised from the event benefit Youth Leadership Jacksonville and Collegiate Leadership Experience, programs for high school and college student leaders.

San Marco author debuts paintings

Jacksonville art enthusiasts were treated to an array of digitally-embellished paintings marked by a 3-D effect when Todd Rykaczewski's work made its debut during a reception at Riverplace Tower on April 8. His show, entitled "Bright Colors Shine in the Heart of the Southbank," will run until June 2015.

Through painting, Rykaczewski said he is striving to embody "modern impressionism through poetic eyes."

Utilizing mixed media in his work, Rykaczewski first prints out an enlarged digital photo and paints over it in order to infuse the 3-D effect of having the painting appear differently depending upon from where it is viewed in the room. Each canvas is displayed in a homemade wooden frame.

Rykaczewski published the novel



Jessica Cmar, Todd Rykaczewski

Word Revolt in 2007 and is currently working on a second book entitled The Folklore Behind Shade, which is scheduled for publication in the fall of 2015. Although he is an accomplished writer, Rykaczewski said his ultimate goal is to become a full-time artist. "A dream come true would be to become one who can sustain himself with his art," he said.

State Attorney's Office administrator retires after two decades

It's not every day a former beauty contest winner throws a party for a lawyer.

The retirement of Richard Mette from the State Attorney's Office after more than 22 years was the occasion for Angelia Savage, Miss Florida USA 1997 and top runner up in Miss USA, to host a gathering of local and regional political Who's Who for Mette at The Grotto last month.

"We go back 25 years and he helped me on my campaign for Miss Florida USA," said Savage. "Everyone knows him and everyone adores him so that's why we're giving him a big party."

More than 100 people gathered to wish Mette well, among them District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer and Judge Tyree Boyer, former Jacksonville Mayor Tommy Hazouri, past Secretary of State of Florida Bruce Smathers, Florida State Attorney Angela Corey, Supervisor of Elections Jerry Holland, former State Senator Mattox Hair, and Mike Williams, candidate for Jacksonville Sheriff.

Smathers, for whom Mette worked, said "What has exemplified him throughout his career is his integrity, loyalty, ability and his hard work. Richard puts out 110



Bruce Smathers, Richard Mette, Tommy Hazouri

percent in everything he does."

Mette also worked for former Mayor Hazouri, 1987-1991, in the consumer affairs division. "Richard is a hard worker. He hits the ground running. He was more efficient in the parking meter division than anybody who's ever been there," said Hazouri. "He made sure he did his job in consumer affairs; we responded on time and in a way that we helped people. When he succeeded our administration succeeded."

Mette was humbled and amazed by the number who attended. "They are good people, hard workers and leaders in our community so it says a lot that they would take time to join me tonight," he said.

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Women's Club establishes fund for permanent philanthropy

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The 118-year-old Women's Club of Jacksonville recently established a fund with The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida to continue the club's charitable work in perpetuity. The Fund, known as the Woman's Club of Jacksonville Endowment, will make charitable gifts to support projects that guide and support the health, education and cultural development of women in Jacksonville.

"We are so pleased to be able to ensure that the work that all the women have done for more than one hundred years will be carried on in the future," said Janice May, current president of The Women's Club. "Setting up this fund at The Community Foundation will allow us to continue the mission of the club."

The Fund was initiated with the proceeds from the sale of The Women's Club riverfront property to The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in 2005. The land for The Women's Club was donated by Ninah Cummer and the 13,000+ square foot structure was designed and built in the same style as Cummer's adjacent estate.

Grant recommendations for the Fund will come from the



Janice May, club president, and board members Nancy Patton, Harriette Dodson, Elizabeth Reed

Club's Heritage Committee, created to oversee the proceeds from the sale of the building and chaired by Katherine Naugle.

"We will use the investment earnings from this endowment to continue the things that have been important to every generation of Women's Club members," said Naugle, a third generation member of the club.

Baptist Center for Wound Care recognized nationally

The Center for Wound Care & Hyperbaric Medicine at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville was recognized with a national award for its outstanding care. There were 506 centers eligible nationally for the Center of Distinction award, but only 172 achieved the honor.

The Center of Distinction Award, provided by Healogics, Inc., the nation's largest provider of advanced wound care services, was given for outstanding clinical outcomes for 12 consecutive months, including patient satisfaction higher than 92 percent, a minimum wound healing rate of at least 91 percent within 30 median days to heal, and other quality outcomes.

"We strive for the best outcomes for our patients, and to provide our community with the highest-quality care possible," said Michael Mayo, hospital president of Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville. "Receiving this award for distinction is a testament to the hard work and compassionate care our team consistently provides to the patients we serve."

Area teachers honored for careers

Two local teachers were among four who were surprised in their classrooms last month with \$15,000 awards, courtesy of Gilchrist Berg, founder and president of Water Street Capital.

The 2015 winners of the Gladys Prior Award for Career Teaching Excellence include Valerie Doner, a Language Arts Department chair and forensics coach at Bishop Kenny High School and Cormac O'Riordan, a history teacher at The Bolles School.

To date, Berg has given more than \$1



Valerie Doner



Cormac O'Riordan

million to honor Jacksonville teachers with an award named after his fourth-grade teacher, Gladys Prior, at Ortega Elementary. The University of North Florida College of Education and Human Services manages the awards for Berg. Doner, a St. Nicholas resident, teaches

English, speech, debate and Advanced Placement language and composition. A teacher for 35 years, she is described as an educator who inspires her students "to reach for the proverbial stars."

O'Riordan integrates critical and thoughtful analysis as he teaches students to assess history beyond facts. He has been a teacher at Bolles for 19 years and is one of the most frequently visited teachers by returning alumni who want to thank him for contributing to their development as students and people.

Also receiving the award were Mollie Peterson, James Weldon Johnson Middle School, and Tim Kenney, Mandarin Oaks Elementary.



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ExZooberation celebrates a roaring 20th

Dapper and Roaring Twenties risqué, guests donned in 1920s attire attended the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' 20th annual ExZOOberation on April 11. The casual, adult evening benefit was held to raise money for the care and feeding of the Zoo's animals and plants, educational programs and conservation initiatives. Attendees enjoyed drinks, dinner and both a silent and live auction, which included the chance to bid on the rights to name the Zoo's new baby gorilla. Exotic animals were also available to touch and admire.



Drs. Kevin and Anika Comar with Paola and Robert Harris



Billy Kuntz, Kelly Stein, Charlie and Emily Colyer with Kimberly Tanning and Gia and Brian Kirk



Beth Chesak, Cathy Hartley and Missie Sarra LePrell



Ali Korman Shelton, Ryan Schwartz, Kenyon Merritt, Helene Schwartz and Craig Merritt

A big evening for Cummer Museum, art appreciation

More than 300 guests enjoyed an interactive artistic evening in the lavishly decorated galleries of the museum during the annual Cummer Ball April 25. Overseeing the black-tie event was honorary chairman Preston Haskell and his wife Joan. The theme of the evening was Rothko to Richter: Mark-Making in Abstract Painting from the Collection of Preston H. Haskell, organized by the

Princeton University Art Museum. Patrons enjoyed an evening filled with artistic moments from painting to dancing, to music and theater, in addition to a seated dinner in the galleries as well as cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. A silent auction was held where guests had the opportunity to bid on artwork based on Winslow Homer's The White Rowboat as interpreted by nine Jacksonville art-

ists: Karen Kurycki, Thony Aiuppy, Dustin Harewood, Andre Gruber, Crystal Floyd, Christianna White, Marisa Yow, Overstreet Ducasse and Varick Rosete. During dinner, a live auction to support ongoing educational opportunities at the museum. Serving as co-chairs for the event were Kenyon Varn Merritt and Kristen Schmidt Seay. Ron Autrey acted as the Corporate Chairman.



Barry Wilson with wife, Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Executive Director Hope McMath



Susan Caven, Preston Haskell, Joan Haskell and John Caven



Alice Coughlin and Cyndi Schmidt



Ron and Hilah Autrey, Wendy and Hugh Durden, Mark and Cheryl Lamping

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Lynne Murphy, Marla Anderson, Lisa Driver
(All photos courtesy of Laura Evans)



Ryan and Lindsey Lastinger Riggs



Tamara and Jeff Bogan

Rotary groups gather, raise a toast

The San Marco and West Jacksonville Rotary Clubs' fundraiser, Dirty Martinis for Clean Water, was held April 17 at the Jacksonville Garden Club. The event included music, cocktails, tastings and a silent auction. Proceeds from the event will benefit Rotary International's drive to provide clean drinking water to all as well as other Northeast Florida charities and non-profit organizations.



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Big money raised for Cathedral Arts Project

The Cathedral Arts Project raised more than half a million dollars to support its art education programs during its 11th Annual Spring for the Arts fundraiser April 17 at the Deerwood Country Club.

Speakers at the event included Duval County Public School Superintendent Dr. Nikolai Vitti, President and CEO of Baptist Health Hugh Greene and his wife Susan, and Presenting Sponsor Heather Moore Geraghty. Hugh and Susan Greene were the honorary chairs of the event. Beth Jennison was the event chairman.

During the fundraiser, the Greens presented Linda and David Stein with the 2015 Guardian of the Arts Award. Earlier that day, the Cathedral Arts Project gained recognition as a 2015 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award Finalist by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Out of 335 nominations, the Cathedral Arts project was selected as one of 50 finalists for the award.

Episcopal hosts Under the Big Top

Supporters of the Episcopal School of Jacksonville gathered on March 28 for the annual Under the Big Top – Celebration 2015 to raise funds for the school's programs.

The semi-formal evening, including an exceptional dinner and fundraising auction, was held in the school's Buck Student Center. It is Episcopal's biggest event of the year and has been held since 1975.

Thanks to the efforts of many dedicated individuals, ESJ is celebrating 49 years of providing its students with a superior college-preparatory education within a nurturing Christian environment.

"It has been my honor to serve as the chairperson of Under the Big Top – Celebration 2015, but it is the community of Episcopal parent volunteers that made this event possible," said Janine Moore, Chair of Under the Big Top – Celebration 2015. "With their assistance we were able to raise over \$80,000 to benefit the School while bringing the school community together for a wonderful evening."



Dan Dodd with Cindy and David Baker



Kyle Nichols, Andrew Rohrer and Glenn Miller



Laurie DuBow and Harry Shorstein

Photos by Larry Tallis

Jewish Family and Community Services honors best and brightest

The theme of this year's fundraiser "Heroes Among Us" was chosen to honor all of those whose hard work and support make JFCS one of our community's most vital social service organizations. From staff, volunteers, donors and supporters to the clients themselves;

all selflessly help to strengthen each other, their families and the community at-large.

Guests were treated to a vocal presentation by the Jacksonville Children's Chorus, followed by three videos created by The Silhouettes and a guest performance by a local vocalist. The Silhouettes, based out of Hollywood, selects one charity organization a year and dedicates their performance to the mission of the organization. The three

videos told the stories of Homeless Prevention, Children's Services and Jewish Causes, specifically Holocaust survivors and the elderly.

Co-Chair Susan Dubow introduced a last and final special guest of the evening, her long-time friend, Melissa Manchester, who delivered a stunning vocal performance. Melissa's songs of love mirrored her kind words of the importance of supporting JFCS and all it does for the community.



Eunice and Barry Zisser



Co-Chairs Jeanine Rogozinski and Susan DuBow with Singer Melissa Manchester and Co-Chair Debra Setzer



Ron Elinoff, Jeff Marks and David Robbins




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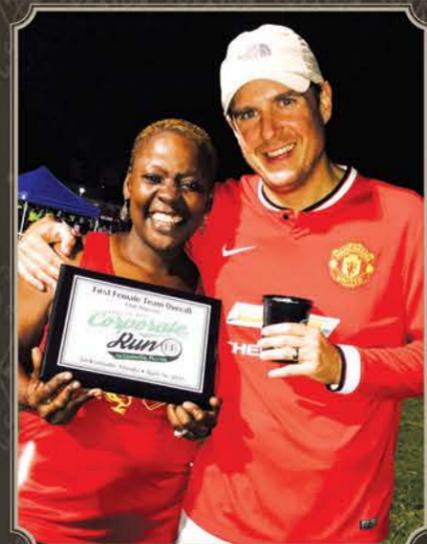
Many members of the Pajcic and Pajcic Law Firm and their families participated in the Katie Ride for Life this spring. The bicycle touring event is designed to raise awareness for the importance of organ donation. It is in honor of Katie Caples who was killed in a car accident at age 17. She was a registered organ donor and her generous act saved 5 lives. Pajcic and Pajcic is proud to support the Katie Caples Foundation.



Our firm was honored to sponsor the annual Edward Waters College Celebrity Golf Tournament in memory of Gary Pajcic. Several former NFL players were among those who hit the links to help raise money for the college's annual fund. It provides unrestricted dollars for the college operations, scholarships, academic support and more. Former Jaguars punter Bryan Barker was on the winning team.



There are always plenty of Pajcic employees willing to put on their running shoes and participate in the city's 5K Corporate Run. It gives people in all types of businesses a chance to get together after work and compete. We took home a few trophies this year and of course we are very competitive so the training has already begun for next year!



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Vision Is Priceless held its annual BBQ & Western, presented by Miller Electric and W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractors, to raise funds to support the mission. This year, supporters went west, way out west on Normandy Blvd. in order to enjoy The Keeler Property in Jacksonville.

Over 650 area residents, business leaders, and eye care professionals from Northeast Florida joined VIP to celebrate the 32nd annual event, enjoying a night full of home cooked BBQ, a silent auction, live auction and The George Aspinall Band. It was the largest fundraiser for Vision Is Priceless to date.



Jamie Egan, Kelly and Sean Thomas with Diana Fanning



Lon Lansing, Christy Rollings and Valerie Ficke



Judge Gary Flower, Board Chairman Dr. Jeffrey Levenson, Board Member Ed Witt, Jr., Doyle Carter and Ronnie Roberts



Adam and Suzanne Verducci with Steve and Ellen Sandefer

PAL Round-Up helps fund children's initiative

The Police Athletic League of Jacksonville honored Sheriff John Rutherford and raised funds for a worthy cause March 27 at its second annual Sheriff's Round-Up for PAL.

With the Deerwood Country Club decked out in a country-western theme, Round-Up goers had a chance to do some boot scootin' while raising funds to support programs that encourage children to grow into law-abiding citizens.

In addition to enjoying live music and tasty vittles, participants at the Round-Up could play a round of blackjack, bid on an array of silent auction items, and enjoy s'mores, cigar bar and libations.

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Burgers & Beers



Taste the neighborhood's choicest cuts

By Katie Smith
Resident Community News

Rev up the grill, summer is coming. Soon the sweet smell of sizzling hamburgers will be wafting from backyards everywhere. As everyone knows, there is nothing that can do justice to a juicy burger like a large cold glass of beer. But if you haven't time to get your own grill fired up, take heart! The Resident went out and tested the best burgers and ale in the neighborhood and came up with a few suggestions.

Bistro Aix's X Burger - \$14
"Most pedigreed beef"

For their X Burger, Bistro Aix opts for Chicago's Allen Brothers™ USDA Prime beef, meaning their hamburger is made from the top three percent of all graded American beef. A classic preparation of cheddar cheese, pickles, onions, local lettuce, and a chipotle sauce accent puts the focus on the meat. Plated with house-made chips, order it with an Aardwolf Belgian Pale Ale, \$5. 1440 San Marco Blvd., (904) 398-1949, bistrox.com



Black Sheep's Chuck Norris Burger - \$18
"Most likely to roundhouse kick you in the tastebuds"

You won't find it on the menu, but regulars know that for celebrity treatment, order the Chuck Norris burger. A grass-fed beef patty plus two strips of Pine Street bacon, under a thick layer of house-made pimiento cheese, with house-made bread-and-butter pickled jalapeños and pickles. This big burger comes with off-the-menu hand-cut fries. Managing partner Allan DeVault recommends



accompanying this action hero with the fizzy and fruity Belgian Trippel, Unibroue's La Fin Du Monde, \$6. 1534 Oak St., 5 Points, (904) 380-3091, blacksheep5points.com

Blind Rabbit's Holick Burger - \$14
"Most apt to put hair on your chest"

Blind Rabbit anchors one end of the King Street entertainment district. Before heading out for the evening, try the Holick Burger, a beef patty layered with a thick slab of Intuition beer-braised pork-belly, served on a brioche bun, dressed with lemon aioli and house-made bread & butter pickles, and capped off with a sunny-side-up egg.



Refresh your palate with an Aardwolf Belgian Pale Ale, \$6. 901 King St., (904) 337-0146, theblindrabbitwhiskeybar.com

The Brick's Veggie Burger - \$12
"Best burger for when you suddenly remember your New Year's resolutions"

The Avondale strip is home to the city's best veggie burger. Inspired by his vegetarian wife Kelley, owner Steve Kunz and his staff developed a savory, substantial Veggie Burger recipe that features brown rice, black beans, milled flax seed, quinoa, barley, beets, and mushrooms, finished with a caramelized soy glaze. Shaped in a patty press so it stands up to grilling, you'll find no mushy, flimsy veggie



burger here. It'll stand up to the sweet and nutty flavors of Bold City Duke's Cold Nose Brown Ale, \$5. 3585 St. Johns Ave., (904) 387-0606, brickofavondale.com

Harpoon Louie's Buffalo Burger - \$9.99
"Best Burger when looking for a healthy choice, but veggie and turkey burgers aren't cutting it"

The menu description for Harpoon Louie's American Pub & Grill Buffalo Burger is deceptive: 100% ground buffalo topped with barbeque sauce, sautéed mushrooms and onions, and jalapeño jack cheese. What it doesn't tell you is how fresh and delish it is, and how much your mouth will thank you when you take that first bite of very lean buffalo meat with a zingy twist of taste from



the sauce and cheese. Served with a side, so go for the fries. Alternate bites with a sip of Intuition Ale Works flagship beer, the Peoples Pale Ale, \$4.75. 4070 Hershel St., (904) 389-5631, harpoonlouies.net

The Fox Restaurant's Big Kahuna Burger - \$9.25
"Most likely to be served with a bottle of Sriracha"

If it's never dawned on you to explore beyond The Fox's breakfast menu, you're in for a treat. The Big Kahuna burger features a soy-sauce-glazed patty accompanied by the triple threat of bacon, grilled pineapple, and jalapeño, topped with melted provolone. It's a luau in your mouth. Add a bottomless diner coffee



for \$1.95 or your favorite soft drink, \$2.25. 3580 St. Johns Ave., (904) 387-2669, yelp.com/biz/fox-restaurant-jacksonville

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Mossfire's Black Bean Sandwich - \$9

"Best burger for when everyone else wants tacos"

When you've worked up an appetite biking around 5 Points, give Mossfire's Black Bean Sandwich a try. It's a house-made green chili, corn, and black bean patty topped with fresh guacamole and a roasted red pepper aioli. Comes with fries, red chile slaw, or black beans. Vegetarian, sure. Boring? No way! Set



your meal off with a Sierra Nevada IPA, \$5, and don't forget a pitcher of margaritas. 1537 Margaret St., (904) 355-4434, mossfire.com

Taverna's Angus Burger - \$13

"Best burger for locavores"

On your next visit to San Marco Square, swing by Taverna for their classic version of the Black Angus Burger on a whole wheat bun flavored with Greek yogurt. Taverna's ground beef is hormone- and antibiotic-free, and their focus on local and seasonal produce means your burger's Bibb lettuce was harvested by local farmer Fred Bacon. Wash it all down with Aardwolf's Belgian Pale



Ale, \$6. 1986 San Marco Blvd., (904) 398-3005, tavernasanmarco.com

MShack's Insanity Burger - \$11.95

"Best option for the indecisive"

Hamburger? Grilled Cheese? MShack won't make you choose. The Insanity Burger is a double-patty burger housed in between two grilled cheese sandwiches, topped with lettuce, tomato, a pickle, and Shack Sauce. Indulge yourself with sweet potato tots, \$3.50, and a refreshing Bold City Killer Whale Cream Ale, \$5.25. 1012 Margaret St., 2103 San Marco Blvd., (904) 423-1283, mshackburgers.com



Wine Cellar's Angus Cheeseburger - \$12

"Best burger for when you want to be formal, but you're here to party, too"

The Wine Cellar, a fixture on the Southbank for over four decades, is a relative newcomer on the hamburger scene. After all, their Black Angus Burger has only been on the menu for ten years. Nonetheless, their eight-ounce patty—draped in aged cheddar and mozzarella, sprinkled with crispy fried onions, with a swipe of chipotle aioli, and served on grilled ciabatta alongside rosemary



fries—is no amateur. If you're feeling refined, complement it with their house red, Foyt Family Wines No. 72 Meritage Sonoma County 2011, \$13/49. 1314 Prudential Dr., (904) 398-8989, winecellarjax.com

O'Brothers Irish Pub's Herb-Crusted Lamb Burger - \$13.50

"Best burger for the non-sentimental"

A stilton cheese-thyme crust with white wine and onion, O'Brothers' lamb burger is a savory masterpiece cooked to order, and a great alternative to your common beef patty. Try it with a side of green beans, if you're feeling guilty. Pairs well with Smithwick's Irish Ale, \$5.25. 1521 Margaret St., (904) 854-9300, obrothersirishpub.com



Pinegrove Market & Deli's Sal's Patty Melt - \$10.99

"Best nostalgia option: just like Grandma used to make"

All the Avondale locals know to head to Pinegrove to pick up USDA Choice house-aged beef for their grilling needs, but real Pinegrove regulars will point to Sal's Patty Melt as the sandwich to satisfy lunchtime cravings. It's a half-pound steak burger with grilled onions and melted havarti-jack cheese on toasty grilled sourdough bread. Comes with house-made Grove Chips, or



try the onion rings, \$3.49. The beer cooler is self-serve; grab a can of Cigar City Jai Alai IPA, \$3.75. 1511 Pine Grove Ave., (904) 389-8655, pinegrovemarket.com

Why Pale Ale?

Noticing a trend in the beer pairings our restaurants chose, we went to the source. Why is Aardwolf Belgian Pale Ale such a popular choice to accompany a juicy burger? "Pale Ales, including American and Belgian styles, are coppery-gold beers brewed with lightly roasted 'pale' malts, and tend to have citrusy overtones with a crisp finish. With IPAs, there's a shift toward more bitter hoppiness, with some piney flavors. Look for a balanced level of hops for a great palate cleanse. Your last bite will taste as good as the first," explains Cory Lippel, bartender and assistant brewer at Aardwolf. "IPAs are great with spicy meals that can stand up to the IBUs, but those extra hops can overpower some foods with a tannin-like effect on the palate. A Belgian style, though, is a staple of dinner beers. At 5.9 percent, you can pair our version with almost anything, whether a burger or a nice piece of snapper. The sweeter malts give it a golden color and the European hop profile will satisfy even die-hard IPA drinkers. I got opinionated about it while cooking in restaurants. Good food deserves good beer."



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Jazz Festival tunes up for 36th year

By Vince Iampietro
Resident Community News

If your ears long for live Jazz, the 2015 Jacksonville Jazz Festival is soon here with swingin' groups, traditional trios, and Klezmer bands who will grace several stages downtown during Memorial Day weekend. National acts Spyro Gyra, Tito Puentes Jr. Orchestra, and Michael Franks appear along with Jacksonville's own Mama Blue, The Kelly/Scott Quintet, and the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra.



Eric Mason

Keeping the beat in Avondale

Keeping all that jazz in sync is drummer and festival veteran Eric Mason of Avondale. Mason first played percussion at age 5 when he accompanied his ragtime piano-playing grandmother by arranging pots and pans, then playing with wooden spoons.

At 16, Mason and his family moved to Jamaica where he discovered that "Jamaica is not just straight up reggae but has a thriving jazz scene...infused with Caribbean and Afro-Cuban music styles." There he earned a certificate in Afro-Cuban Music Studies from the Jamaica School of Music, Kingston.

Back in the U.S., Mason performed with UNF's inaugural jazz program class at the Jacksonville Jazz Festival in 1987. "The UNF Jazz Program and Jazz Festival grew together and helped the Jacksonville music culture to grow" said Mason, who has backed Toots and the Maytals, Arturo Sandoval, and the Drifters, among others.

Balancing family life, playing music full time, and working in orthopedic and medical sales, "...is always challenging" for Mason, whose day job allows him selectivity with performances. Mason's love of jazz echoes concern and hope: "Jazz is about lineage and history and the generation that appreciates it are out by attrition."

Mason wants to "play and advocate for young people for traditional jazz" and sees "amazing musicians taking the art form to mind-blowing levels of musicianship." Mason can be seen with the TBA Big Band, Windjammer the Band, and Jimmy Parrish and the Waves.



Gary Roberts

Jazz bridges the river

Jazz rhythms and horns are natural aural accomplices and jazz trombonist Gary Roberts, owner of Roberts' South Bank Pharmacy in San Marco, is happy to play that sound. Though an accomplished player, Roberts' decision to become a pharmacist rather than professional musician happened during college. The

Ortega Forest resident explains, "I was a music major before pharmacy but switched because I had to take either band or chem lab, which were at the same time. I only wanted to perform and so few make a living there - but I had skills in math and pharmacy which led to the switch."

Roberts, who plays for the West Jacksonville Jazz Ensemble during worship services at West Side Baptist Church, enjoys music with horn parts and textures. "Whether I have good or bad feelings during the day, I always feel better after playing...jazz creativity, how it all comes together...always draws something out in me."

Roberts said he's lucky to have a family who allows him time for the trombone. "Playing jazz trombone is not like work; being able to play music is a God-given talent to use for good, and I'll continue to do so...I can take music further in life than athletics (for example) - long as I have wind, I'll play!"

When Dan Mullis, former West Side Baptist Church musician, now Director of Music Missions for Operation Mobilization, contacted Roberts seeking donations for children to attend the Jacksonville Jazz Festival Music Clinic, Roberts' Pharmacy provided funds to sponsor up to 50 children. Music can be a life-long pursuit, according to Roberts: "It has no definite end point. I have friends in their 80s who are great musicians."

Professional jazz in Murray Hill

Adding depth to that jazz sound is saxophonist Joe Yorio of Murray Hill, who first picked up the saxophone in 1980 at the age of 8 and knew he would one day be a pro. Yorio's musical interests began with John Coltrane and continued into the saxophone after hearing Billy Joel's "Just the Way You Are."

Today, Yorio is the professional he



Joe Yorio

imagined as a child. A UNF Performance Major teacher and professional player, Yorio describes himself as "...an extrovert in the body of an introvert" who "can more fluently express myself as a musician because there is more truth in sound and vibration than there is in words. I almost feel like it's the process of Jazz that's so captivating and good for my own personal development."

Along with sax, Yorio resumed playing the clarinet because of its expressiveness and likes feeling its "channel of air under my fingers" because it's more attached to the music. "The clarinet strikes a chord with people. Whenever I play it, I always get a compliment after the show." Yorio performs with the band Gary and the Yehudas at this year's Festival and can be seen with Windjammer the Band.

Admission to the Jacksonville Jazz Festival is the sweet sound of free, while VIP and Preferred Day Passes are available for a charge and good from Thursday, May 21 through Sunday, May 24.

All ages and instruments are welcome; reservations are required. Call (904) 630-3690 for more information. As you enjoy the music, browse the work of artists and craftspeople from all over the U.S. at Art in the Heart of Downtown during festival hours. Head to www.makeascenedowntown.com/Events/Jacksonville-Jazz-Festival-05-28.aspx for complete information on the Jazz Festival. Your ears will thank you.



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Jr. Residents

Episcopal student heads to international science fair

At the State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida (SSEF) seven Episcopal students, including Avondale resident Carly Crump, earned place awards, cash prizes and scholarships and a place at the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF).

Crump, a senior, earned first place in her category and was awarded a \$2,500 a year scholarship for four years at the University of Florida. In addition, Crump was named as a Grand Award Winner, called a Ying Scholar, for which she received a plaque and check for \$1,000. As a Ying Scholar, Crump will represent the State of Florida and the Northeast Florida Region at ISEF in Pittsburgh, Penn.

At the SSEF Opening Ceremony Crump was a Jason Speaker, addressing the crowd of more than 2,000 students, teachers and chaperones with her motivational talk. This was Crump's fourth year representing ESJ's region at the state fair. Her project focuses on the transmission of the Dengue virus in mosquitoes.

Other Episcopal winners were Andre Royce (first), who will also attend ISEF, Crystal Ji (second), Wenduo Nie (second), Zachary Zeller (third), Alice Choi (third) and Christian Bilgrien (fourth).



Feng (Crystal) Ji, Yebin (Alice) Choi, Andre Royce, Carly Crump, Wenduo Nie and Zachary Zeller; not pictured, Christian Bilgrien

San Marco resident a creator in One Spark



Episcopal School of Jacksonville senior Celeste Burns and her project, In Process, took part in the recent One Spark

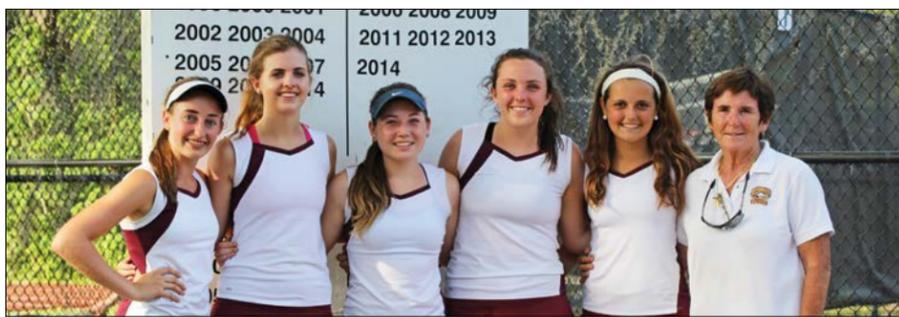


2015. Burns, of San Marco, was seeking \$10,000 to create a website, rent a studio and purchase camera equipment and bookmaking supplies.

Burns incorporates bookmaking and photography, investing countless hours to create books and zines, as well as a portfolio of many fine photographs. "The process of creation and conceptualization is the true artistry," said Burns in her One Spark application. "It is what separates one artist from another."

ESJ Girls Varsity Tennis regional champs

Episcopal Girls and Boys Varsity Tennis defeated P.K. Yonge in the Regional Semifinals on April 7, to advance to the Regional Championship on, April 9. At the Regional Championship the Girls Varsity Tennis team defeated Trinity Catholic (Regional Final.) The girls advanced to State, but did not prevail.



Danielle Corbin, Phoebe Clements, Bianca Cornthwaite, Laurel Lee, Taryn Peterson, Dede Allen

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Students represent Florida in national contest

Hendricks Day School participated in the 2015 American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) poster contest. Students went “above and beyond” in the enriching experience which combines the arts and the Spanish Language. This year’s theme was “Español, un puente al futuro” (Spanish, a bridge to the future).

Three of the students are finalists and their posters will be submitted to represent the state of Florida in the national AATSP contest.



Contest finalists: Samantha H. (3rd), Ever M. (4th) and Mariel C. (8th)

San Marco resident named new head coach

Bishop John J. Snyder High School announced that San Marco resident Travis Markoski will be its new head football coach.

Markoski spent the last four years on the football staff as the defensive coordinator.

The coach search committee identified Coach Markoski as the right man to grow BJS football and elevate it to the next level. Markoski will begin immediately preparing the team for spring practice which begins on May 2.



Exchange students home from Spain

Ten Bolles students, including San Jose resident Audrey Trieu, enjoyed a 14-day exchange trip to Madrid, Spain. Accompanied by faculty members Carmen Adair and Gloria Wood, Bolles students attended classes offered by teachers from the Colegio San Agustin and took day trips around Madrid during their visit. As San Agustin students do when they visit Jacksonville each year, the Bolles exchange students lived with host families from Colegio San Agustin.

In addition to class time and conversational Spanish practice, sightseeing played an important role in the students’ Bolles abroad experience. The group visited the Royal Palace, the Cathedral, the Plaza Mayor, the Puerta



Marlo Morales, Lucy Rosario, Emily Fender, Jill Kight, Mercer Peek, Audrey Trieu, Abigail Anderson, Mary Claire Boline, Christa Green and Jorge Mejia

del Sol, The Prado Museum and The Reina Sofia Museum, in addition to day trips to the cities of Toledo and Segovia.

To learn more about this invaluable experience visit the student blog at <http://bollesinspain2015.blogspot.com>.

St. Nicholas resident attends State Geography Bee

Will Weinbecker, a St. Nicholas resident and 6th grader at Assumption Catholic School, was selected as one of the top 100 in the state to attend the Florida State Geography Bee on March 27 at Jacksonville University. Weinbecker won his school’s Geography Bee and then took a state qualification test of which he received one of the top 100 scores and was invited to compete in the state bee. He participated in the qualifying rounds but did not make the top 10 to compete in the elimination rounds.



Will Weinbecker with grandparents Marilyn and Jim Burns of Manitowoc, Wis., who came into town to cheer him on.

Science projects win state awards

Four San Jose Catholic School student participated in the 60th Annual State Science and Engineering Fair in Lakeland, Fla. and are pleased with their results in the competition.

Olivia Reidy, 8th grade, placed second in the Chemistry Division with a project titled “Safer Scrubs: Fluro-Acrylic Emulsion and Healthcare Worker Safety.” MaryAlice Young, 7th grade, won 1st place in Earth and Space Science for her project “Sunscreen SPF Effectiveness in the Presence of UVB Rays from the Sun and Artificial Light.” Sephora Affa, 7th grade, earned 4th place in Engineering with “Critical Connection Points of a Pratt Truss Bridge.” Grant Reidy, 6th grade, received



Sephora Affa, Olivia Reidy, Grant Reidy, MaryAlice Young

a Recognition Award for his project “What Blocks Cell Phone Signals?”

Carla Chin, teacher at the school, attended as a representative for NE Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair. “We could not be more proud of the students and their accomplishments,” she said.

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A shout-out to marvelous, matchless moms



HILLARY ALMOND

Super Mom Hillary Almond lives in San Marco with husband Eric and children Ander (11), Kathryn (9) and Fenley (6), who attend San Jose Episcopal Day School. She's a working mom, running a local engineering firm with her husband and juggling the demands of family life. In addition to being avid supporters of the school and running to afterschool activities with her children, Hillary is on the Board of Governors at Epping Forest Yacht Club and spends countless weekends on the road with Ander's traveling baseball team. Friendly and down-to-earth, Hillary enjoys being with her family more than anything, especially on the water.



AMANDA BAGGETT

Super Mom Amanda Baggett lives in Deerwood with husband Matt and children John and Susannah, 3-year-old twins, and Bo, 2, who attend The Cathedral School. Also, a working mom, Amanda is an attorney in construction law at Rogers Towers. "I am the mother I am thanks to the love and support of my husband!" said Amanda.

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

All moms are heroes – just by doing all the unnoticed things that knit a family together. Mothers who juggle more balls than a circus performer often feel as though they've spent the day walking barefoot across hot coals. At the end of the night, with a little relief and perhaps a bit of recognition, these busy women are ready to take their act on the road again another day. In honor of the one day a year that moms can claim their own, *The Resident* asked contributors to share stories about mothers who will inspire us all. We call them Super Moms.



SHANNON CONNELL

Super Mom Shannon Connell lives in Beauclerc with husband Matt and children Caroline, 10, and Evelyn, 8, all students at San Jose Episcopal Day School. Shannon is a registered nurse turned stay-at-home mom, and avid supporter of the Pulmonary Hypertension Association.

A volunteer, a leader, Shannon is involved in almost every activity and event on campus and is always willing to lend her down-to-earth humor and can-do attitude to get the job done. Shannon loves to read and travel, and is a friend to all she meets.



HOMA GUY

Super Mom Homa Guy lives in Southside with husband John and children Gracie, 14, who attends Episcopal School of Jacksonville; Ella, 10, at Neptune Beach Elementary, and Layla, 8, a student at San Jose Episcopal Day School. Homa is Parents' Association president at Layla's school and volunteers in other areas, but she has a big job providing 24-hour care for Ella, who has special needs. Forever smiling, Homa loves spending time with her children and husband, and when she can find a spare moment likes to exercise, go to the beach, read and travel with her family.



ALLISON LUKER

Super Mom Allison Luker lives in Mandarin with husband Joel and children Ethan, 10, and twins Reese and Wyatt, 6, who attend San Jose Episcopal Day School. She works as Chief Financial Officer for the Duval County Clerk of Courts and volunteers as homeroom mom, popping in to lead kindergarten science experiments, among other things. Allison manages occasional trips to the emergency room with unbelievable ease, and in her spare time, likes to cook and garden, and enjoys being with her family.



ANNA VALENT

Super Mom Anna Valent lives in San Marco with husband Kevin and children Riley, 6, who attends kindergarten at Hendricks Avenue Elementary, and Sawyer, 3, who goes to St. John's Cathedral School. Anna has two careers as CEO of The LeeValent Group which helps companies relocate families to Jacksonville, and as a partner in Wine Decadence, an in-home wine and pairings company. "I am the mother I am thanks to the example my parents set and the support of my husband, Kevin," Anna said.



MEGAN POULOS

Super Mom Megan Poulos denies she is a Super Mom. She lives in San Marco with husband Nick, a pediatric surgeon and a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves, and her children Alexis (17, Florida Virtual School), Lindsay (14, Episcopal School of Jacksonville), Jake (13, Episcopal School of Jacksonville) and Michael (10, San Jose Episcopal Day School). Megan has cared solely for her four children during Nick's three tours to the Middle East. In addition to keeping up with children in two different schools, she homeschools daughter Alexis, whom she describes as "amazing" and "the closer," and

who happens to have a rare collagen II gene defect. The mother of four is always willing to lend a hand to anyone who needs it and is always smiling. If she had spare time, she would really love to garden.

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JaxSports brings kids triathlon to EverBank Field

Incredible vibe creating momentum

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

If Peter Pan had spent more time swinging a bat, shooting a hoop or passing the pigskin, he may have finally grown up. Perhaps what the boy with the never-ending childhood needed was a kick start such as the First Coast Kids Triathlon.

The triathlon, now in its seventh year, gets boys and girls age 5 to 15 off the couch and into a healthy, positive lifestyle. In an effort to retain the title of World's Largest Kids Triathlon, this year the goal is for 3,000 finishers.

To meet the finish-line goal that is 50 percent greater than last year's, JaxSports (the Jacksonville Sports Council) is partnering with the YMCA, the Jacksonville Jaguars, venue management company SMG and the City of Jacksonville, to hold the first kids triathlon ever to finish inside of an NFL stadium.

In conjunction with the First Coast Kids Triathlon, May 2-3, 7:30-11 a.m., Gator Bowl Charities and YMCA of First Coast will present Healthy Kids Day on May 2, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Part of a national initiative to improve



Alan Verlander

the health and well-being of kids and families, Healthy Kids Day features activities such as the Guinness World Record attempt for World's Largest Family Boot Camp, swim testing sign-ups, youth sports skills/drills clinics, art contests, petting zoo, inflatables, face painting and other family activities. The Y will also launch Wellness Passport for kids to earn a ticket to the 2016 Taxslayer Bowl.

Off the couch, on the turf

If youth now – regardless of socioeconomic status – would spend more time exercising their lungs, instead of exercising their thumbs, they will probably grow up to be healthy adults, surmises JaxSports Executive Director Alan Verlander.

“The natural inclination is to think it's the underprivileged child who needs [to do] that, but in reality, the ‘privileged’

kids who have access to video games and computer are not exercising,” said Verlander. “The goal of the triathlon is to get any child away from their screens and gadgets and get them to exercise.”

He believes the draw to get kids in the triathlon will be the finish at EverBank Field, where every finisher will be featured on the largest video boards in the world.

An eye for opportunity

Verlander didn't spend much time on the couch, participating in sports at The Bolles School and playing college baseball at Samford University, where he majored in speech communication. While he didn't consider a future as a professional athlete, what he did was parlay a love for sports into a fulfilling career.

For nearly two decades Verlander has kept his “eye on the ball” – first landing a job as director of marketing and operations with the Gator Bowl Association, then heading back to Samford University as associate director of athletics, which ultimately positioned him to be hired as Jacksonville University's athletic director.

Three years ago this month Mayor Alvin Brown tapped Verlander for the position of the city's executive director of sports and entertainment, where Verlander's job was to make the city a destination for sporting events. He left that position 18 months later for Gator Bowl Sports, as its chief operating officer, with similar goals: to bring athletic events to Jacksonville.

Then, a little over a year ago, a public-private partnership was formed to showcase Jacksonville as a sports destination and Verlander was named executive

director for the new Jacksonville Sports Council, aka JaxSports. He still serves as COO for Gator Bowl Sports.

Rooting for Jacksonville

Verlander, a Miramar native who even now lives just two streets from where he grew up, is proud of the San Marco area. “That whole area has been my whole life and seeing the changes, and more development, and the resurrection of San Marco Square, is really cool. Being a resident there is very important to me,” he said.

A great ambassador for Jacksonville as well, Verlander is upbeat about JaxSports. “My business is sports ... so many times over the years we've fought against each other, but finally we have a leadership group in Jacksonville that is coming together and saying enough is enough and it's time to elevate our city ... it's a lot of the business leaders, the sports leaders, the Jaguars embracing that culture,” he stated.

JaxSports board of directors has representatives from all the major stakeholders in town, Verlander stated, from the City of Jacksonville to Visit Jacksonville to the JAX Chamber of Commerce, and the Jaguars, all supportive of a unified effort.

“There has always been a decent vibe in this town revolving around sports and culture. However, at this particular time we are experiencing an incredible vibe which is creating serious momentum for sports and culture in our town,” Verlander concluded enthusiastically. “I've been in Jacksonville a long time and there is such a positive feeling and vibe for the present and future of our city like nothing that I have seen before.”

Independent schools sports league picks up speed

Less than two years ago a small group of independent schools formed a sports league to gives students the opportunity to play a variety of sports for their school.

The North Florida Independent Schools Athletic Conference (NFISAC) now includes Jacksonville Country Day School, St. Johns Country Day School, St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, San Jose Episcopal Day School, and Beaches Episcopal Day School and offers basketball (boys and girls teams), volleyball (girls), flag football

(boys) and soccer (coed).

“The league's mission and goal is to get students involved in sports, instill the school pride value, and support a healthy lifestyle at the elementary school level,” said Drew Upchurch, Auxiliary Services Director of Jacksonville Country Day School and one of the founders of the NFISAC.



Jacksonville Country Day School and San Jose Episcopal Day School go for the ball during a soccer game.



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From Olympic Contenders to Couch Potatoes, Master Jason Watson Has Martial Arts for You

The mention of martial arts conjures images of actors clad in colorful kimonos, flipping through the air while making humanly impossible hits on their adversary, all to American voices poorly lip synced to foreign fighters involved in the action. Hit shows such as Kung Fu Theatre, featuring the above, were the norm in the 1970s and inspired many children to begin martial arts training.

One of those kids, Jason Watson, owner of Watson

Martial Arts, was inspired to begin martial arts after watching Kung Fu Theatre with his brother at the age of seven and went on to become a ten time National Taekwondo Champion. Watson Martial Arts, with classes for all levels and ages in Taekwondo, Hapkido, and FightFit, was started by Watson's parents in 1986, with Watson taking over the business full time in 1995 and recently moving it to its new location at 1780 Emerson St.

While televised martial arts may seem exciting and

dramatic, Master Watson says he and his instructors provide "...an inviting, non-intimidating atmosphere" where children, top competitors, and couch potatoes alike can train where there is a "Really cool family feel, where students hang out with each other even when they're not in class."

His instructors are themselves products of Watson Martial Arts who began their training with the Tiny Tigers Class, structured for children of ages 4 - 5. "Our biggest goal is to get clients from white belt to black belt," a process that takes up to five years. Watson stated "If we can teach kids patience...to set a goal and achieve it, you've done something cool and shown kids they don't need instant gratification - a skill they can use later in school or college."

As a Master, Watson says he "has to relate to people on a personal level and adjust to their learning style. You've got to convey the goal and provide the plan to get there so they're not just spinning their wheels." Watson went on to say that his trainers are "Personable, friendly, and show you what to do," affirming "You're in charge of your own pace." This is important for all skill levels, particularly beginners or those coming into martial arts as adults wanting to get up from the couch and get back into the shape of something other than a potato. Taekwondo and the defensive art of Hapkido are combined in classes for beginners, intermediate, and advanced students, while FightFit, as Watson explains, "Grew out of a need to combine the striking concept with intensity training. The workout is different every day, the instructors provide the workout, and you go."

Tiny Tigers, Taekwondo/Hapkido, and FightFit each have their own training space in Watson Martial Arts's new, 6000 square foot location at 1780 Emerson St., with new, state-of-the-art equipment available in well lit, padded, and ventilated areas. See more at www.watsonmartialarts.com or call (904) 636-0092 for information on the two-week trial class or to enroll yourself or children in Watson's no contract classes.

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COASTAL LAW'S HIGH MARKS RAISE THE BAR

When William Flournoy first realized he'd passed the Florida Bar Exam he was relieved. "I was just glad that I passed," he said. "It's one of those exams that when you walk away there is always some doubt." But the Florida Coastal School of Law student's relief turned to delight two days later when he understood just how well he did. On his first try, Flournoy had scored among the highest of his peers in Florida and first among his Florida Coastal classmates.

"On Monday I could see that I passed. On Wednesday, I could see that I did pretty good," he said, noting Chief Judge Vincent G. Torpy, Jr. has asked him to speak at the swearing-in ceremony in Daytona May 4.

Flournoy was not the only Coastal student who passed the Bar on his first try. This year, Florida Coastal School of Law ranked third in the state with seventy-five percent of the candidates passing the exam on their first attempt. And it's not the first time Coastal Law students have bettered the state average. In the 23 Florida Bar examinations administered since 2004, the school has equaled or bettered the average passing percentage 10 times. Perhaps more remarkable is that 88 percent of the law school's graduates eventually pass the Bar examination.

"One of our top priorities is to graduate attorneys who can immediately add value

to their respective organizations because they have the right knowledge and training to do so," said Coastal Law President Dennis Stone. "The more traditional model of legal education is to graduate law students who expect their first employers to train them after their hired. Our Law Practice & Technology program is one of the most innovative in the country in terms of preparing students for the 21st century demands of practice, and we are continuing to introduce other programs rarely found at other law schools. Our Educational Technology Program grants students a MacBook Air computer to ensure they have the tools they need to compete."

This approach is beginning to be recognized nationally. For the second year in a row, The National Jurist has named Florida Coastal a best law school for providing practical training. The leading news source in legal education granted it with an A+ listing in its top 20 law schools. This is an improvement from Coastal Law's A- ranking in 2014.

One difference is that Florida Coastal provides its students with ample internship and externship opportunities, placing them with firms throughout Florida and the southeast. Flournoy interned with a private Jacksonville firm that did home foreclosure defense, he said. He plans to set up a practice, specializing in first and third party property claims as well as criminal cases.

"Just passing the bar exam doesn't make you a hireable attorney," said Interim Dean Mary Margaret Giannini. "Our students take what they learn in law school and apply it to the real world."

Flournoy agrees. "I've heard some employers have hired Coastal grads after they were disappointed with the hires from other schools," he said. "Apparently they really liked the way Coastal has prepared them."

After graduating from Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri, Flournoy applied to several law schools but selected Florida Coastal after he visited the campus. "I liked the practical nature of the school. I want to be a practicing attorney and to be in the courtroom. Because I actually want to practice, I could see it would be a good fit for me," he said.

It was Florida Coastal's "open door" policy that most impressed him, Flournoy said. "In a lot of law schools you can get lost in the classroom, and you can't go into the professor's office and talk to them about things, but at Coastal you can," he said.



Aspiring attorneys can visit Florida Coastal School of Law at 8787 Baypine Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32256 or call (904) 256-1215 to discuss the curriculum and certification programs or arrange a tour.

Flournoy

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Residents 'Wine Down' to raise money for park improvements

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

More than 200 residents came out to support the San Marco Preservation Society Wine Down fundraiser in support of Brown L. Whatley Park on April 18. The event was "sold out" said SMPS President Mary Toomey, noting she does not yet have a firm figure of how much money was raised. Two hundred tickets were sold at \$50 per ticket.

Money from the event and additional donations will help pay to upgrade the infrastructure in Whatley Park. On the first leg of the event, residents had an opportunity to view for the first time the Society's proposed plans to improve the park with benches, new trees, more attractive bridge railings, street lamps

as well a concrete pathway that would wind through the park and connect with the bridge that spans the concrete ditch, which divides the park. These improvements would help the park comply with the American Disabilities Act, said President-elect Andrew Dickson.

Similar to a progressive dinner, participants sampled wine and appetizers supplied by local eateries at three different San Marco locations. After meeting at Whatley Park participants walked to Lillian S. Davin Park, where they sampled more wine and food. A corn-hole toss game was also available. Live music was available at all of the locations.

Although a brief rainstorm swept through the area while everyone was at Davin Park it didn't seem to put a damper on the number of participants who continued toward the final destination, the gazebo in Balis Park in San Marco Square.

"It's great to have all the events within walking distance," said Rebecca Miller of San Marco, who pushed her Pomeranian in a small buggy. "These are the parks



Rebecca Miller and her Pomeranian Jack join Mary Beth Blackwell near the tent in Davin Park.



Kristie and John Kasbar and their two daughters, 3-year-old Kensey and 1-year-old Jane, enjoy a brief interlude by the fountain in Balis Park.



Incoming President of the San Marco Preservation Society Andrew Dickson joins former SMPS president Diane Martin at the Wine Down fundraiser April 18 in Brown L. Whatley Park in San Marco.

where we walk our dogs every day."

"I think this a great event," said Mary Beth Blackwell of San Marco. "It builds a sense of community in San Marco. It's an opportunity to get to know your neighbors."

Rain before, after doesn't dampen race spirits

Hundreds of Jacksonville's fitness fiends and casual runners braved the biggest rainstorm of the season on April 25 to run 1st Place Sports' Wine & Chocolate Run 5K in San Marco. Funds from the inaugural run benefit ongoing beautification projects in San Marco Square. Runners were treated to Peterbrooke Chocolate and an assortment of wines served in commemorative wine glasses after the race.



Jennifer Couch, Melissa Fagan



Guy and Anna Browning, Ginger Blackmon



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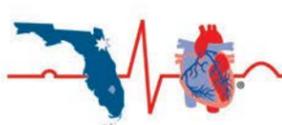
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Beautiful results when fire and water mix

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Mixing fire and water usually results in the absence of one over the other, but glass sculptor Brian Frus successfully mixed one of those elements with the idea of the other to create a breathtaking piece of art that celebrates the proclaimed Year of the River.

Frus is one of 10 diverse, recognized regional artists working in different media to be invited by the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens to participate in its Reflections



Brian Frus adds detail to a glass turtle for his sculpture.

exhibit, on display through Oct. 18.

"I was honored to be one of the artists in whom the Cummer trusted to create a museum quality artwork for this show," said Frus, a San Marco resident and assistant professor of glass art at Jacksonville University. While eight of the other artists were paired with pieces from

the Cummer's permanent collection and asked to respond with their own work, Frus and poet Tiffany Melanson created works from the "blank canvas" of their own imagination.

A most challenging piece

His creation, River Table, is an intricate look at the St. Johns River as it transitions from fresh water to brackish to salt water both above and beneath its surface. During the process of creating the glass sculpture Frus engaged with many people and all kinds of new techniques and ideas.

"Because I wanted to celebrate the beauty and diversity of our river in a fairly realistic way, I met with marine scientists to better inform myself about the plants and animals in our river," Frus explained.

"I learned about technology and partnered with Rubin Ironworks to have my glass tabletops cut using a water-jet machine."

The sculptor said the sheer scale and engineering complexity of River Table made it the most challenging piece he has created to date.

"Try to imagine the engineering to embed hardware within hand-sculpted glass parts so it will all line up and become a functional table ... it took pages of notes and more than a few test pieces to settle on a method that would work" Frus related. "Making the glass parts is a wonderful and exciting part for me. At times monotonous (I sculpted nearly 60 table legs to get the 40 used in the finished sculpture), but mostly a unique opportunity for me to push my own skills. Sculpting the different creatures was the most fun, and also the most challenging."

Local creators reflect on One Spark experience

By Peggy Harrell Jennings
Resident Community News

Some of the 537 creators spent months in the planning, others were "sparked" by last-minute inspiration. Many were existing companies, yet struggling to break through while some saw the third annual World's Largest Crowdfunding event as a chance to jump-start new businesses.

Several local creators won awards, including Shai Tzabari (Olive My Pickle, Health & Science, 2nd place) and The Firewater Tent Revival (Music, 3rd place).

The Resident caught up with three local creators, who vied for their share of the 117,169 votes cast, and \$93,324 in contributions.

Medical crisis sparks idea

Lakewood residents Charu and Ravi Raheja's project, My Nurse Triage App, came about because of a personal medical crisis. After experiencing symptoms which included what she thought was just a headache, Charu's husband suggested that she call and ask for a medical recommendation. She was advised to go to a hospital where she discovered that she had a stroke.

With \$35,000 in funding, production of My Nurse Triage mobile app can be completed. Then the company will hire, train and license new nurses so that

individuals can connect directly with a registered nurse, even if they don't have insurance or a primary care doctor. The app and website would help eliminate unnecessary, costly visits to the Emergency Room or, in some cases, could evaluate a dangerous condition which someone might ordinarily ignore.

Ravi said that One Spark helped them by pushing them to get the technology in place to showcase their new product. "It was a good way to make connections – having a deadline was helpful – and from an operational standpoint it was a success." Charu remarked, "I really enjoyed the event.

We met a lot of really good people, with lots of ideas. We made so many connections to move forward with our business and the feedback about our product was helpful."

Turning disability into profitability

Mark Bennett was inspired to create by losing his vision in one eye and making lots of messes in the kitchen while trying to fill the coffee maker. Bennett, of San Jose, said he would come home from work each day to design and build prototypes for what would eventually become "Magic Filler," a device to deliver water to the coffee maker with the turn of a valve. A lot of late night research and interactions with his "old friend Google," a whirlwind of activity, a last-minute application and he was on his way to One Spark with a \$250,000 fundraising goal.

"I'm sure most people had been planning on doing this for months (or years). Our decision came in less than a week. Everything fell into place. Our goal was to see if people like the idea, if they felt comfortable installing it, and finding an investor," said Bennett. "I'm working on other versions as well. I couldn't count the times someone said, 'You guys really need to be on Shark Tank.' It's good to hear from others that they think our product can make it."

Alternative therapy to talk

Becky Lachut of The Child Guidance Center in San Jose describes her One Spark experience as "energizing but exhausting." With two projects in the Health and Science Category – Sand Tray Therapy and Children's Mental Health Research, which were voted number 5 and 10 – she received over 400 votes and secured \$700 each in donations and a possible community collaborator. Her goal was to raise over \$40,000 in funding to provide 75 therapists with the sand tray tool and to help the 5,000 children they see every year overcome trauma, depression, anxiety and family conflicts.

According to Lachut, the sand trays provide "an evidence-based therapy tool to help nonverbal children." By providing children with miniatures in different themes the children can to express their thoughts and feelings by constructing a story or world. She explained, "Children experience events and situations similarly but personally. The play therapy allows for a child guided experience and helps lower defenses. The sand trays give the therapists another tool for communication in their therapeutic service."

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Annual neighborhood festival brings out residents



More than 100 residents gathered to enjoy an afternoon of fun and games, a barbecue/potluck supper and getting to know neighbors at the annual GranadaFest celebration April 18 at Granada Park. The festivities included volleyball, laser tag, bounce houses, hula hoop contests, and face painting. Members of the event planning committee included Andy Newman, Amy Stapleton, Zoie Morales and Juliette Vaughn.



Facepaint artist Portia Gillespie, aka Cotton Candy the Clown, with 7-year-old Ceci Watrel at the annual GranadaFest. (Photo by Angela Lopez)

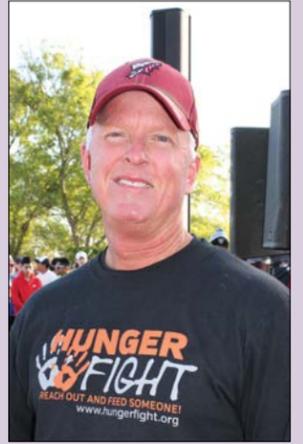


Two San Marco dads enjoy the annual GranadaFest celebration with their 3-year-old daughters: Marco Bongiovanni and Isabella; Wayne Tutt and Chloe.

Runners support Hunger Fight

More than 1,200 runners came out to support Hunger Fight at its Color Me Fed 5K Walk/Run on March 28. With 172 volunteers and sponsorships from Tijuana Flats, Smoothie King, Coggin Honda on Atlantic, Lil Kimmi Dee Creations, Barefoot Wines and Whole Foods, Dean Porter counted the event a huge success.

Hunger Fight has packaged nearly 900,000 meals since it was established about 18 months ago as a nonprofit, enlisting schools, churches and businesses to help put the nutritious meals together at mega-packing events. For more information visit www.hungerfight.org.



Dean Porter



Dlynn Phelps, Darla Schultz



Nancy Hunt, Paige Maki



Brenda Pohlig, Mitchell Patch, Yvette Patch, Joshua Wolfe

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"I pledge to reduce violent crime, drug crime, and gang activity by 25 percent my first year in office." ~ **Ken Jefferson**



As your Sheriff, I will reduce violent crime, drug crime and gang activity. I will use my 24 years of law enforcement experience combined with my professional experience as an expert crime analyst on WJXT Channel 4 to develop and implement a comprehensive crime reduction strategy. My plan will address proactive and strategic enforcement and allocation of resources, prevention, incarceration and recidivism. Some of the key points:

- Proactive Enforcement to include street crimes unit deployed to high crime areas and use of crime tracking software.
- Community Outreach to include the creation of a Citizens Advisory Council because **We Can Do Better... Together.**
- For the incarcerated, a required curriculum for those convicted of a crime.

I also have a plan to reduce recidivism and pledge as Sheriff to work one day a month with police officers on our streets. To read more in depth details of my plan, please visit my website.



"As a person of my word, I must look at who is best for the department internally and also who is right to lead the agency for our community.

JSO cannot function without the community's trust. That's why I am reaching across party lines and supporting Ken Jefferson to serve as Jacksonville's next Sheriff." ~ **Jimmy Holderfield**



"I recognize Ken is the only man left in this race that can bring the CHANGE we need, the CHANGE we deserve. And, I humbly ask everyone

who supported me in this race to offer their full support to Ken Jefferson as the only man who can bring about the CHANGE we need."

~ **Rob Schoonover**

EXPERIENCE

- 24 Years with Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
- Academy Staff Instructor
- Burglary Detective
- Sex Crimes Detective
- Federal Program Coordinator
- Police Spokesman
- WJXT, News Channel 4 expert crime analyst
- Leadership Jacksonville Graduate
- Police Recruiter

Last Landon High School class rocks the weekend

More than 100 classmates and their guests turned out for the Landon Class of 1965 50th Reunion on April 18 at River City Brewing Company, part of a weekend of fun and reminiscing. Classmates enjoyed dinner on Thursday evening at the Beach Road Chicken Dinner, lunch at the Mudville Grille on Friday, followed by the official welcome party that night at a local hotel, then on Saturday a tour of the school, now operating as the Julia Landon College Preparatory School, and lunch at Bono's on Beach Boulevard, a favorite class hangout in the early 1960s.



Kate Kelly Kinsley, Patti Jo Angel Brammer, Randy Houser, Deni Edenfield Murphree, Nancy Skelly Miller



Some of the Class of 1965 Reunion committee members: Anne Rice Barcelo, Dawn Lowery Carter, Pat Errico Alban, Anita Tiffany Dunford, Becki Paille Adcox, Randy Houser, Marli Albright, Linda Bennett McNamara. Missing are Howard Coker, class president, John Rose, Pam Chafin Roach.

Remembering Bob Mette after 59 years

By Jim Webb

The Western Union Telegram began, "I regret to inform you that your son Pvt. Robert Allen Mette USMCR is critically ill at this hospital due to acute meningitis."

Bob's father was enjoying a quiet Sunday morning at home with his two younger sons when the message was delivered. Mr. Mette immediately drove to Mayfair Baptist Church and got his wife, Cora. They packed quickly, and the Mette Family headed to Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, NC to be with their oldest son. Their trip was in vain. Bob died the afternoon before his family arrived.



Bob Mette 1956

Just 65 days earlier, Bob had graduated from Landon High School. He was a handsome, gifted athlete whose future seemed as bright as the sun. He lettered in football, basketball and baseball. Bob loved basketball best and was offered a basketball scholarship to Jacksonville Junior College. Bob's fastball had some professional baseball scouts showing an interest in his pitching ability. He wouldn't make any decisions between basketball and baseball until after his two-week trip to Summer Camp with the Marine Corps Reserve. Bob's heart was set on a professional baseball contract and he wanted a chance to further pursue that goal.

Motorcycle Officers from the old Jacksonville Police Department escorted Bob's funeral cortege to the entrance of Greenlawn Cemetery on Beach Boulevard. The officers dismounted their motorcycles, snapped to attention and saluted Bob's flag-covered coffin as it entered the cemetery. There was a seemingly endless stream of cars with headlights aglow as classmates, dignitaries, former competitors, and friends alike came to pay their last respects. A Marine Honor Guard from Jacksonville NAS performed full Military



Corporal Cody Wilkinson, Shirley Yost, Morris Busbia, Carolyn Kraus, Fred Fulkerson, Malinda Durham, Jim Webb, Cathy Edwards, Dr. James Harrell and Staff Sergeant Phillip Greer.

Honors at the grave site, ending with a distant bugler playing "Taps."

Richard Mette, Bob's youngest brother, has done everything possible to perpetuate Bob's memory. Richard donates annual scholarships in Bob's name to two local Marine Corps Reservists. Recently, Richard bought two benches and a plaque describing Bob's

character and had the school board place them on the front lawn of Bob's alma mater. Almost 59 years after Bob's death, eight of his classmates, accompanied by two Marine Honor Guards, attended the dedication ceremony.

If you are interested in learning more about Bob or his classmates, visit www.Landon56.com.

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- Shirley Warren

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*Amelia Island
resident, Dana.*

“It felt like a ticking time bomb in my head.”

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The Way We Were – Merles Dekles Teates

By Julie Kerns Garmendia
Resident Community News

Although her vision and hearing are fading, once Merle Dekle Teate, 97, of San Jose settles into a favorite chair overlooking her backyard and lake, her Maltese poodle Angel tucked by her side, she's eager to share timeless memories. Still a lovely Southern lady with the sunniest of personalities, Teate's home off San Jose Boulevard was once the center of a vibrant social circle reflecting the music and entertainment of the time.

"Things were different then. People often entertained at home. If we weren't going out for dinner and dancing to Abe Livert's Band on Saturday nights at San Jose Country Club, we invited friends here. We'd take

a boat ride, dine together...then the music and dancing started," she said.

Stacks of record albums in her Marianna Road home prove the music rarely stopped, especially when U.S. Air Force and Florida National Guard pilot, the late Lt. Col. Thomas "Tommy" Luten Teate was home.

Teate was the son of Thomas Abner Teate, Jr., and his wife Billie Octavia Duncan Teate, a well-known local ballroom dance instructor who acted in early Jacksonville-produced silent movies. Tommy learned to dance from his mother in the family home on Liberty at 16th street in Springfield. He was often her partner and later taught Merle to dance. Merle says that Teate especially loved his family, flying, and dancing, a passion they shared throughout their 65-year marriage.

"We danced every weekend. There were always dances at the National Guard Armory in Springfield or at the Masonic Lodge downtown on Newnan Street. Our favorites were ballroom, the Cha and square dances," Merle said.

The well-worn Teate album collection has neat handwritten notes on each cover indicating song number and title for favorites. They played Pete Fountain, Count Basie, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, the Glen Miller Orchestra and Vaughn Monroe hits. Big Band, Dixieland, Jazz, Swing, Latin music and movie themes sung by stars of the day are dear to Merle. Songs they practically wore out were: Green Eyes, Sugar Blues, Marie Elena, Mamselle, Sleepy Lagoon, Mood Indigo and Little Brown Jug.

The family lived on Catalonia Street before moving to the Marianna Road home, which Tommy just had to have, Merle recalled. Its large yard, private lake and island were perfect for their family and entertaining.

"Tommy wanted this home because he loved the water. We had a pontoon boat named The Love Boat and jet skis. He fished, catching brim and 10-pound wide-mouth bass," she said. "We liked to boat to the island, roast hotdogs and picnic. Along the way we'd invite neighbors who were outside to boat over and join us...such fun."

Merle Dekle was born June 6, 1917 at home, 325 Cottage Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets in Springfield. Her older

Continued on page 43 >>>



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brother, Vaughn, is deceased. Her parents were Julian Arthur Dekle and Zimmie Harrison Dekle. Nearly 100 years ago, Julian founded the Dekle Lumber Company downtown, which he later sold to the Mason Lumber Company, predecessor of The Charter Company.

"My lifelong friend, Virginia "Ginger" Dell, 96, lived on the corner of Pearl and 11th Streets, so close I could walk outside and call her, and she'd hear me even if she was in her backyard playhouse. She was like my little sister. We attended Miss Cadine Montgomery's Kindergarten in a house next door to mine. I remember walking Ginger to her first day of kindergarten, her first day at Kirby Smith and to Andrew Jackson High School. The only time we ever argued was over Betty Boop paper dolls we cut out of the Pictorial Review Magazine every month. The only naughty thing we ever did was to skip school and borrow my brother's 1935 cream-colored Chrysler Convertible to go to the beach. Ginger was only 16 but she knew how to drive. Unfortunately we got stopped by the police for speeding, but they let us go without a ticket," she said. Dell went on to found Virginia Dell



School of Dance in Jacksonville, a love of dance she and Merle have shared for nearly a century.

Merle was the first Bolles Sweetheart in 1934, chosen at a dance she attended with John Thomas, a boarder at the then all-male Bolles Military Academy. The Dekles' porch and kitchen were home-base for Bolles students who visited Merle and her girlfriends on Sunday afternoons after church, hosted by her parents.

Both are Jacksonville natives who attended the same schools, and the handsome, romantic Tommy would walk to Merle's house from his home, whistling so she would hear him coming. The date June 6th, Merle's birthday, was significant throughout their lives. They graduated together on June 6, 1935 from Andrew Jackson High School and married on June 6, 1939.

Tommy Teate served in three wars, flew countless dignitaries including Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy and taught Charles Lindbergh to fly a B-29 Superfortress bomber during WWII. Lindbergh's historic 1927 cross-Atlantic flight inspired Teate to earn his pilot's license



Merle Teate and lifelong friend Ginger Dell

at age 16. He retired from the military in 1977 but continued as Winn Dixie and Davis family pilot and as a flight instructor via computer simulation right up to his death. He and his sons founded Enviro-Test Services, Inc. environmental testing company, now located in Columbia, South Carolina. Tommy also served as a volunteer missionary pilot, flying supplies to disaster zones worldwide, including medical evacuation services.

They celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary before Tommy's death in 2003. His last words were "I love you, Merle." She still treasures the watch he gave her engraved with her name, so that she would not forget him while they were apart. The plane he flew during his military service had "Merle" painted on it. She was often told by returning military personnel that they recognized her husband because of her name on his plane.

There are three Teate children: Thomas "Deke" Teate of Ortega, Suzanne Teate of San Jose and son Terry Lee Teate of South Carolina. Four grandchildren include Suzanne's son Rik Bos and Terry's children Travis, Tara and Tiffany.

Merle expects to continue well past her 100th birthday because she has two friends who lived to 104. She enjoyed bowling, bridge, pottery, collecting dolls, and sewing or knitting clothing for her family and the Salvation Army. The Teates were active at San Jose Episcopal Church, All Saints Episcopal in San Marco, and later at All Souls Episcopal in Southside, where Merle was a volunteer. These days Merle enjoys her family, dining with friends and is delighted to tell visitors that she is ready to go dancing any time.



Upcoming Events




Air Supply
Friday, May 15 at 8:00 PM
The Australian pop rock duo topped charts worldwide with a string of hit songs "Making Love Out of Nothing At All," "All Out of Love," "Every Woman In The World," "The One That You Love," and "Here I Am."

John Mulaney – Time For Mulaney
Sunday, May 3 at 7:30 PM
John Mulaney is quickly becoming one of the most sought after young comedians and actors in the comedy world.

Jason Isbell with guest Craig Finn
Tuesday, May 12 at 7:30 PM
Award winning singer/guitarist Jason Isbell spent six years with the Southern rock outfit Drive-By Truckers before he pursued a solo career.

Brit Floyd Space and Time World
Tuesday, June 2 at 8:00 PM
This amazing musical journey celebrates five decades of Pink Floyd; from their creation in 1965 right through to the release of their brand new album.

The Gipsy Kings featuring Nicolas Reyes and Tonino Baliardo
Thursday, June 11 at 8:00 PM
Melding deep-heated flamenco, rumba, salsa and pop to the tune of 20 million albums sold, the Grammy Award-winning hit-makers behind 'Bamboléo'.

Happy Together Tour
Friday, June 16 at 8:00 PM
This multi-media show will take fans back to the 60's with such hits like "Happy Together," "Eleanor," "She'd Rather Be With Me,".

STYX
Friday, June 26 at 8:00 PM
With 16 Top 40 hit songs, STYX is best known for "Lady," "Come Sail Away," "Renegade" and "Too Much Time On My Hands."

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