



St. Vincent's Red Rose

Preparations for the 35th Annual Red Rose Ball are underway as St. Vincent's HealthCare celebrates the 100th anniversary of its founding by the Daughters of Charity. Chairing the 2016 Red Rose Ball are Rhonda and Dr. Mark Mostovych, Rosalind and Mark Travis, and Jan and Lou Walsh, along with the Honorary Chair, Sister DeSales Wisniewski, D.C.



December 2015

Community News

Resident

Riverside — Avondale — Ortega — Murray Hill



www.ResidentNews.net

Fiercely Local News ... Fiercely Loyal Readers

Vol. 8, Issue 12

Neighbors rally against restaurant planned for old laundry center

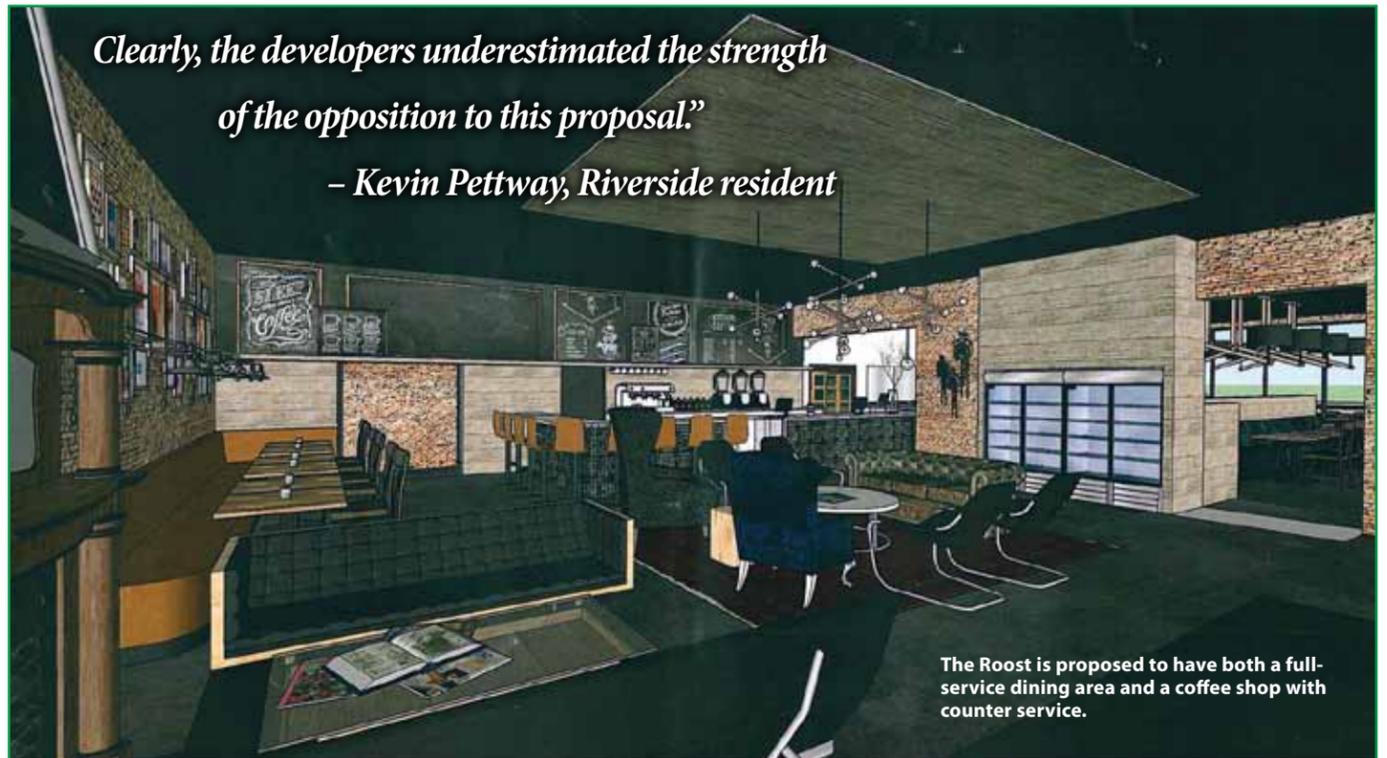
Residents believe Roost is fox in henhouse

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

In what may be an ironic choice for a name, The Roost is being viewed by residents as the fox in the henhouse, believing that approval of the plan bodes ill for the neighborhood.

What was initially pitched as a small, 60-seat breakfast and lunch café expanded into a 150-seat late-night restaurant after the property owner, Anthony Saleeba, offered up two of his three buildings at the former Deluxe cleaner site on Oak Street to restaurant developers Ted Stein and J.C. Demetree.

Once word spread about The Roost, residents joined forces to oppose the plan. In a matter of just a few weeks, a group led by Kevin Pettway coalesced formally as P.R.O.U.D.: Positive Riverside Optimized Urban Development. Pettway, who lives near the proposed restaurant, created



Clearly, the developers underestimated the strength of the opposition to this proposal.”

— Kevin Pettway, Riverside resident

The Roost is proposed to have both a full-service dining area and a coffee shop with counter service.

a website, proudofriverside.com, and initiated social media to find supporters against the plan.

“My wife and I were on a walk when I first heard about the proposed development from a neighbor who had discovered it

from city government. We immediately began asking around to see what anyone

[Read more on page 26](#)



Glenn Miller, Michael Miller, Daniel Miller, Jen and Josh Sachs

Meet me in Havana a hit for River Garden

Patrons danced the night away and enjoyed festive entertainment complete with costume clad dancers and live entertainment. The Cuban-themed River Garden Foundation Gala was held at the Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nov. 22. [Read more on page 20](#)

Artscapade lends new meaning to Stayin' Alive



Wolfson CVICU's Rachel Mitchell, Lisa Teel, Mandy York, Sheri Dörner, Michelle Urbanek, Kristin Fore, Lindsey Giordano, Laura Gronski and (in front) Dr. Michael Gayle

Sweet Pete's and Candy Apple Café played host to Artscapade, a benefit event in support of the Patrons of the HeART, a pediatric care initiative for heart surgery patients. [Read more on page 20](#)

Making one's bed in cardboard box a humbling experience



Ortega Methodist Church members Jordan Davenport, Youth Director Shane Williams and Madison Stephenson get ready to spend the night in their cardboard boxes. The annual Family Promise Cardboard City event at CrossRoad Methodist Church helps raise awareness of homelessness in Jacksonville and funds for Family Promise. See Section B for more inspiring stories of holiday giving.

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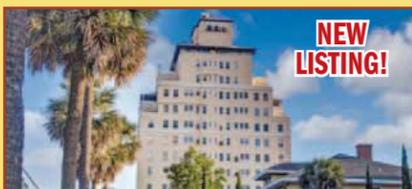


Q I'm ready to sell my house but think it's probably better to wait until the Spring to list my house - what do you think?

A What a difference a year can make! Last year, I wrote in my column that we were having brisk showings and lots of activity across all price points and that it was a great idea to go ahead and list your home for sale now vs. waiting until after the holidays. We are not having anywhere near the activity (showings) this year that we were having last year but with inventory at an all time low, there's just not much to see!

What I know to be true, however, is that if your house isn't on the market, no one can "see" it. If you're ready to sell, you should consider forging ahead and getting your house out there. You might even have a bit of a competitive advantage because so many sellers decide to wait until after the holidays to list so you'll have a lot less competition. Another reason to consider listing now is that buyers generally have a lot more free time over the holidays and those that are looking are generally very serious buyers. Inventory remains dramatically low, so if you're considering a sale, please call me!

Email your questions to steilberg@comcast.net



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Life at its best, thanks to Ohio company

By *Kate A. Hallock*
Resident Community News

The first phase of the Memorial Park restoration and renovation project was underway in November with cleaning of the park's centerpiece, the statue *Life*.

The project was in the very capable hands of McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory, Inc., one of only three major companies in the United States that do this kind of work, according to Tom Podnar, senior conservator of sculpture with the Ohio-based company.

"There's very few of us that work at this level," said Podnar, who has done restoration work here in Jacksonville previously. "We worked on the Charles E. Bennett Federal Building in Jacksonville, cleaning a concrete mosaic by Albert Vrana."

McKay Lodge responded to a Request for Proposal, which was vetted by CMS Group, who is managing the project under the direction of Pattie Houlihan and Jake Ingram, both past presidents of Memorial Park Association.

"We have the sole source contract for the GSA [U.S. General Services Administration], so we take care of the outdoor artwork for the GSA," said Jim Gwinner, conservator of sculpture and public art with McKay Lodge. "We're in all 50 states working for the federal government, so it's not unusual for us to do this."

The crew of four arrived in Jacksonville on Nov. 3 and began work the next day. The work on the reflecting pool includes cutting out the old mortar in the seams and joints of the concrete pool and re-mortaring; replacing conduit, and installing new electrical and plumbing. The bronze statue was cleaned with a dry ice blast process and then covered with a clear protective coating made specifically for outdoor bronze statues. The plaques on the pool were also refinished and two new rosettes installed.

Podnar anticipated finishing the project in December, weather permitting.



The reflecting pond's exterior joints are taped to retain moisture in the new mortar while it sets.



Life, the bronze sculpture centerpiece of Memorial Park, receives a thorough cleaning. (Photo by Robin Patton)



Emmett Lodge, of McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory, Inc., repaints the exterior seams and joints on the reflecting pond.



Jim Gwinner, of McKay Lodge, carefully removes decades of dirt from the globe on the statue *Life*. (Photo by Robin Patton)

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Media Rate Card: www.residentnews.net

EDITOR
Kate A. Hallock

NEWS EDITOR
Marcia Hodgson

editor@residentnews.net

Design Production:
Joe Bahret, Danielle Smith-Boldt

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Elevate, eliminate, extend – or keep as is

JTA ponders what to do about Skyway

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

It's been over 18 years since the Jacksonville Transit Authority took over management of the downtown monorail transit system known as the Skyway and now the independent agency responsible for the city's public transit finds itself at a crossroads.

Faced with an obsolete operation system, spare parts which are impossible to find, and no manufacturer willing to replicate the cars, the JTA has welcomed public input over the past 90 days as it mulls over five different directions the Skyway can travel in the future.

In September, JTA chairman Scott McCaleb formed a three-man subcommittee of his board and a 15-member Skyway Advisory Group comprised of downtown stakeholders to review the following options:

- 1) Keep the Skyway it as it is but overhaul the existing vehicles and rehabilitate the operating system and infrastructure;
- 2) Keep it as it is but purchase new, different vehicles and modify them to operate on the existing infrastructure and operating system;



This map shows the current path of the Skyway and suggested routes if it is expanded to other areas in downtown Jacksonville and its surrounding neighborhoods.

- 3) Use the current system until the vehicles no longer operate safely, then decommission the Skyway and tear it down its infrastructure;

- 4) Decommission the system and re-purpose the infrastructure into an elevated bike and pedestrian walkway similar to New York's High Line in Manhattan; or

- 5) Extend the Skyway's routes to travel to neighborhoods adjacent to downtown such as Riverside, Brooklyn, future Healthy Town,

and the proposed Shipyards and EverBank Field, while purchasing new vehicles and modifying its infrastructure.

Over the course of the past three months, the subcommittee held five public meetings to discuss these proposed options. A sixth committee meeting will be held Dec. 3, 3-5 p.m. at the Main Library, followed by a public forum, 5:30-7 p.m.

The JTA requested Jacksonville residents submit their preferences via a survey on its website. The subcommittee is scheduled to make recommendations on the Skyway's future to the JTA Board of Directors at its meeting Thursday, Dec. 10.

JTA had received 232 responses to its online survey as of Nov. 6, said Brad Thoburn, JTA Vice President of Long Range Planning and System Development in a meeting Nov. 12. Of those responses, the two most popular were: extend the Skyway's route system while

modifying the system to accommodate new cars (80 percent) and decommissioning the Skyway it so it could be transformed into a multi-use elevated path (nine percent).

"The Skyway right now is a critical component to where we're trying to go," said Aundra Wallace, Chief Executive Officer of the city's Downtown Investment Authority. "If we're going to replace it or expand it, it's going to help us be able to grow downtown, when the decision comes out from this particular committee, with regards to where we go with this particular system and the other systems as well."

Slow to be embraced

The Skyway came into being in the early 1970s when the Florida Department of Transportation and a mayor's task force contemplated building a "people mover" as a way to improve air quality and transport commuters over congested downtown streets.

JTA took over the project in 1977, and in 1985 received a grant for \$23 million to build a starter line from the convention center to the central station and Jefferson station.

In 1989, the starter line began using a Matra vehicle, which is the same kind of car used in Miami for its metro mover. When the line was extended to Rosa Parks Station in 1997, Bombardier Inc. was awarded a contract to retrofit the system into a monorail, which at that time was considered the vehicle of the future.

By 2000, the Skyway's operations and maintenance center were completed and new stations had been built at San Marco, Riverplace and Kings Avenue, Thoburn said in a meeting before the North Florida Transportation Organization's Citizen Advisory Committee Oct. 7.

Overall, the cost of system construction and design was \$182 million, not including the planning study. What Jacksonville received for

continued on page 5 >>>

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its money were 10 driverless two-car trains, which travel as fast as 30 mph and can carry up to 56 passengers over a 2.5-mile stretch of track downtown. The bi-directional system is touted by transportation professionals as the safest way to travel through the urban core and can connect with bus and Park-n-Ride facilities on downtown's periphery.

"No mode of transportation can beat the Skyway for frequency," said Harold Samms, Senior Manager of the Skyway during a meeting Oct. 26.

Unfortunately, at its inception, the Skyway was said to "go nowhere people want to go" and found very few riders, although over the years its clientele has gradually increased.

Since JTA recently restructured its bus routes to better coordinate with the monorail, ridership has climbed to 5,000 riders per day, up 600 per day from a year ago, said Thoburn. This year the Skyway will hit a record 1.37 million riders since it was built, he said.

Looking toward the future

Now that the Skyway has reached its "midlife," decisions need to be made about its future. While the Skyway is structurally sound, it needs some upgrades to its infrastructure. If kept as it is, over the next 15 years it will require \$24 million in infrastructure investments to keep it in good repair, Thoburn said.

"We have vehicles that are past their useful life, that need to be either overhauled or replaced," said Thoburn. "We are facing significant challenges with the technology that we put in place. It's proprietary equipment. Parts are difficult to find, and they're very difficult to service."

Also, as technology has advanced, its operating system has become obsolete, he said, noting the cars are no longer in production by Bombardier or any other company in the world, and JTA has found little interest among its vendors to reproduce them.

Currently four out of Jacksonville's 10 existing vehicles are out of service and being used for spare parts, he said.

The cost of overhauling the existing vehicles is \$18 million, and adding necessary

upgrades to the system could run as high as \$70.2 million. Replacing the vehicles with new cars will cost \$35 million, and when modifications to the system are added the price could go as high as \$85.1 million, Thoburn estimated.

But the other options have costs as well.

No one is discussing specific costs of extending the system to Brooklyn, Riverside, or the Stadium, other than to say building the extensions could be prohibitively expensive.

If the Skyway is decommissioned and its infrastructure torn down, the total cost could be as high as \$78.5 million as JTA will be required to pay back the Federal Transit Administration, Florida Department of Transportation and the city for the remaining cost of the Skyway's "useful life." Getting rid of the Skyway in its entirety could also impact future funding from the FTA for rapid transit buses and the city's new compressed natural gas buses. Also, JTA would need to replace the Skyway with alternative transportation such as streetcars, trolleys or buses, Thoburn said.

If the Skyway is decommissioned and transformed into an elevated multi-use path suitable for biking and walking, the total cost could be as much as \$67.8 million, as JTA would be required to fulfilled its payback obligations, install fencing, continue to maintain the old Skyway stations and invest in alternative forms of transportation such as streetcars, trolleys or buses, Thoburn said.

"The Skyway is not a standalone system," Wallace said in a meeting Oct. 26. "It is part of a bigger transit system. It's part of a bigger vision for our regional transit system. Our public transportation does not do well without a strong downtown and downtowns don't do well without a strong public transportation. There is a strong tie between them. The cities are the engines, economic engines of the future, and today we're in an area that's growing."

Thoburn agreed. In a meeting Nov. 12 he suggested the JTA subcommittee consider choosing the option that might best to satisfy the city's future needs and not let cost drive its decision. There are many sources available to fund the project, he said. "Funding shouldn't drive the vision."

Residents weigh in on future of aging elevated people mover

As the Jacksonville Transportation Authority ponders the fate of the elevated monorail system *The Resident* asked residents for ideas about what should be done with the Skyway. Should it become an elevated bike and pedestrian walkway? Or expanded by replacing the cars and building more stations? Or should it be decommissioned and torn down? Here's what a few said about the city's 2.5-mile people mover. *Compiled by Marcia Hodgson, Resident Community News*



Lisa Cusimano
Riverside

It should be expanded. Short as it is, it is not much use. It should come down Riverside Avenue and there should be parking so more people would take it. Going into Brooklyn would be good. It should go down Bay Street to Metropolitan Park, the baseball fields, the arena and the stadium.



Tommy Strelecki
Murray Hill

Every option is very expensive. I don't know if I'd make it a bike path. I don't think the cyclists around here would use it. I heard the original plan was to extend it to Orange Park. That plan didn't get finished, but could be useful. It could be an integral part of our infrastructure if it was expanded.



Jeri Little
Avondale

Having it sets Jacksonville apart from other similar-size cities. Anything that's a public mode of transportation that has some uniqueness about it is good for a city like Jacksonville. They should expand it if it makes sense to do it. If that's an option, yes.



Gloria Little
Avondale

I've only ridden it once but I really enjoyed it. I'd like to expand it so it goes more places other than downtown, places like the stadium, Veterans' Memorial Stadium and Riverside.



Michael Loyd
Riverside

Turn it into a walkway-bike path or expand it. I've only lived here a year and the farthest I go is to school at Robert E. Lee. I'm looking for reliable public transportation anyway and it would be great to take me around the city.



Mary Catherine Hartley, *Riverside*

It doesn't go anywhere so no one rides it. They either need to get rid of it or extend it so it connects into the bus system or goes to the stadium so that people might use it. In San Marco, it's a long walk from the parking garage to the station.



Janie Boyd

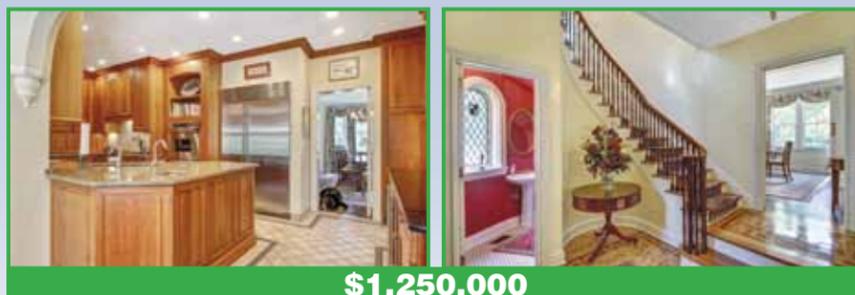
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Young men's social club built future leaders

Hi-Y reunion planned

By Lorrie DeFrank
Resident Community News

Mack Crenshaw remembers that his Hi-Y club at Robert E. Lee High School met at 7:30 on Monday evenings, that Jimmy Terrell kept humorous minutes, and that he often dashed from basketball practice to make it on time.

Jack Milne remembers that those meetings ended with a friendship circle, devotional and the playing of "Tara's Theme." Jim Overton remembers selling white Lee T-shirts with blue neckbands to raise money for his Hi-Y club. Andrew Jackson High School graduate Tommy Hazouri remembers the annual Hi-Y banquets at Beach Road Chicken Dinners.

Decades-old details show how treasured those memories are. Those men, and potentially hundreds more, will have opportunities to swap tales at the Riverside YMCA's Hi-Y reunion activities next year. In early planning stages, the effort to bring them together will be not only to celebrate the new Y but also to recognize them at the annual Y-Bash in February.

Many boys who attended Lee, Jackson and other local and national high schools from the 1940s to early 1980s belonged to the popular Hi-Y clubs that were affiliated with the Young Men's Christian Association. Tri-Hi-Y – and in Lee's case, Y Teams – were for girls, before the Hi-Y program became coed and eventually evolved into today's Y youth programs.

"At the First Coast YMCA, we are proud to be the starting point for leaders who began their civic and community engagement as a member of Hi-Y, high school clubs affiliated with our organization," said Eric Mann, president and CEO, YMCA of Florida's First Coast. "As we move closer to the opening of the new Winston YMCA in Riverside, we look forward to reconnecting with Hi-Y members, celebrating service to the community through Hi-Y, and re-engaging them with our mission of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility."

Stories remembered

As word gets out about the reunion, stories are surfacing. Most involve the solid values and lifelong inspiration former members attribute to Hi-Y.

Nostalgia rivals excitement as the impressive Winston Family YMCA is being built along the St. Johns River behind the present Y on Riverside Avenue. Called the Central YMCA after it opened in the 1950s, it was renamed the Claude J. Yates Family YMCA after the Southern Bell executive and community leader in 2000. Packing up to move involves sorting through memorabilia spanning half a century, including scrapbooks stuffed with clippings of Hi-Y photos and stories.

After working out at the Yates Y



—TIMES-UNION PHOTO BY RAY STAFFORD

Youth Legislature Delegates

More than 300 high school students from throughout the state are participating in the 14th annual YMCA Youth Legislature this weekend in Tallahassee. Sixty Jacksonville representatives from high school Hi-Y and Tri-Hi-Y clubs left Thursday for the three-day conference, which will include simulated legislative and executive activities, with bills being presented, debated and voted upon. Clyde Patterson, a senior at Englewood High School, is serving as governor. Speaker of the house is Jimmy Overton, a senior at Lee High School.

THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION, JACKSONVILLE, FRIDAY, MAY 29.



HI-Y COUNCIL OFFICERS

Officers of the Hi-Y Council, representing 21 Hi-Y Clubs in Duval County confer after being elected at the annual Hi-Y officer's training retreat at Camp Immokalee. From left are Jim Baskerville of Lee, president; Paul Cone, duPont, vice president; Sam Rudland, Landon, secretary; and Nevin Miller, Fletcher, chaplain.

Old newspaper clippings from scrapbooks kept at the YMCA.

recently, Jack Milne, head of The Bolles School's Middle School Bartram Campus and a '71 Lee graduate, thumbed through an old scrapbook on display. He came across a story about his brother Doug's trip to a world youth conference.

Attorney Doug Milne, an Avondale resident and '61 Lee graduate, said Hi-Y's commitment to social services heavily influenced his teen years. As a 17-year-old junior he was one of two Florida delegates at a 10-day YMCA conference in Holland. Teens from 48 countries attended. "I'm 72 years old and that was easily one of my lifetime highlights," he said.

He said he would like the Hi-Y reunion to "plant seeds to reintroduce that whole concept in the school system because we know it does good."

"Hi-Y was great fun in a much simpler time – pre-computers and pre-video games," said Jack Milne. "It was about service, whether clearing an abandoned cemetery or delivering Thanksgiving meals or raising money for various causes, it was fun."

Like many of his colleagues, he also recalls Hi-Y's sports and social activities,

such as basketball, baseball, flag football, dances and hayrides. "Many friendships formed in that group and stayed strong," he said. "The moral and spiritual lessons were very important."

Mack Crenshaw agrees that Hi-Y leaders exemplified wholesome Christian values. "They were the most pleasant memories I had from high school," said the retired 4th Judicial Circuit judge who now works as an assistant public defender in the juvenile division. "The Hi-Y clubs were, in my opinion, the most active and exciting and beneficial extra-curricular activities that anybody had."

Hi-Y inspired leaders

For future politicians Ander Crenshaw, Jim Overton and Tommy Hazouri, Hi-Y's leadership initiatives proved to be influential.

U.S. Rep. Ander Crenshaw graduated from Lee in 1962, two years after his brother Mack. In his senior year, he was Gamma Hi-Y president; junior year, Gamma chaplain; and a Gamma member his freshman and sophomore years.

"I've got some very fond memories of Hi-Y, including Blue Ridge visits with other Hi-Y students from around the Southeast. The leadership skills gained and the friendships made in this organization have been valuable to this day," said Congressman Crenshaw.

Overton, a real estate broker who served as Duval County Property Appraiser and on Jacksonville City Council, graduated from Lee in 1971. He said attending YMCA-affiliated youth conferences throughout the Southeast were part of his political education. His second paying job – after delivering newspapers – was as a dishwasher at YMCA Camp Immokalee in Keystone Heights the summer after his freshman year in high school.

Hazouri, who graduated from Jackson in 1962, said Hi-Y was "one of the best organizations when I was in high school." A member of Jacksonville City Council, he said its leadership training helped to spark his political career, which includes serving as mayor of Jacksonville and as a member of the Florida House of Representatives and Duval County School Board.

"Hi-Y builds character, relationships, integrity and sportsmanship – more than just in sports, but in being a good a sport, which makes a big difference," he said.

New Y big part of rebirth

Lakeside resident Norman Abraham was in Hi-Y at Lee from 1957 to 1959. "Being a Christian organization, Hi-Y gave me insight concerning my morals and what I believe in," he said. "It was a great fellowship of students that we had at Lee."

The Historic District businessman continued to foster that camaraderie in his restaurants that were frequented by politicians and other influential Jacksonville residents. The most recent, Two Doors Down on Park Street, closed in November to be replaced by a Gate store as part of the area's revitalization. Nevertheless, he is supportive of the rebirth, particularly the new YMCA. "As the area grows the Y will grow with it," Abraham said. "People in the new condos and apartments are health-minded and the new Y will be appealing to them."

"What they've done in Brooklyn and that area is a continuation of what is going on in Riverside, San Marco and hopefully soon downtown with retail and entertainment. It's great," Hazouri said.

Calling the new Y a big investment, Hazouri said reuniting Hi-Y members will help preserve that institutional knowledge. "Keepsakes and memories build a city," he said.

"When I was on City Council we knew that area was going to take off one day. It was a matter of everything coming together," Overton said. "Brooklyn will continue to develop as a suburb of downtown. It's a very exciting place to be and the Y is a big part of that. It gives people who want to invest money in that area a lot of comfort because that Y will be there for 50 years...and probably longer than that."



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This past year with your help, we have found homes not just for people, but for animals in need with our "Caturday" event. We have collected food and school supplies for families who need a little extra help to make ends meet. In addition, we were able to collect much needed items for a wildlife rescue group who care for endangered animals. Again, we THANK YOU as we would not have been as successful without this community's help.

PLEASE STOP IN AND SAY HELLO DURING THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS IN AVONDALE SATURDAY, DEC 6TH (5PM-9PM)



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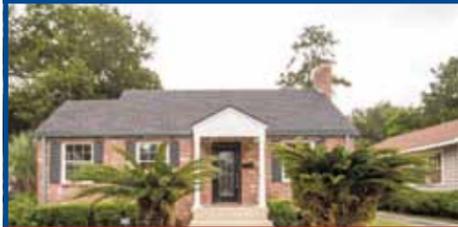
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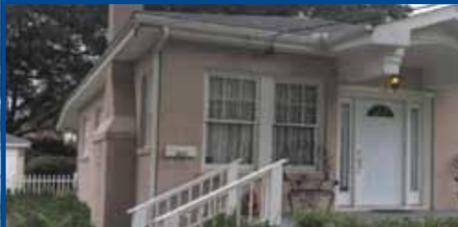
Historic District



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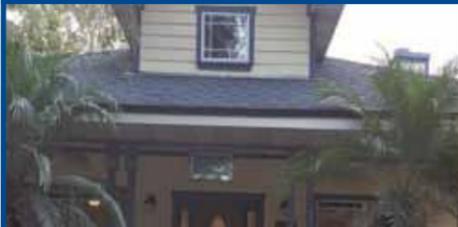
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Beacon Riverside suspends sales efforts, seeks financing

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Despite the rosy projections noted in *The Resident's* November issue in a story titled "Low inventory in Historic District means seller's market," there is one sector in the housing market that is still struggling. New condominium developments, including Beacon Riverside, by HP 500 LLC, are finding it difficult to sell the concept.

Construction plans for the luxury condominium Beacon Riverside are at a temporary standstill as NAI Hallmark Partners seeks gap financing to start building, and sales have been suspended as well.

In the meantime, the company has returned deposits to early buyers, according to Bryan Weber, Principal, Multifamily, NAI Hallmark Partners. "It was in escrow, so there was no sense in holding on to it," he said about the deposits refunded.

"We had a good round of early, preconstruction sales, but have realized that the next round will come with building," Weber said. "Right now our objective is focused on finding funding, probably through equity financing."

Weber said other interested buyers had indicated they would sign when construction of the 16-story tower was underway. "They are anxious for us to get it going," he said, noting the most common concern for the preconstruction buyers was whether they would get the same unit once construction begins.

"We own the land and are still excited



Artist's conception of 16-story Beacon Riverside condominium tower

about the project," said Weber. "I'm committed, having spent a lot of time on the design and getting permits. We just have to focus now on financing."

The typical capital structure for financing a new condominium development is made up of a developer's equity, the purchaser deposits (typically up to 50 percent of the purchase price), and the construction loan, according to a July 6, 2015 online story on *Multi-Housing News*.

"It can be a challenge for developers to obtain financing because, unless they are a Rockefeller, there is normally a 'presale"

requirement in the 50 percent (of the total units) range. This is generally not required for [construction of] apartments," said Gil Pomar, executive vice president, CenterState Bank. "The presales are important to confirm sales price projections and protect everyone from a failed or poorly performing project."

When the recent recession ended lenders may not have been entirely comfortable with the new purchaser deposit structure. As developments began and purchasers posted their deposits at the agreed upon benchmarks, such as signing, groundbreaking and building top-off or floor

completion, then lenders' confidence may grow, stated the article.

However, Pomar said that was not always the case.

"If you build it...they don't always come. These presales require the buyer to put up cash deposits," Pomar said. "The deposits have conditions, but the more and the larger the buyer's deposit, and more non-refundable it is, the easier to obtain financing. In certain cases the deposits can be used in conjunction with the developer's equity and the bank's construction loan."

Area realtors are still encouraged by the reception Beacon Riverside has had from prospective buyers.

"Beacon Riverside experienced initial success and we feel certain that after the developer begins construction, today's buyers will be prepared to buy," said Linda Sherrer, president and CEO, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty.

"We know that qualified buyers are choosing to buy older condominiums and renovate them with the same total real estate investment, but move in less than a year," she said.

Sherrer noted that the Riverside neighborhood is attractive for condominium buyers for three reasons. She said the location is spectacular near the St. Johns River; shopping, restaurants, retail and arts are all within walking distance, and there is continuing strength in the luxury market in Northeast Florida.

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Historic Riverside church choirs unite in voice



Choirs from the historic Riverside Baptist, Riverside Presbyterian, Trinity Lutheran and Riverside Park United Methodist churches sang as one on Nov. 8.

Afternoon sunlight streamed through the stained glass windows of Riverside Park United Methodist Church as organist Richard Lewis opened the Historic Churches of Riverside Choir Festival with "Festival Flourish."

In a spirit of "Amazing Grace," the choirs of Riverside Park United Methodist Church, Riverside Baptist Church, Riverside Presbyterian Church and Trinity Lutheran Church presented selections interspersed with

congregational singing.

John Larsen, Director of Traditional Music for Riverside Park UMC, brought the historic churches together as part of the celebration of the 125th year of Riverside Park UMC. Each choir presented two selections and then 60 voices joined together on "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross."

"I'm so pleased with the way it all went," said Larsen. "Everyone was so dedicated and it turned out beautifully, a real blessing."

City's tree canopy exists today thanks to charter amendment

New tree planting initiative unveiled

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

The gathering early on the morning of Nov. 4 at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens included a Who's Who of arboreal preservation. Celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Tree Charter Amendment, Scenic Jacksonville Inc. and Greenscape of Jacksonville, Inc. threw a party and also launched a year-long tree-planting challenge campaign.

The campaign, Jax Digs Trees, will encourage citizens, schools, neighborhood organizations, businesses and civic groups to plant, protect and promote trees.

"The goal is to increase our tree canopy," said Anna Dooley, Greenscape executive director. "Greenscape is here to help you."

Dooley stated CSX is issuing a challenge to other companies to get trees out in the community and gave away 800 trees last month as part of CSX's Trees for Tracks initiative, which plants a tree for every mile of their 27,000+ tracks nationwide.

Rose Caven, head of the Student Involvement Committee on the Julia Landon College Preparatory School Parent, Teachers, Student Advisory board, indicated she will organize a team for the tree challenge against other middle schools.

"As part of the leadership curriculum, Landon students already participate in a wide range of service projects. Our son, Blake, has also been involved with many Greenscape plantings starting in third grade," Caven said. "Blake will help lead the Landon tree challenge team starting in late January. The goal is to plant trees on the school campus as well as encourage students to plant trees in Jacksonville neighborhoods."

The Tree Charter Amendment, which



Bill Brinton recalls the history behind the Trees Charter Amendment of 2000; the signs in front were pulled from the archives.



Nancy Powell, Riverside Avondale Preservation board member, pauses to check out tree samplings for the Jax Digs Trees challenge campaign.



Helen Lane, Peggy Bryan, Dinah Kossoff



Alicia Grant, Espie Patrinely, Lori Boyer, Suzanne Perritt

passed in all voting precincts on Nov. 7, 2000, boasts the largest voter approval, at 76 percent, of any City Charter amendment, according to Fred Pope, City of Jacksonville landscape architect. It established minimum standards for tree mitigation, especially during development, and conserves and protects Jacksonville's tree canopy.

"What you did 15 years ago made a huge difference," said Dooley. "Because of you, today we are celebrating 15 years of improving our tree canopy. Because of you, the voters were not only informed, they were engaged. They turned out."

The Charter Amendment efforts were spearheaded in 2000 by Susan Caven, president of Scenic Jacksonville's board of directors; William Brinton, shareholder at Rogers Towers, P.A., and John Crescimbeni,

City Council At-Large Member, who together established Citizens for Tree Preservation, Inc.

Introduced to rousing applause as a "real, real community activist" by Susan Caven, Brinton recalled a last-minute attempt by a judge to pull the amendment off the ballot, but 197,000 voters in Duval County voted in favor of the charter amendment.

According to Brinton, the story began 30 years ago when JCCI (Jacksonville Community Council, Inc.) had a visual pollution study, chaired by Doug Milne. The implementation chair was Tracey Arpen and kicked things off regarding landscape and tree protection. Although then Mayor Tommy Hazouri took the lead in enacting effective landscape and tree protection laws, they were not adequately enforced.

"At the end of 1999, the laws were

weakened to the point where a tree was protected only if it were more than six feet in diameter," said Brinton, of Avondale. "A very rare thing to find in Jacksonville."

Among those attending the celebration were Espie Patrinely, founder of Tree Hill Nature Center; Agnes Danciger, president of Memorial Park Association, with past MPA president Jake Ingram and his wife Pam; Bob Chabot, director of horticulture, facilities and exhibits at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens; and attorneys Tracey Arpen, Wayne Hogan, and Jim Terrell, who all gave pro bono work when lawsuits were filed to block the measure to put the Tree Charter Amendment on the Nov. 7, 2000 ballot. At the event, Hogan, Terrell and Brinton all issued challenges on behalf of their law firms for the Jax Digs Trees campaign.





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‘Our library is whole again’

Willow Branch Library re-opens

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

More than 18 months after water intrusion repair work began, and more than a year after it was temporarily closed, the Willow Branch Public Library at 2875 Park St. was re-opened – in better condition than ever.

A crowd of more than 200 neighbors and library supporters attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 14. Remarks were made on the front steps of the library by historian Wayne Wood, Jacksonville Public Library Director Barbara Gubbin, District 14 Councilman Jim Love, Board of the Library Trustees member Sybil Ansbacher and Friends of Willowbranch Library President Roxanne Henkle.

Wood spoke about the history of the Willow Branch parcel and the Mediterranean Revival Style building, designed by prominent architect Bernard W. Close and built in 1930. Close also built the San Marco Library in 1949, a modern style in contrast to Willow Branch.

“Willow Branch is probably the last great building built in that style,” said Wood. “It stands as a testimony to the

splendor of libraries and is inviting by its façade.”

Wood noted that the decorative band at the top of the building was done through a technique called sgraffito, Italian for “little scratch.”

“An itinerant Italian artist did this one, I’m told,” he said. The technique is produced by applying layers of plaster tinted in contrasting colors and then by scratching the design into the plaster.

Gubbin thanked the Riverside Avondale community for supporting the library, and for being patient with what the city thought would be a short process to deal with the water penetration.

“A lot of people rose to the occasion to make the water penetration issue one to be taken care of for another 85 years and for making the library look like it does today,” she said. “We think you’ll be glad to see all the work that has been done.”

“Libraries are so important to the community, particularly one you can walk to,” said Love in his remarks. “I think you’re going to enjoy this library for another 85 years or longer. It was tax dollars well spent. It’s an important asset for the community and it’s one of the most beautiful in all of Jacksonville.”

One of the library’s first patrons when it opened in 1930 was at the ceremony. Jordan Ansbacher lived on Avondale Avenue and attended West Riverside Elementary school.

“My brother-in-law, Jordan Ansbacher,



Jim Love, Marshelle Berry, Sybil Ansbacher, Wayne Wood, Barbara Gubbin, Roxanne Henkel at the ribbon cutting for the grand opening of the Willow Branch Public Library on Nov. 14.



Friends of the Willow Branch Library Board: Front: Helen Lyons; middle: Elaine Starling, Claudia Ellis, Roxanne Henkle; back: Puddin’ Verney, Elaine Burnett, Bill Lyons

was a really young fellow when this library first opened and he and my late husband, Lewis “Lukie,” and their brother Robert were brought here by their father,” said Sybil Ansbacher, whose late husband’s rare and extensive map collection was donated to the Jacksonville Public Library and is housed in the Main Library.

Before Sybil Ansbacher cut the ribbon, opening the library to its loyal patrons, Henkle shared a few words, too.

“Willow Branch is once again open to all and restored to its full potential. We’re excited to have the community room dedicated for adult programs, book clubs and entertainment events. Our children’s library is open to the

children of the community,” Henkle said. “Our library is whole again. We have thousands of new materials in the collection now. I’m sure you will all be coming by to check something out for the next 85 years.”

The front doors were opened for the special occasion only and patrons streamed in to see the restored historic reading room, to check out the Children’s Library and the new community room, and to enjoy cake and other snacks. Music was provided by strolling violinist Beverly Chapman and folk musician Al Poindexter, and children enjoyed face painting, balloon sculptures and other entertainment.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Avondale icon renamed under new ownership



Reekee Patel

First it was Monty's West Inn, named for the bar's manager, then the Spofford family changed it to West Inn Cantina. Now after more than 40 years, the iconic Avondale establishment has both a new owner and a new name. Reekee Patel, president of Shores Liquor Stores in Mandarin and Shores Liquor at Arlington, has renamed the bar and package liquor store Shores Liquors and Bar of Avondale. The store is open daily, 10 a.m. to 2 a.m., at 3644 St. Johns Ave.

Bedtime made safer, thanks to Pajama Monsters

Children who are afraid of the dark and find bedtime intimidating need not fear any longer. Pajama Monsters, created by graphic artist Hank Champion of Murray Hill, are putting nightmares to rest.

Ten years ago, while living in New York City, Champion put pen, ink and watercolor to paper to create Pajama Monsters. The five colorful characters grew into stuffed toys and a storybook after he saw how successful the bedtime story was for his stepson.

Champion is trying to kick start the fledgling company with a holiday special to benefit Wolfson Children's Hospital. "For every two monsters or books purchased, I'll donate one to Children's Hospital," said Champion.



Hank Champion

Visit pajamasmonsters.com to help donate toys to Wolfson Children's Hospital.

Peoples-Waters recipient of first Aikens Renaissance Award



Hanya and Jim Farah (Photos by James Robinson Photography)



Jean Aikens, widow of the late Dr. Chester Aikens, Attorney Rhonda Peoples-Waters



Kortney Wesley, Dr. William and Betty Cody



Elizabeth Bates, Jean Aikens, Chae Aikens, Alicia Edwards

As a part of Florida Coastal School of Law Founders' Day celebration, the school's Foundation paid honor to one of its charter class students, Dr. Chester A. Aikens, who passed away in 2013 of a heart attack.

The first annual Dr. Chester A. Aikens Renaissance Award and Scholarship Gala was held on Oct. 17, in the school's atrium. The recipient

of the award was Attorney Rhonda Peoples-Waters.

All proceeds raised will benefit the school's pro-bono legal clinics that have provided free legal resources in Jacksonville for the past 15 years. To learn more about the Foundation or about the free legal services provided by the school, visit www.fcsll.edu/clinic/clinical-programs.

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Weaver presents matching funds to PAL, announces more support



Delores Barr Weaver, surrounded by grateful children at the Police Athletic League

After presenting the matching funds she pledged to the Police Athletic League of Jacksonville (PAL) as a result of the gun buyback program sponsored by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Delores Barr Weaver also announced two new funding initiatives that will support PAL's mission to impact Jacksonville's youth.

Weaver showed her support for Jacksonville's youth by matching the \$50 payout that citizens received in the gun buyback with a \$50 pledge to PAL for each gun turned in, handing PAL Executive Director Lt. Lakeisha Burton a check for \$74,000 as an unrestricted general operating grant for PAL programs.

The first of Weaver's two initiatives supports PAL's Youth Development Council (YDC) program, specifically funding employment stipends for young men to work with collaborative partner, Load King, during school breaks.

The second is a new initiative, which will fund a licensed mental health counselor at PAL's Northside PAL facility at 2165 West 33rd Street. This first-of-its-kind program will provide both group and individual therapy to support PAL children who have faced trauma, grief and violence. This pilot program is in collaboration with Daniel, a nonprofit mental health services provider in Jacksonville, which will identify and manage the counselor, related activities and data collection.

Jacksonville dealership nominated for Dealer of the Year

Billie Nimnicht III, president of Nimnicht Chevrolet, was named a nominee for the 2016 TIME Dealer of the Year. The highly coveted and prestigious award in the automobile industry recognizes successful auto dealers who also demonstrate a long-standing commitment to community service.

Nimnicht, a San Marco resident, was chosen to represent the Florida Automobile Dealers Association in the national competition of 16,000 dealers. The winner will be announced on April 1, 2016 in Las Vegas at the 99th annual National Automobile Dealers Association Convention and Exposition.

As a nominee, the charity of Nimnicht's choice will be given

\$1,000 by Ally Financial, sponsor of the award. Nimnicht supports a wide variety of charitable organizations and causes in Jacksonville, including the United Way, Operation New Hope, the HEAL Foundation, and sponsors many events, such as Think Pink (for a local breast cancer charity), Cutting for Kids (donations to Locks of Love), and the UNF Dance Marathon (which benefits Children's Miracle Network), among others.



Billie Nimnicht, III

Avondale woman named FAME president

Lucretia Miller, of Avondale, was elected as the president of the Florida Association for Media in Education (FAME). She is the Librarian and Information Specialist at St. Johns Country Day School.

"I am proud to serve as the leader for FAME during this time of increasing recognition of the importance of school libraries. New research continues to show that student achievement is greatly increased when a school has a well-funded school library managed by a certified school librarian," said Miller.

Miller served as a school librarian in Duval County for 12 years prior to

her placement at St. Johns Country Day School. She was Duval County's Teacher of the Year, the only school librarian to achieve this

award, and was a semifinalist for Florida Teacher of the Year. She is one of 9 librarians in the nation on the Digital Public Library of America's Curation Corp for the Open eBook initiative to give free open access to thousands of eBooks for Title-1 students and families.



Lucretia Miller

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

New owner, focus at City Cycle



Alice Gould, Brady Irwin

City Cycle Bicycles has a new owner and a modified focus. Since Drew Johnson moved to Utah in 2013 the Riverside bicycle shop has been managed by Alice Gould, but five months ago Johnson sold the shop at 2740 Park St.

Brady Irwin, who worked at another bike shop, became interested in City Cycle when Johnson decided to sell it. "I've been an avid cyclist when I was eight or nine; did my first 100-mile ride when I was 11 and my first cross-state ride (in Kansas) when I was 13," said Irwin, who moved to Florida nearly five years ago. When the owner of the

bike shop he was working for declined Johnson's offer, Irwin took him up on it.

The previous focus of the shop was on the serious or the higher-end cyclist, but Irwin is modifying that to appeal to families. "We've brought in kids' bikes and we're going to offer a trade-up program," he said. "We've also brought in lower priced Cannondale bikes to help families get into biking at a reasonable cost."

City Cycle will continue to offer Cannondale racing and mountain bikes and provide maintenance and repairs on any brand.

New city forester chooses Riverside for its character

Florida native Richard Leon, a new Riverside resident, is the new city forester for the City of Jacksonville. A graduate of the University of Florida, with a degree in Forest Resources and Conservation, Leon's first job was in Hannover, Germany, in multi-use forest management with a utility company.

Back in the States, Leon worked for 2-1/2 years as a utility forest for Florida Power and Light and Duke Energy, then moved to Dallas, where he worked with the Texas Forest Service working as a regional urban forester for 2-1/2 years.

Leon is a certified arborist, a graduate of the Municipal Forestry Institute, is qualified for tree risk assessment and completed Urban Forest Strike Team training.

"I run tree crews doing on the ground tree work, but I'm also out to build strong partnerships in my area in order help promote the healthiest urban forest that we can have in Jacksonville," said Leon, who chose to live in Riverside because of its aesthetic and historical character.



Richard Leon

"It's as if Riverside/Avondale is an enclave within greater Jacksonville. It's actually a pretty small town there. I run into the same people when I'm getting pizza at Mellow Mushroom, grabbing a coffee at Bold Bean or shopping at the Publix at 5 Points."

Riverside woman publishes second novel

Sandi Gordon, of Riverside, is celebrating publication of her second novel, *Scent of Corruption*, set in Jacksonville. Just two years since her first novel was published, Gordon said that she writes something almost every day and it took about a year to craft this one start to finish.

"It's a thriller without a dead body," said Gordon, describing corporate intrigue in the perfume industry. The author held a book signing on Nov. 14 at Riverside Oaks Apartments, where she has lived for the past five years.



Sandi Gordon

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Il Desco offers community table seating

Il Desco, a 150-seat restaurant located at 2665 Park Street, will serve modern Italian cuisine seven days a week in the former Pele's Wood Fire space.

Mark Frisch, owner of MAF Restaurant Group and a partner in Il Desco, originally opened Pele's in 2012. "I felt that this neighborhood lacked a strong Italian restaurant where people could enjoy authentic wood-fired pizzas," he said. "I believe Il Desco will build upon Pele's success and bring a new level of casual sophistication to the area."

In addition to reconfiguring the dining room layout and transitioning the existing private dining room into a semi-private dining room, key updates to the space include a custom-built wine room that will hold 564 bottles of red wine, and a 20-seat community table made with century-old wood restored from the Cowford Chophouse construction site.

"Pele's built a loyal following, and we



Mark Frisch, Jacques Klempf, Fraser Burns

look forward to serving those guests and reaching new ones through our modern Italian concept in Riverside," said Jacques Klempf, a partner in Forking Amazing Restaurants. "This is a new neighborhood for our restaurant group, and we are very excited to become part of the vibrant restaurant scene along Park and King Streets."

New boutique open in Ortega Village



Renee, Diana, Debbie, Clara, Holli, Jessica, Vicki, Gina, Talea

Sisters Cottage, now open in the heart of Ortega Village, is located at 4159 Oxford Ave., where co-owners Diana and Debbie have poured love into the cottage and turned it into a sanctuary full of vintage home decor. Surrounded by creative "sisters," the shop is a

family affair of all generations. Diana's daughter Renee brings her creativity to the table offering a children's boutique. You can also find Holli's "Belle of the Boulevard," providing women's clothes and accessories for a one-stop shop. Call (904) 559-5339 for information.

Local sub shop partners with school in fund raising effort



Rosalyn Bloxom, Robert E. Lee High School athletic director; Matt Randle, Jersey Mike's general manager; Drew Maider, Jersey Mike's franchisee; Scott Schneider, principal, Lee High School; not available, Joe Debiase, Jersey Mike's franchisee

In a good example of local businesses "adopting" a public school, Jersey Mike's, 4261 Roosevelt Blvd., presented a \$1,130 check last month to the Athletic Department at Robert E. Lee High School to help raise funds for a student's medical expenses.

"We reached out to the Athletic Department a few weeks ago to see what we could do to assist them with raising funds and partnering with them moving forward," said Drew Maider, Jersey Mike's franchisee. "We try to be involved in the community near our stores as much as possible and help when we can."

The sub shop ran two fundraisers,

including a Spirit Night with an eating contest for the football program, which raised \$130. A week-long fundraiser consisted of issuing 1,000 free sub cards to Lee High School students, redeemable with a \$2 donation.

"I was not a student at Robert E. Lee, but we have partnered with athletic departments at different schools to help the programs raise money and have donated food to the athletes before games," Maider said. "We wanted to find a partner at a high school for our Roosevelt store, and met with Robert E. Lee High to see if they were looking for any community partners."

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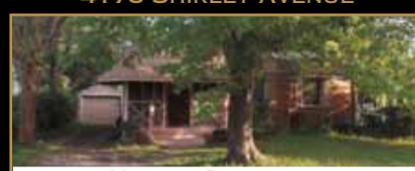


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Favorite lunch spot for politicians makes way for gas station

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Not many businesses have the opportunity to go out on top. Judging by the number of recent and long-time customers who are dismayed that Two Doors Down shut its door on Nov. 25, Norman Abraham had a great run.

“We built a great following here, the business has been wonderful,” said Abraham, a Lakeside resident. “We have great customers and filled a void in the area.”

Where patrons once took a seat to fuel themselves with a hearty lunch, soon they will pull up to fuel their vehicles. Ware Family Realty, owners of the property where Two Doors Down serves home-style breakfasts and lunches five days a week, sold the property to Gate Petroleum.

Abraham served Jacksonville a blend of Middle Eastern and Southern cooking for more than 40 years, most recently at Two Doors Down, located at 436 Park St. The restaurant’s name came from its location two doors down from the original Tad’s restaurant at 400 Park St.

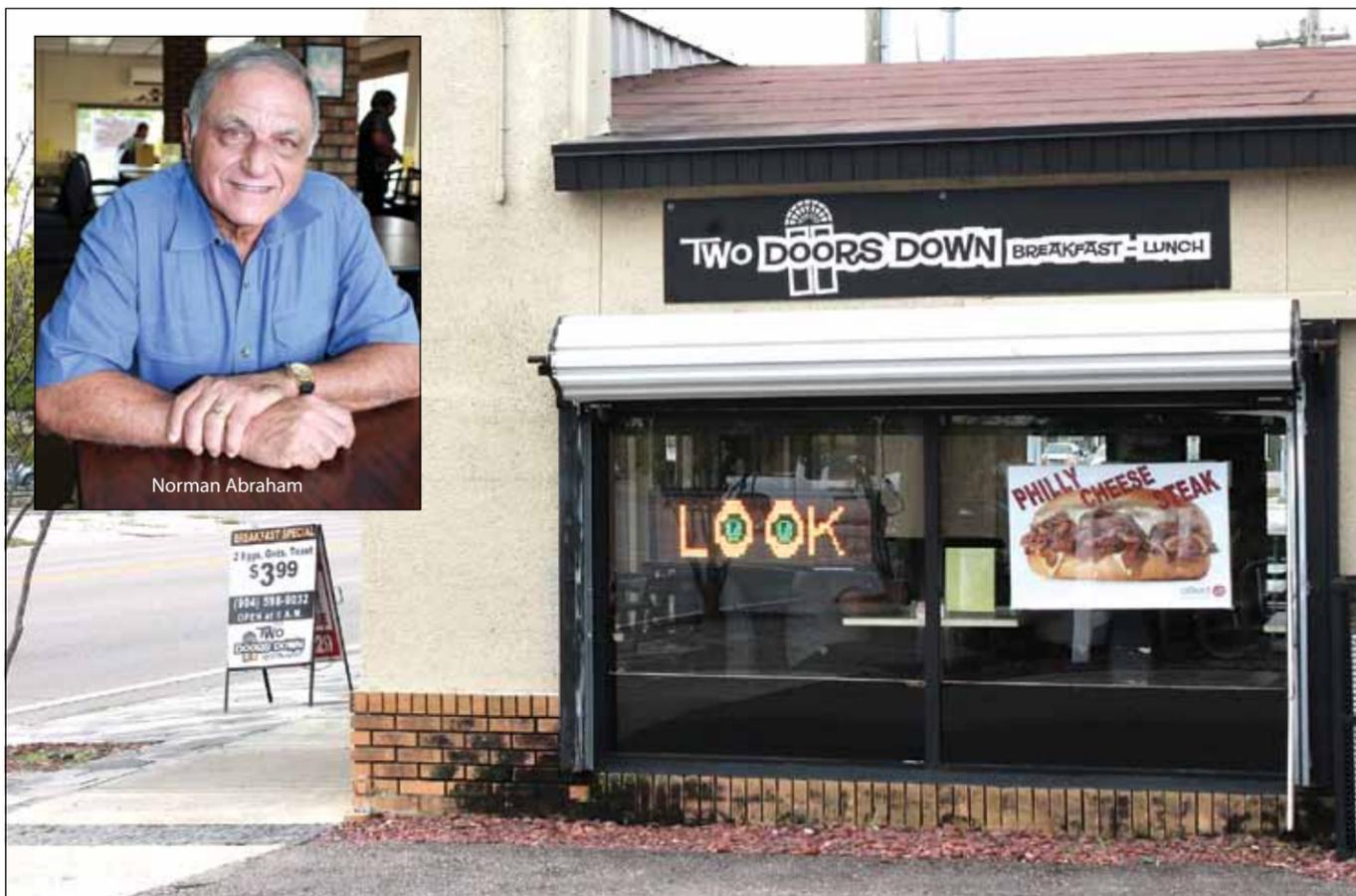
Tad’s, named after the owner, Tom A. Davis, opened in 1951 and Abraham became its third owner in the mid-1980s, purchasing the restaurant from Bernie Hoffman. In 1997 the Florida Department of Transportation took the property to widen Forest Street. Abraham relocated Tad’s to Lane Avenue.

After Tad’s closed in 2005, Abraham worked with a local fast-food chain until opening Two Doors Down in 2009, in what was originally Catanese Florist, two spaces down the block from the original Tad’s site.

Both the Park Street Tad’s and Two Doors Down, were long considered “the place” to nosh at noon for city officials, judges and politicians. Abraham credits former Mayor Tommy Hazouri, his first cousin, and Harry Frisch, owner of Beaver Street Fisheries, for helping establish that following.

“Harry has been my biggest advocate, has probably brought more people in here. It’s a great meeting place for him, it’s close [to his business],” said Abraham. “Harry told me ‘I can come here, eat in 45 minutes and not have to worry about traveling and parking.’”

Frisch’s 92nd birthday was celebrated at Two Doors Down, where he has his own



Local favorite Two Doors Down closed Nov. 25 after the property was sold to Gate Petroleum.

nameplated booth. “Customers know that it’s Harry’s lunch spot,” Abraham said.

When Abraham had to move Tad’s in the late 1990s to Lane Avenue, most of the downtown lunch crowd fell off. “They would come, but not like they used to,” he said. “Those former two- and three-day-a-week regulars would come the distance on Thursdays for the Arabic food. They would pack the place out.”

“It’s a great place to meet, greet and eat,” said Abraham. “If you come here, you’re going to see people you know here. No matter where you sit, you see people coming in the front door.”

The beginning and the ending

Abraham was born in Brooklyn, on Dora Street just a few blocks away from Tad’s and Two Doors Down. His family moved to McDuff Avenue, and he attended Robert E. Lee High School. His first company, National Business Systems, manufactured peg-board systems, which allowed a bookkeeper to write checks and make check-register entries simultaneously by using special checks with a carbon strip on

the back and a peg board to position each check accurately on the register.

“There were a lot of account receivables in that business,” said Abraham. “I got into the restaurant business because it is strictly a cash business, no worries about account receivables.”

Two Doors Down was fifth in the line of restaurants Abraham owned, including Tad’s, the Thompson House (where bb’s is now located), the Rib Shack and Players Café in Ponte Vedra.

In 2009, Walter Ware, who owned Ware Family Realty and the nearby Johnstone Supply, asked Abraham to come back to Park Street and open another restaurant. Abraham signed a five-year lease with an option for five more, but after Ware passed away in April 2013, things started to change.

“Brooklyn started getting busy, the companies in the area were expanding, the timing was right for Gate Petroleum,” said Abraham. “On June 29, I was told ‘You have six months to get out.’”

Abraham has another month to sell and remove his equipment. After that, in January or February, he will undergo a

knee operation, then has plans to travel with his wife, Carol. “We were married 53 years in November,” said Abraham. “We’re going to do the things we haven’t been able to do for the last 40 years in the restaurant business. The restaurant business kind of ties you down.”

But after taking some time off, the 74-year-old restaurateur said he would consider his next steps. “I have no plans, but I know I will do something. It may not be restaurants, but it may be consulting. Something may come along,” Abraham said.

Most of Abraham’s staff of seven have been with him for decades, moving from one restaurant to the next. And, if he were to do it again, several are willing to go along for another ride.

“If any opportunity comes along and I feel it’s right, my people are like the Minute Men. I can pick up the phone, say ‘We’re doing to do it again’ and they are ready. I’m blessed to have them,” he said.

Then again, “maybe this is the chapter of my life that God says, ‘This is Carol’s time. You have enjoyed life together and given back to the community,’” Abraham concluded.



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Local Orthodontist Follows In Family Footsteps, Serves Community He Grew Up In

When it was time for retiring Orthodontist Dr. Daniel Schellhase to choose the successor to his practice of 30 years, it was clear why he reached out to Dr. William "Vaughn" Holland, chief orthodontic resident at the University of Florida.



Dr. William "Vaughn" Holland

Dr. Holland is not only a native to this very community, but a fourth generation dentist as well. His great-grandfather opened his first dental practice in Miami, which was later relocated by his grandfather to the Riverside area where his father and uncle both practice today. Dr. Holland was selected by the College of Dentistry at the University of Florida to pursue a customized dual specialty program in both Prosthodontics and Orthodontics, becoming one of less than 10 such doctors in the United States. His unique background in both restorative dentistry and orthodontics allows him to treat even the most complicated of orthodontic cases.

Dr. Holland's extensive qualifications and personal history in the community mean Ortega Orthodontics offers both elite patient care in the office, and dedicated community outreach to its residents.

"He often goes in on weekends if a patient needs something, and he answers the office phone himself during lunch hour. His dedication to his work is far beyond what you would expect from a typical Doctor or business owner." Wife Vanessa Holland said.

Though Ortega Orthodontics is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., based on the community's experience, those hours are, at times, merely a suggestion.

Vanessa Holland related the story of a patient in the neighborhood who called the office about discomfort with a poking wire. Knowing that she was on the drive home, Dr. Holland stopped at the patient's house, and adjusted her wire on the spot even though it was something that could have waited until the morning. "He is very passionate about what he does and truly cares for each of his patients as if they are part of his family. I admire that about him and hope others do too."

However, most work is best done in the office, and there Dr. Holland, who self admits he is a perfectionist when it comes to his patients, shines. By owning Ortega Orthodontics, Dr. Holland said he is able to "treat everybody how I would want if it were my child, mom, or wife; what would I want them to experience? If I treat them like that, it's easy."

Using traditional treatments, combined with the latest options such as Invisalign braces or lingual braces, which are positioned in back of the teeth instead of in front, Dr. Holland enjoys giving his patients a smile they can feel confident in.

"Taking care of kids and adults who are self-conscious, and giving them the smile they deserve, is the most fulfilling part of what I do," Dr. Holland said. "At the end of the treatment, patients are proud and grateful for their new smile. It's incredibly rewarding to know I helped change the way they look and feel for the rest of their lives."

Dr. Holland enjoys helping the community outside his office as well. "It's very rewarding to finally be able to give back to the schools I once attended and the same community events I enjoyed as a child." Recently he sponsored the Annual Fall Festival at John Stockton Elementary, where

he attended as a child. The proceeds raised are administered by the PTA for the school's benefit.

He is also a Silver Sponsor of the annual Ortega River Run, which benefits the scholarship fund for St. Mark's Episcopal Day School.

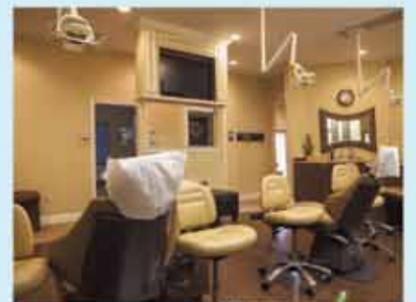
As passionate as Dr. Holland is for each of his patients, his dedication to his own family, including his wife Vanessa and their four children: Blake, 4; Cody, 2; and twins Arden and Walker, 5 months, is evident. The family enjoys the low-key lifestyle their neighborhood of Ortega Forest provides. On any given afternoon you will find them playing in the street with their neighbors and friends. According to Dr. Holland, "Moving back here to raise my own family, brings back memories I cherished as a child. I love that I am able to experience it all over again with my wife and children."

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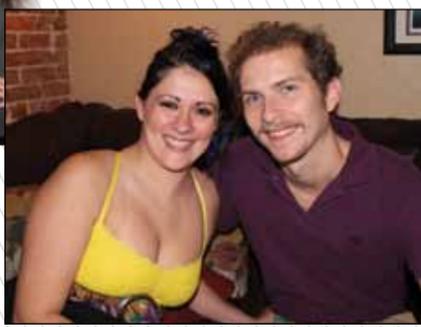
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Event organizers Meisha Joyce, Katie Robinson, Brian Hughes, Addie Hall, and Cheyenne Overby, Relay For Life Senior Community Manager



Tapa That chef Arielle Coutu and restaurant owner Michael Lane



Mixed Media Artist Becky Craig with Dylan, David and Chloe Craig



Toy Scott, Susan Donnell



Sisters and breast cancer survivors Lisa Johns, a 4-year survivor, and Teresa Vickers, a 10-year survivor



Mixed media artists Sharon Kuhn, Katheryn Milkey, SoMMA Vice President Wendy Sullivan and SoMMA President Betty Smith



Don Hart and Pamela Walker Hart

Wine Not? Cancer survivor social sponsored by Relay For Life

Cancer survivors and caregivers found an opportunity for self-expression at a painting party hosted by the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life Riverside team on Nov. 9 at Tapa That in 5 Points.

Led by artist Kyle Willis, president of Local Artists Coming Together (LACT), 20 men and women enjoyed putting purple paint to canvas while sipping wine and eating light appetizers provided by Tapa That. The canvasses and heavily discounted paint and brushes were provided by Reddi Arts.

Willis walked the group through each step in painting purple hearts. Purple is the color that represents all cancers, and the dollars raised through Relay For Life benefit the American Cancer Society, which also encompasses all cancers.

According to Cheyenne Overby, Relay For Life Senior Community Manager, the goal is to create a "Call to Survivors" in Riverside, the Westside, San Marco, San Jose, and Metro Jacksonville.



Cancer survivors and their supporters enjoy a night of wine, tapas and painting, courtesy of Tapa That in 5 Points.



Shirley Brack, mother of cancer survivor Christie Lesser

Local artists celebrate mixed media in Riverside

Art connoisseurs had the opportunity to purchase something to fill the empty spot on their walls when Riverside Liquors & Village Wine Shop played host to Let the Celebration Begin, a members art show of the Society of Mixed Media Artists (SoMMA). The show opened Nov. 7 and will be on display until Dec. 31.

Pamela Walker Hart placed first in the show with Francesca Tabor-Miolla taking second and Pat Setser third. Receiving honorable mention were Sharon Kuhn for "Star" and Leslie Kruzicki for "Tools of the Trade."

Cookie Davis, of Murray Hill, judged the show. Setser was exhibit chair, while Kruzicki and Lynn Kazemekas helped hang the art work.



Above: Jean-Pierre and Amanda Valdez, Sarah and Jeremy MacDonald, James and Christine Hissam, with Jennifer and Joseph Indriolo



Left: J.L. and Bill Jacobs with Jade Lotus



Shepherd and Eleanor Colledge



ECS CEO Connie Stophel with Dr. Gigi David, Kerry Shewckuk, Jason and Alicia Williams, Jeanne Dillard and Autumn Tomas



William and Erin Colledge with Maggie Hightower and Kari Jenkins



John Peyton, Betsy Lovett and Mike Hightower

A Focus on Education

The Ortega home of Betsy Lovett was the venue for a private cocktail party Oct. 29 to raise awareness and donor participation for Episcopal Children's Services educational programs.

"The best part of the whole evening was that so many people from across the community come out to Betsy's cocktail party," said Episcopal Services CEO Connie Stophel. "We appreciate them coming out and learning what we can do for children and how we can do more with their help."

The fourth largest nonprofit in Northeast Florida, Episcopal Children's Services uses research and best practices to ensure children enter school ready to learn. Some of the educational programs supported by the nonprofit organization include Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Learning Centers, Voluntary Pre-K, Regional Training Programs and the "Coach Jax!" Early Learning Quality Improvement Program.

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Jeremy and Susan Cooke

Big-hearted donors enjoy 'best party of the year'

Artscape, the annual fundraising gala for Patrons of the HeARTS, which took place Nov. 6 at Sweet Pete's Candy Apple Café. Featured artist was Worley Faver, whose pottery works are collector's items.

Often dubbed "the best party of the year", the colorful striped, polka-dot clad donors enjoyed an auction and art show as well as food and entertainment during the disco-themed evening, which benefitted the Wolfson Children's Hospital and the University of Florida Pediatric Cardiovascular Center. Funds raised help provide life-saving surgery to children with congenital heart defects from throughout the world.



Lou and Jan Walsh



Heidi Harris, Tatiana Salvatore, Paula B Rice, Paola Parra Harris, Lara Nezami, Sujata Deshmukh



Solange Benjamin with Randy Bryant



Nicole Houser and Chad Langenberger



Ken and Shelley DeVault, Merri Jones, Jackie Jones and Hugh Jones



Sandy Weber, Terence Rohrer, Peter Mackey and Jesse Stevens with Nancy and Scott Sprague



Caroline Pope with Melissa Bateh, Deena Wallace and Emily Magevney

Libations, music and the Treaty Oak

Live music serenaded donors as they tasted an incredible selection of wines, cheeses, charcuterie and local craft beers during Catholic Charities 12th Annual Festival D'Vine at Treaty Oak Park Nov. 6. Supporters listened to music and relaxed under

the expansive branches of the Treaty Oak as they tasted delicacies from local restaurants and enjoyed a selection of wines supplied by Wine Decadence. All proceeds went to benefit local families in crisis under the care of Catholic Charities of Jacksonville.



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Kali Browning and Keith Proctor



Lynn and Rick Mullaney with Honorary Chairs Gena and John Delaney



Janne and Jody Brandenburg

River Garden donors enjoy Cuban nightlife

With no need to board a plane to Havana, the doors of Cuba were opened to patrons of the River Garden Foundation's 23rd annual gala. The theme "Meet me in Havana" was a hit and delivered on a spectacular evening for those in attendance.

The gala supports programs and financial

assistance through the nonprofit arm of the River Garden system of senior services to include the River Garden Hebrew Home/Wolfson Health and Aging Center. Former Mayor John Delaney and his wife Gena were honorary chairs. SunTrust Bank was the Premier sponsor this year.

Red, White and Blues delivers on the River

Supporters of the North Florida School of Special Education enjoyed some of the best wine and food Jacksonville has to offer during the Red, White and Blues fundraiser Nov. 20 at the San Jose home of Gary McCalla.

Mr. and Mrs. John MacDonald were entertainment sponsors for the event, which included live music, original children's art and a special live auction featuring a California excursion for two to Napa Valley and San Francisco. The trip includes a private tour of Steele Wines followed by dinner with the man himself, Jed Steele.

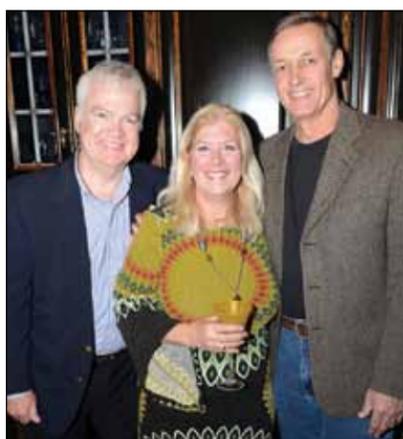
Another highlight of the evening was the chance drawing, sponsored by Underwoods, of a Marco Bicego necklace and earrings worth \$3,200.



Dave and Robin Albanese



Molly Dahl, Tate Loftis and Ciaran Sontag



Frank Houston, Melanie Jensen and Jim Atnip



Moxie Kitchen and Cocktails' Tom Grey and Sarah Marie Johnston

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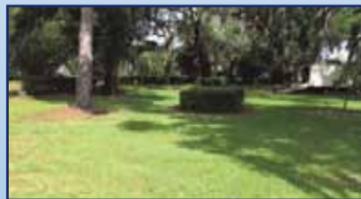
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\$294,900



0000 Riverside Ave.
\$279,900



0000 St Johns Ave.
\$279,900



4315 Charleston Ln.
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SOCIAL REGISTER



Leighton Tesche, event co-chair, and Bob Buehn



John and Patty Otterson

The Navy League Jacksonville Council saluted Rear Admiral Tom Watson, USN (Ret.) of Fleming Island, at its biennial dinner, held Nov. 5 at the Florida Yacht Club. The Navy Band Southeast Woodwind Quintet, Fair Winds, performed at the event.

A combat Naval Aviator, Watson was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross twice. He commanded VA-81, Carrier Air Wing Nine, Light Attack Wing One, USS Truckee and the aircraft carrier USS Independence (CV-62).

The Salute to Veterans Honors Dinner and Prize Drawing honors the men and women who maintain America's freedom through service in the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine, known collectively as the Sea Services, and all U.S. military veterans.

The event supports the Navy League's role of informing citizens of the vital role American armed forces play in protecting the United States' freedom and national interests around the world.

It also provides financial support for local entities dedicated to preparing young men and women to become U.S. military leaders of tomorrow and promoting the welfare of our current forces. The Navy League's beneficiaries this year included the Franklin D. Roosevelt Squadron, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, the Honorable Tillie K. Fowler Memorial NROTC Scholarship Fund at Jacksonville University, the Navy Band Southeast and the Council's adopted ship, the USS Jacksonville.

The Navy League was founded in 1902; the Jacksonville Council was established in 1954.

Harvard Business School Club lunches with Leadership Jacksonville

Leadership Jacksonville, an organization that educates, connects and inspires youth and adult leaders in Northeast Florida, recently co-hosted Lunch with Leaders with the Harvard Business School Club of Jacksonville.

The luncheon included Leadership Jacksonville adult program graduates, members of the Harvard Business School Club of Jacksonville and guests. The event, a first-time collaboration of the two groups, was held at the River Club.

The program's keynote presentation featured a panel with Jacksonville business leaders discussing the importance of community investment to make a difference in people's lives. The panelists included Gary Chartrand, executive chairman of Acosta; Preston Haskell, chairman of The Haskell Co.; Michael Ward, CEO of CSX Corp.; and Wayne Weaver, the former majority owner of Jacksonville Jaguars. The panelists discussed their philanthropic interests, their motivations for giving and the role of corporate philanthropy in each of their organizations.

"We were very pleased to join the Harvard Business School Club of Jacksonville to present this program on the importance of philanthropic giving," said Ortega Forest resident Jill Langford Dame, chief executive officer of Leadership Jacksonville. "The luncheon provided a one-of-a-kind networking opportunity with a fascinating and educational program that will inspire leaders to build and strengthen their communities."

To learn more about Leadership Jacksonville and its programs, visit www.leadershipjax.org or call (904) 396-6263.



Attending the Lunch with Leaders event were Leadership Jacksonville past presidents Espie Patrinely and Courtenay Wilson.



Dan Foley and Darryl Willie are members of the current class, Leadership Jacksonville 2016.

Navy League Salute to Veterans honors retired Rear Admiral Watson



Jim and Robin Love with Cindy and Kevin Kuzel



Saundra and Bob Kidd with Carol Sack, in back, Mary Alice Phelan



Phil and Lynne Murphey with honoree Retired Rear Admiral Tom and Lynn Watson



Sarah Terrell with Michael and Julie McKenny, presenting sponsor



Nick and Beth Pulignano with Marilyn and Dr. Bill Walkett



Michael Ward, Wayne Weaver and Preston Haskell participated in a panel about philanthropic giving at Leadership Jacksonville's Lunch with Leaders program.



Dan and Patty Griffin with Patty and Dave Palmer

CoRK artists throw doors open to public

Residents had the opportunity to experience the creative energy of the CoRK Arts District during an Open Studios event on Nov. 21. Normally not open to the public on daily basis, the 80,000-square-foot space in six buildings is home to artist studios and galleries. Visitors enjoyed interacting with over 70 artists, watching them create, and could purchase original art, ranging from painting, sculpture, glass, photography, performance art and more. CoRK is located at the corner of Rosselle and King Streets.



Mary Dale, Tiffany Paige, Alicia Harris



JP and Mariah Salvat



Faith McMas and Riverside artist Sharla Valeski



Bill and Katie Delaney with David Gibbs, Kyriaki Karalis

Thirteen no unlucky number for annual Riverside WineFest



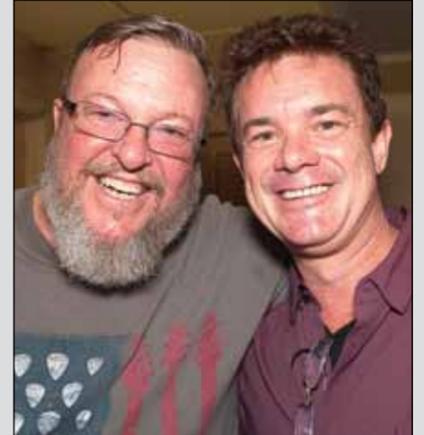
Meghan Leonard with Katrina Sousa



Norah McCrossin, Melanie Cost, Gabrielle Dusablon



James and Amy Buzek with John and Margaret Hartman



Dan Shepard, Dr. Barry Stephens

Riverside at Park and King Streets was the place to be on Nov. 21 at the 13th Annual Riverside WineFest. Sponsored by Riverside Liquors and Fine Wines, and Riverside Avondale Preservation, more than 300 wines were available for tasting at the fall festival, which included food vendors and live entertainment. Hundreds of residents were seen sporting a festival logoed wine glass as they took to the streets for the RAP benefit.

Annual Oyster Roast draws a crowd in Riverside

Several hundred guests enjoyed the St. Johns RIVERKEEPER's 14th Annual Oyster Roast, which is known all over town as one of the best parties of the year.

Held annually at the Garden Club of Jacksonville, supporters rallied in support of the city's mighty waterway. Patrons enjoyed fabulous food from Biscotti's as well as fine libations, great music from Spice and the Po Boys and a silent auction.

The festive, sprawling event is the RIVERKEEPER's top fundraiser, as it helps fortify the efforts to further effective advocacy, outreach and education programs. This year's event, according to Executive Director Jimmy Orth, had already surpassed last year's numbers by a solid count— prior to additional ticket sales the night of the event.



St. Johns RIVERKEEPER Lisa Rinaman with Victoria Register-Freeman



Michelle Preuss with Susan Feeley, Karla Newton and Erica Paul



Leigh Adams with Joshua Garrett

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Heavenly music greets guests at reception

Nearly 100 guests, including Cathedral Arts Project donors, board members and FIS executives, enjoyed the music of CAP alumni in a small strings ensemble at an Angels of the Arts reception held on Oct. 28 at the Ortega home of FIS President and CEO Gary Norcross and his wife Amy, CAP board member.



Several CAP alumni played in a small ensemble to welcome guests to the event.



Robert and Jane Still with Helen Lane



FIS President and CEO Gary and Amy Norcross with Marisa and Frank Martire, FIS immediate past president and CEO. Amy and Marisa are both CAP Board members.



Ben and Kate Jolley, president of the CAPtivators Board and member of the CAP Board.



Team RPDS

Annual Ryan's Race has winning turnout

The number of runners in the 3rd Annual Ryan's Run 5K topped last year's total, with 267 finishers. Of the 136 female finishers, Avondale resident Michelle Krueger took first place with a time of 19:09.

Team RPDS and students from The Bolles School were among the runners, along with Nancy Field, Judith Cooksey and Flo Bliss of Ortega.

The Nov. 14 race, in honor of Ryan Perry, was hosted by Ortega United Methodist Church. Proceeds benefit the Ryan D. Perry Endowment at the church to grow children's ministries in the community.



Reese and Audrey Cummings



Nancy Field



Carol and Ken Whyrick, grandson Malachi Clarke



Katie Creveling, Catherine Kunz, Isabella Wright, Haley Anderson

Featured are:
 In front, **911 Roll** - Tuna, Salmon and Yellowtail with Grouper tempura on top with kani salad, eel sauce and spicy mayo
Holiday Roll - Shrimp tempura, cucumber, avocado with mango, spicy kani salad and shrimp sauce, eel sauce, topped with crunchy tempura

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Dr. Hayes is now accepting new patients.

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 2023 Professional Center Dr.
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 Fleming Island, FL 32003

Mandarin
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 Jacksonville, FL 32223

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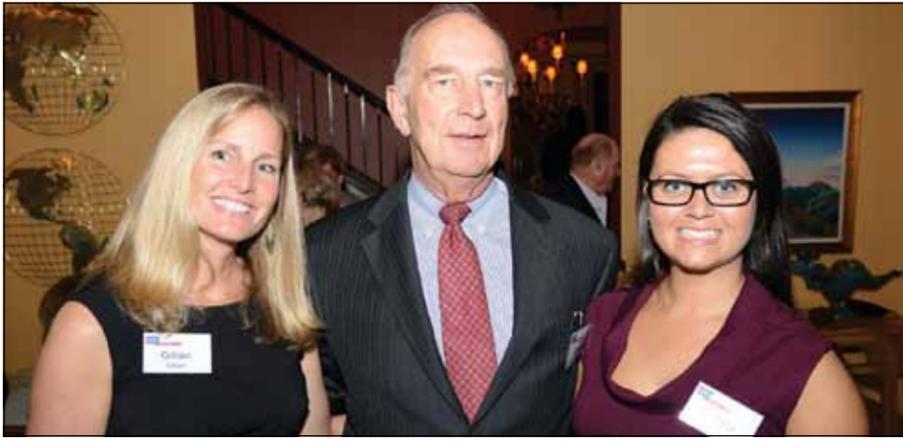
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Gathering heightens awareness of Hope Lodge mission



Gillian Green, Campaign Chair Charlie Tomm, cancer survivor and guest speaker Victoria Rosenblum

Local physician hosts evening reception

Thanks to a generous donation of land from the Davis Family Foundation and a \$9.6 million pledge from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, a capital campaign continues to gain momentum for a Hope Lodge.

The local chapter of the American Cancer Society [ACS] has been hard at work to raise additional funds and increase awareness in order to build-out the facility on Jacksonville's Mayo Clinic campus.

The Hope Lodge is a home-away-from-home concept, a housing facility for those undergoing cancer treatment far from their home town. The current goal of the chapter is to deliver a top notch, nurturing environment for those battling cancer in Jacksonville.

During a recent evening of awareness at the San Jose home of Dr. Scot Ackerman, the top brass from the American Cancer Society worked to spur donor interest, build corporate contacts and grow friendships among philanthropic leaders.

American Cancer Society CEO, Gary Reedy, was in town to help increase awareness of the peaceful refuge Hope Lodge will provide cancer patients and their caregivers. The facility will offer a place for reprieve while families undergo treatment in any of Jacksonville's numerous cancer centers, regardless of income, as there is no fee to stay.

A heart-warming story was shared by local Jacksonville cancer survivor, Victoria Rosenblum, who at 26, told of her harrowing



Alexandra and Dr. Scot Ackerman spoke to guests during the evening of awareness event, which they graciously hosted at their residence.

tale with poise, bravery and a colorful personality. Mrs. Rosenblum spoke to the group about her experience at Hope Lodge Boston, one that helped her battle, unencumbered, while she fought for her life against a rare form of cancer. She shared her uplifting, positive experience – one that was bettered by her stay at Hope Lodge Boston – and ultimately, became a story of recovery.

"The Hope Lodge program is a much needed resource in our community for patients traveling for cancer treatment. Not only will it reduce the financial burden of cancer, but it will also provide a positive and healing environment to support cancer patients and their families," said Dr. Ackerman, who is the medical director of the Ackerman Cancer Center on San Jose Boulevard in Mandarin. "Being able to interact and connect with others who are going through a similar experience improves the quality of life for the entire family while they are away from home."

For more on the Hope Lodge or to donate, contact Kellie Ann Kelleher, director, major gifts campaign in Jacksonville. Email kellieann.kelleher@cancer.org, or call 904.391.3606.

March of Dimes cooks up culinary delights

Some of Northeast Florida's top chefs helped to raise funds in support the March of Dimes mission – to improve the health of babies in Northeast Florida – during the annual Signature Chefs Auction at the Omni Jacksonville Hotel downtown.

Returning as the event's lead chef for a third consecutive year was Hector Gonzalez, Director of Food & Beverage at TPC Sawgrass. The 'chef's choice' theme this year resulted in some creative healthy dishes,

creating a perfect pairing with March of Dimes' message that a healthy diet and exercise for expecting mothers can improve the health of their unborn babies.

Participating chefs represent local restaurants including NINETEEN at TPC Sawgrass, Juliette's at Omni, Moxie Kitchen & Cocktails, Publix Apron's Cooking School & Catering, Matthew's Restaurant, Azurea at One Ocean, HOBNOB and Ocean 60. The event took place Nov. 12.



Hayden Maxwell, Liana Rothstein Hood and Blake Hood and Valerie Pickett



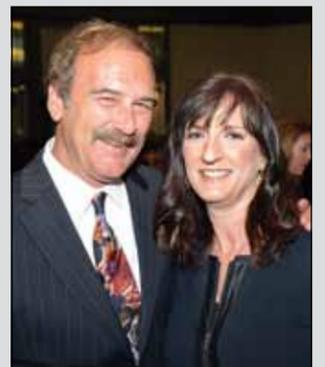
Reecy and Randy Thornton



Randy and Brianna Swift with State Senator Aaron Bean



Representing Wells Fargo were Damian Haitsuka, Heather Julin-Pittman, Wes and Gina Stapp and Kelly Smith



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Neighbors rally

continued from page 1

else knew, and shortly afterwards, I happened to bump into Ted Stein himself," said Pettway. "He pitched me the initial, smaller-scale version of the restaurant. At first my attitude was to wait and see, but I quickly became alarmed and began meeting with other concerned neighbors to organize opposition to this proposal."

In early November, Stein and Demetree circulated a petition among residents living on Riverside Avenue, Oak Street, and Herschel Street as well as the cross streets in between to solicit support to rezone the property at 2220 Oak St. They invited the community to hear about their proposed restaurant on Nov. 12 at the Riverside Avondale Preservation office.

The neighborhood is currently zoned CRO (Commercial Residential Office) in a Residential Historic Character Area. Due to the amount of deviations needed for the restaurant, Saleeba is applying for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) to "facilitate the redevelopment of a commercial area and provide for a unified scheme of development."

Neighbors flatly oppose Roost

Pettway said he and a group of concerned citizens met with Riverside Avondale Preservation in late October and stated only one person at that meeting was in favor of the idea.

"Everyone else was clearly opposed," he said. "[At the Nov. 12 meeting] I saw a packed room of neighbors united in their objection to the plan. Even J.C. [Demetree] said, and I quote, 'I'm a little taken aback by this.' Clearly, the developers underestimated the strength of the opposition to this proposal."

Among the concerned neighbors is Roxanne Henkle, who lives in a 100-year-old carriage house across the street from the old Deluxe cleaners. A resident since 1990, Henkle is opposed to The Roost for a variety of reasons.

"I am concerned that the proposed 150-seat restaurant would have an adversely intense impact upon our area. Currently, Snap Fitness has taken up much of the street parking. Parking requirements alone would displace many residential and tenant parking," Henkle



Bicycle rack in front of Snap Fitness takes up one of the 13 parking spaces being claimed as part of the required total for a new restaurant proposed in the former Laundry, Dry Cleaner and Launderette.

said. "Add a 150-seat restaurant with alcohol and the street will suffer from constant strain of traffic, not to mention the effects of late night hours on the neighborhood that is mostly residential."

Nancy Murrey-Settle and her sister Ruth Thompson grew up in the neighborhood and they were in attendance at the standing-room only meeting. "My grandparents bought two homes in 1922, and we have been stewards of the property and neighborhood since then," said Murrey-Settle. "We definitely have deep roots and a stake in all of this."

Murrey-Settle said there is much to lose if the PUD is allowed against the zoning currently in place. "If we allow too many exemptions, variances and, in this case, a complete PUD, that will change the fabric of our residential areas in Riverside. We can say goodbye to many of the homeowners who have invested their time and money to make Riverside the 'hot' area it is," she said. "What attracts the developers to our area is exactly what they will destroy by their presence."

Not right fit, says RAP

The PUD notes there will be 41 parking spots onsite, but according to the Municipal Code, 54 off-street parking spaces are required. The PUD indicates 13 spaces on the street will pick up the difference, however those spaces are shared with Snap Fitness, a gym located next door.

Parking issues as well as increased noise and traffic are not the only concerns. At the Nov. 12 meeting, several people raised the issue of the PUD itself, which is filed under the property owner.

"Their Planned Urban Development (PUD) re-zoning request will stay with the property forever, making it easy for another bar to use it, without public input, should this development fail," said Pettway. "Unfortunately, such failure is statistically likely. It's a slippery slope, and we don't want to go there."

Run-off is another concern. Riverside Avenue residents living along the back side of the Oak Street property are currently dealing with water intrusion. One homeowner said she has 1,300 square feet of mold in her house from run-off behind Snap Fitness. She, along with others, is concerned that a paved parking lot will increase run-off, which causes flooding behind the property.

In response, Steve Diebenow, attorney for the developers, stated development of the property is not allowed to cause runoff that will hurt neighboring properties.

"If the lot is paved, we might as well send our neighbors little boats to use for the summer in their back yards," said Henkle, in an email to city officials.

At stake, too, is the precedent that will be set if this PUD is approved by Land Use and Zoning, the Planning Commission, and City Council. Although Diebenow claimed an approval will not set a precedent because all

applications are judged on their own merits, Carmen Godwin, RAP executive director, disagrees.

"This absolutely does set a precedent. It's important what happens in this case," she said. "It's just not the right fit for this location. There is not one other property zoned CRO with a restaurant in our district."

Godwin stated RAP had offered to help Stein and Demetree find another, more suitable location for their restaurant, but they said they knew what they were getting into.

"They are asking for so much more than what's allowed. If they are not willing to negotiate, what role can RAP play?" she asked. "It's tough for us to be a mediator."

Murrey-Settle said if it were not for RAP, Riverside would not be the hot neighborhood it is. "When we did the remodel at our house we respected the codes and restrictions that come with living in a neighborhood that has a historical designation," she said. "I expect big moneyed developers to do the same."

During the Nov. 12 meeting at RAP's office, residents asked for changes to the PUD, which Diebenow and the developers indicated they would take into consideration. Although a revised document was not available at press time, Stein and Demetree issued a statement:

"We listened attentively to all of the concerns shared by the neighbors, staying after to answer every question. We were encouraged by the number of supporters in attendance after sharing our vision for The Roost during the course of the evening. As Jacksonville natives, we want The Roost to blend into the artistic fabric of Riverside.

"After listening to the concerns of the neighbors we decided to make changes to the initial concept to ensure that we re-develop these two vacant, dilapidated, historic buildings into something that makes Riverside proud. Our vision for The Roost can only succeed, and be made better, through a constructive and positive dialogue with all interested parties."

Share your thoughts

What do you think should happen with the old Deluxe Dry Cleaner and Launderette on Oak Street? If you have a suggestion, send your opinion to editor@residentnews.net.

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Representing Riverside, Avondale and Ortega in the UrbanPlan competition at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville were Brook Wiley, Lily Nigro, Megan Altman, Gage Leonard, Mark Weaver, Will Taylor, Alex Oakley and Tal Ponder.



Putting together a Lego model of their fictional city were Brook Wiley of Riverside, Marissa Lingaitis, James Cissel, Gray Vickers, and Thatcher Rottinghaus at Episcopal School Oct. 29.

Students use real-life criteria in urban planning competition

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Megan Altman of Avondale was on the winning team when economics students from Episcopal School of Jacksonville presented complicated plans for rejuvenating a fictional city as part of their UrbanPlan unit to a panel of judges from the Urban Land Institute of North Florida Oct. 29.

UrbanPlan, a 15-hour class-based curriculum, is offered in economics and government classes. Through the program, upperclassmen explore how the forces of a market economy work with and against non-market forces in a democracy to create the environment in which they live.

In completing their plans the students had to consider economic, social, cultural and political goals of the fictional city and its residents. Some of the items they needed to consider were zoning and design regulations, market demand for different types of land uses and real estate products, traffic patterns, quality of life and the needs of investors and lenders providing the capital for the project. All plans had a time line, during which investors had to be given a return on their investment.

The students were placed into groups of five students. Each group was required to submit a portfolio that included pictures of its Legos plan, financial prospectus, vision statement and list of specific uses within

their development. Two groups presented in each of two locations with a winner chosen from each location.

Altman was a member the winning team Prestige Worldwide LLC. Her teammates were Parker Dickson, Alexis Terkonda, Anish Mirjankar, and Taylor Hulsey.

Also winning the event was the Crown Molders Inc. team comprised of Mikayla Parsons, Kyle Williams, Caroline Cooper, Jonathan Mackoul and Noah Wells.

“The winning teams were consistent in their ability to effectively communicate

their vision for their development as well as effectively defending their uses per the requests of the RFP (requests for proposal),” said Perry Walthour, an economics teacher at Episcopal.

“I am always amazed at how well our students are able to defend their development decisions. Several of our former students have made the decision to study real estate in college and plan to make development a career as a result of participating in UrbanPlan,” Walthour said, noting that all students were required

to present their projects in professional attire in order to make a positive impression on the judges.

Serving as judges from the Urban Land Institute for the event were Wiatt Bowers of Atkins; Joe Loretta of Genesis Group; Doug Myers of Collaborative Law Group; Jess Simmons of CBRE; Trip Stanly of Blackwater Capital; Ryan Whitaker of Northmarq; Riley Williams of J. Riley Williams, PLC; and Russell Yaffee of Peters and Yaffee.

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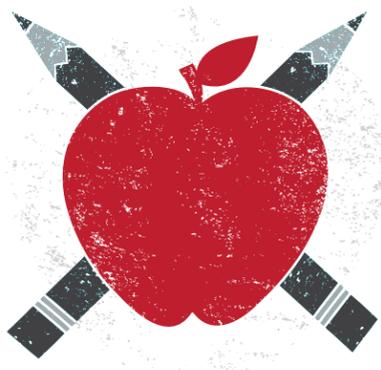
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DECADES OF LOVE WRAPPED UP IN TEACHING

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

In an era when lifetime careers are almost unheard of, to celebrate a decades-long position is an achievement. The field of education may be one of the most rewarding professions as you will often find teachers with two, three or even four

decades at the same school, even teaching in the same classroom.

The following short stories share insights from teachers who have challenged generations of students in our neighborhoods.

Many motivated students attribute their success to a great start in preschool. No longer merely a place to stay and play while parents are working, preschools – especially CDO (Child’s Day Out) Avondale – are the foundation for the learning experience.

According to longtime CDO teacher Beverly Joseph, one of the biggest changes in preschool is the curriculum. “We are now teaching in VPK (voluntary pre-kindergarten) what used to be taught in kindergarten,” said Joseph, who has taught her entire career, 19-1/2 years, at CDO.

“Teaching has been my passion since high school,” she shared. “I love to see the growth of the children and to give them a positive start at the beginning of their school years.”

That passion influences the advice she would give to young teachers today. “Make sure that teaching is your passion. Be energetic, patient and organized in the classroom,” Joseph said.



Beverly Joseph

Child’s Day Out (CDO)

Preschool Teacher, 19-1/2 years

Nearly two decades of four-year-old boys and girls are testimony to the impact Joseph has made in the classroom.

“It is very rewarding to have children say that they miss you and to think that maybe you had a hand in making their school years start on a positive note,” she said. “I have many parents who bring their children back to visit because the children want to see me and tell me all about how they are doing in school.”

Katherine Brantley calls Fishweir Elementary School her second home and feels she is a second mother to her students. For 21 years she has taught all subject areas and now focuses on students with Varying Exceptionalities in kindergarten to fifth grade.

“I chose to become a V.E. teacher because I enjoy working with children, and I feel like I’m their second mom,” Brantley said. “Students spend more time with their teachers than they do with their parents during the school week, and I want to be a positive part of their life.”

Over two decades, Brantley has experienced many positive changes in the public schools.

“The support and resources available to students with special needs continues to improve. The changes in the curriculum move at a rapid pace and teachers need continued training and the flexibility to implement the Common Core standards,” she said.

Like a mother who never lets go of the desire to help her child, Brantley also continues to support former students who are now in college. “Their special needs don’t go away and they need support all



Katherine Brantley

Fishweir Elementary School

Inclusion Teacher, 21 years

through their life,” said Brantley. “Society at times forgets to slow down and take a look at the whole child all the way through their educational life as well as their career.”

For young teachers just starting out in the special-needs classroom, Brantley advises taking the “whole child” into consideration to ensure a positive experience throughout their education. “Students have different needs emotionally, physically and academically, learn at different rates, have different abilities levels, and unique learning styles,” she said. “Assess and evaluate their needs constantly to provide them with the best interventions so they can be successful.”

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Avondale resident Jeanne Shober, a recently retired third grade teacher at St. Matthew Catholic School, wanted to be a teacher since she was a little girl. “Maybe being the oldest of nine had something to do with it – I’m not sure – but that was all I ever wanted to do,” she said.

Shober taught for over 20 years, and 15 of those years were spent at St. Matthew’s Catholic School teaching third grade.

“By far, the best part of teaching is watching your students grow up and become awesome adults,” she reflected via text messages while in Europe after finishing a month-long, 514-mile pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St. James, which travels



Jeanne Shober

St. Matthew’s Catholic School

Retired Third-grade Teacher, 20 years

through Western Europe.

Shober has good advice for young, new teachers today. “Enjoy your students. Laugh. Take care of yourself and keep your life balanced.”

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Joy Pichardo didn't set out to be a teacher, nor did she think she would still be one 20 years later.

"Twenty years ago I thought it would be a fun way to use my English degree and give back to Catholic education; I am a product of Catholic education in this diocese, born and raised in Jacksonville," said Pichardo, who teaches sophomore religion at Bishop John J. Snyder High School. "I never thought I would still be a teacher 20 years later! But, I quickly realized that it is my calling, my vocation, to be a teacher in the classroom and in Campus Ministry. Teaching and helping teens comes naturally to me. I love going to school every day."

Pichardo is also Director of Campus Ministry and plans retreats for the students, does some pastoral counseling, plans service projects and organizes other opportunities for spiritual growth. She has been at Bishop Snyder for 14 years, following five years at Bishop John Kenny High School and one year at Assumption Catholic School.

Social media and the amount and variety of extracurricular activities have caused a great change in students today, Pichardo said, noting they are busier than ever, often playing a sport year-round or doing multiple activities.

"Students have so much more to deal



Joy Pichardo

Bishop John J. Snyder High School

Religion Teacher, Director of Campus Ministry, 20 years

with outside of the classroom than when I started teaching," she said. "Social media has permeated their home lives and often times it is more of a burden than a positive aspect in the lives of our young people."

Preparing for higher education is also a burden. "They feel the pressure to build resumes as admission to colleges and universities is becoming more and more competitive," Pichardo said.

"Teaching is not just about getting the content to the students," said Pichardo. She advises young teachers to take an interest in the young people and be present to them.

"Each time I think that I am making a difference in students' lives, I realize how much more of a difference they have made in mine."

Lauren Mahoney is such an enthusiastic teacher she inspired her daughter to get into education for a career as well.

"She grew up witnessing my enthusiasm for teaching," said Mahoney, who has taught grades pre-kindergarten to high school over 27 years. "She knew about the challenges, but also knew it was a very rewarding profession. We all know a teacher's salary does not compare with some professions. My advice would be to go into teaching for the challenge and not for the money."

Mahoney, of Ortega, currently teaches kindergarten at St. Mark's Episcopal Day School where she has taught for 25 years. She is just as excited about her profession now as she was when she realized that's what she wanted to do.

"As a young teenager, I taught swim lessons to children and enjoyed watching their excitement as they learned a new skill. It was such a fun and satisfying job for me, I thought it would be even more gratifying to work with a child in the classroom where I could teach them about everything, not just swimming," Mahoney said. "I started teaching right after I graduated from college, and I was hooked. It is so rewarding to work with a child and witness that precious moment when they work through a challenge or



Lauren Mahoney

St. Mark's Episcopal Day School

Kindergarten Teacher, 27 years

understand something for the first time."

Mahoney has watched the family dynamic change over the years, noting more families have dual-working parents so the children are spending more time at school. "This has given teachers a greater responsibility to partner with parents in raising their children," she said. "We don't just educate, we are also a second home and family."

Recently a former fifth-grade student reached out to Mahoney through Facebook. "He made the effort to reach out after 20 years to thank me for making him love school," she shared. "Another who returned to visit St. Mark's when he was in high school said his love of writing began when I encouraged him to journal and just to write about anything that made him happy to write."

Pam MacCulley really loves children. In her 40th year of teaching, MacCulley's desire to be a teacher hasn't waned after four decades.

"I became a teacher because of my love of children, along with my desire to have a career where I felt I could make a difference. It brings me joy to inspire students, ignite the spark of learning, and watch them succeed," said MacCulley, a third-grade teacher at Riverside Presbyterian Day School. "Their creativity and energy keep me on my toes. I can always find something they do or say that makes me laugh. It is a very rewarding career, and even after all these years, I haven't lost my passion for teaching."

MacCulley has been inspiring students in the lower grades at RPDS for 37 years, and embraces the introduction of technology into the classroom.

"Although many educators feel that the integration of technology and a more contemporary curriculum has changed student performance in a negative way, at Riverside Presbyterian Day School we use it to enhance our carefully planned lessons. Technology supports the instruction taking place in our classrooms. Chrome books and iPads are used for many student-created projects," MacCulley explained.

For MacCulley, teaching is a calling



Pam MacCulley

Riverside Presbyterian Day School

Third-grade Teacher, 40 years

in a profession that challenges one to be a lifelong learner as well as a good communicator and collaborator.

"My advice for new teachers today is to build good relationships with your students and your families, and to keep open lines of communication going with them. Communication reflects a commitment you have as their teacher," she said.

"Also, collaborate with parents, letting them know you are their partners," she continued. "In addition, plan with your team members, and don't be afraid to ask questions. You may think you have all the answers, but you don't."

The difference MacCulley believes she has made in her students' lives is borne out when former students bring their own children to RPDS and request they be placed in her class. "That's the greatest reward of all!"

Jeannette Bruce became a teacher because she wanted to make a difference in the lives of students, just as several teachers did in her life. "Teaching is the one thing I wanted to be for as long as I can remember," she said. Bruce is in her 34th year of teaching, of which 28 have been with St. Paul's Catholic School in Riverside. Religion, social studies and math are the subjects she teaches to sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students.

"The one thing that has really changed in education over the years is technology in the classroom. When I started we typed everything and ran it on the mimeograph machine," Bruce said. "Today we use computers and iPads on a daily basis. The technology, like many things, has its positive and negatives. Students are able to create projects, we can present the newest material and access textbooks online. We can use the iPad apps to reinforce material and play games to review for test. The downfall of technology is many students rely on the computer for their work and when it doesn't work they have trouble completing assignments."

Bruce has taught almost all of the cousins in a local family, of which the



Jeannette Bruce

St. Paul's Catholic School

Assistant Principal, 34 years

oldest student is now a doctor and the youngest is in second grade at St. Paul's. "This family has made me promise to stay until I have the youngest," she said. "I do feel that I have made a difference in students' lives. I had one former student from another school who came to look at St. Paul's and when her mother saw I would be her daughter's teacher she said she knew right away that she was making the right choice."

After more than three decades in the field, Bruce has easy advice for new teachers. "Challenge students, but don't make it stressful. Have fun with the subject matter and the students."

Happy Holidays! Photo by Christy Whitehead

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DECADES OF LOVE WRAPPED UP IN TEACHING

Melissa Tyler, of Riverside, knows what it's like to work in the corporate world and in advertising, but it wasn't until she pinch-hit as an English teacher at the former Riverside Avondale Middle School that she realized where her calling was.

"A local Head of School called me one day and begged me to cover the English classes of a teacher expecting a long-term absence," said Tyler, who has taught for 32 years. "I knew from that first day in the classroom ... that I was meant to be a teacher."

Tyler studied psychology in college and said teaching the subject for 10 of her 22 years at The Bolles School is a dream fulfilled.

"I love encouraging my students to ponder, to wonder, and to seek truth. With the proliferation of 'pop' psychology and specious or dubious 'scientific' findings in the media, I expect my kids to learn to question and reject nonsense," she said. "If students want to impress me, a good approach is this: 'Last night I was thinking about what we talked about in class, and I wondered...'"

Tyler is so passionate about mastering her subject and teaching with all her heart, she has cautionary advice for those considering a teaching career.



Melissa Tyler

The Bolles School

Psychology Teacher, 32 years

"If, after your first year, you cannot say with conviction that you love what you do and that you love your students, then teaching is not the career for you," she said. "The work itself is too demanding for anyone who doesn't have the heart for it."

Her love for teaching made an impression on one student in the 1990s, who contacted her a few years ago.

"He told me that my belief in and advice to him when he was my student gave him the grit and resolve to endure the ravages of a bone marrow transplant to treat his adult leukemia, which has been in remission for many years now. While I remember him fondly, I cannot imagine a single word I could have said to him that would have made such an impact," Tyler said. "I am forever humbled."

Except for her first year as a new teacher, Debra West has spent 34 of her 35 years at John Stockton Elementary School and this year is her last.

"I have always enjoyed learning, watching others learn and helping children learn!" said West, who currently teaches kindergarten. "It fills my heart with so much joy when a child finally realizes that he or she can read, write and do math."

West, who has also taught Exception Student Education and first grade, told the story of a young boy who struggled with reading. "He held a book up, leaned his head back to look at the words and said, 'Hey, Mrs. West, there is something wrong with this book. I couldn't read it before and now I can. Somebody fixed it!' It is moments like this that have made me so excited to teach young children," she said.

Over three and a half decades, West has witnessed many changes in curriculum, but is glad to see some basics returning. "There are many tried and true basic skills that have been taken out of the curriculum,



Debra West

John Stockton Elementary School

Kindergarten Teacher, 35 years

such as handwriting and spelling, but are gradually resurfacing," said West. "Best practices of teaching remain as the pathway to success with students, despite the changes in curriculum, teaching styles, standards, testing and state requirements."

Her advice to new teachers includes working through challenges with a positive focus, strengthening one's teaching through collaboration, and fine tuning the successes for the next year.

"Reflect on a daily basis," she said. "There is always something to celebrate."

When Donette Snyder was a child, she loved school. She can still recall all the names of her elementary school teachers.

"My mother told me that I always talked of being a teacher, and I can remember playing school when I was young so the desire was there at an early age," said Snyder, who has been a teacher for 33 years. "For the vast majority of my 23 years at RPDS, I have had the privilege to work with first through third grade. My focus is primarily math and reading."

Snyder said she is still driven by the deep desire to help students learn reading and math. "I know what lies ahead as we journey through the learning process and am deeply committed to giving it all I have to help children," she said. "I want to do anything I can to make it click for them. These earlier years can impact their confidence and self-esteem, and I take my job to heart!"

One change she has observed over the years is that children are ready to learn at a younger age. "It's exciting to see their minds so open to new challenges and they are not afraid to step forward in the journey!" Snyder said. "They seem more confident in new situations and move ahead with gusto!"



Donette Snyder

Riverside Presbyterian Day School

Resource Teacher, 33 years

Independent thinking and problem solving is one area where children today could use more help. Snyder advises parents and teachers to step back and challenge children to earnestly try to figure things out before they jump in, stating these skills are needed in so many areas - academics, relationships, sports, and much more.

For young teachers, Snyder said, "Remember those teachers that impacted your life in a positive way and desire to do the same. Model the character traits that impact the world. Share compassion and kindness. Pencil in the plan book, team work, and the importance of caring for one another. Then teach it over and over and over again."

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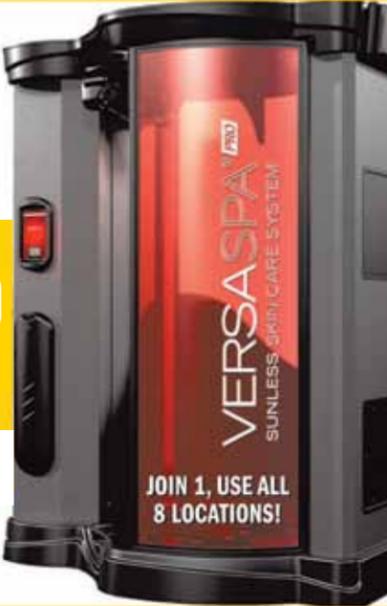
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Finnegan Billy takes a mighty swing at the Junior Strongman game.



Michael Cyzewski (aka Clifford the Red Dog) with Nimra Khan, a medical resident at St. Vincent Family Practice



Jennifer Swearingen reads to her daughter Julia, a student at Riverside Presbyterian Day School.



Beville Anderson reads *Silly Sally* to children at the 9th Annual Read & Romp on St. Vincent's Riverside campus.

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

On what was more like a sweltering summer day with temperatures in the high 80s than a crisp fall afternoon, the 9th Annual Read & Romp fall reading event was held on the Riverwalk behind St. Vincent's Medical Center in Riverside.

Planned for 600 children and their parents, the registered attendance was 510. Each child was encouraged to take home seven different books, purchased through funds donated by The Physicians Giving Society, the event sponsor. PetSmart donated stuffed animals for game prizes.

Throughout the afternoon, readings were conducted on two stages. Beville Anderson, of Ortega and guidance counselor at St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, was one of several readers, entertaining the children, age eight and younger, with the story *Silly Sally*.

The annual event is a special passion for

Dr. Sonya Dominguez, Medical Director for St. Vincent's Associate Health and Wellness since 2005. She started a Reach Out and Read Chapter at the residency in 2003, which has distributed over 15,000 free books to children in Northeast Florida.

"As family doctors, we give kids a brand-new book when they come for their wellness visits," said Dominguez, who is also associate program director for the medical residency. "Our goal today was to have families come and spend the day with doctors from St. Vincent's Family Medicine Center and volunteers from St. Vincent's."

Promoting reading is personal for Dominguez.

"When I grew up I had a hard time learning to read. Spanish was my first language, but once I mastered reading, I loved it," she said. "If you have a good foundation as a reader, you can do anything, no matter what background you come from. For me, it's important to share this with my patients."

Neighbors support church playground fundraising effort

Nearby neighbors and other residents of the community turned out to support fundraising efforts by Riverside Avenue Christian Church to renovate its 15-year-old playground.

Bounce houses at the Family Fun Festival on Nov. 14 could barely compete with the playground itself which, despite its age and condition, is still an attractive option for active children.

The Charles E. Bennett Memorial Playground needs a \$50,000 overhaul, to be done in three phases. The first phase, estimated at \$25,000, will replace the large playset, typically

used by children ages five to 12. Phase two will include a new playset for toddlers and children up to age five, and will cost approximately \$15,000. According to Kelly Paterno, director of the Riverside Arts Children's Center at the church, the final phase includes repairing or replacing the fence, and re-mulching.

"We think we raised about \$2,000 from Saturday's event and we had about 45 volunteers, both church and neighborhood folks," said Paterno. "We were very pleased with the support from the community and are talking about what to do next!"



Proceeds from the family festival will benefit refurbishing the playground at Riverside Avenue Christian Church.



Corey Taylor works the hula hoop at the Riverside Avenue Christian Church Family Festival Nov. 14.



Vanessa Holland with twins Arden and Walker, sons Cody, 2, and Blake, 4, and helper Amelia Walthour (left)

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Jr. Residents

Parents come out for CDO fall festival

Child's Day Out (CDO) Avondale celebrated its annual Fall Festival and Trunk or Treat event on Oct. 29, which included parents hosting creative activities and sharing lunch with the children.

"This is an event where parents volunteer their time and the children have the opportunity to talk to their parents about their experience," said Cindy Lawrence, CDO director. "We bring parents and their children together on special occasions to create an environment that is happy and healthy for all of our families at CDO."



Donations of new socks a reminder of blessings

Olivia Mackoul donates socks for the annual St. John's Presbyterian Preschool sock collection. Students at the preschool learned about Thankfulness in chapel last month, and the sock drive provides a wonderful example for the children to be thankful for their many blessings and to help others. The socks will be given to the City Rescue Mission in time for distribution at the Thanksgiving dinner.



Birthday boy asks for pet toys

For his seventh birthday, Evan Pieklo, a first grade student at St. Paul's Catholic School, asked his guests to bring toys for shelter animals instead of gifts for himself. After his Star Wars-themed party, Evan and his mother, Holly, took nearly \$300 worth of pet toys to Friends of Jacksonville Animals, where they presented him with an official "Friend of the Animals" certificate.



Students make Christmas merrier for needy family

For the eighth year in a row, St. Paul's Catholic School student council, along with the help from the whole student body, will adopt a family from St. Vincent de Paul society. The students raise money for gifts from the family's wish list. Emily Willis wraps a Christmas gift for the chosen family.



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Fourth and fifth grade students on Astronomy Night.



Kindergarten to third grade students on Astronomy Night.

On an overcast night in October, with a barely visible crescent moon, students, parents, staff and faculty at Central Riverside Elementary School waited patiently to take part in the Second Annual White House Astronomy Night.

Developed for a young generation of future scientists and astronaut-hopefuls across the United States, Central Riverside Elementary joined over 80 other sites in the Oct. 19 star-gazing event. It was the only school in the state of Florida to

participate.

Students viewed the moon through a professional telescope and held a piece of a meteorite from space, thanks to Lee Seltzer, event coordinator; Dr. Michael Reynolds, professor at Florida State College Jacksonville; Yvonne James, professor of astronomy at FSCJ; the FSCJ STEM Club, and the Northeast Florida Astronomical Society.

Central Riverside Elementary is celebrating its 100th birthday this year.

Holiday brings service opportunities at local school

Students at Riverside Presbyterian Day School are gearing up for three annual holiday service events this month. For the eighth year in a row, the sixth-grade class of 43 students will assemble bagged lunches in its 1,000 Sandwiches for Sulzbacher event, then deliver the ham and cheese sandwiches to the Sulzbacher Center.

All students will collect and donate gifts to distribute to newly arrived refugee families who are served through Lutheran Social Services. Parents of the refugees submit a wish list with items such as clothing, coats, shoes, games, skateboards and grocery store gift cards. The Caring Tree program has been a holiday service event at the school for nearly 20 years.

For the fifth year, third grade students will carol at area assisted living centers, while students in other grades will create



Abby Beaver helped assemble sandwiches for Sulzbacher when she was a student at Riverside Presbyterian Day School.

ornaments and artwork for the residents at Riverside Park Apartments, Riverside Presbyterian Apartments and St. Catherine Labouré Manor.

Students continue tradition of creating Thanksgiving meals

St. Paul's Catholic Church and School have helped feed neighborhood families Thanksgiving dinner for many years. This year, 13 classes were asked to provide different portions of the meal in order to have a complete menu that included dessert and hot chocolate, for 50 families in several nearby neighborhoods.



Gabi and Chloe Iuliano, eighth-grade students in the National Junior Honor Society, help fill boxes for Thanksgiving meals.

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The Way We Were – Donna Koren

By Julie Kerns Garmendia
Resident CommunityNews

Ortega resident Donna Koren's energy and vivaciousness belies her age, making it hard to believe the petite dynamo is a 1963 Lee High School graduate who's been creating art in Jacksonville for 52 years.

A Jacksonville native, Koren is an award-winning commercial illustrator, artist and designer whose list of employers and clients includes May-Cohens, Furchgott's, Stein Mart, *Florida Times-Union/Water's Edge Magazine*, popular restaurants and magazines.

She has also taught children's art classes at the Jacksonville Art Museum, when it was located at the Koger Center, and partnered with the late George Johnson of Avondale in the successful Artwear Screen Printing & Design Company.

Koren grew up in Murray Hill. She is the daughter of the late Albert George Koren and his wife, Katherine Pacula Koren. Her parents moved to Jacksonville in 1939, and were well-known local personalities.

Koren's mother owned the Katherine Koren Beauty Studio in 5 Points, above Owens Pharmacy. Donna recalls looking out the shop's large windows and seeing everything down Park Street. When she was young, Koren relished the angel food cake with fluffy white icing from Goode's Bakery, requesting it for every birthday and recalling it was "light as air and the best tasting cake ever."

As a junior high student she often



Al and Katherine Koren, baby Donna, Al and Kathy, 1946

walked from her mother's salon down to the Children's Museum on Riverside Avenue for art lessons and joined the "Duval Discoverers" in summertime. The group traveled to interesting spots: Little Talbot Island, Ft. Clinch, or the ocean where they studied and collected seashells, butterflies or artifacts. Every outing ended with a swim.



Senior class photo

When her mother's elderly clients could no longer climb the stairs up to her salon, she moved to a street-level space just across from Owens, and re-named the salon Katherine Koren Coiffures. The salon thrived in bustling 5 Points until its sale in the late 1980s. Koren's mother died in 1993.

Koren's father, Albert, was an award-

winning artist, glass-blower, poet, violinist, golfer and a tennis pro. In Jacksonville he was a political cartoonist for the *Chronicle* newspaper. Donna's scrapbook of her father's political cartoons traces city political and social history from 1939 until his death in 1952. One cartoon commemorates Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to Jacksonville on January 6, 1939. Roosevelt came to congratulate cigar factory owner Carl Swisher on the opening of the nation's first on-site daycare at Swisher's Jacksonville headquarters.

Koren's dad also owned a neon sign business on Hogan Street. Koren said her father designed the neon sign for Creamette Ice Cream on Post Street and later altered the sign when owners changed the name to Dreamette.

Koren inherited her parents' work ethic as well as her father's artistic abilities in multiple media, particularly his deft skill for uncanny caricature. She has drawn more than 200 caricatures of local notable citizens for display in the former Adams Street restaurant, Doodles Eating & Drinking Emporium. When the restaurant closed during 1991 the caricatures vanished, leaving a mystery with no clue to their whereabouts.

Other highlights of Koren's art career include her participation in Jacksonville's collective arts scene, *Imagination Squared! Creative Response Experiment*, where hundreds of local artists created squares grouped into one immense artwork for the Mixed Cargo Exhibition 2010 at JAXPORT

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Donna Koren, Grade 9 student at John Gorrie School, 1959



Working at May-Cohens Department Store in 1981



Donna and her pet hen, Henrietta



At home in Ortega, with wren houses

Cruise Terminal.

When she was growing up, Koren's family lived in the developer's model home on Dellwood Avenue in Murray Hill. Koren walked with her friends to Ruth N. Upson Elementary School. In junior high school, at John Gorrie Middle School, she won her first award for artistic creativity.

"I was a tomboy, always climbing trees or catching bugs and butterflies. My collection of bugs and butterflies won a blue ribbon in the ninth grade Science Fair at John Gorrie," she said.

While their parents were at work, the Koren kids were cared for by their housekeeper, Bea Jones. Koren and her brother did acrobatic tricks in their backyard when Al wasn't working on their treehouse or on his ham radio transmitters in the garage.

After her 1963 graduation from Robert E. Lee High School, Koren briefly attended

South Georgia College. Over the holidays she accepted a position in the May-Cohens Department Store credit department. An unexpected opportunity to be a fashion illustrator became available and Koren didn't hesitate.

"I gathered my art drawings from school, got an interview and showed them to the advertising director. He hired me to do the men's art illustrations and soon I was illustrating the women's fashions, too," she said.

Koren returned to South Georgia College, graduating in 1966 with an associate science degree. She briefly enrolled at the University of Georgia but, unhappy with their art classes, she returned home to work and save money for study in Europe. While she worked at Furchgott's Department store illustrating fashions, she reconnected with high school boyfriend Bill Floyd, Jr. The

couple married, settled in Leesburg, Florida and had a son, Bill Floyd, III.

After their divorce, Koren moved with her son back to Jacksonville where she worked for May-Cohens from 1976 to 1988, a position which gained her entry into the community of local artists who identify each other with the phrase "I knew him/her from May-Cohens..." That group includes artists and designers such as Ward Lariscy, Forrest Brewer, Ann Manry Kenyon, Allison Watson, Joanelle Wood Mulrain and Gary Adler, among others.

Koren is still in touch with school friends, meeting monthly for dinner to reminisce and catch up with each other's lives, she said. She especially enjoys spending time with her son and his wife, also of Ortega.

Koren said she keeps in close touch with her siblings, brother Alfred Koren, a retired GE electronics engineer and his wife, Maria,

and their daughter Kristine Koren, an investment management attorney in New York City. Her sister, Kathy Koren Hicks, of Atlanta is a realtor and Kathy's daughter, Jennifer Hicks, works in television and film.

Koren's most eccentric family member is Henrietta, the Rhode Island hen who "adopted" Koren this past summer and resides contentedly in a plant- and flower-filled backyard oasis.

A do-it-yourselfer, Koren intends to brick in her own patio and envisions a distinctly non-traditional chicken coop for Henrietta's safety. Henrietta's housing has moved up Koren's priority list because she roosts on the beams of Koren's porch, disrupting the peaceful hodgepodge of her quirky wren houses and their tiny, indignant inhabitants.

Koren is currently illustrating a children's book and can't wait to start the mosaics she has been saving colorful bits and pieces to create.

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Veterans honored with wall of remembrance



Veterans honored at Riverside Presbyterian Apartments: (Front, on the floor) Richard Crymes, Michael Nassau, George Scardasis, Robert Allen, John Smith; (middle) Diana Bradshaw, James Todd, Gerald Thomas, Harold Roberts; (back) Herbert Thomas, Leigh Robinson, Bobby Stroud

Twenty veterans – residents and staff – were honored on Nov. 6 at Riverside Presbyterian Apartments with the dedication of a Wall of Honor, and presentation of the flag by the Robert E. Lee High School ROTC.

Those named during the ceremony for serving in the U.S. Army were Robert Allen (6 years), Boyd Darden (5.5), David Gibbs, Sr. (2), Louvensky Harris (2), Angus Olmstead (2), Herb Thomas (6), Gerald Thomas (5) and James Todd (1.5).

Those who served in the U.S. Navy included Robert Allen (3 years), Richard Crymes (20), Boyd Darden (17), Sylvester Henderson (30), Michael Nassau (4), Harold Roberts (3.5), Leigh Robinson (22), George Scardasis (4), Ameil Thomas (20).

Serving in the U.S. Air Force were Diana Bradshaw (4 years), Bobby Stroud (4) and Elizabeth St. James (4); serving in the U.S. Marines were David Gibbs, Sr. (2), John Smith (3), and in the Coast Guard, Bobby Stroud (12).



Miriam Motts, Jackie Rees, and JoAnn Kuhns patriotically attired for Veterans' Day at Riverside Presbyterian Apartments



Visitors at Riverside Presbyterian Apartments check out the new Veterans' Wall of Honor

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Veterans celebrated with Pipes and Drum

Veterans' Day was celebrated in style at Riverside Presbyterian House on Nov. 11. Patriotic songs, presentation of certificates and pins to 44 veterans, men and women, and a flag folding ceremony by the Sandalwood High School ROTC was followed outside by the retirement of the U.S. flag. The Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department Pipe and Drum Corps played a medley of Armed Forces songs.



Veteran Bill Brewer, a 92-year-old resident at Riverside Presbyterian House, was one of 44 residents and staff recognized for their service to the country. He served in the Merchant Marine and Navy Reserves as a Radioman 1st Class from 1941-1946.



Tim Elkins, Lakeshore resident, is the pipe major for the JFRD Pipe and Drum Corps. A hair stylist by trade, Elkins has been a bagpiper since his late teens, nearly 40 years ago.



Veterans were honored at Riverside Presbyterian House. Here 29 of the 44 honored posed for a group photo. In the back are Haven Hospice staff, Pam Kearney, Steve Groth and Andrea Knight, who presented certificates of appreciation and pins to each veteran.

Choppers, hogs liven up seniors' day

A quiet Saturday afternoon in Riverside was shattered by the roar of choppers and hogs in the 4th Annual Biker Or Not Day at Riverside Presbyterian House. Seniors were treated to honorary membership in the Middleburg motorcycle club, CCC, getting the chance to sit on any of a dozen bikes and earn their bandana.



Leo Vogel, of Riverside, has coordinated Biker Day for the residents at Riverside Presbyterian House for four years. He sits in a brand-new Polaris Slingshot belonging to Jed Norton.



Jean Morrow, 89, proves you're never too old to rev'em up.



Marilyn Munyon and Peanut



Lucilla Johnson, 91, enjoys her seat on a motorcycle.

Home for the Holidays

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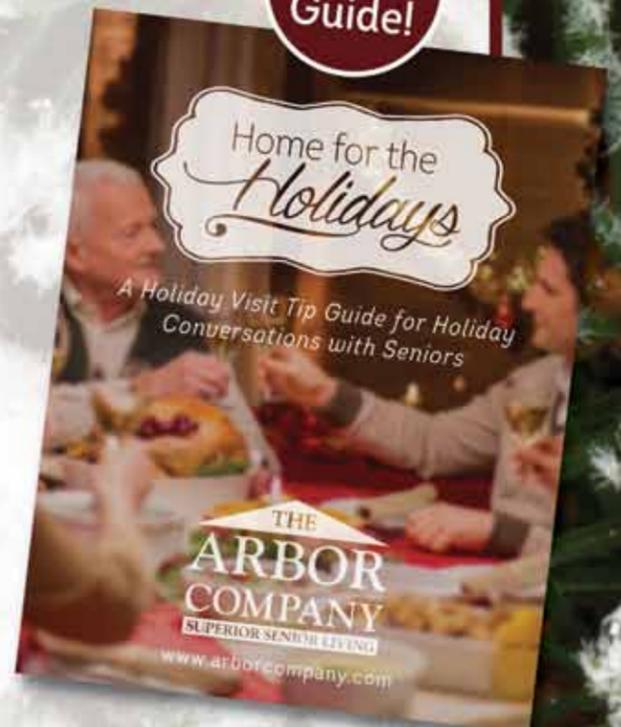
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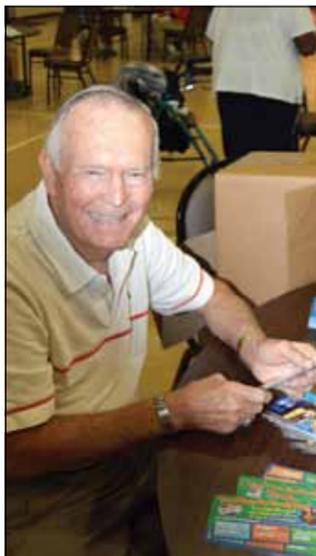


Seniors on a Mission celebrates decade of community service

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

It's been 10 years since Joanne Hickox started the nonprofit Seniors on a Mission, and the group celebrated by doing what it does best – working on several team-oriented community service projects and enjoying lunch during a day-long event at Lakewood United Methodist Church.

The Christian ecumenical nonprofit provides seniors with the opportunity to do purposeful good works for the community while offering them a chance to get out of



Jerry Adams fills bags with literature for the American Diabetes Walk.



Maggie McGovern and Rebecca Barnhart help out during the 10th Anniversary celebration of Seniors on a Mission Nov. 6. Both women are working on a graduate degree in public health at the University of North Florida and are working as part of a community partnership between the nonprofit and the university.



Joyce Adams and her son, Lance, stuff bags with literature to be given out at the American Diabetes Walk.

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the house and socialize with their peers.

"It's not just a ministry, but a community," said Phyllis Andruszkiewicz of Avondale, who organized the 10th Anniversary event. "It gives seniors a sense of purpose after they have retired and provides a way for them to give back to the community."

Lark Roberts, a Seniors on a Mission board member, agreed. "I'm a senior myself, and it's encouraging to know there's a place that I can go to and give back to the community. This group of seniors saves the nonprofits in the community a lot of money. They give their time to organizations, which saves them money because they don't have to hire people to do this work."



Phyllis Andruszkiewicz and Seniors on a Mission founder Joanne Hickox at the nonprofit's 10th Anniversary celebration at Lakewood United Methodist Church Nov. 6.



Sandy Spranger and Ruthie Goshen stuff bags of candy.

Over the past 10 years, Seniors on a Mission has brought together over 850 senior adults through day-long "mission" trips. During these outings they accomplish team-oriented, community service projects in partnership with other local nonprofit organizations throughout Jacksonville and the surrounding region.

During the past decade, the seniors have accumulated more than 83,000 community service hours and saved 83 local nonprofit organizations \$1.8 million through donating their services, helping the nonprofit agencies reduce their operating budgets.

During the Nov. 6 event, seniors stuffed bags with literature to be distributed during an American Diabetes Walk in November, while others worked on filling bags with candy for the Word to Works organization so they can be used at mini-parties on the streets of North Jacksonville as a way to

share the love of God with children.

Some seniors also worked with Dave Tuttle of Riverside in repairing new clothes that will be given to Dignity U Wear for distribution. The clothes had been made in foreign countries and were intentionally damaged so the clothing company would not have to pay a tariff when they were shipped to the United States, explained Tuttle, who is a major supplier to the nonprofit agency. "We fix them and then give them away," he said.

Also working with the group were two graduate students from the University of North Florida, Maggie McGovern of Avondale and Rebecca Barnhart of Riverside, who helped out as part of a community partnership between the senior nonprofit and UNF. Both women are seeking to earn a master's degree in public health.

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