

# HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2016

# Resident

Community News

San Jose — San Marco — St. Nicholas

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Fiercely Local News ... Fiercely Loyal Readers

January 2016, Vol. 8, Issue 1



## Pretty like a piece of art

Dr. Veronica Scott-Fulton, vice president of Operations and Patient Care Services for Wolfson Children's Hospital, stands with Grace Sarber, president of the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital during the Opening Night Party for the 39th Annual Art & Antiques Show Dec. 4. Read more, page 20.

## Ninth grade student releases Star Wars-themed Minecraft mod



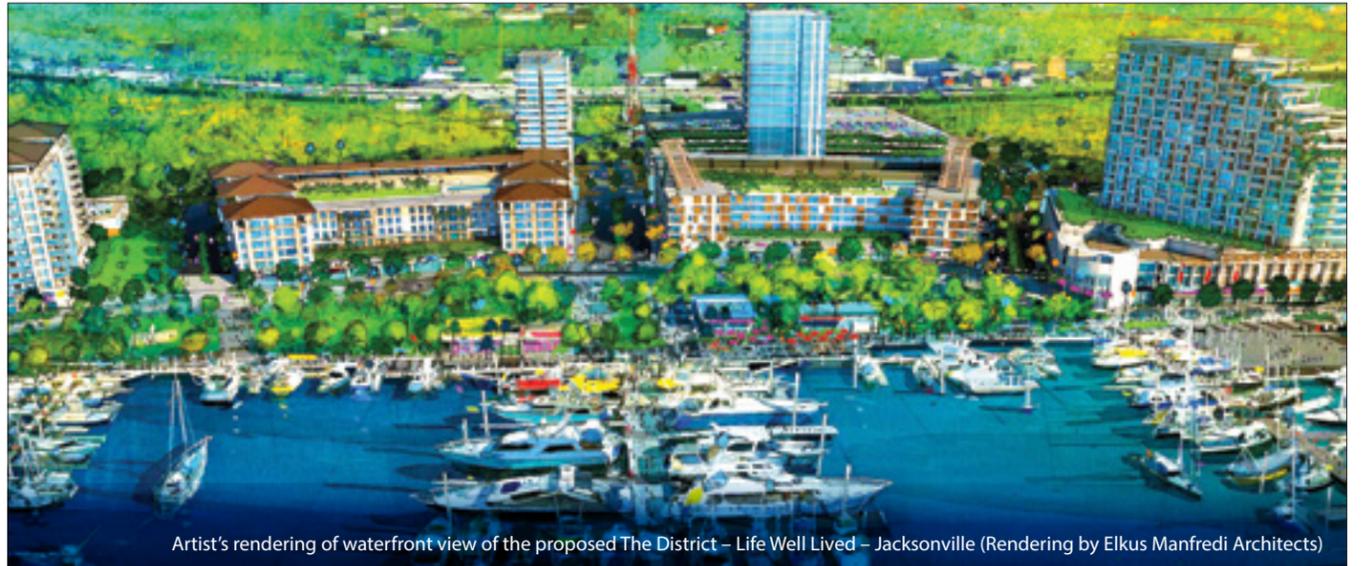
Weston Miller and Colby Newman work as a team developing code for a free add-on to Minecraft.

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Just in time for the premiere of "The Force Awakens," a ninth grade Bolles School student is releasing an update to a Star Wars-themed add-on for the popular building game Minecraft.

Continue reading on page 5

## Southbank to explode with new growth in 2016



Artist's rendering of waterfront view of the proposed The District - Life Well Lived - Jacksonville (Rendering by Elkus Manfredi Architects)

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Redeveloping the Southbank is all about "placemaking," Downtown Investment Authority CEO Aundra Wallace likes to say.

With several new developments on the cusp of becoming reality, major stakeholders from the residential, medical and central business districts met in late November to have a "conversation" in order to begin "pulling the pieces together" as

several key developments go forward in the New Year, Wallace said.

"We want to make sure the Southbank gets the same kind of vibe as neighborhoods like Brooklyn, Riverside and 5 Points," said Wallace, noting that the Southbank is part residential, part business, and part medical, but is also a recreational area, with The Riverwalk, Treaty Oak Park, and the Museum of Science and History, as well as walking trails planned for one of the new riverfront developments.

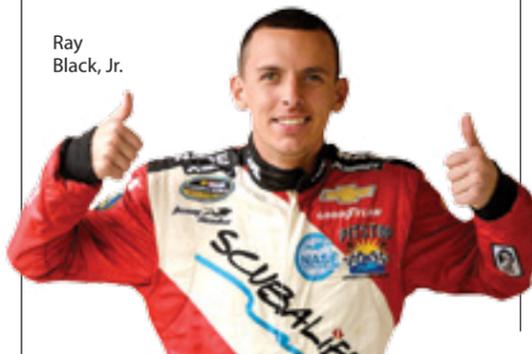
Already the city has fully funded plans to reconfigure Riverplace Boulevard so it can become more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. Conceptual planning on the project was completed in December with designs forwarded to the DIA for its approval in January, after which the project will be put out to bid. Provided there are no hitches, construction should begin in early 2017 and take nine months to complete, Wallace said.

Continue reading on page 6

## In the Clutch: NASCAR driver comes through for city

Car racing buffs cheer Flagler Beach's Ray Black, Jr. when he puts the pedal to the metal in NASCAR's Xfinity series. The racecar driver gave Southbank residents something else to cheer about when, in mid-December, he solved a sticky problem for both the St. Johns River and the city. Read more, page 10.

Ray Black, Jr.



## A season well celebrated at JCA

Dave Flagler, Director of Jewish Family Programming at the Jewish Community Alliance leads JCA members in song during the annual Chanukiyah Lighting Ceremony and Chanukkah celebration in San Jose Dec. 7. Read more, page 24.

## First look at luxury living on the Southbank

Developers release renderings and a glimpse into the future of mixed-use development on the Southbank. Read more, page 13.



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## Watson San Marco Collection



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This delightful three bedroom two full bathroom traditional house is the perfect place to call home. With a cozy fireplace and great entertaining space it is sure to charm your friends and family. You will fall in love with the spacious backyard that includes an elegant private pool. This charming home offers rich hard wood and tile floors that will thrill you. Don't let this property pass you by! \$190,000 MLS# 800951 Laura Lander 904-673-2526



Big Family? Love to Swim & Entertain? Perfect home! 6 bedroom, 3 baths & 2 half baths under brand new roof. Brick beauty features a breathtaking infinity pool, large family room w/brick fireplace, wet bar, formal living & dining rooms. Chef's Dream Kitchen has travertine floor, KitchenAid ovens, desk & cooktop, marble tile counters & brick accent wall. Breakfast Nook offers pool & marsh views. Kayak/canoe on tidal creek to the St. Johns River! A Must See! \$525,000 MLS# 766798 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



Prime Location, in the heart of San Marco! This renovated traditional home offers 4 bedrooms, 1 non-conforming, 3 baths nestled on a double lot. Home features a chef's dream, gourmet kitchen with custom cabinetry, 5'+ downdraft cooktop island, deep sink, stainless steel appliances, wine cooler, built in desk, wall oven + microwave, under cabinet dimming lights, granite counters & appliance garage! This home is loaded with upgrades galore! Call today to see this lovely San Marco Home! \$600,000 MLS# 798031 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



Pool Home with Complete In-Law Suite or Media Room! Main house offers 3 spacious bedrooms, 2 baths, loft, great room with vaulted ceilings & fireplace, plus separate dining area. The fully equipped kitchen has been updated with newer cherry wood finished cabinetry, smooth top glass range, wine cooler, refrigerator, dishwasher & microwave. Large laundry room with cabinetry & pantry shelving, In-Law Suite/Media Rm with private entry, Kitchenette, handicap ready bath & stained concrete flooring. Loaded with must haves! \$300,000 MLS# 803116 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



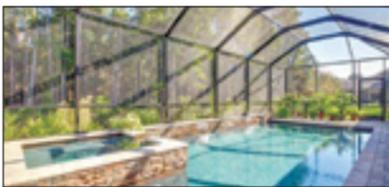
Beautiful and completely remodeled 5 Bedrooms 2 Baths Home on Cedar Hills Estates. New cabinets, new bathrooms, new floors, new a/c... AND MORE Come see it today! Motivated seller, make your offer today...will not last long at this price \$125,000 MLS# 805030 Call 904-731-5800 for more details!



In the heart of Mandarin, 1 year new, Isaac model boasts 2 master suites & office. Oversized living areas with a split floor plan is perfect for entertaining. The great room serves as the heart of the home, overlooking an elegant kitchen with granite, ample cabinet space & breakfast nook. Master suite offers large closet, garden tub & large bedroom. Covered screened patio overlooks the wooded backyard. Additionally, you have a large laundry room, too. Plenty of storage and pride of ownership is evident! Don't miss this one. \$335,000 MLS#805176 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



Great Location! St. John County! Gated entry, offering this 2 bedroom 2 ad 1/2 bath townhome. Living room and dining room combination! Downstairs 1/2 bath... All appliances convey except the washer and dryer. Dual master bedrooms upstairs, each with an on suite mater bath, and walk in style closets. Home has a 1 car garage! \$126,000 MLS# 803874 Call 904-731-5800



All the bells & whistles in this Willowcove pool home! Home offers 4 bedrooms, an office w/French doors, bonus/flex room, separate dining w/extensive millwork & designer light fixtures, gourmet kitchen w/natural gas cooktop, huge island overlooking the great room, breakfast area, designer finishes and much more! Entertain large parties by opening the 12' stackable sliders from the great room to the outdoor living area overlooking stoned trimmed, waterfall, screened salt pool w/spa. Set the ambiance with the \$10K sound system. Don't miss this beauty! \$545,000 MLS# 801374 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



Fabulous San Jose home with many upgrades and a huge privately fenced backyard. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths with high vaulted ceilings, loaded with crown molding throughout, large dining room, updated & fully equipped kitchen with stainless steel appliances, large rolling island with appliance garage, built in cabinetry for trash and drawers--Plenty of storage. Oversized living area opens to screen patio with spa overlooking the huge backyard + open stone patio! \$225,000 MLS# 802059 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



Great opportunity. Almost new home in Durbin Crossing. Great floor plan with separate living and dining room. Open kitchen area with breakfast area and family room with fireplace. Ceramic tile throughout the house. Inside laundry. Enclosed back patio. Larger backyard fully fenced. 2 car garage. This home has all that you need. \$295,000 MLS# 804982 Call The Dream Home Team Jax: Gonzalo Mejia, Michael Leachman, Nubia Ocampo, Eleana Carrion 904-309-2000



Beautiful 4 bedroom 3 full bath, single family home in a wonderful location close to schools and shopping. Home features high ceilings, covered screened patio, separate dining room, breakfast nook, fireplace in living room, wood floors, crown molding, 2 car garage and much more! \$269,900 MLS# 802128 Call 904-731-5800

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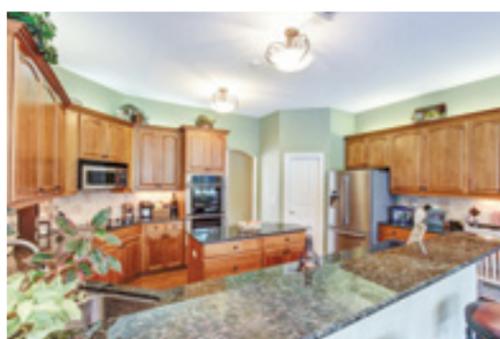
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# PUBLISHERS NOTE

Dear Resident Readers,

As we look back on 2015, we're thankful that our readers were so engaged. In such hurried and busy times, it is nice to know that 'good news' is something each household looks forward to each month.

It's a sign of a thriving, strong community when so much content is shared with our staff that the paper continues to grow. We are happy to accommodate the demand, thanks to our valued advertisers who make it possible.

We also realize that in 2016, interest in developments on the Southbank and our burgeoning downtown will increase our readership. Our distribution team delivers thousands of papers downtown, through the Southbank, San Marco, St. Nicholas, Granada, Point LaVista, San Jose all the way down to Baymeadows to fulfill requests for more newspapers. When people love their paper, it shows.

With this in mind, we want to share that love with a contest for our fiercely loyal readers. From now until January 20, submit a photo, poem or short essay about why you love your neighborhood. Prizes will be awarded to the best entry judged by *The Resident* staff. There will be one winner and a runner-up for adults. For the youth (8-18) category, one winner will be announced.

Prizes include \$250 and \$100 in gift cards to select restaurants, including Taverna, Little Toscana, Pizza Palace and a Foxy Lady dinner cruise. And for children, the prize is 10 tickets to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens and a \$25 Pizza Palace gift card (See our ad on page 38).

We encourage you to show your love by entering the contest and illustrating just how much you love the area in which you live, work and play!

While reflecting upon the past year it's important to mention the fact that *The Resident* launched two new annual publications due to a demand for informative and innovative products.

The 100-page *Historic Life - Neighbors and Newcomers Edition* was introduced in July and serves new residents who have moved into the neighborhoods. A look into regional attractions, art and entertainment venues, news topics to follow and a brief synopsis on the history of each area we cover helps provide a warm up to Northeast Florida and our neighborhoods. Keep an eye out for this publication again this summer with new stories and updated information.

Also making its debut in 2015 was *Circles - Social Datebook and Charity Register 2015-2016*, a magazine that showcases the nonprofit sector, philanthropy and fundraising events in Northeast Florida. Launched in mid-November at the National Philanthropy Day Luncheon, the full-color, large format magazine has received rave reviews from philanthropists, advertisers and leaders of charitable organizations alike.

The publication is available by request and can also be found online at [www.circlescharityregister.com](http://www.circlescharityregister.com) where readers can page-turn the magazine online and browse an up-to-date calendar of fundraising events for hundreds of nonprofit organizations. If you don't see your nonprofit or its events online, let us know and we'll gladly add them to the website and next year's publication.

Speaking of an online presence, you can find many of our monthly stories at [www.residentnews.net](http://www.residentnews.net) as well as an online page-turning version of each product, including *Historic Life* and *Circles*. Plus, we've grown our Facebook page, where you'll find fresh content as well as behind-the-scenes photos.

We wish you endless prosperity and happiness in 2016. Thanks for your loyalty and support!

Happy New Year,

**Pamela and Seth Williams**  
Publishers



*A friend of mine recently gave me a copy of your publication Circles. The publication is fabulous and your focus on philanthropy is deeply appreciated.*

— David L. Pierson, LISC Jacksonville

*You did an absolutely wonderful job with Circles. It's just adorable and the cover just couldn't be more perfect for the people who are on it. All the different people in it have been so meaningful for Jacksonville, many who are not even from here but have done masterful things for Jacksonville. It really showcases a beautiful city. What a great gift to everyone, especially to those who have worked so hard and been such good volunteers.*

— Joan Haskell

*I took a minute to read the article about Mr. Stein and to flip through a bit, I am so glad we are a part of this! It is beautiful and so well put together, you all did such a great job!*

— Julie Blair, Greenwood School

*We are so thrilled with the beautiful first issue of Circles! What a gorgeous piece, so well done, and a wonderful showcase for all the amazing charitable organizations and donors that we are so blessed to have in our midst. Congratulations - very well done!*

— Carol, Fred, Beth and all of us here at Fred Miller Group, Inc.

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## Happy New Year 2016

The magic of a new year is thick in the air. Plans are being concocted and goals are being laid on the road to success. New-ness is in the air, a sort of nervous energy bound with confidence. Neighbors waive as they tear out of the driveway heading towards victory. Kids trot off to school with auras of pride wearing the afterglow of Santa's visit. We marvel that another year is down and a new one is here.

My cellphone ringtone is a doorbell because every time it rings, I am reminded that I am opening a door. When you ring and begin telling me your story, you fill the blank page on my desk with your goals. In my mind I begin to organize your story into what will become a real estate transaction. Keep ringing, keep filling my pages. I welcome your unique stories. Allow me to be your Realtor. I love what I do because of you and your beautiful homes. Happy New Year!

—Anne Rain

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# Overlay ordinance to define property's waterfront as backyard

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

San Marco residents living on the St. Johns River have been seeking an answer to whether the river is considered a front yard or backyard when it comes to property improvements.

River Road residents with homes on waterfront lots between River Oaks Road and Landon Avenue will finally get clarity on this issue thanks to Ordinance 2015-834, which District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer submitted to City Council in December.

The ordinance will go before the Planning Commission Thursday, Jan. 7, followed by a hearing before the Land Use and Zoning Commission Wednesday, Jan. 20. Two public hearings on the new law will be heard during City Council

meetings Tuesday, Jan. 12 and 26.

The ordinance seeks to amend yard setback requirements for riverfront lots and structure height measurements as well to amend the section of the zoning code that allows deviations in certain rear yards.

The intention of the ordinance is to clarify what is a front yard and what is a rear yard and what can be done on the riverfront side so that neighbors won't build something to block another's view, said Boyer.

The proposed ordinance clearly states "For lots fronting on a navigable waterway, except for the Riviera Plat... the frontage on the waterway shall be deemed a rear yard, and specifically not a 'yard, front' as defined in Section 656.1601, Ordinance Code."

The underlying purpose behind the new rule is to alleviate problems with permitting, particularly about what accessories, such as

pools and cabanas, are acceptable, how close to the river they can be built, and what size they should be, Boyer said.

"The city generally interprets riverfront property with two front yards," Boyer said, noting both the river and the street are considered to be front yards. "Our overlay did not make it clear what we want. Generally the rule is that you can't have accessory use, like a pool or a cabana, in the front yard. But everybody in San Marco uses the river as a backyard. If people put in a pool, they put it in the rear yard," she continued. "It's an interpretation, but not part of the ordinance. We need to get legislation to make it clear."

San Marco Preservation Society President Andrew Dickson said he agrees with the ordinance. "It's good to have the overlay for San Marco so there is clarity," he said. "What's important is that we settle

*"It's good to have the overlay for San Marco so there is clarity ... what's important is that we settle confusion."*

— Andrew Dickson  
President, San Marco Preservation Society

confusion. For those that live on the river, it will maintain the historic area and what's already been built, giving homeowners the same opportunities other homeowners have had up to now so that everybody has a fair shake. It's for what is best for the river and the neighborhood and their neighbors. We want to make sure no one blocks another's view, and that people don't build so close to the river that things are washed away."

## Officials seek to maximize public parking on Southbank

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

To look at an aerial photo of the Southbank, one would think the area is a land of parking lots with a few buildings sprinkled around. Closer examination determines that although parking lots abound in the northern reaches above San Marco, there are still very few places for the public to park.

As The District – Life Well Lived – Jacksonville and Alliance Residential Company's Broadstone River House luxury apartment complex are developed, there has been concern expressed among public officials that Jacksonville citizens will have no place to park to enjoy the Southbank Riverwalk or the future retail establishments and restaurants.

"Public parking is very important and we

need to maximize it as much as we can now," said Aundra Wallace, a Southbank resident who is CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority. "We need to build it in before the rest of the area is developed," he said.

To guarantee city residents will be able to access future restaurants and shops as well as the Southbank Riverwalk, which the city spent over \$19 million to replace, District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer has been negotiating with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority and Florida Department of Transportation to make sure plenty of short-term, two-hour public spaces are available near the south shores of the river. A meeting of the principals is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 8, in the Mayor's Conference Room to discuss the issue, Boyer said.

Boyer has been eying the area underneath the Overland Expressway adjacent

to Hendricks Avenue and Kings Street near San Marco and Broadcast Place in the vicinity of the South Shores neighborhood, as well underneath the Acosta Bridge or adjacent to San Marco Boulevard to secure a certain portion of the parking spaces are available to the public.

"The parking may be metered. Chances are it won't be free, but it will be public parking, and it will help accommodate public access to the Riverwalk, Friendship Fountain, MOSH (Museum of Science and History) and the restaurants and retail outlets that are here already and will be coming," Boyer said. "I want to make sure the public isn't left behind."

Already there is some "limited" public parking on the street near the existing retail establishments, Boyer said, noting that if 20 to 30 spaces underneath the Overland Expressway could be reserved for the public it would be "significant."

"I'm concerned about the mom-and-pop stores," said Boyer. "When the Riverplace Boulevard Road Diet is finished people will come," she said. "There will

be a migration to the new facilities as the streets become more pedestrian-friendly."

The River City Brewing Company leases its lot from the City of Jacksonville with the obligation to allow a certain number of spaces for the patrons of MOSH, Boyer said, adding that residents seeking to enjoy the Riverwalk need to pay River City Brewing for use of the lot. Some public spaces are available in the Riverplace Tower garage, particularly on the top floor, but most of it is reserved for businesses, she said, noting there are no signs and "this is not clear to the public."

Boyer is also investigating the ownership of the vacant grass lot next to the former Transportation Planning Organization building on Prudential Drive. The building is owned by the JTA and is listed for sale with Colliers International of Northeast Florida, and could possibly be used for public parking if the circumstances are right, she said.

"We want to try to enliven and invigorate the northern corridor up to the Southbank so it is more usable," she said.

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# Physician to build 50 apartments on Southbank

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

A vacant lot on the Southbank behind Clara's Tidbits Restaurant and Catering will soon be the site of a new apartment complex.

San Marco Professional Building LLC, a company owned by Dr. Robert Bass, a gastroenterologist from Jacksonville Beach, intends to develop property at 1444 Home Street into a residential complex.

What is planned is a five-story, 50-unit apartment building with a rooftop lounge and secured surface parking, Bass said, adding that each floor will include 10 apartments. The project is in its preliminary stages. Bass's company is currently working to produce a cost analysis of the project to see if it is viable, which he will eventually present before the Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority, he said. The analysis is expected to be complete within the month, he said.

"We are moving forward," said Bass. "Tentatively we are looking to build 50

urban-style apartments with rooftop amenities. It's taken a while to find the right builder and person with experience in building apartments. We're moving forward, we just don't have anything definitive yet."

The building will be designed to face Home Street, Bass said. "It will be close to everything – the river, the restaurants and shops, San Marco and the hospitals. If you work at the hospital, you could ride your bike to work," he said, adding that he sees a great need for apartments in the area in the future.

"To be here is to be living in what I see as a safe place that is close to many amenities," he said. "Residents will have access to everything, at least that's my observation as someone who doesn't live there."

Bass's company, San Marco Professional Building, purchased the property in 2004 from Southbank Partners for \$1.43 million. According to records from the property appraiser's office, the land is currently valued at \$965,000.



This vacant lot on Home Street will be the future home of a 50-unit apartment complex.

*"To be here is to be living in what I see as a safe place that is close to many amenities."*

— Dr. Robert Bass  
Property developer

## Community meeting on Riverfront Park

District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer will host a community meeting to discuss solutions for the problems relating to Riverfront Park in San Marco on Tuesday, Jan. 19 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in San Marco Preservation Hall, 1652 Atlantic Blvd.

During the meeting, city officials will provide follow-up to the issues discussed at a community meeting last November where public fishing and traffic on River Road were of chief concern to residents. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

## Star Wars-themed Minecraft FROM PAGE 1

Colby Newman, who was introduced to coding when he was 10 years old, began this coding project in June. "Coding isn't entirely a day-to-day thing, but during any week, I generally code at least 18 hours because of the project I'm currently working on, Parzi's Star Wars Mod, with my cousin, Weston Miller," he said.

"The first languages I came across were just basic ones, like HTML, but eventually I started to become familiar with more advanced languages, like Java and C#," said Newman.

For Parzi's Star Wars Mod, Newman wrote over one million lines of code and Miller created the models and textures. "We just released our mod four months ago and already have 25,000 downloads worldwide, and we couldn't be more excited!" he said.

"If I were to relate to any Star Wars character, it would most likely be C-3PO. He knows a lot of languages and thus, has a deeper understanding of technical things, more than any of the other main characters," said Newman. "Since he has that knowledge, he is always there to help when things go wrong, which appeals to me, because I like helping other people code and troubleshooting any problems they run into."

The San Jose resident is hoping to get into hardware and large-scale systems design someday. Miller, who attends Jacksonville University majoring in mechanical engineering, has aspirations of working as a 3D designer in the automotive or aerospace industry.

Newman's mod can be downloaded from <http://parzivail.com/mods/tswm/>

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## Southbank to explode with new growth in 2016

FROM PAGE 1

As at least two large Southbank developments are in the works, it is important to take steps now to insure pedestrian and vehicular mobility as well as parking will be incorporated so the area has a cohesive sense of place, Wallace said, noting good signage and well-blended urban landscaping between the different developments within the community is essential. "We want the Southbank to have a vibe to it," he reiterated. (For more on Southbank parking, refer back to story on page 4).

### A new name for Healthy Town

Perhaps one element that will give the Southbank "vibe" and make it a destination within Jacksonville's downtown is the new name developers Peter Rummell and Michael Balansky and partner Michael Munz, all of San Marco, have given "Healthy Town," the urban resort they plan to build on 30 acres of river frontage east of the Duval County Public School Building.

In August, the trio decided the official name of their project would be "The District - Life Well Lived - Jacksonville" after they launched an online naming contest requesting suggestions for a name, which embodies "a place where you can live healthily."

"I can envision people saying 'The District on the Southbank,'" said Wallace, noting in his mind the tag line "Life Well Lived" exemplifies the kind of community the Rummell and Balansky are striving to build.

"The District blends in a lot of what the Southbank is becoming," Wallace said. "The Southbank Riverwalk is a place where people walk and run. It's all about a healthy lifestyle. It's all about wellness as well. It will become a Northeast Florida slogan unto itself. The District on the Southbank, I can hear that people would say that," he said.

Rummell and his partners were successful bidders during the JEA's 2014 Request for Proposal process. They are continuing to secure allocation agreements as well as master planning and are working to complete due diligence requirements.

"We have the allocation of development rights as approved by the Downtown Investment Authority," said Munz. "We're beginning the application process for the DDRB (Design Development Review Board), which will also go back through the DIA. And we're

beginning to have conversations with the city for the redevelopment agreement," he said, noting all that will be going on between now and the closing date.

At a cost of \$400 to \$500 million, The District will feature three phases including a total of 1,170 homes for rent or sale, 200 hotel rooms, 288,500 square feet of commercial/retail space and 200,000 square feet of office space. The architecture will be an eclectic mix of complementary styles. In the plans is a marina, so that The District can take full advantage of its riverfront location. The Southbank Riverwalk will be extended around the 30-acre site to allow nature trails and walking paths to circumnavigate the entire project.

On Dec. 15, Equity Resources LLC of Birmingham, Alabama, announced plans to develop a high-end luxury apartment community in connection with The District. Referred to as The District Luxury Apartments, the development will make up one component of the first three phases the developers have planned. (See story page 13).

Groundbreaking scheduled for the first phase is slated for early to mid-summer 2016, with the first apartment homes completed and ready for residents to move in 18 months later, according to Munz.

### New apartments on Crowdaddy's site

Meanwhile on the other side of the Duval County School Board Building on the site of the former Crowdaddy's Restaurant, Alliance Residential Company, a development firm based in Phoenix, Ariz., plans to build Broadstone River House, a 300-unit apartment building.

Alliance Residential representatives have consulted with DIA staff about the project, but at this time the company isn't seeking tax incentives; instead the firm is asking DIA to help expedite entitlements to hurry the project along, according to information obtained on the company website.

"Alliance is working through the conceptual design. We should see a final design soon," said Wallace.

Planned for the three-acre parcel is a five- to six-story structure of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments as well as a

parking garage. According to the company website, Broadstone Riverhouse will be similar to the ultra-modern Broadstone Hyde Park, which the development firm opened in Tampa. Broadstone Hyde Park offers apartments with nine-foot ceilings, gourmet kitchens and wood flooring.

The community amenities will include a pool, courtyard, fire pit and game areas, social clubroom and billiards lounge as well as a health club that will feature yoga and spin studios and top-grade fitness equipment.

Monthly rental rates will range from \$1,100 for a studio to \$2,000 per month for the largest two-bedroom unit.

### Former Wyndham Hotel changed hands

In June 2015, an affiliate of the Vantage Hospitality Group of Coral Gables purchased the former Wyndham Hotel and the five acres it resides on, located at 1515 Prudential Dr., for \$9 million and rebranded it to the Lexington Hotel & Conference Center.

Since then, the hospitality group applied to the city for a permit to make renovations and expects to spend \$2.46 million refurbishing the structure.

Meanwhile, according to Duval County records, on Aug. 31, Miami developer Ramon Llorens purchased the 11-acre, doughnut-shaped parcel surrounding the hotel, which includes riverfront acreage, a 1.41-acre parking lot and the Chart House Restaurant. The seller was Riverwalk Jacksonville Development LLC of Miami, which sold the property as part of its Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization.

Llorens, who owns multiple properties in Jacksonville, could not be reached about his intention for the property. Wallace said Llorens purchased the property, yet has not revealed plans for it. "I'm not sure what his plans are. He has not shared them with us," he said.

Other future construction activity on the Southbank includes property at 1444 Home Street, where Dr. Robert Bass, a gastroenterologist from Jacksonville Beach intends to develop his property behind Clara's Tidbits Restaurant and Catering into a 50-unit apartment complex. (See story page 5.)

Also, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority currently has the old North Florida Transportation Organization building on Prudential Drive up for sale. "The TPO Building is a key parcel," Wallace said. "We are closely monitoring that property."

### Hospital District expands

Along with the new MD Anderson Cancer Center, which is slated for construction in San Marco on Palm Avenue across from Nemours Specialty Care, Baptist Health expanded its foothold in the Southbank in June, when it purchased the duPont Center, two office buildings, which are in close proximity to The District.

The buildings, located at 1650 and 1660 Prudential Drive, provide a "strategic investment" for the health system, which has its principal campus at 800 Prudential Drive, said Scott Wooten, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Baptist Health. Baptist Health established its main hospital on the Southbank in 1955.

The health system paid \$16 million for the Class A office buildings, which comprise 80,000 square feet of office space over nine acres. Parking and two vacant acres are included in the deal, Wooten said.

Baptist Health purchased the buildings from Flagler Development Company, which built them in 1989.

The multi-tenant office buildings are 89 percent leased, Wooten said. "We want all current tenants to know we are committed to maintaining an excellent work environment for them," he said.

"We own some buildings and lease space in others. We know that long-term, owning is more cost-effective than renting so this was a purchase decision that made sense," he continued. "We plan to occupy some of the available space in the buildings. Gradually, over an extended period of time, as additional space becomes available, we will look at creating efficiencies by centralizing some of our administrative offices as well as a few clinical services, which are currently scattered in leased spaces throughout the city."

Clearly, with several new developments in the works, by this time in 2017, the Southbank may be well on its way to looking very different from what it is now.

*"The District blends in a lot of what the Southbank is becoming ... The Southbank Riverwalk is a place where people walk and run. It's all about a healthy lifestyle."*

— Aundra Wallace  
CEO, Downtown Investment Authority

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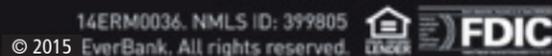
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## Informational meeting on special tax districts slated for creek communities

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

For residents living along Craig, Christopher and Miramar Creeks looking for ways to remove the sludge-ridden water that causes flooding or restricts river access, District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer will hold a special informational meeting to discuss the process of setting up a Special Tax District to pay for dredging the waterways leading into the St. Johns River.

The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28 at Hendricks Avenue Elementary School. All homeowners and interested parties are welcome to attend.

Attorney Wayne Flowers of the Lewis, Longman and Walker Law Firm will be at the meeting to answer questions, Boyer said. Flowers is an experienced lawyer who

is familiar with the establishment of special tax districts, Boyer said, noting he is also working with Millers Creek residents.

"Residents from all three areas have reached out to me to better understand special tax districts," Boyer said. "I am not suggesting they create a special district, but I had at least three people mention it to me after they heard about what Millers Creek is doing."

The meeting will cover step by step how neighbors can band together to form a special district. Boyer said, adding that she can only advise homeowners and provide information on the process. She cannot initiate the process, which must instead be spearheaded by residents within the area of the creek, she said.

However, if residents decide to form the tax districts in order to clean out the creeks

near their homes, Boyer said once the cost of the dredging project is known she will be happy to provide information about grants from the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND). Everyone in Duval County is charged a millage increment on their tax bill to maintain the Intracoastal waterway, Boyer said, and the commission has additional funds to spend on county navigational or waterway projects. Money from a FIND grant is currently helping to pay for the Pottsburg Creek dredging project, she said.

"My thought would be that in the number of districts where people are willing to impose an assessment to fix this problem on themselves, there is a good case for matching funds from a FIND grant," Boyer said, noting that once the cost of the dredging project is calculated, she can advocate that the tax district is added to the list of the city's FIND

*"Districts where people are willing to impose an assessment to fix this problem on themselves, there is a good case for matching funds from a FIND grant."*

— Lori Boyer  
City Council District 5 Councilwoman

grant applications. "When they get to that point, they may have some funds applicable for matching. I will suggest this for Millers Creek as well when the time comes.

"We always apply for eight to 10 grants per year," Boyer continued. "Some cover the design and construction phases, but you need to spend it within three years."

## Millers Creek Special District establishes assessment guidelines

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

St. Nicholas residents within the Millers Creek Special Tax District unanimously accepted using the Uniform Method for Levying Assessment as a way to tax themselves in 2016 in order to pay for the dredging of Millers Creek.

During a meeting Dec. 7 at Cuba Libre

Nightclub in St. Nicholas, Attorney Wayne Flowers explained specifics about the assessment process according to Florida statute. During the meeting, the group agreed with the plan and decided two percent of total collected assessments will go to the Duval County Tax Collector and 1.5 percent will go to the Duval County Property Appraiser. The remainder will be allocated to the Millers Creek Special District for its dredging project.

By mid-summer 2016, the Board will decide the amount of the assessment for each property owner and members of the special district will vote on the amount of the assessment during its meeting in

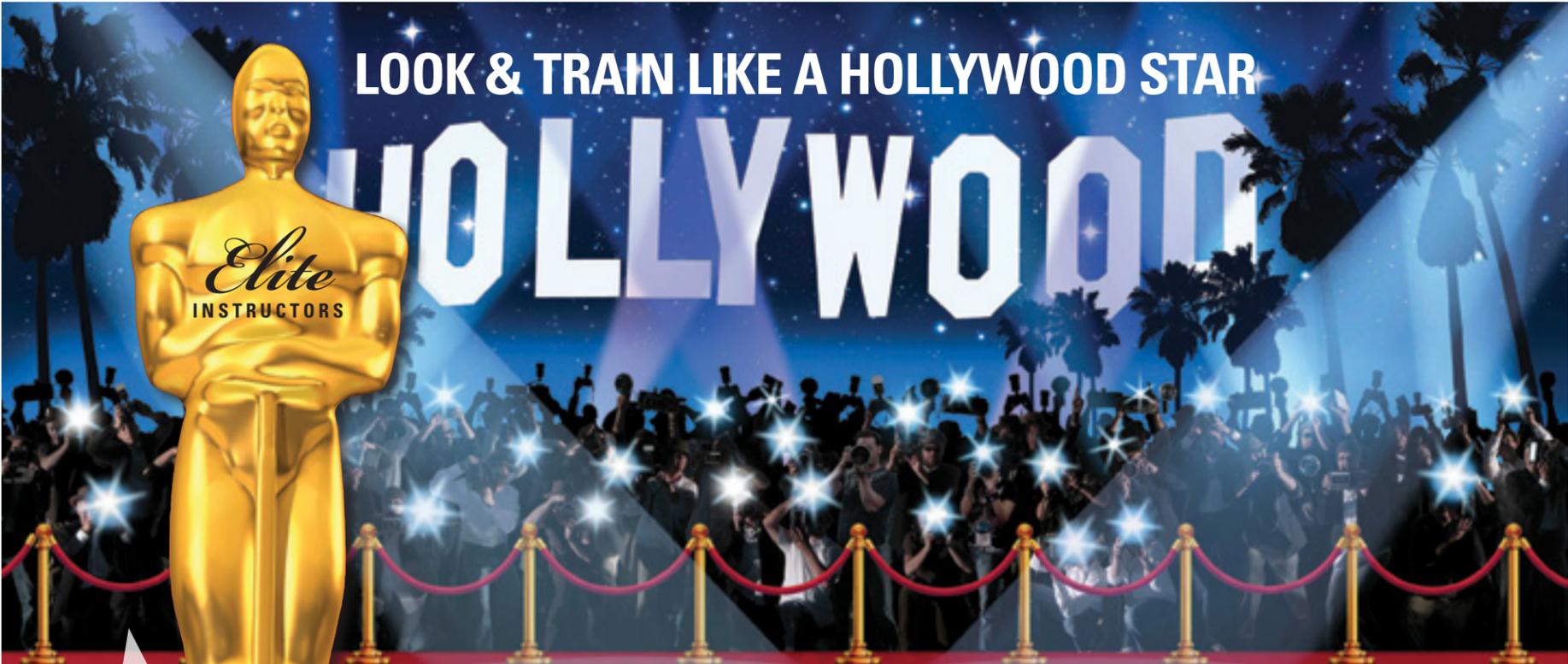
August. The assessment will be included with each homeowner's tax bill but as a separate statement.

An account for the Millers Creek Special District has been established at Bank of America in San Marco. So far, the only money placed in the account has been derived from "donations" given to the District by its residents to pay for costs incurred by the District until formal financing has been obtained, said District secretary Sharon Johnson. At an earlier meeting, district members decided each property owner must contribute a minimum of \$100 to the account by Friday, Jan. 22.

"There is no maximum to be contributed. Each homeowner will receive a reimbursement, less costs, for the contribution once formal financing has been obtained," said Johnson.

During the meeting, District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer explained the Millers Creek Special District might be eligible for grant money from the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) awards grants to defined districts that qualify. Boyer said she could make an application on behalf of the district once its budget and expenses are in place. The application is due in March 2016 for grants to be awarded by fall 2016.

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# Superintendent willing to consider school board building move

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Envisioning the stretch of riverfront from the Main Street Bridge to the new The District – Life Well Lived – Jacksonville site is similar to playing the childhood game, “One of These Things is Not Like the Other.”

Dotting the landscape are high-rise apartment and condominium buildings, hotels and restaurants, with more to follow once two large residential and retail developments begin construction in the near future.

Yet, sitting like a sore thumb between the old Crawdaddy’s site where Alliance Residential Company plans to build 300 luxury apartments and the 30 acres where San Marco developers Mike Balanky and Peter Rummel intend to build their futuristic healthy enclave of apartments, condos, upscale restaurants and shops lies Duval County School Board Administration Building and its uninspired parking lot.

Duval County Public Schools Superintendent Nikolai Vitti understands that over the years developers have salivated over the idea of obtaining the five-acre school board property. Now as the area surrounding the six-story, 112,461-square-foot building is on the cusp of taking off, he said he is more than willing to entertain fair offers for the Duval County School Board Administration building so that it might be relocated to a more advantageous location for both the city and the school district.

“There’s nothing about being on the river in this location that is associated with student achievement,” Vitti said in a telephone interview. “I’m willing to sell the building at a fair price.”

Although he has not done any specific “leg work” or “analysis,” Vitti said an acceptable offer would have to meet the following criteria:

1. It would enable the school district to move to a central location, preferably downtown;
2. It would enable the school district’s headquarters to move to a newer, more environmentally-friendly building that would have lower energy costs and be less expensive to maintain on a yearly basis;
3. It would enable the school district to relocate into a building with plenty of parking that would cost less to upgrade than the one the school district currently inhabits.

“We’d like to have something in the general radius of where we are now, but not on the water,” said Vitti, a San Marco resident. “It could be on the outskirts of downtown.”

Ideally, Vitti would like to have the



Nikolai Vitti, DCPS Superintendent



The Duval County Public School District shares the building at 1701 Prudential Dr. with the school board.

school district own its own building as it does now, but said he is not opposed to renting. “It would be great if we could purchase the land where we would move. Ideally, we want our own property, as we own what we have now, but I’m not against renting. It’s all about the cost,” he said.

Vitti also said he was willing to consider moving into a smaller building and relocating some of the departments now housed in the School Board building into Duval County school buildings that have unused space.

“The bottom line is the size of the building doesn’t need to meet the seating

capacity of our current building,” he said. “I don’t think all of our departments have to be located in a central building. For instance, curriculum and instruction doesn’t need to be in a central building. It could be in different schools that are under-utilized. Also, the parent and community engagement office could be spread throughout the county,” he said.

So far Vitti said he has engaged in casual conversations about a possible move, but hasn’t been presented with anything official. “I’m willing to entertain proposals, but so far there has been nothing formal at this point,” he said.



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# Nautical eyesore removed from Southbank

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Thanks to the generosity of a NASCAR racecar driver, the sunken Lady St. Johns, a derelict party boat, is no longer an eyesore on the river landscape in the view of many Southbank residents.

Ray Black, Jr., owner of Blacksmith Marine Corporation – Offshore, supplied a crane pro bono and spent four days raising the Lady St. Johns from its muddy resting place alongside the Southbank Riverwalk near the Chart House Restaurant.

Black began the task of removal on Dec. 11, finally towing the abandoned vessel four days later to an undisclosed location where it will be cleaned up and eventually taken into the ocean to become a reef, said Black's father, Ray Black, Sr., in a telephone interview.

Black Jr., a NASCAR driver who races in the Xfinity series, lives in Flagler Beach and owns the marine salvage company, which he operates during the months when he is not racing the circuit. According to his father, Blacksmith Marine did the work for free after it was contacted by the city.

"The city reached out to us, and we donated our time to the city to clean it up," said the elder Ray Black. "It was a real community effort – a partnership between the city, us and the reef community. The city asked for my son's help, and he did it. We originally thought with the crane it would take a day, but it ended up taking four because there were so many hull holes. The boat was in pretty bad shape,"



The Lady St. Johns, a party boat owned by River Cruises, Inc., was abandoned and stuck in the mud along the Southbank Riverwalk for several months, lacking a clear solution.

he said. "We honor our word, and we did it. We always do what we say we're going to do, even if it takes us a month," Black, Sr. said. "You have a really good mayor in Jacksonville. His office reached out to us to solve the problem, and everybody came forward to help."

The TISIRI (Think It, Sink It, Reef It) Corporation of Jacksonville has been contacted about the fate of the craft, said Joe Kistel of TISIRI. "The fate of the vessel has not been determined as of yet," he said. "We have been part of the conversations but have no information we can share as of yet. Perhaps we will have more info early next year."

### Southbank residents notified city

Tied up to a Southbank Riverwalk city

dock near the Chart House Restaurant for many months, the Lady St. Johns first began listing in its berth alongside its sister ship, the Annabelle Lee, in July. By early September, it was listing even more, said Hank Werner, who had a bird's eye view of both abandoned vessels from his 32nd-floor balcony in The Peninsula.

Concerned, Werner said he contacted both the Coast Guard and the City multiple times about the situation, which looked to be serious from his vantage point. By the end of September the boat had sunk, spilling more than 100 gallons of diesel fuel into the river, and requiring a speedy clean-up by the United States Coast Guard and Department of Environmental Protection, who put absorbing booms around the vessel to soak up the fuel.

"I saw the boat listing in July and I called the Coast Guard and City Hall and then I emailed the City Council," said Werner, who contacted District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer about the problem. "Two weeks later it sank. It would have been cheaper to get rid of it when it was floating. That crew spent four days digging it up."

Werner was not the only Southbank resident to contact Boyer about the problem. Many Southbank residents emailed her to express concern. Dr. Allyn Strickland, who lives in The Peninsula, wrote Boyer questioning when the "pollution source and eyesore for the Riverwalk" was going to be removed.

"I'm very upset about it. The city already told us it would gone and it wasn't," said Judy Sigman, a resident of The Peninsula, the day before the Lady St. Johns was raised. "It looks like people are living in it. I've seen indigent people go in and out," she said.

Boyer said she contacted many city

departments, including the Office of the General Counsel, to find a solution to the problem. "Here we have an expensive development. The city spent \$18 million on the Riverwalk, and this is an eyesore that needs to be removed," Boyer said when asked about the situation Dec. 3. "We don't want the Riverwalk to look like derelict shipyards."

According the city spokesperson Marsha Oliver, the Lady St. Johns and Annabelle Lee are the property of River Cruises Inc., a San Marco-based company owned by Dane Lucas, a well-known Jacksonville businessman.

In a telephone interview, Lucas said he had River Cruises, Inc. for 30 years but sold the business on a lease-to-own basis some time ago. His tenant neglected the boats, and when he stopped paying rent, Lucas was forced to take the business and the boats back. He has subsequently "closed" the business. The Lady St. Johns sank after Lucas took back the business, he said.

Dock rental for each boat to be tied up at the Southbank Riverwalk city dock is \$800 per month, said Tia Ford, a spokesperson for the city. "The monthly rent is paid in full through June 2015 with River Cruises Inc. currently owing \$9,600 in docking fees to the City of Jacksonville for both boats," she wrote in an email.

Oliver said the city expects Lucas, as the current owner of record, to pay for the outstanding fees. The Annabelle Lee is still tied up to the city dock and is still accruing fees, she said. The dock rental bill was sent out Dec. 17, Oliver said.



A crane owned by Blacksmith Marine Corporation – Offshore stands in the background after raising the Lady St. Johns, a derelict party boat owned by River Cruises, Inc., from the muddy river bottom Dec. 11.



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# JTA Board votes to keep Skyway

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

The Jacksonville Skyway, a monorail transit system managed by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, will live to see another day and possibly be expanded.

During its Dec. 10 meeting, the JTA Board of Directors voted unanimously to accept the Skyway subcommittee's recommendation to continue operating the downtown connector while having staff develop a Skyway Modernization Program, which will include replacing existing vehicles and evaluating future extensions into the adjacent neighborhoods of Brooklyn/Riverside and San Marco as well the sports district near EverBank Field.

The preliminary estimate to replace the vehicles and modernize the infrastructure and operating system is \$74 million, which does not include contingency funding or the cost of extensions, said Brad Thoburn, JTA Vice President of Long-Range Planning and System Development. If JTA finally decides to expand the 2.5 mile bi-directional system, it will have to search for additional city, state and federal funding.



The Skyway, Jacksonville's downtown monorail connector, will soon be modernized and possibly expanded, according to a recent decision made by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority.

The idea for the Skyway was conceived in the early 1970s as a way to address traffic congestion, air quality and parking issues in downtown Jacksonville. It currently provides service through downtown's inner core and across the river onto the Southbank with eight stations and a 25,000-square foot operations and maintenance facility.

The Skyway operates on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on weekends during select special events. Currently, the Skyway makes 5,000 trips per day and had 1.32 million trips during the fiscal year of 2015, said Thoburn during the meeting.

The total cost of the original system including planning, design, construction, vehicles and equipment was \$185 million. JTA, the City, the Florida Department of Transportation and the Fed-

eral Transit Administration all provided funding for the system.

In early September, JTA chairman Scott McCaleb formed a three-man subcommittee of his board as well as a 15-member advisory group consisting of downtown stakeholders to decide between five options: keep the Skyway as it is by overhauling existing vehicles and infrastructure; keep it as it is but modify the vehicles to be used on the existing system; decommission and tear down the system once it no longer operates safely and replace it with either a streetcar, trolley, bus rapid transit or personal rapid transit system; decommission the system and repurpose it into an elevated bike and pedestrian walkway or extend its routes into the neighboring communities.

Since it was built in the late 1980s, the

Skyway system has been heavily criticized as a transportation system "that goes nowhere." However, when presented with the options of keeping the system as is or decommissioning it and tearing it down, an overwhelming majority of residents responded favorably to retaining the Skyway and expanding its routes to take riders to adjacent communities.

During the JTA Board meeting, Thoburn said JTA had received 1,619 responses to its online survey about the Skyway's future. Of those responding, 80 percent favored keeping the Skyway and expanding the system. Nine percent preferred repurposing it to an elevated multi-use path. When asked about potential route extensions for the Skyway, 83 percent of respondents supported having it head to the Sports District and Shipyards while 79 percent wanted to see a Brooklyn/Riverside extension and 66 percent favored further connecting the system into San Marco.

In a telephone interview after the meeting, Downtown Investment Authority President Aundra Wallace said he was happy with the JTA Board's decision.

"The Skyway is essential for mobility downtown," said Wallace, who favored keeping the system. "I live at San Marco Place. I can see the Skyway from my balcony. When it arrives at the station I know I have seven minutes between trains. I can get over to the station in seven minutes and then be at my work at City Hall in less than 15 minutes. It was a plus for me when I relocated here from the Midwest. Living close to the Skyway was a great selling point for me. It has to be great for others."

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# Hot demand for commercial real estate in 'hip' historic districts

By Lorrie DeFrank  
Resident Community News

Commercial real estate in Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods is in demand—and hard to find.

Merchants, restaurateurs and other business people looking for space face challenges. Vacancies are scarce in the long-established neighborhoods of San Marco, Riverside and Avondale as well as in new developments such as Brooklyn Station and 220 Riverside.

"Commercial follows residential, and residential is as hot as it's been there in seven or eight years," said Robert Warren, president and broker, Warren & Company. "There's a movement around the country to come back to the central core. People want to live where there is life and activity and restaurants to walk to."

In addition, Warren said a continually improving economy coupled with low interest rates are encouraging people—many who are experienced baby boomers wanting to work for themselves—to open businesses. "These areas have become some of the best in Jacksonville, particularly the last 12 months," he said. "Demand for commercial real estate in cool hip little areas like San Marco, Riverside, 5 Points and Brooklyn increased significantly."

Although the majority of businesses in the Historic Districts are locally owned and strongly supported by the locals who frequent them, some national chains—such as the Hair Cuttery and Corner Bakery Cafe at Brooklyn Station—offer diverse products and services.

"Supporting local business is something we like to do," said Brooklyn Station spokesman Eric Davidson, communication manager, Regency Centers. "We like to do a strong mix. Each enhances the other based on needs."

That Unity Plaza, which has no weekend rentals available from March through Memorial Day, indicates how nonprofits, too, energize the district and support its commercial establishments. Since its fall opening, the urban park and amphitheater, a public-private partnership, has hosted monthly festivals as well as activities sponsored by local nonprofits to raise awareness of their missions.

"We are completely coming alive, surrounded by food and beverage," said Jennifer Jones Murray, executive director

of Unity Plaza, praising Sbraga & Co. and Hobnob, new restaurants at the adjacent 200 Riverside. "In the Historic District and Urban Core, relationships drive a highly individualized and very artistic experience. Jacksonville is on fire with talent and we see this individualized style, especially in food and beverage in Brooklyn."

## Steady growth

In contrast to the commercial explosion in Brooklyn, which underwent a dramatic transformation from one of the city's most impoverished neighborhoods, San Marco's business district has been growing steadily for decades.

"San Marco is one of the original shopping districts in Jacksonville, evolving from gas stations and grocery stores to upscale restaurants, bars, theaters and fabulous boutiques. San Marco Bookstore and San Marco Theatre have been there for years," said Anita Vining, president, San Marco Merchants Association, and Realtor, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. "It brings people from all points of Jacksonville in large part because of independent boutiques that offer more upscale merchandise and personal service."

She said the thriving business corridors that extend from San Marco Boulevard to Hendricks Avenue all the way to Lakewood are filling up. Particularly in San Marco Square, vacancies are rare.

"You can't find anything in San Marco Square unless somebody moves out," agreed Warren Tyre, broker principal, Commercial Real Estate Solutions, and a San Marco resident. "It's still a seller's market, or owner's market, because if you've got something precious, it costs more."

Tyre said the lure is all about the aura—"the friendliness, the acceptance, being able to get whatever you want, good food, interesting clothing, places to pick up this and that, and still be close to home. And it's safe."

## No empty storefronts

Likewise at Park and King, empty buildings are scarce. District 14 Councilman Jim Love, president of the Park and King Merchants Association, credits the city's multi-million dollar Town Center Initiative in 2005 with turning the decaying area around. The project that included upgrading

*"Commercial follows residential, and residential is as hot as it's been in seven or eight years. There's a movement around the country to come back to the central core. People want to live where there is life and activity and restaurants to walk to."*

— Robert Warren

President and Broker, Warren & Company.

drainage, streets and landscaping enhanced a business district that continues to thrive.

Examples include Kickbacks Gastropub's expansion a few years ago, Burger King's recent remodeling and Il Desco, a locally owned Italian restaurant that opened in the former Pele's Wood Fire location at Park and King streets.

"The attraction is the vibrancy of the walkable neighborhood," said Love.

"You can window shop, get a tattoo or a hamburger...and Kickbacks has the most variety of beer in Northeast Florida."

Love sees that commercial momentum on Stockton Street, too.

You won't find empty storefronts in Avondale, either. "As soon as something goes, something else moves in," said Dianne Garcia, president of the Shoppes of Avondale Merchants Association and co-owner of jAshley Boutique with her daughter, Ashley Holt, for nearly 15 years.

"The majority of shoppers are local, but a good percentage is from out of town," she said. "When you go to a new city, you want to go somewhere that is unique and you look up the historic areas. We get a lot of that."

"The past few years have been great here. There are not a lot of vacancies," concurred Allan DeVault, speaking of Riverside's trendy 5 Points area. "There's a lot of demand to be in the neighborhood. People come from Fernandina Beach to our restaurants."

A managing partner of Black Sheep Restaurant, DeVault is a member and past president of 5 Points Merchants Association. He attributes 5 Points' popularity largely to its diversity of local and national businesses and its strong neighborhood advocate groups such as Riverside Avondale Preservation.

"And Brooklyn, a healthy walk away, can only make it busier for us," he said.

The commercial spots at Brooklyn's 220 Riverside residential/retail complex

are filled with Sbraga & Co., Hobnob and Brixx, according to David Auchter, executive vice president and COO of NAI Hallmark Partners, one of several parties that executed the community plan to redevelop Brooklyn. "This is just the tip of the iceberg," he said of the current new activity plus what's in the works, including the new YMCA, a Gate station and a hotel. "We see Forest Street as the new gateway to downtown Jacksonville."

## 'New urbanism'

From Riverside to San Marco, AccuBuild has been involved in at least 25 historic preservation and/or commercial projects. "We feel we are pioneers there," said founder Mark Rubin who sees the focus moving more toward local businesses. Currently, AccuBuild is working on local projects at Stockton and Oak streets and at LaSalle Street and San Marco Boulevard.

"There's been a lot of pent-up demand from people wanting to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams but capital markets have been closed, so people had to defer their dreams," Rubin said. "Now we see them coming on line."

Traci Jenks, senior director, Cushman & Wakefield, sees "new urbanism" at play in the commercial excitement. "It's not technically downtown, but neighborhood people can walk to shops and restaurants where they work, live and play. Not a big mall, it's more a hometown kind of feel. People really want to embrace those local operators."

With few vacancies throughout the Historic District and with Riverside Avenue filling up, Jenks predicts that older buildings on Park Street will be renovated. "We will see creative things with more distressed buildings that have been vacant for years," she said. "People are going to figure out how to make them work."

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# Luxury apartments to comprise first phase of The District



Rendering of proposed luxury apartment planned for The District – Life Well Lived – Jacksonville. (Rendering by Pucciano & English)

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

The first phase of The District – Life Well Lived – Jacksonville is one step closer to becoming reality.

On Dec. 15 Equity Resources LLC of Birmingham, Alabama, announced plans to develop a high-end luxury apartment community in connection with The District – Life Well Lived – Jacksonville, a Southbank riverfront urban resort planned by real estate developers Peter Rummell, Mike Balanky and their partner Michael Munz, all of San Marco.

Referred to as The District Luxury Apartments, the development will comprise one component of three phases The District developers have planned. It will consist of two buildings, each containing 276 residential units. Both apartment structures will include a five-story multifamily building

built above 46,000 square feet of retail space and a 433-space parking garage.

Plans call for a groundbreaking in early to mid-summer 2016, with the first apartment homes completed and ready for residents to move in approximately 18 months later.

The plans offer a mix of efficiencies, one- and two-bedroom apartments ranging in size from 642 to 1073 square feet. The apartments will be well appointed with high-end features such as gourmet kitchens with granite countertops, under-mount sinks, custom-routed wood cabinetry with brushed nickel hardware, stainless steel appliances and upscale wood finish flooring.

“We are thrilled to bring this high-end multifamily component to The District,” said Jack Fiorella, president of Equity Resources. “Peter Rummell and his partners have an innovative vision for this 30-acre development that is focused heavily on their guiding principles of unintentional

*“Peter Rummell and his partners have an innovative vision for this 30-acre development ... We are convinced that our apartment home development will complement that vision quite nicely.”*

— Jack Fiorella  
President, Equity Resources

exercise and multi-generational lifestyle living. We are convinced that our apartment home development will complement that vision quite nicely.”

The District community will offer amenities including a grand elevated courtyard that will feature a resort-style swimming pool, covered pavilions, grilling stations and fire pits. An observation deck will be included, allowing residents views of the planned marina on the St. Johns River and the downtown Jacksonville skyline.

The District will also include an athletic club, gourmet coffee and hot tea bar, a residents’ retreat with media and gaming, a cyber business area and will be fully wired with cutting-edge technology. Residents will also have access to The District’s Base Camp, which will be the focal point of the development and will include yoga classes, personal health counseling, community gardening, a health concierge, and computer technology which can harness the resident’s fitness experiences.

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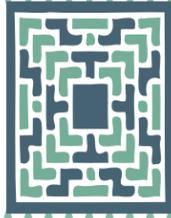


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# New community name reflects Southbank's healthy ambition

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

After much scrutiny over four months, San Marco developers Peter Rummell and Michael Balanky and their partner Michael Munz have finally selected "The District - Life Well Lived - Jacksonville" as the official name of their proposed "healthy-concept" urban resort on the Southbank.

The trio, which formerly used the working moniker "Healthy Town" to describe the project, sought to select a name that would embody the new community "as a place where you can live healthily in a cool mixed-use urban setting with multi-generations."

"Places in which people live, work and play affect their mental and physical well-being. When a community is designed to go beyond the requisite bike paths and fitness centers and instead integrates the natural and virtual environments, positive results are sure to emerge," said Balanky. "Whether you call The District home or visit to dine, shop or take advantage of the array of riverfront activities, you will know you are in a unique and special destination."

More than 1,000 entries were submitted to the

Healthy Town website resulting in five winners, all of whom used a version of the word "district" in their suggestion.

The District's development team has yet to release the names of the winners, however, each is being contacted and will receive a year's free membership in "Base Camp," the new resort's "alternative to the traditional clubhouse or town center that will be a focal point where hardware and software integrate within The District."

The winners' names will also be listed on the community cornerstone, which will be unveiled along with other public art pieces displayed throughout the development.

"The enormous level of interest that Jacksonville residents and the development community have shown for the project has reaffirmed that we are creating a model for future multi-generational life-style living that starts in Jacksonville," said Rummell. "As a team that cares about the community we call home, we are tremendously proud to be bringing 30-acres of prime river-front land in the heart of our city to life and creating The District - Life Well Lived - Jacksonville."



This is the most recent rendering of The District - Life Well Lived - Jacksonville

## New name for Healthy Town - love it or leave it?

Jacksonville developers Mike Balanky and Peter Rummell changed the name of their proposed Southbank development from Healthy Town to *The District - Life Well Lived - Jacksonville*. *The Resident* asked, "What do you think of the new name?"



**Al Palazzola**  
San Marco

I prefer the old name. The new name is too long. I don't understand why they would change something that really didn't need to be changed to begin with.



**Vanessa Mullin**  
San Marco

It sounds a bit long, but it encourages a healthy lifestyle of living well in Jacksonville.



**Ward Blakely**  
San Marco

Quite frankly, it's a bit hokey. Sounds like something Disney World would come up with. It sounds like a forced program, a Walt Disney envisioned project, not the real world.



**Emory Frostenson**  
San Marco

It matches what it is and that's kind of cool. I'm excited we live pretty close by and it will revive the area.



**Skip Frostenson**  
San Marco

I think the name matches what they are trying to accomplish. The District makes it more like it is a part of downtown. It will integrate the community.

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# New Daily's Dash location to open in San Marco

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

First Coast Energy boasts having more than 170 Shell gas stations in Florida and 25 in Northeast Florida alone. When the doors of its new Daily's station on Atlantic Boulevard in San Marco open in mid-January, company CEO and co-founder Aubrey Edge of Avondale said his newest venture will be more of a neighborhood gas station than impersonal member of a large franchise.

"We've worked very diligently with the neighborhood association to not only fit in with the neighborhood but to become a part of the neighborhood," Edge said in an interview at his newest location. "I think San Marco residents will respond to the high quality of our offerings."

First Coast Energy expects to hold its grand opening in mid-January with a ribbon cutting and much fanfare. It will be the 13th location in Florida to offer Dash fast-casual food.

The new service station will consist of eight double-sided multiproduct Shell gasoline dispensers, a freestanding car wash and a 5,000-square-foot convenience store, which will include the Dash food operation.

Daily's Dash is an in-store kiosk, which includes breakfast offerings, salads, made-to-order sandwiches comprised of top-of-the line deli meats and other items. The store will include a gluten-free section of premium snacks and a diverse selection of premium coffees, high-end wines and champagnes.

"Our top of the line deli meats can rival any high-end deli," Edge said. "We have no phosphates or binders in the turkey we serve. Our selection of specialty coffee will rival that of any coffee shop."

A small, covered eating area will be available for customers who want to eat on-site, and with 20 spaces there will be plenty of free parking.

*"We've worked very diligently with the neighborhood association to not only fit in with the neighborhood but to become a part of the neighborhood"*

— Aubrey Edge  
CEO, Co-founder, First Coast Energy

Embodying the slogan, "It's nicer here," Daily's has always been a community player, Edge said. "We've always felt it's important to give back to the community," he said, noting nearly all of the charitable work the company underwrites benefits children.

Joining forces with St. Vincent's Health System, Daily's supports the hospital's Mobile Outreach Ministry and has sponsored an annual charity golf tournament, which over the past six years has netted \$2.4 million, including \$450,000 last year alone.

The company's heart is in supporting underprivileged children in Northeast Florida. Daily's believes in giving financial assistance to local organizations including the Boselli Foundation, Birdies for the Brave, St. Mark's Episcopal Day School's Scholarship program and Angels for Allison. In the past, it has been the title sponsor for the Ortega River Run, and this year will support Riverside Presbyterian Day School's new Fit-4-Life program, becoming the new title sponsor for the program's duathlon event (biking and running), which is designed to promote healthy exercise and activities for children.

Daily's consistently contributes to local schools and community sports in the region. In fact, its convenience stores give free ICEEs to any child under age 12 who



First Coast Energy CEO and Company Co-founder Aubrey Edge is overseeing the installation of a new Daily's gas station on Atlantic Boulevard in San Marco.

comes into the store wearing any type of uniform, be it sports, band, cheerleading, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.

One recent way Daily's gave back to the community was through its "Name Your Own Price and Give Back" promotion on Dec. 18, when customers were allowed to decide what they would pay for food, from 50 cents to \$500 from its Dash concessions. The company donated all

the proceeds earned that day to the St. Vincent's Mobile Outreach Ministry.

"We think San Marco is a great location for the Daily's concept," Edge said. "Daily's focus is to deliver high quality products at competitive prices. I think San Marco residents will respond to the high quality of our offerings like they have everywhere."

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# MOVERS & SHAKERS

## Local residents among honorees of 2016 Humanitarian Awards



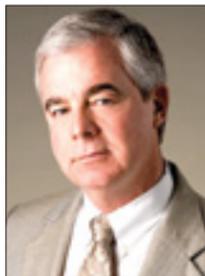
Alton W. Yates



Harry Frisch



Hope McMath



Michael Boylan



Kevin Gay



Susan Greene

The OneJax Institute at the University of North Florida announced the recipients of its 2016 Humanitarian Awards, honoring individuals who have demonstrated the highest level of personal and professional integrity, given generously and extensively to the community and have been dedicated to the improvement of human relations among diverse groups in the community.

Alton W. Yates, aerospace and civil rights pioneer, is the recipient of the 2016 Gold Medallion for Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing those who have had an

extraordinary impact on and have given back generously to their communities through exceptional commitment to the OneJax mission of promoting the dignity and respect of all people.

Riverside resident Hope McMath, director of the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, is the recipient of the President's Citation Award, bestowed periodically to a leader whose efforts and vision have resulted in substantial, positive, local and national changes in one or more areas.

The 2016 Silver Medallions, given in

recognition of their outstanding dedication and community service, will be awarded to Michael T. Boylan, president and CEO, WJCT Public Broadcasting; San Jose resident Harry Frisch, founder, Beaver Street Fisheries; Kevin T. Gay, founder and CEO, Operation New Hope - Ready4Work Jacksonville; and Susan Greene, community volunteer, and San Jose resident.

The honorees will be publically recognized during a special ceremony at 6 p.m., April 14, 2016, at the Prime Osborn Convention Center.

### St. Nicholas resident opens law practice downtown



Michael Rainka

Michael Rainka, St. Nicholas resident, has opened Rainka Law, LLC with offices in downtown Jacksonville. The practice focuses on criminal defense, personal injury and family law. Rainka previously worked as an Assistant Public Defender and with a civil firm focusing on personal injury and construction defect litigation. He holds a Bachelor's degree in history from the University of Florida and a law degree from Florida Coastal School of Law, is a member of the Jacksonville Bar Association, the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, as well as its Jacksonville Chapter, and the Jax Sports Council. For information, visit [makeitrainka.com](http://makeitrainka.com) or call (904) 516-5426.



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### 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



Billie Nimnicht, III

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.

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# Alcoholics Anonymous Florida celebrates 75 years

Just four and half years after Alcoholics Anonymous had its beginning in Akron, Ohio, Jacksonville held the Florida AA meeting at 2747 Riverside Ave.

In September 1940, a retired Navy Commander involved in Alcoholics Anonymous in Los Angeles, California, received orders to report to Jacksonville Naval Air Station to prepare for the possibility of war by organizing the first Aviation Training School. The Commander's wife had initiated his interest in Alcoholics Anonymous by purchasing him a copy of the Alcoholics Anonymous organization's "Big Book." She was also helped by a base physician who found another alcoholic that the Commander could work with, and with his help started the fledgling AA movement in Florida.

Members of Alcoholics Anonymous will be celebrating this monumental event 75 years later on Jan. 16, 2016, 2-4 p.m., at the San Marco Club, 1423 San Marco Blvd., where AA moved in 1953 after having met in a variety of other locations, primarily downtown. There will be speakers, displays and light refreshments at the anniversary event.



The first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in Florida was held Jan. 6, 1941 at 2747 Riverside Ave.

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

### Local pastor earns doctorate



Rev. Gary Webber

Southside Baptist Senior Pastor the Rev. Gary Webber graduated from Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama with a Doctorate of Ministry Dec. 2.

To earn his doctorate, Webber, of San Marco, completed a dissertation entitled "The Alien Church," which discussed the benefits of cross-cultural ministry.

A native of Lakewood, Webber grew up as a member of the Southside Baptist Church and has served as its senior pastor since October 2008. He is also a graduate of Jacksonville University with a Bachelor's degree in music education and a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

### Greenscape, San Marco musician receive SPARK grants

Composer, musician Maxwell Lee, of San Marco, and Greenscape of Jacksonville, Inc. are two of the five recipients of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's 2016 SPARK grants.

Lee, with his film partner, James Siler, conceived "The Music Video 48-Hour Challenge" project to showcase local talent to a worldwide audience and to showcase Downtown Jacksonville to worldwide talent. Musicians and video artists will be challenged to apply to be selected to produce music videos in the SPARK District within a 48-hour period to be shown over a weekend in the fall of 2016.

Greenscape, the 44-year-old non-profit dedicated to planting, protecting and promoting trees in the city, plans to bring a provocative public art installation to the SPARK District known as "Blue Trees." This project, originally created by Australian artist Konstantin Dimopoulos, has attracted the interest of residents and tourists in cities all over the world.

Projects will be implemented between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016, using \$70,000 of funds raised from recent Arts Awards Gala including a sponsorship by Florida Blue. The investment in these projects brings the total amount granted



Maxwell Lee

directly to projects and organizations to \$176,000 over three years.

Other winners include visual artist Nicole Holderbaum of Neptune Beach, the Jacksonville University Music Department, and Stage Aurora Theatrical Company.

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# GO Jax program aids community by building relationships

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Last August, when members of Southside Baptist Church joined forces with volunteers of three other churches to put up a new privacy barrier between Bolle's Bartram campus and the Florida Baptist Children's Home, the project was more than just building a fence, said Southside senior pastor Gary Webber of San Marco. "It's about building relationships," Webber said. "Bolles, Southside Baptist and the Children's Home worked on it together. It was a great example of how a private school and the Faith-based community can work on things together."

In order to encourage more cooperation between churches of different denominations and the neighborhoods they serve, Southside Baptist has initiated GO Jax, a new program where nonprofit community organizations supply projects and churches marshal the manpower to get things done.

"GO Jax is an effort to mobilize multiple churches to bless the community and neighborhoods in the name of Christ," Webber said. "We work with groups in the area on projects that need to be done."

The next GO Jax weekend is scheduled for Saturday, April 23. The church will be posting a link on its website for volunteers to sign up in February, said Vickie Harrelson,

Southside Baptist's Director of Lay Mobilization. Southside Baptist is currently soliciting new projects from organizations for its next GO Jax event, Webber said. "We hope to involve more churches next time and do it twice a year, in the spring and fall."

On August 8, members of The City Church, Southside Karen Baptist Mission, both of San Marco, and Deer Meadows Baptist in Southside joined volunteers from Webber's congregation to perform seven neighborhood projects on a single Saturday. In total more than 160 people from four different churches worked at seven different sites to kick off GO Jax pilot program. The churches supplied the workforce and also paid for supplies and materials to complete the project, Webber said, noting participation allows families and members of different churches to meet each other and serve together.

In addition to tearing down an old wooden fence and replacing it with a new privacy enclosure between the Florida Baptist Children's Home and Bolle's Bartram campus, two of August's projects included helping to paint and do electrical work at The Pulse Ministries Youth Center on Spring Park Road and cleaning out the flowerbeds and putting in new landscaping at Englewood High School.

Englewood Principal Sara Bravo reached out to Webber when she wanted to spruce



Volunteers from four local churches joined together to build a fence with volunteers from The Bolles School as part of GO Jax, a program initiated by Southside Baptist Church.

up the entrance to the public high school before welcoming its students last fall. The church paid for new bushes and mulch and had the items delivered so GO Jax volunteers could join Englewood students in re-landscaping the front entrance and office area outside the theatre.

"Sara wanted the place to look good for the first day of school," Webber explained, noting he became acquainted with her when she was principal of Landon Middle School, where Southside Baptist is a faith-based partner. "She wanted the kids to see that we care about the place.

"We become aware of most needs because of our relationships," Webber continued, adding that he learned about the

fence project because the Chief Financial Officer at Bolles attends his church.

"As members of the church become involved with the community, they become aware of its needs. We are trying to network in the name of Christ. Many hands make light work," Webber said. "We want to descend with 20 people and get the work done. When the body of Christ works together, great things can be accomplished for the glory of God.

"It's not that we come in and do it for you, it's that we come and work with you," Webber continued. "Our effort is to connect churches with local needs. This is a creative way to focus on it, and give a concerted effort."

## Volunteers needed to plant trees on River Oaks Road

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

The San Marco Preservation Society has accepted the challenge Jax Digs Trees Campaign put forth by Scenic America and Greenscape to plant trees in San Marco to improve the tree canopy and provide shade on local streets and sidewalks.

SMPS will hold a public meeting to discuss planting the trees in city right-of-ways on Thursday, Jan. 7 at Preservation Hall in Fletcher Park, 1652 Atlantic Boulevard.

The trees, which are free, will be provided through a GreenReLeaf partnership between Greenscape of Jacksonville and JEA, said SMPS President Andrew Dickson.

The Preservation Society will supply a corps of neighborhood and high school volunteers for the tree-planting event, which will be held Saturday, Feb. 6, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Volunteers will meet on River Oaks Road.

The neighborhood area that will be served will be River

Oaks Road and its culs-de-sac east and west of Hendricks Avenue as well as Fieldston, Thornwood, Southwood, Green Bay, Riverwood, White Oak, and West Cove Lanes.

This area was selected because it is a "discrete geographic area" where there are many gaps in the tree canopy and sidewalks clearly mark the city rights of way, Dickson said. "It was also targeted because it includes many neighborhoods on both sides of Hendricks Avenue and includes properties within a range of income levels. However, all neighborhoods are eligible for future plantings," he said.

JEA Urban Arborist Joe Anderson will survey the neighborhood to identify gaps in the tree canopy and select suitable trees for each location. During the public meeting, residents can sign up for trees, Dickson said.

Six- to seven-foot trees will be provided free of charge in 15-gallon containers. Property owners will be responsible for watering and maintenance of the trees.

The effort is similar to an earlier tree planting the Society sponsored in Alexandria Oaks Park in October.

North San Marco is a candidate for tree planting for fall 2016, particularly the grid between Atlantic Boulevard and I-95, the Florida East Coast Railway tracks and the river, said Dickson.

"We would like to do Green ReLeaf twice a year, in the fall and spring," he said. "Eventually we would like to cover all of San Marco. There are a lot of big oaks that were planted when the neighborhood started that are dying off so there are gaps we want to fill."

Scenic Jacksonville and Greenscape are providing trees as part of its Jax Digs Trees campaign to celebrate the city's tree charter amendment, Dickson said. "Basically they will provide trees to people who want them," Dickson said.

The Jax Digs Trees tree-planting challenge campaign was created to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Tree Charter Amendment and help ensure a healthy tree canopy for future generations. Jax Digs Trees is a citywide initiative to increase scenic beauty, create a healthier community by increasing Jacksonville's tree canopy and ensure the continuation of a vibrant, urban tree cover.

The Jacksonville community is encouraged to use social media to share tree planting activities by posting their tree photos online and using the campaign hashtag, #jaxdigstrees. Interested citizens and organizations are encouraged to challenge others to plant trees and help protect and preserve Jacksonville's vibrant tree canopy.

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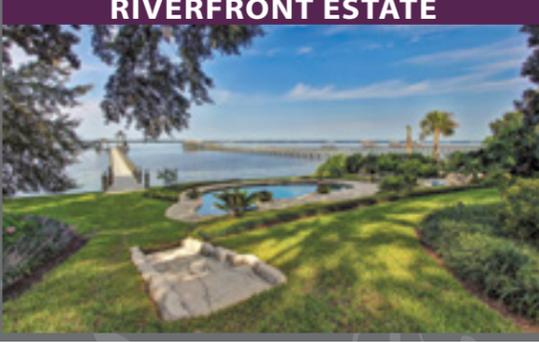
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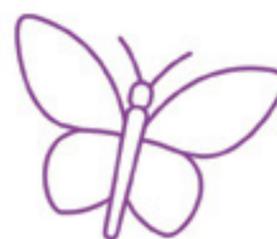
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**Local designer hosts trunk show at Underwood's**

Underwood's Jewelers hosted a private party for a group of special guests, Jacksonville Jaguar notables and friends of jewelry designer Priyanka Murthy at their Avondale location. Murthy, an Ortega resident, now adorns celebrities and other sports figures with her Arya Esha line of jewelry.

The trunk show, held on Dec. 15, arrived just in time for the holidays where locals got the chance to partake in purchases from her lineup of earrings, bracelets pendants and other accessory items. Ten percent of the proceeds from the evening's event will go toward Jaguar long snapper Carson Tinker and his wife Annie's Be a Blessing Foundation. The funds will help Habijax to build and furnish a home for a deserving family in need.



Emily Pepper with Priyanka Murthy



Purvi Sanghvi, Mittal Desai and Niral Shah



Jaguars Kicker Carson Tinker and Annie Tinker, Mary Dudley, Christy and Clayton Bromberg



Linda DiTeodoro, Megha Chokshi, Vik and Suma Gopal with Kunal Thakkar



Michaela Bradley with Nancy Babich

**SOCIAL R**

**Antiques, Art and Spanish influence at 2015 Gala**

The Art & Antiques Show gala, presented by the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital, rolled out the red carpet and invited guests to ¡Viva España!, Dec. 4. The intriguing evening, a high point for the social season, is highlighted by antique furnishings, decorative accessories, fine art, collectibles, rugs and jewelry from top antiques dealers from around the country.

The four-day event, held annually at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center, begins with a black tie Benefactor Preview Reception followed by the Opening Night Party. The remainder of the weekend features lectures from nationally-renowned interior designers, event and floral designers. The Children's Fashion Show, featuring current and former patients of Wolfson Children's Hospital, is a crowd pleaser each year as well.

For the past 38 years, the mission of increasing awareness and raising funds for Wolfson Children's Hospital has grown to reach women across the First Coast. With approximately 400 members, The Women's Board has raised more than \$26 million for facilities, equipment and programs.



Johnson Sarber and Women's Board President Grace Sarber



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# Nonprofit seeks to find missing children with help from baseball fans

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Former minor league baseball player Dennis Bair has a motto: "More eyes looking mean more children found."

Founder of BairFind, a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2010 with the purpose of helping to find missing children, Bair is teaming up with San Marco resident Ellen Sullivan, CEO of BairFind foundation, to revolutionize the search for missing kids nationwide by placing photos and profiles of lost youngsters in minor league stadiums throughout the United States.

"BairFind is revolutionizing the search for missing kids in the United States, and we are making it happen from Jacksonville," said Bair, who formerly played for the Chicago Cubs, Cincinnati Reds and Arizona Diamondbacks organizations.

Bair and Sullivan recently attended the Baseball Winter Meetings in Nashville,

Tenn., in order to push for a nationwide program for the 2016 season. Current league partners include the Southern League, Florida State League and the New York - Penn League.

Already, his organization has placed profiles in 40 minor league stadiums including The Jacksonville Suns and aims to cover all 160 stadiums nationwide this year.

The BairFind Foundation was started at the end of 2010 in Pittsburgh and originally licensed in Pennsylvania. Bair also licensed his organization in Florida when he moved to Jacksonville last year. Presently it has board members in both states including three local members: Angela Campbell, the aunt of Mark Degner, who has been



Dennis Bair's baseball card with the Cubs

missing since 2005; Kevin Monahan of Small Business Development Center and Guy Cuddihee of San Marco.

"I was honored to be asked to join the BairFind Foundation board," said Cuddihee. "I have known Ellen Sullivan for over 25 years, and it was great to meet Dennis Bair who is the founder of the foundation. Ellen and Dennis have a passion for finding missing children around the country, and I'm looking forward to helping the foundation meet its local, regional and national goals."

Every year thousands of children go missing. Many are located due to the selfless efforts of law enforcement agencies and other organizations, but still thousands of children remain missing every year. When their profiles fade from the news and flyers, leads helping to locate them quickly dry up, said Sullivan in an email. When the public stops looking, the chance of recovering a missing child

decreases substantially, she said, noting Bair spent many years in baseball stadiums and realized the power of these venues in the search for missing kids.

The Jacksonville Suns are participating in the BairFind program and have a concourse sign. Last August, BairFind and the Suns hosted a first-pitch ceremony for the family of local missing boy Mark Degner to help keep Mark's profile in public awareness.

The Foundation also brought long-time Cleveland kidnapping victim Gina DeJesus and her family to Jacksonville last October to introduce them to Degner's family.

DeJesus' widely publicized rescue in 2013 was a major breakthrough for the foundation, which had featured DeJesus and her fellow captive Amanda Berry on its website and stadium signs for many years. To date a total of 65 of 278 children featured on stadium concourse signs have been successfully located and brought home.



Young baseball players gaze at a sign on the concourse of the Jacksonville Suns stadium.



Long-time captive Gina DeJesus and her family with Dennis Bair after a first-pitch ceremony last summer.

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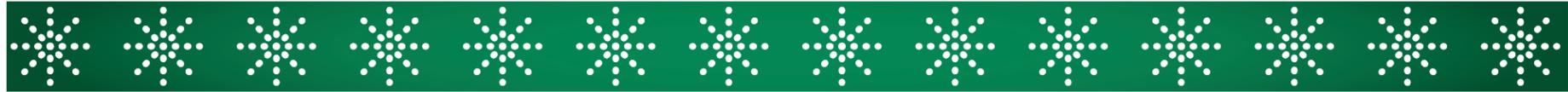
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### Pets share Christmas wishes with Santa in San Marco



Abraham, a black Labrador retriever owned by Katie Delaney poses with Santa Claus at St. Francis Animal Hospital Nov. 29.

Pets and their families had the opportunity to be photographed with Santa Claus during Santa Paws, a fundraiser for St. Francis Animal Hospital, a non-profit animal hospital in San Marco Nov. 29. Proceeds from the event helped provide veterinary care to family pets in need.

### JCA helps celebrate the season, lights the night

Families from the Jacksonville Jewish Community Alliance gathered for the annual Chanukiyah Lighting Ceremony and Chanukkah celebration Dec. 7 at the JCA facility in San Jose.

Approximately 300 members of the local Jewish community came together to celebrate Chanukkah, the eight-day festival of lights that began on the eve of the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev.

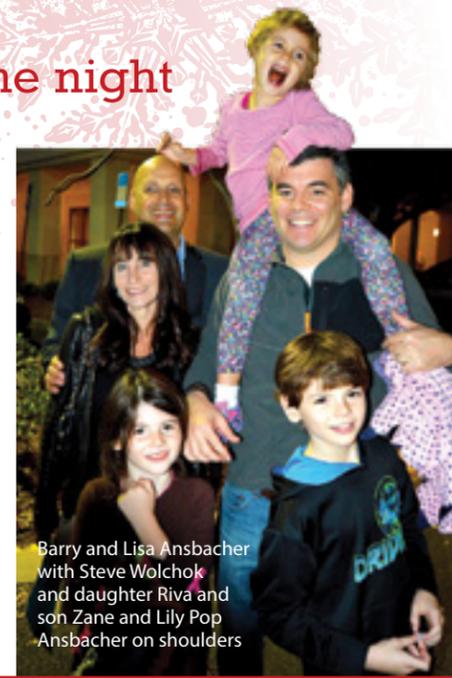
Lighting the giant outdoor chanukiyah was JCA President and Purchasing Director of Beaver Street Fisheries Adam Frisch. The nine-branched Chanukiyah was created by local artist David Ponsler. It commemorat-

ed the miracle of a day's worth of Menorah oil, which lasted eight days. Eight of the chanukiyah's nine candles symbolize each day the single day's worth of oil burned after the consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem.

During the ceremony, David Flagler, Director of Jewish Family Program at the JCA, led the throng in song and also in the recitation of Chanukkah candle lighting blessings.

After the event, members brought Tzedakah gifts, which were later donated to Jewish Family and Community Services.

JCA members also enjoyed a large buffet, and children played games.



Barry and Lisa Ansbacher with Steve Wolchok and daughter Riva and son Zane and Lily Pop Ansbacher on shoulders



Peninsula Board member Judy Sigman and Natalya Horne

### Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and all that jazz

The Peninsula of Jacksonville residents and their friends enjoyed cocktails, heavy hors d'oeuvres, a chocolate fountain and superb entertainment led by Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and Juilliard graduate Ulysses Owens, Jr., a jazz musician, in support of Don't Miss A Beat, a nonprofit with the mission to blend music, art, academic achievement and civic engagement for youth in the Riverside, Brooklyn and Woodstock communities.

Donations, as well as the proceeds from a toy drive initiated by Peninsula, residents benefited 30 families with children from age four to 16. Thanks to the generosity of the Southbank residents, on December 25, the children and their parents, received Christmas toys, winter coats and groceries. Proceeds also supported Don't Miss A Beat's arts and afterschool tutoring programs in the Brooklyn and Woodstock neighborhoods.

### Merchants spread holiday cheer at St. Nicholas Train Station

Santa Claus greeted more than 100 smiling and excited children during the Jolly Holiday Christmas party Dec. 10 at St. Nicholas Train Station Park.

It was the first time since 2008 that a Christmas gathering had been held in the old train station on Beach Boulevard.

The once-annual party was revived this year due to the generosity of seven merchants - Sylvia Pulido of Havana-Jax Café and Cuba Libre Nightclub; Jill Mero of Mero Realty in San Marco, Drs. Danny and Rene Pulido of Emed Multispecialty Group and Walk-in Clinic; Tim Wilson of Tom's Printing; Louis and Joe Joseph of the Mudville Grille and Kuhn's Florist co-owners Marty McCall and Charlie Howard.

In charge of decorating, Howard and McCall transformed the interior of the station by bringing a faux fireplace, sparkling Christmas trees, elf statutes and Santa Claus himself.

Children munched on cotton candy, popcorn and snow cones and enjoyed jumping in a bounce house after lining up to see Santa. During the visit with Old St. Nick, Amanda Taylor and

Lee-Anna Taylor of Kuhn's Florist took a free photo of each child, which parents were able to pick up the next day at their store.

Rene Pulido and his brother provided three carloads of toys to be given out at the event. "I just went to Walmart and bought everything they had," Rene Pulido said.

Providing live holiday music was Oleta Riggs of Mandarin, who donated her services by playing guitar and singing during the event.

Mero, who came up with the idea to revitalize the event, said the turnout was better than she could have dreamed. "It was a great success, way better than we thought," she said. "It was really a community effort."

"We had twice as many as last time," said Sylvia Pulido, who said she is already looking ahead to doing another party at Easter time. "We can do something in the park for the kids and then maybe something for the adults like food and wine tasting similar to what they have in San Marco," she said. "If we could keep this going, it would be amazing. Fantastic."



Martha San Juan helps her daughter, Maria, pick out a toy during the Jolly St. Nicholas party at St. Nicholas Train Station Park Dec. 10.



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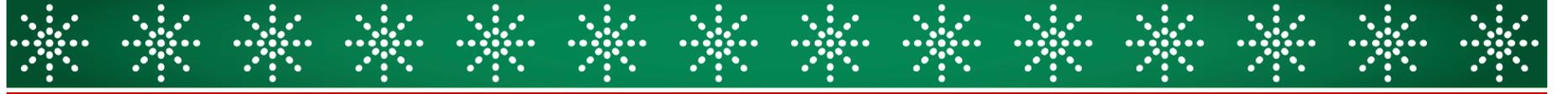
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### San Marco tree lighting blessed with large turnout

More than 100 residents were filled with holiday spirit as they sang Christmas carols and enjoyed festive entertainment supplied by local musical groups during the San Marco Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony in Balis Park Dec. 4.

“This was the best one ever,” said Elle Camp, a co-chairman of the event. “We had the most participation by far. It couldn’t have been done better.”

Sponsored by the San Marco Merchants Association and the Garden Circle of San Marco, this year’s event differed from previous years because more entertainment was offered, said event co-chairman Holly Kobrin. “This year, Anita (Morrill) helped to amp

things up with some local talent,” she said.

Included among the performers were Melody Makers from Hendricks Avenue Elementary, a team from Studio K Dance, the Children Choir from Southside Methodist Church, the Lavilla Performance Band and Kobrin’s son, Luke, 14, who played guitar with his friend Will Shephard as a finale to the festivities. Luke Kobrin and Shepard attend The Bolles School.

Peterbrooke Chocolatier of San Marco passed out free chocolate and caramel-covered popcorn during the event, and pop-up flower market was available for residents to purchase holiday centerpieces and other floral arrangements.



District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer, Elle Camp of the Garden Circle of San Marco, Ian Stakes of Southside United Methodist Church and the church Children’s Choir sing “O Christmas Tree,” during the Christmas Tree Lighting event in Balis Park Dec. 4.



### Students hold drives for those in need

St. Johns Country Day School students collected canned goods and boxed foods (more than 2,000 items), and clothing and toys for Head Start children to make a positive difference in the lives of people they do not know. Friendly competitions, worthy challenges, families recruited to help, and donations of desperately needed items made win-win experiences for everyone involved.

Sponsored by St. Johns Country Day Lower School Student Council, the student body collected and donated several boxes of food to the Food Pantry, Green Cove Springs. Here Juliete Moody, Carolyn Tyson Guess, Ryan O’Sullivan, Helen Clare Makar, pose with John Morse and Sam Rayburn, volunteers from the Food Pantry.

### For 25 years, more than a ribbon



This woman was one of more than 400 guests who remembered their loved ones at the 25th annual Tree of Life celebration Dec. 3 at Community Hospice of Northeast Florida. Towering evergreens with holiday lights illuminated hundreds of white satin memorial ribbons adorned with the names of loved ones. Each ribbon represented a person whose absence is felt especially during the holidays.

Ribbons purchased for the Tree of Life supported Community Hospice Foundation, which helps families embrace life, guide them through the journey at life’s end and provide comfort and care for all, regardless of age, the illness they face or their ability to pay.

### Holiday magic cheers runners during San Marco’s Festival of Light

Hundreds from all over Northeast Florida converged in San Marco Square to take part in the Annual Festival of Lights Fun Run and 5K Race sponsored by First Place Sports to benefit The Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, Wolfson Children’s Hospital and UF Health.

The races took place during the same evening as San Marco’s Holiday Magic celebration. Santa and Mrs. Claus were on hand to greet children and pose for photos in front of San Marco’s sparkling Christmas tree, while celebrants enjoyed live animals, bouncy houses, Christmas music food and drinks.



Dressed as Santa’s elves, Kallie Pearson, Isabella Mancheno, Jessie Pearson, Jillian Candelino and Sophia Parry pose in front of the Christmas tree in Balis Park before running in the Festival of Lights Fun Run Dec. 5 in San Marco.



Laura and Bonnie Watson pose with Jovi, a canine companion, who joined them in running the Festival of Lights fun run Dec. 5 in San Marco Square.

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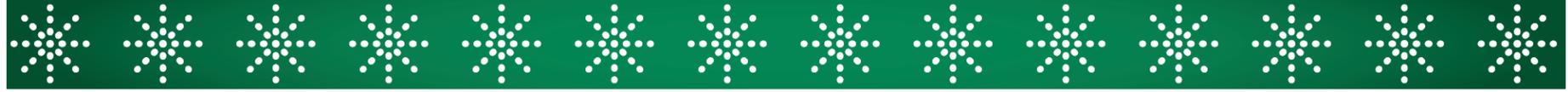
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## Spirit Night lucrative for Hendricks Avenue Elementary

Randy Hales, manager of the Tijuana Flats in Lakewood, showed his restaurant's support of its local public elementary school when he presented Hendricks Avenue Elementary Principal Lacy Healy with a sizable check in late November.

The \$1,520 check included a \$1,000 grant from the Just in Queso Foundation, the charitable arm of the Tijuana Flats Corporation as well as \$520, which was 20 percent of the proceeds spent by Hendricks Avenue

Elementary supporters during the dinner hours of its Spirit Night celebration Nov. 9. It was second of five Spirit Nights that will be held at local eating establishments during the school year. Others during the school year will be held at Jersey Mike's Subs, Dunkin' Donuts and Marble Slab Creamery.

Sponsored by the Friends of Hendricks Avenue Elementary, a 501(c)(3) organization that raises funds to support the school, the money will be spent on grants

to provide Hendricks' teachers with additional money to buy supplies for their classrooms. The Friends of Hendricks Avenue Elementary administers both Spirit Night and business partner programs. All proceeds directly benefit the students and staff at the school.

Avery Corn has a chat with Henry the Eagle, mascot of Hendricks Avenue Elementary, during the Spirit Night fundraiser for the school at Tijuana Flats in Lakewood.



## Target shopping spree a tradition for Sanctuary



Maryann Anderson, Eric, Dartavus, Joseph and Cora Nancy Anderson

Target employees braced themselves Dec. 2 for the annual onslaught of cheerful children from the Sanctuary on 8th Street on their traditional shopping spree.

This year Executive Director Vicky Watkins and Program Director Rick Cartledge brought more than 40 youngsters to Target, where they were paired up with volunteers to help each child spend \$75 wisely.

"It's amazing for the volunteers to see how generous the kids are for their families," said Watkins, about the nearly 10-year-old tradition.

It all began, according to Watkins, with a college class. "A psychology professor at UNF did a project with her graduate students that involved our girls. Once a week for a semester I took the girls to the class," Watkins recalled. "When the course was completed, parents of two of the students wanted to do something with the Sanctuary and gave us \$2,000 to take the kids

Christmas shopping. They came shopping with us and continued giving money for a few years."

Over time others became involved, including board member Mark Rosenberg, who expanded the event to include not just staff and volunteers, but others as well. This year there were more than 30 volunteers, including sisters Maryann and Cora Nancy Anderson, and Marcia Doby, all of San Marco, who shepherded the boys and girls down the aisles during the hour-long spree.

Doby, who escorted Rickquan, asked the young boy what he would like to get for his mother. "She said she didn't want anything," said Rickquan.

"That means she really would like something," responded Doby, as they headed into the store, hoping to ensure that Rickquan's mother would have a very Merry Christmas.

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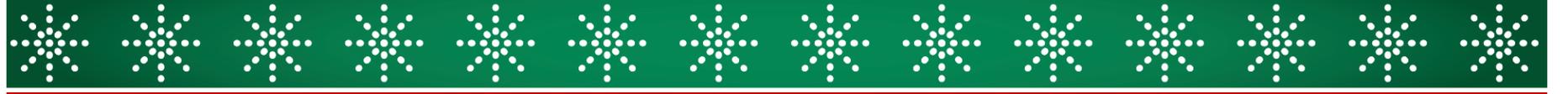
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### Edible Christmas creations displayed at Gingerbread House Extravaganza

Chairman Pat Andrews' goal for this year's Gingerbread House Extravaganza was to display 50 houses and raise \$50,000 for the Jacksonville Historical Society, and on the first day of the exhibit at Old St. Andrews Church near Veteran's Memorial Arena it was clear she had accomplished the first part of her goal.

Fifty of the sugary confections were on display amidst a forest of glittering themed Christmas trees created by the Junior League of Jacksonville sustainers. Included was an angel tree comprised of ornaments owned by Betsy Lovett of Ortega, who has sponsored a tree for the past 18 years.

Andrews also had a head start on her monetary goal thanks to a \$10,000 grant that will be given in perpetuity, Jacksonville Historical Society Executive Director Emily Lisska announced during the party to kick off the event.

Winning the best family award was the Pochurek family of San Marco for their cre-

ation, "The Nightmare Before Christmas - Christmas Town," which was constructed by eight-year-old Benjamin with help from his three-year-old sister Josie. "Benjamin made 99 percent of this," said his mother, Jennifer, who has competed in the event for several years. "He came to me and said he wanted to make his own this year and I thought it was time." Josie assisted by placing small balls of sugar around the windows of the house.

One of the "Housewives of San Marco," Jennifer Pochurek was part of a team, which was a co-winner for the Best Landmark award. She and her friends, Francine Shell, Kristen Allen, Molly Curry, Heather Hodgett, Heidi Harris and Kathleen Davis, were recognized for their rendition of San Marco Square entitled "Christmas in San Marco." Also winning the Landmark Award was Peterbrooke Chocolatiers, which constructed a gingerbread facsimile of the Lions' Fountain in Balis Park.



Eight-year-old Benjamin Pochurek stands in front of his prize-winning creation "The Nightmare Before Christmas - Christmas Town" at the annual Gingerbread House Extravaganza Dec. 1, at Old St. Andrews Church.



Sponsors of the All Saint's Church gingerbread exhibit Barbara and William Harrell pose with exhibit creators Pat Andrews and Fred Lambrou. The San Marco residents are all members of All Saints Episcopal Church. Assisting in constructing the nativity and lambs, which dotted the landscape, were children from the church's Sunday School. Andrews was chairman of the event.

### Red shoes, ugly sweaters garner support for Ronald McDonald House

The Red Shoe Crew, the young professionals group which supports Ronald McDonald House, ended the 2015 season with its traditional Ugly Sweater Party. The event was held Dec. 10 at Aardwolf Brewing Company with food by Son of a Butcher food truck. Raffle items included gift cards for V Pizza, Hightide Burrito Company, Firehouse Subs, Maple Street Biscuit Company, Painting with a Twist and golf for four at the Blue Sky Golf Club.



Karleen Nickerson, Brooke Resnick, Nicole Bettis, Ashley Jones, Jen Courtner, Jennifer Sparks, Jaimie Metcalf



Claudia Radke, Jen Feber, Marie O'Keefe



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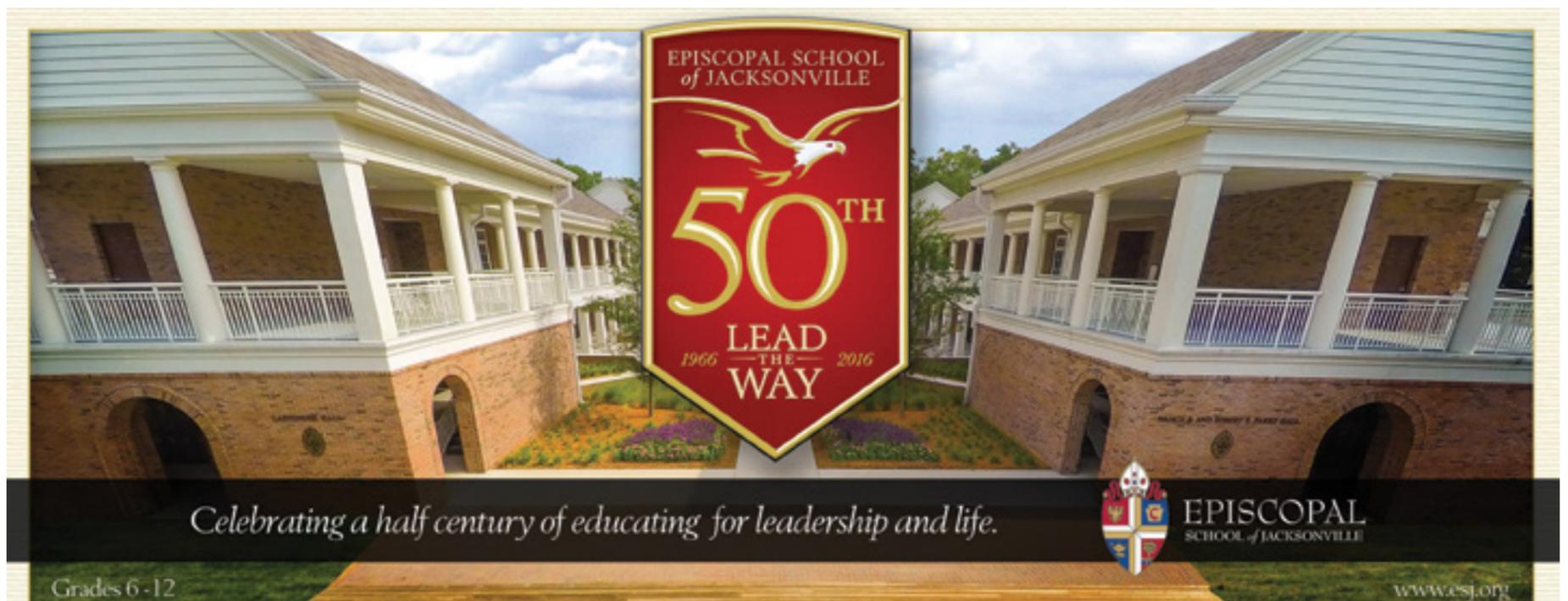
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# Free medical advice for a healthier new year



Local medical professionals share their best tips – no co-pay needed – to help residents make and keep resolutions for a healthier lifestyle in 2016.



**Dr. Jeff Jacqmein**  
UF Health Family Medicine

“To make a positive difference in your health in the New Year, *attack your nutrition*. The foods you put in your body have a dramatic effect on how you look, feel, and operate—even more than your typical exercise routine. Use each meal and snack to your advantage. I have found the Zone Diet to be one of the most scientifically sound and sustainable ways of eating. Prioritizing the intake of whole foods in the right proportions on a regular daily schedule will move and keep you closer to your ideal weight, provide energy for high mental and physical performance, and reduce your risk for disease. Start with January, and don’t forget to reward yourself periodically for your discipline.”



**Dr. Bill Putnam**  
Medical Director,  
Baptist MD Anderson  
Cancer Center

“No cigarettes! Stop smoking! Smoking is an addiction, not a habit, and individuals who have smoked in the past will need a concerted effort to stop and never smoke again. ‘Will-power’ can be one strategy, yet very demanding. A smoking cessation discussion with your physician can help a lot. Nicotine replacement therapy is available in drug stores and supermarkets, and can provide some relief from nicotine withdrawal with a personal commitment to stop smoking. Other medications can be used to help to stop smoking, but require a physician’s assessment and review.”

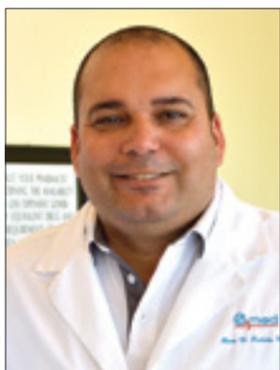
“The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends annual lung cancer screening for adults 55 to 80 years old, who have smoked 30 pack-years (for example, one pack of cigarettes each day x 30 years, etc.) and who currently smoke

or quit smoking less than 15 years ago, and who have no symptoms. The test, a low-dose CT scan of the chest (CT means computed tomography), is a simple one and pain-free. A CT chest scan can identify abnormalities or nodules, which may require additional evaluation. Smoking cessation counseling is part of the process. Ask your doctor if you or a family member should be considered for such a screening test. Your physician is the best person to discuss the advantages of lung cancer screening as it relates to your health. Enjoy the New Year smoke-free! Breathe well!”



**Dr. Melanie Barriger Wilson**  
Ellison Vein Institute,  
Baptist Health

“The vascular procedures I provide are mostly non-invasive and minimally painful. However, patients can have anxiety at a doctor’s office, and I have to provide them with the most calming environment possible, so I can provide the best results. I have noticed that when I perform sclerotherapy (injection treatment for varicose and spider veins), patients with a positive outlook and an upbeat attitude fare better than those who come in with a negative or frightened outlook. If a patient and I can talk through a painful procedure, also known as ‘talk anesthesia,’ I can actually accomplish more treatment and thus get a better result. I have made great friends with my patients over the years because we talk about life, family, sports, whatever! I am thankful for every patient encounter that I have, and learn much from my patients as a result.”



**Dr. Rene Pulido**  
President, Emad  
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**Dr. Justin D'Arienzo**  
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**Dr. J. Phillip Garcia**  
Garcia Institute Town Center

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*Continued on page 29*

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**Dr. J. Danny Pulido**

Pulmonary and Critical Care Specialist,  
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“In life’s journey to achieve optimal health it’s important to maintain physical and mental balance. Physical balance is achieved by eating well-balanced meals, routine exercise, and regular healthcare visits. Mental balance is obtained by following a healthy routine, which includes dedicated time for work as well as rest and family/personal time. An imbalance of physical and mental health is the most common cause of chronic medical conditions that are preventable.”



**Dr. Vaqar Ali**

First Coast Cardiovascular  
Institute & Jacksonville Clinic

“Being healthy is about the small changes that collectively add up. It doesn’t take hours at the gym to be active. Take the stairs, park as far as you can and use your lunch break to take a walk. Similarly, think twice before filling your plate. Have a serving of fruit or vegetables at every meal. Replace your side order of French fries with a side salad. Have a bottle of water with you wherever you are. Don’t neglect the small things!”

Keeping our furry friends healthy, too!



**Dr. Susan Shelton**

St. Francis Animal Hospital

“Not only is exercise beneficial to keeping your pets happy, active, and at their healthiest body condition, exercising your pets can also provide the same benefits to you! Plan to take a walk each day with your dog or spend some time playing with your kitty; it will increase your bond with your furry friend while integrating phys-

ical activity into both of your lives. Play also keeps your pets’ mind sharp. Just five minutes per day spent tossing a ball or dangling a kitty toy can mentally stimulate your pets. Additionally, just like humans, overweight dogs and cats are more likely to get a number of diseases and health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, skin conditions, liver disease, and joint problems. So exercising with your pet and keeping your pet at a healthy weight will result in improved health and a longer life for both you and your pet.

“Just like humans, pets need to visit their doctor once per year. For older pets, the visits to the vet should be more frequent, generally about twice per year. By going to the vet regularly for wellness appointments, you can hopefully catch changes in your pet’s health and prevent conditions from worsening. Most importantly, if something is discovered during your pet’s wellness examination, early intervention could be lifesaving for your pet.”

**Physical activity can increase life span, reverse ‘diabesity’**

Submitted by Darrell McKay  
Owner, Anytime Fitness

According to a recent study published online (JAMA, Sept. 2015) nearly 50 percent of adults living today in the U.S. have diabetes or pre-diabetes, a condition where a person has elevated blood sugar and is at great risk of developing diabetes. The result is 66 percent of the adult population is overweight, with 35 percent considered obese.

Adult-onset diabetes associated with obesity, called diabesity, is the greatest healthcare epidemic of our time. Diabetes treatment racked up \$245 billion in consumption of healthcare dollars in 2012.

We as a country have failed our overweight population in multiple areas. Our healthcare system, primary care physicians, education and fitness centers have not reduced this endless sea of obese Americans. It is literally killing us slowly. This is the first generation of children that will live a shorter life than their parents due to life style choices and unhealthy eating.

Patient-centered healthcare – rather than disease-focused medicine – will help fight diabesity. Understanding the underlying causes of disease and how our lifestyles interact to determine health or disease is revolutionary.

Also, frequent exercise is crucial to the prevention and management of a number of chronic diseases such

as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, types of cancer, obesity, high blood pressure and other major risk factors. Exercise is Medicine, a global initiative launched in 2007, strives to elevate physical activity as a key strategy in improving healthcare and fighting diabetes.

Five success strategies for a long-term New Year’s resolution

- 1) True change transpires with transformed thinking. You must change!
- 2) Surround yourself with a strong support network and accountability.
- 3) Engage with a coach who has years of experience with transforming others. Review their education and certifications.
- 4) Meet with your physician. Review your health challenges. Work together to create a detailed plan that will improve your health.
- 5) Draft short- term and long- term goals. You must write them down. Utilize accurate ways to measure your progress in reducing body fat, increasing lean muscle mass, and reducing your waist-to-hip measurements.



Darrell McKay served as a Healthcare Executive for 4 medically based Fitness centers across the USA. He relocated to Jacksonville, FL in 2004 to design and develop Brooks Health and Fitness with Dr. Brooks Brown. He was a Vice President of an Integrated Wellness Division for Sinai Hospital in Baltimore Maryland. His passion is helping others make permanent life style changes that result in optimal health. Email for questions: jacksonville@anytimefitness.com

# Vintage Players bring laughter to thousands

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

The members of Vintage Players, the only senior acting troupe in Jacksonville, have a wide range of acting experience and professional credits, but what narrows the focus for all is the love of laughter.

“We feel that laughter is very spiritual and we don’t laugh enough,” said Bill Dunford, of San Jose.

The troupe began in 1994 and some of the current actors are charter members, including Mary Allman Clark, a 1956 graduate of Landon High School, and Beatrice Gilliard, 94, of the Westside. “This helps me to stay alive,” said Gilliard, who moved to Jacksonville in 1959 from Key West.

The Vintage Players put on shows with skits, short plays and monologues twice a month at local churches, senior centers and nursing homes. Over the years, Dunford estimates they have appeared before thousands of people.

“Our skits are brief because of the attention span of many in the audience,” said Dunford, who noted they have a large repertoire, often altering them for the type of group to which they play. “Every show is completely different. We share roles as assistant director, producer, stage manager, principal actors, etc.”

The troupe does have a professional artistic director, Gary Baker, who has an extensive resume both locally and in places like Second City in Chicago. Baker graduated from Jacksonville Uni-



Mary Allman Clark and Beatrice Gilliard, two of the early Vintage Players



Mary Metzler plays a cantankerous parrot in a two-person skit

versity in 2006 with a Bachelor’s degree in theatre and performance.

“He’s very young to have done so much. He teaches children’s theater, also, and so he knows how to treat us,” joked Dunford. “Everything we do is very professional and we’ve been invited back to places for years. We are booked through 2016 already.”

Members can often be seen in local theatre productions. They have appeared in movie and television productions in Jacksonville, and in local and national television commercials.

Vintage Players is seeking new members, especially men, but the qualification for joining is an easy one. “You

must admit to being at least 50 years old,” Dunford said. “Gary will do the rest. He is a miracle worker.”

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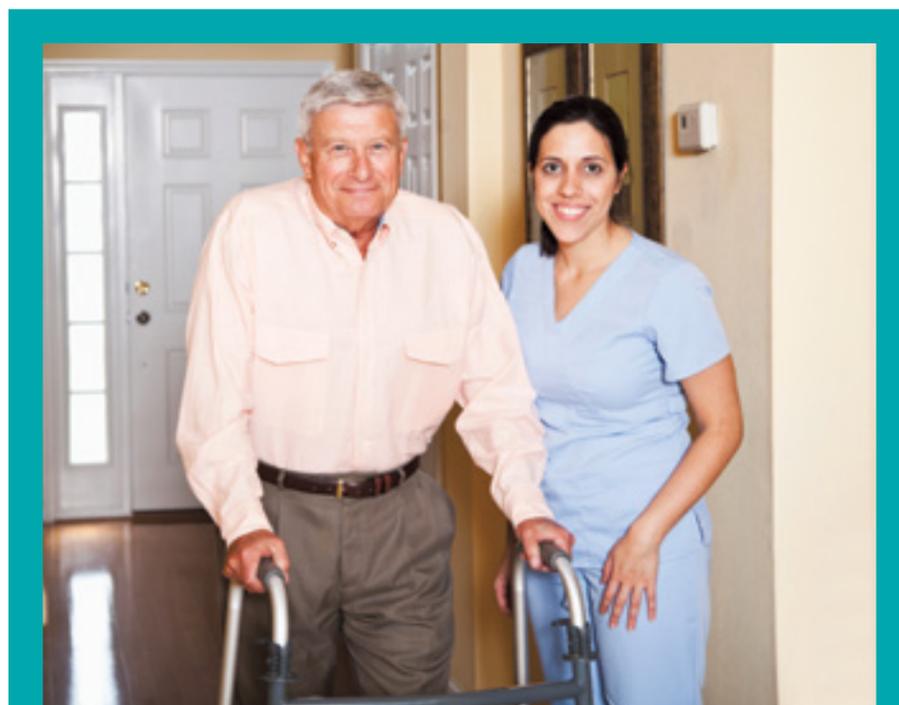
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– In Memoriam –

# Sidney J. Gefen

April 21, 1920 – December 12, 2015

**S**idney Josef Gefen, affectionately called Sid, loved Jacksonville. A New Yorker by birth, from the age of 21 Gefen called Jacksonville home and invested in its success.

“I love working on things to help bring Jacksonville alive,” Gefen told *The Resident* two years ago. “The city has to have a purpose.”

Known and respected as an astute businessman, Gefen enjoyed a series of profitable careers, beginning with aircraft repair at NAS Jax, moving into boats, automobiles, electronics, and eventually into advertising and tourism. His company, International Productions, one of the largest staging and trade show production companies of its kind, annually showcased Florida tourism and, for that contribution, Gefen was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010 from the University of Florida.

An active, lifelong member of Congregation Ahavath Chesed, Gefen also belonged to the United Way Tocqueville Society the Masonic Ionic Lodge, and was a member of Morocco Shrine as well as a founding member of Beauclerc Country Club.

At the time of his death, Gefen was the chairman of the Eric Friedheim Foundation, which awards scholarships to Uni-

versity of Florida students attending the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute, one of only six partner organizations in the U.S. recognized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Somewhere along the way Gefen found time to dabble in politics, working in 2004 for George W. Bush’s second election. He shared with *The Resident* a handwritten thank-you note from President Bush.

“Thank you for your great help on my campaign in Florida. Your state played a critical role in this election, and the vice president and I were fortunate to have your help in campaigning in Florida,” wrote President George W. Bush, in the note dated Dec. 21, 2004.

When he passed away Dec. 12 at age 95, Gefen was still looking for the next best tourist attraction to bring visitors to his city. According to his daughter, Barbara Jaffe, he was considering a Ferris wheel, to be the tallest one in the country, located near the Riverside YMCA.

“This is where my career took off,” reminisced Gefen in his memoir, *Still Climbing Mountains, Still Planting Trees*. “This is the location of my first riverfront venture, The Duval Marine Company.”

Although local ordinances prevent



Sidney J. Gefen

**“I love working on things to help bring Jacksonville alive ... The city has to have a purpose.”**

— Sidney J. Gefen

naming public property after living persons, when Gefen donated the marine’s riverfront property to the city, Mayor John Peyton and City Council passed a special ordinance to create a one-time exception. Sidney J. Gefen

Riverwalk Park was dedicated three days before his 91st birthday in 2011.

To learn more about the fascinating life of Sidney Gefen, go to residentnews.net, then enter Gefen in the search field to download a PDF of his memoir.

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# The Way We Were - Richard & Sandi Thalleen

By Julie Kerns Garmendia  
Resident Community News



Richard and Sandi Thalleen

Whether a mutual love of music or having grown up as near neighbors, to hear them talk, it is clear something special brought Richard Thalleen and Sandi Huber of Lakewood together 60 years ago.

After six decades, four children, 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, the couple is as close as they ever were and enjoy looking back to a time when Miramar was “way out” in the county and rent on a Sorrento Road apartment was a mere \$65 a month.

Richard, 80, and Sandi, 78, grew up three houses apart on Birchwood Avenue, attended duPont Middle School two years apart and later ended up at Jacksonville University at the same time.

Sandi was the only child of Clyde and Ruth Huber from Wisconsin, where she was born. The family moved to Jacksonville for her father’s new job at Wilson & Company Meatpacking on Bay Street. Sandi said that the train tracks ran right to her father’s building, transporting deliveries to and from the plant.

“When we were young, Greenridge Road was the city limits,” said Sandi. “There were nice brick homes available but homeowners were painting the red brick all kinds of colors and my dad hated that, especially when the paint started to peel.”

Although Sandi and Richard attended duPont Middle School together, Richard

said the first time he really “noticed” Sandi was the day he was doing yard work outside his family’s home on Birchwood at Peachtree Circle North in the 1950s. He was up on the roof cleaning out the gutters when a young girl drove by.

“I don’t know why I did it, but I yelled at her, ‘You’re too young to be driving!’” Richard recalled. “She stopped her car in the street, got out and yelled back at me that she was quite grown up enough to be driving. Then she got back in her car and drove home. I knew who she was, but she sure wasn’t 12 years old anymore!”

The Thalleens love music and both sang in the duPont student chorus that performed locally and regularly traveled to Lake City to sing at the Veterans Hospital.

*“We paid \$50 for a car and took off driving to Alaska. We were going to claim homesteads. We made it as far as Kansas where our car broke down and our parents caught up with us.”*

— Richard Thalleen

One of their favorite songs was “I’m Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover.”

Richard inherited his love of music from his parents, Nestor Jacob Thalleen and Mary (Vosburgh) Thalleen, who met and married in Rockford, Illinois. Nestor worked as a manufacturer’s representative for Sargent Manufacturing Company (hardware) which relocated him to Jacksonville in 1947. Nestor got all the hardware donated by Sargent for the original Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church (HAB).

Before their wedding, during the 1930s, the Thalleens sang and Mary was pianist for the “Singing Sweethearts of the Air” radio show in Rockford. Mary, an accomplished musician who studied at the Milwaukee Conservatory of Music, served for many years as the organist and choir director for HAB, their family church. Richard remembers Reverend Dr. Clyde B. Lipscomb who served as pastor for 26 years, from 1953 to 1970.

“When HAB burned on December 23, 2007, a plaque we donated to the church in honor of my mother was one of the few things left untouched by the fire,” he said. “Her favorite music, Handel’s Messiah, framed her name. I believe it hangs outside the choir room now,” he said.

Perhaps his mother’s love of music rubbed off. Both Richard and Sandi recall as a favorite memory the annual Spring Music Festival famously put on by Miss Anderson, the music teacher at duPont.

“Miss Anderson directed a big production every year with junior high students performing. When I was in seventh grade and Richard was in ninth grade we did a play featuring “The Indian Love Call” as a solo that Richard sang,” Sandi said, adding that “The Indian Love Call” was a hit song

from Broadway and film based on a famous 1924 musical, “Rose-Marie.”

“There was a wooden post with an Indian girl tied to it and Richard played the lead role of the Mounity who [in their version of the story], rescues the Indian girl...all I wanted was to play the Indian girl” she said. “When I finally got to the ninth grade I didn’t get the lead, but I was the substitute.”

Sandi was in the first graduating class of seniors from duPont in 1955 after it became a senior high school. She wanted to attend Florida State University but her father asked her to stay in Jacksonville and attend Jacksonville University. This is the part of their story where Richard lovingly describes Sandi as definitely “an only child, spoiled brat.”

“Her dad was pretty smart. He told Sandi that if she attended FSU, freshman students could not have cars. If she would agree to attend JU, at least the first year, they would buy her a car,” Richard explained.

Of course, that was a short argument. Sandi got a brand-spanking new red 1955 Buick Roadmaster Convertible, which they both agree was at least one of the reasons, if not the reason Richard fell in love with her and eventually proposed.

For high school, Richard attended Bolles Military Academy, fulfilling the dream of his father who had always wanted to attend a military academy. He graduated in 1953 and attended two years of college at Stetson University, intending to become a minister. In 1955, however, he and a college buddy heard about the Alaska Homestead Act (1898-1988) and decided they would head north.

Continued on page 33

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Newly wed Richard and Sandi Thalleen in 1956

“We paid \$50 for a car and took off driving to Alaska. We were going to claim homesteads,” he said. “We made it as far as Kansas where our car broke down and our parents caught up with us. I ended up back in Jacksonville, enrolling at JU...at exactly the same time Sandi was there.”

The couple married in 1956 at Southside Presbyterian Church, Sandi’s home church, and lived in an apartment on Sorrento Road. In 1959 they bought a home on Randy Road in San Souci where they welcomed their two daughters, Sandra Deniese Garland (Jim) of Kissimmee, who have two children, and Kristina Turner of Louisiana, who has three children.

After Hurricane Dora in 1964 they moved to Daytona so Richard could take a management job with Eckerd’s Drugs, followed by two years with Walgreen’s. They also started a home office supply/printing business. Sandi gave birth to two sons in Daytona: Michael and Marc. Michael is married to Lisa and they have three children; Marc and his wife Jennifer have a son, Joey.

In 1976 the Thalleens returned to Jacksonville and bought their Lakewood home, a 1950 bungalow. They continued

to operate their home office supply and printing business until 2003, then Richard worked for IRS Customer Service at the Independent Life Building (now Wells Fargo) until his retirement in July 2015.

Lifelong volunteers, the Thalleens focus on charity and community activities with their church, All Saints Episcopal. They coordinated the Jacksonville Food Drive, gathering area churches’ food donations for 10 years because they strongly believe that no one should go hungry. They visit and help several seniors now residing at Taylor Manor. They support AMVETS, Wounded Warriors, City Rescue Mission and Sulzbacher Center.

Traveling the U.S. in their RV and getting deliberately lost on road trips to discover out-of-the-way places may be past adventures, but the couple now equally enjoy home projects. They cook and bake together and have taught themselves to make homemade lemon curd and apple butter. They love dining at their favorite restaurants, Stonewood Grill or Athens Café and look forward to a family reunion in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary this year.

## Bishop Kenny alumni gather to recognize by-gone baseball players



Thirty-three members of Bishop Kenny baseball teams dating back 60 years gathered to celebrate the achievements of Crusader teams over the years during a special ceremony Dec. 5 at the school’s waterfront baseball complex. (Photo courtesy of With the Wind Productions)

Alumni from throughout the United States gathered to celebrate more than 60 years of Bishop Kenny High School baseball during a special hall of fame ceremony in the school’s waterfront baseball complex Dec. 5.

The event was organized by Bishop Kenny alum Gontran Celerier, who graduated from the school in 1965 and was named to the All-City baseball team during his senior year. Gontran said he spent 15

eight-hour days at the Jacksonville Public Library researching the players who would be honored during the event.

Nearly three dozen Bishop Kenny players dating back to the 1950s were on hand with their families during the special event. Celerier was the keynote speaker. Also speaking were Principal Todd Orlando, Athletic Director Bob West, current baseball coach Tommy Edwards and assistant coach Jason Pascual. West was a long-time coach of the Crusaders and guided them to a state championship.

The highlight of the ceremony was the unveiling of a “Honor Roll” Board celebrating the records of former players who earned All-City, All-State, All-American and All-District honors during their tenure as well as those who were drafted into the major and minor leagues. Inducted into the Bishop Kenny Hall of Fame were more than 100 former players, including five that are deceased.

After the event, the former players gathered at the Mudville Grille in St. Nicholas to rehash old times.



Bishop Kenny alum Gontran Celerier of the Class of ‘65 gives the keynote speech during a special celebration marking 60 years of Crusader baseball Dec. 5 at the school’s waterfront complex. Also taking part in the ceremony were Assistant Baseball Coach Jason Pascual, Baseball Coach Tommy Edwards, Athletic Director and former baseball coach Bob West, and Bishop Kenny Principal Todd Orlando.

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# Decades of love

## wrapped up in teaching

### Part 2

By Marcia Hodgson, Resident Community News

In the December 2015 issue of *The Resident* we shared profiles of teachers with long-term careers in our public schools. This month we focus on private and parochial school teachers who are happily committed to their careers.



### Shirley Valbuena

Assumption Catholic School, 31 years

Shirley Valbuena has spent 31 years at Assumption Catholic School, which was her first and only teaching job since graduating from Jacksonville University where she earned both a bachelor's and master's in education.

Over the years she has taught first, second and third grade and now serves as preschool director. She has seen Assumption's facility become improved and updated to

accommodate technology and its student population increase dramatically. "When I began teaching, the children seemed more innocent," she said. "Children today seem to be growing up faster than they did years ago. The increasing use of technology and the exposure children have to issues and things in society are changing our children."

To be an effective teacher, Valbuena said it is essential to build a classroom environment that incorporates all aspects of a child's development while allowing them to feel safe and secure.

"The establishment of consistent routines, an organized classroom, and effective behavior management techniques are essential to promoting a positive environment where learning can take place," she said. "I love planning fun, creative activities and watching the children get so excited about learning. Teaching at a Catholic school provides a wonderful opportunity of incorporating Catholic values of faith and prayer into the learning environment. I can't imagine what it would be like to teach at a school where you could not mention God or celebrate religious holidays with the children."



### Judy Bryan

San Jose Episcopal Day School, 29 years

What Judy Bryan loves best about teaching studio art at San Jose Episcopal Day School is watching her students create something. "Especially the ones that struggle in the classroom, those are the ones that always shine," she said. "Without the time constraints and being able to focus in a different way, they are able to achieve things that they love. They really open up and realize their God-given talents. The greatest gift of all is when a child realizes they can do something."

Bryan, a resident of San Jose and an active member of the church that's affiliated with the school, has spent her entire teaching career of 29 years at San Jose Episcopal Day. Although she earned a degree in sociology with a minor in art from Newberry College, she soon realized she was more interested in fashion and design. Her first job at Episcopal

Day was as an assistant preschool teacher, but when the art teacher left, she approached the Head of School about creating an art curriculum. "I co-taught with Jan Lord for a number of years and now she volunteers in my classroom," Bryan said.

Bryan sent both her children to San Jose Episcopal. She said the school has remained largely unchanged during her 29 years. "The love, spirit and creativity of the children has not changed at all," she said. "San Jose Episcopal is still very much a community of lifelong friends, not only for the students but for the parents as well. I still meet with my book club, which we formed 15 years ago. These are parents of students that I taught, and we became great friends. And obviously the uniforms haven't changed!"

When it comes to giving advice to new teachers, Bryan keeps it short and sweet. "Remember the reason you're here, and that's for the children," she said.

Although many students stand out in her memory, Christy Kernan holds a special place in her heart. When Bryan was undergoing treatment for breast cancer in 2001, Kernan, a fifth grader in her class, underwent treatment for a brain tumor. "Christy was such an inspiration to me. She was always sweet and caring, and showed such a concern for me and what I was going through when I lost my hair," Bryan explained.

Although Kernan passed away a few years later, her picture still hangs in Bryan's classroom.



### Heather Oulton

Episcopal School of Jacksonville, 19 years

Blessed with "compassionate" instructors throughout her life as well as a mom and sister who were educators, Heather Oulton said teaching middle schoolers at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville is a way to "pay it forward."

"Really, who ever says they wish they could go back to middle school? No one," said Oulton, who has spent 19 years at Episcopal. "I love that as a teacher I can help students navigate those years of awkward adolescence with caring and empathy," she said.

After teaching seventh and eighth grade English for 17 years, Oulton recently switched to sixth grade English and social studies. "It was time for a new challenge. I have always loved the idea 'words are the clothes that thoughts wear.' Teaching gives me the opportunity

to model curiosity and critical thinking and, hopefully, to help students discover their own voices along the way," she said.

"Connecting with and learning alongside my students each day are real gifts," continued the graduate of Rhodes College and Jacksonville University. "It's incredibly gratifying to have a front-row seat as my middle school students open their eyes to their own potential. Teaching is never boring. I laugh more in a day than anyone has a right to at work! And just when I think I've taught long enough to have seen it all, something happens that makes me realize I still have a lot to learn," she said.

One amazing change Oulton has witnessed since the start of her career are the multitasking abilities of her students, who effectively balance more extracurricular activities, electronic distractions and their schoolwork. "The majority of my students (still) place a high premium on achieving academic success and performing to the best of their ability," she said.

As for advice she would give newbie instructors: Find a mentor; remember your students have lives outside the classroom, and make time to take care of yourself.

"On those days that leave you questioning why in the world you do what you do, it's reassuring to have someone who believes in you more than you believe in yourself," she said. "We devote a great deal of head space and heart space to our students. Investing so much in your students means you also have to make time to take care of yourself, which can be easier said than done."



### Joy Karel

San Jose Catholic, 29 years

Joy Karel has spent 23 of the 29 years she has been a Catholic school educator at San Jose Catholic School. During that time she has taught a variety of grades, but has been most "at home" teaching second grade.

"Teaching has been my passion and enhanced my soul," said Karel. "There is a profound satisfaction in the thought that I could make a positive difference in someone's life. That is the ultimate reward for any teacher."

For Karel, teaching was a "natural calling." As a child, Karel loved school and learning, sparked by her mother, who was a kindergarten teacher. "Her enthusiasm greatly influenced my career path," Karel

explained. Another trigger that led her into teaching was the unique opportunity to work with deaf children when she was in high school, after which she double majored in Deaf Education and Elementary Education at Fontbonne University in St. Louis.

During her tenure at San Jose Catholic, Karel has witnessed changes to the physical plant including a new wing to house the pre-K and Kindergarten programs' new playgrounds, science lab and outdoor classroom as well as an enlarged media center which includes the library and new computer lab. The school also boasts updates to its security system, art and Spanish classrooms and gymnasium.

"One of the most uplifting parts of teaching is the opportunity to interact with the light-hearted personalities of children. They possess such fresh outlooks on life," Karel said. "Educating youngsters provides enriching variety as no two days are alike."

In addition to teaching, Karel has served as director for the annual school musical for the past seven years, which doubles as a service project to raise funds for The Guardian of Dreams Foundation that seeks to enhance educational opportunities for urban Catholic schools in the diocese. "Our performances showcase the depth of talent among our students," she said.



**Virginia Dicket**

Jacksonville Country Day School, 21 years

Majoring in music education was a natural progression for Virginia Dicket, who has spent 21 years teaching general music to grades one through six at Jacksonville Country Day School. Dicket's mother was a choir conductor at Southside United Methodist Church and played piano for the elementary musical productions at her school growing up.

"I discovered I enjoyed singing and by middle school I was hooked on singing in my school's chorus and church choirs," Dicket said, noting she helped her mother with the children's choirs at Southside UMC growing up. "Majoring in music education seemed like a natural fit for my passion. I loved performing and helping kids to perform," Dicket said.

Dicket, who earned both her bachelor's and master's at Jacksonville University, recommends new teachers get a mentor to help them with the basics. "Get someone who is well versed in curriculum changes and classroom management," she said. "Take advantage of every workshop and conference you can, even if you have to pay for it yourself. Start collecting all the ideas you learn in a folder. You will find you refer back to that folder decades later."

Conducting performances is her favorite part of teaching, Dicket said. "I love to see the students shine on stage for their parents and friends. They also learn that hard work pays off in the end."

Dicket is gratified many former students later performed in middle and high school

musicals and community programs. One star pupil was Danielle Cheiken, who soloed with the Country Day chorus as well as at the MusicUSA Festival in Orlando before attending LaVilla and Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. Cheiken later graduated with a vocal performance degree from Oberlin Conservatory of Music and is now pursuing a master's at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

"I love to give all of our students a chance to succeed in some aspect of music, whether it's singing, dancing, playing an instrument, or composing a song," she said. "I realize not every student will grow up to be a musician, but hopefully they all will become an adult who loves music."



**Val Doner**

Bishop Kenny High School, 35 years

'Never be afraid to make a mistake' is advice Val Doner would give new teachers. "Try new things. If they do not work, admit it and shift your focus. Mistakes help us grow," she said. Heeding this advice has served her well in the 35 years she has taught English, Speech and Theatre at Bishop Kenny High School.

"I have used opaque projectors, ditto machines and manual typewriters. I have attached coat hangers and tin foil to the back of TVs so we could see the space shuttle and presidential speeches. Today I am using computers, projectors and the iPad. This new technology has brought the world into the classroom," said Doner, adding that coping with new technology would have

been more difficult if she were afraid of making mistakes or asking for help.

"We have instant access to current affairs and the opportunity to sample writing styles and test source credibility. As a powerful, creative tool, the iPad has changed the direction of education," Doner said. "Students no longer have to sit quietly and take lecture notes. This shift is a welcome change for young people whose world moves so quickly they have less patience with lengthy lectures. Now they are actively engaged in critical thinking activities that allow them to hone the skills they will need in today's world."

Doner recommends new teachers have an open mind and seek to learn from their

students. "Students are delighted to share what they know, and teachers need the humility to let them; that is when everything changes," she said. "Trust happens. John Steinbeck believed that teaching is the greatest art because the medium is the human mind and soul. Both need creative fulfillment in order to grow no matter how young or old the pupil is."

"My favorite part of teaching is the interaction with the students and my colleagues," said Doner, who graduated from the University of Minnesota, Duluth. "Bishop Kenny is a school that embraces creativity and critical thinking. We are all encouraged to try new things. That is delightful."



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## Longtime Bishop Kenny coach and administrator to retire

Bishop Kenny High School Vice Principal and Athletic Director Bob West has announced plans to retire at the end of this school year.



Coach Bob West

West, who will complete 39 years of service in June, has served the school in multiple roles over the course of his career including science teacher, Dean of Students, Director of Athletics and Vice Principal of Operations.

West is best known for his 23 years as head coach of the Bishop Kenny's baseball team. Under West's leadership, the Crusaders amassed an impressive 532-129 record, including 16 district championships, 10 trips to the final four and the 2002 State Championship. Seven of West's baseball teams were nationally ranked.

As athletic director West played a key role in expanding the school's program by adding many sports to the school's roster including volleyball; boys' and girls' soccer; boys' and girls' golf; and boys' and girls' tennis. During his tenure, Bishop Kenny won 25 individual or team state championships.

West also initiated Bishop Kenny's sports medicine program, which has been used as a model throughout Florida. His other accomplishments include the establishment of incentive and award programs to encourage athletes to excel in academics and programs to encourage "non-athletes" to support athletics, through sports information, athletic training, and live streaming of athletic events.

In 2013, the Florida High School Activities Association unanimously selected West to be its President-Elect for 2012-2013, and he took over as President the next year. The FHSAA has 780 member schools representing over 800,000 student-athletes. FHSAA recognized West for doing what is right in high school interscholastic sports.

"The time is right for my wife Mary and I to enjoy our children and grandchildren together," said West. "We are blessed with good health and look forward to being able to travel and enjoy our retirement for many years. It has been my good fortune and my honor to have spent 39 years doing what I love to do. It is my hope the Bishop Kenny Community has gotten as much from my years of service as I have taken from the experience," he said.

# "True to the Dream" a collaborative tribute to Episcopal's founders

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Will Ketchum said he was the spark, but acknowledged "it's a bigger story than me."

The story – *Episcopal School of Jacksonville: True to the Dream* – was a 15-year undertaking and collaboration with nearly two dozen men and women who are part of the school's 50-year history.

Ketchum, of Avondale, is president and CEO of Burdette Ketchum, a marketing firm in San Marco's new Kings Avenue Creative Corridor. He is also an alumnus – Class of '84 – of Episcopal and an advocate for a liberal arts education.

"I have an admiration for what they did, for their vision, their perseverance and their accomplishment," he said, speaking of the founders and the early leaders of a school built on rigorous academics, Christian education and a strong sports program.

In fact, this 50th anniversary coffee-table book notes that Lucius Buck, a tax attorney and primary author of *The Report of the Planning Group for Episcopal High School of Jacksonville, Florida* (1966), wanted students to be "muscular Episcopalians" in both intellectual and physical accomplishments.

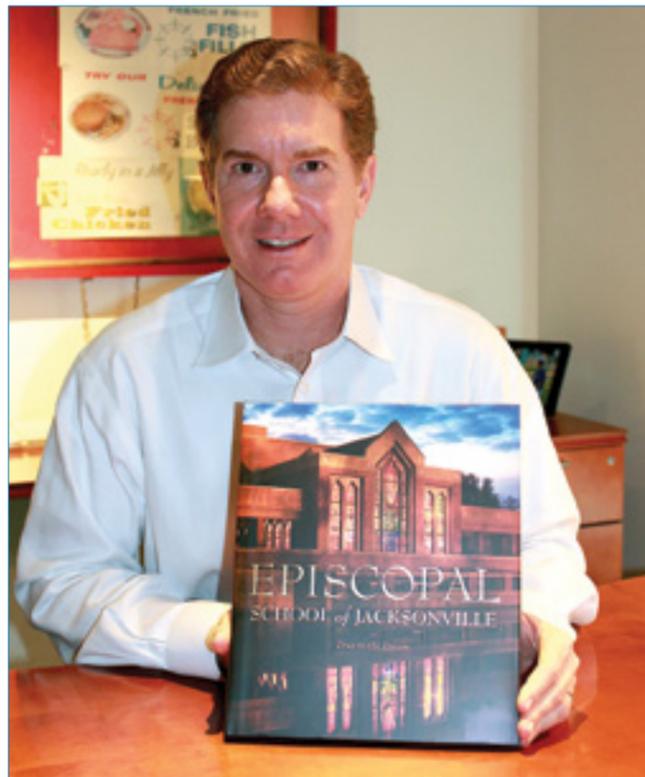
The real heroes are inside the book, according to Ketchum, whose objective was to capture the story while the founders and planners were still around. It was fortunate he had such foresight as seven or eight of those interviewed have since passed away.

Ketchum wrote a letter to Head of School Charley Zimmer in 2000, offering to spearhead the project. "Over time we developed a team of writers and researchers as history unfolded," he said. "At that time we were telling a 35-year story and then we had to bring it up to last year."

The book was developed in phases. "By 2009, we had nailed down the founding – that was the hardest part because we had to stitch it together. From 2009 to the present we began to write as the history unfolded," Ketchum said.

"The interviews were such fun, to sit down with the early founders. There were some real pioneers in those first years," he noted. "[The Rev.] Bob Parks inspired people to take this on, envisioning the school, putting together the leadership and hiring faculty. He was a real star in the Episcopal Church so it was a real honor to sit with him."

The school's first headmaster, Horton Reed, now deceased, shared with Ketchum a story about early school discipline. The strict dress code mandated coat, tie and haircuts of a certain length. "In the late 1960s, there was a temptation on the boys' part to grow their hair longer, in the style of the Beatles," said Ketchum. "Reed brought a barber to his office and would go around campus pulling boys into his office for a haircut. He believed he had to set the tone for discipline early on."



Will Ketchum, Episcopal School of Jacksonville Class of '84

Others who contributed to the book include William Barnett, John Corse, David Foerster, Michael and Beth Kirwan, Wendy Dickinson LaPrade, Eric Rousseau, Meg Scheu Sacks, Victoria Register-Freeman, James Winston and Charles Zimmer.

An Ortega resident at the time, Ketchum attended Episcopal from 1978-1984, serving as student body president during his senior year. He credits his education as the foundation and motivation for his career in communications.

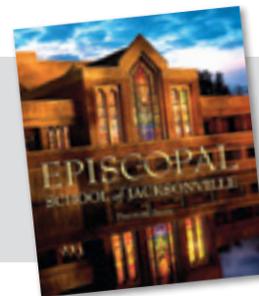
"It was a true liberal arts experience. The school is excellent in writing training and that became a clue," he said. "I began to enjoy the writing and benefit from the rigor of the training and gave me a clue I might like to be in communications."

Now, more than 30 years later, Ketchum has found a way to express his gratitude.

"The place brought together knowledge, work ethic and faith in a way that was very instructive to me in the formative years," said Ketchum. "I loved my experience and learned a great deal from it, and I felt inspired to make sure we captured the story of what to me – and to the thousands who have graduated from it – is a very special place."

"This is all a debt of gratitude," he said.

*Episcopal School of Jacksonville: True to the Dream* can be purchased at the school's campus store, 4455 Atlantic Blvd.; at St. Mark's Episcopal Bookstore, 4149 Oxford Ave.; the San Marco Bookstore, 1971 San Marco Blvd., or online at [www.esj.org/50th-anniversary/50th-anniversary-book](http://www.esj.org/50th-anniversary/50th-anniversary-book) for \$40.



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# Jr. Residents

## Bishop Kenny girls volleyball win state semi-finals

The Bishop Kenny Crusaders Girls Volleyball team won the regional games against Mosley High School (Panama City), then beat Ponte Vedra in the state semi-finals before facing Orlando Bishop Moore to lose the Class 5A state championship, despite plaid-clad dads who supported Assistant Coach Brad Winkler in his lucky plaid shorts. The Crusaders' overall record was 23-9 for the season. The team has made nine state semifinals in Coach Suzanne Winkler's 13-season career at Bishop Kenny.



Plaid-clad dads: Tom Forbes, Erik Airheart, Mark Carrillo, Coach Brad Winkler, Jim Horning, Brian Morrill and Wayne Lombardo



Bishop Kenny Crusaders Girls Volleyball team

## Three from San Jose receive Rotary Club scholarships



Libby Levin



Alexander Kostandarithes



Anderson Gronvold

Anderson Gronvold, Alexander Kostandarithes and Libby Levin of San Jose, juniors at The Bolles School, received scholarships from the Jacksonville Rotary Club to participate in a summer program promoting leadership skill building.

The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, an international leadership program for rising juniors and seniors with leadership potential, help students build networking skills and prepare for college. Local Rotary clubs award scholarships for the intense, all-expenses paid, four-day residential leadership retreat at a Northeast college or university. This past summer, the University of North Florida hosted the event.

## Landon chess team wins

The Julia Landon College Preparatory School chess team, composed of Jatin T, Andrew L, Varun B, Vishnu B, and Vivek V., placed first in the team division at the Greenwood School Invitational Scholastic Chess Tournament held on Nov 7.

## Digital Cookie 2.0 helps Girl Scouts earn badges

More than 1,500 local Girl Scouts, volunteers and their families were introduced to Digital Cookie enhancements at a training rally Dec. 13 at EverBank Field. In addition to Digital Cookie, Girl Scouts learned about safety, marketing, goal setting, booth and face-to-face sales, financial literacy, and rewards. Using Digital Cookie helps the girls earn any of 11 badges related to business.

Last year, 604 local Girl Scouts sold nearly 13,600 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies combined through the Digital Cookie platform. This year, an anticipated 20 percent increase in the number of Girl Scouts from the Gateway Council are expected to participate, demonstrating the excitement surrounding Digital Cookie 2.0's more robust, hands-on and entertaining learning experience. Local Girl Scouts will begin taking cookie orders this month, with booth sales occurring from mid-February through March 13.

Now in its second year, Digital Cookie 2.0



Daisy Girl Scouts have fun at a scouting activity.

features design enhancements built upon the "science of play" to expand girls' understanding of the business cycle, online marketing, e-commerce and website customization, in addition to the five essential skills girls learn through the annual cookie program (goal setting, decision-making, money management, people skills and business ethics).

"With this new engaging technology, girls who participate will learn skills to help put them ahead of the curve when entering the workforce, and customers can feel good about supporting girls' STEM education while purchasing their favorite Girl Scout Cookies," said Mary Anne Jacobs, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council CEO.

## San Marco students perform in church showcase



Hendricks Avenue Elementary students who participated in Digital Music Academy (DMA) and Dance for Joy, two extended-day programs sponsored by Southside United Methodist Church in San Marco, showed off their skills during a Performance Showcase in the church's Family Life Center Nov. 18.

More than 35 children danced and played music during the event, which is part of the Hendricks Avenue Partnership Initiative (HAPI) between the church and the school.

Hendricks Avenue Elementary students dance and sing during a Performance Showcase at Southside United Methodist Church Nov. 18.

## Skiles named Outstanding Young Pianist



Jacob Skiles, Zach Yu, Brenna Rodriguez, Viann Yu

The Friday Musicale 2016 Class of Outstanding Young Pianists includes San Marco resident and Douglas Anderson student Jacob Skiles, who received an Honorable Mention for his performance. Skiles will be presented in concert Jan. 8, at 7:30 p.m. at Friday Musicale, 645 Oak Street, along with Zach Yu, 7th-8th grade winner, Brenna Rodriguez, 9th-10th grade winner, and Viann Yu, 11th-12th grade winner.

# What Story Would You Tell?

## Why I my neighborhood

Judging by the amount of shared news, it's clear our readers love the neighborhoods in which they live, play and work. Next month we want to celebrate Valentine's Day and share that love with a contest. From now until January 20, submit a PHOTO, POEM or SHORT ESSAY about why you  your neighborhood and WIN!

Send photo, with 50-word explanation, or a poem or short essay not to exceed 450 words, to [editor@residentnews.net](mailto:editor@residentnews.net)

### First Place Winner

\$250 in dining gift cards to Foxy Lady Dinner cruise, Taverna, and Toscana Little Italy

### Runner Up

\$100 in Dining Gift Card to Taverna

### Junior Resident Winner

10 tickets to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens & a \$25 Pizza Palace gift card

All winners will be published in the February Edition of The Resident Community News

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**Rules:** Rules: All submissions must be original. By submitting, you agree to allow your entry, along with your name and neighborhood, to be published in the February 2016 edition of The Resident News. The staff of The Resident News shall determine the winners. Poems and essays cannot exceed 450 words. Photos must be 4x6 minimum; electronic format must be .jpg with a resolution of 300 dpi. Photos taken with a camera phone must be transmitted in original (largest) size.

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The Law Firm of Pajcic and Pajcic takes great pride in being able to give back to our community. The success Pajcic and Pajcic has had in the courtroom not only benefits our seriously injured clients, but other deserving members of our community that the law firm cares so much about.

It's wonderful to see the children of the Eureka Gardens neighborhood finally have a place to play. A new playground was built for the hundreds of children who live there, thanks to donations from all around the community. Pajcic & Pajcic was honored to be a major contributor, donating \$50,000 to the effort. We applaud Pastor Mark Griffin of Wayman Ministries for leading the fundraising and making the playground project a reality.



Since service is so important at Pajcic & Pajcic, we are proud when our employees participate in activities that benefit the community. Every year our own Antonio Kirkland volunteers at the City Rescue Mission for Thanksgiving and Christmas to set up and serve food to those in need. He's also involved in a Toys for Tots program. Antonio does this with his club, "Aftermath Riders". It's an organization of motorcycle enthusiasts who share a love of riding. Their goal is to promote a positive image of bikers. They all commit to at least 10 hours of community service a year.



Pajcic & Pajcic is always happy to support the Palm Avenue Exceptional Student Center, a school for students who are mentally and physically exceptional. Curry Pajcic presented them with a check as they were getting ready to perform at the Jacksonville Landing for the holiday season. The funds will go toward supporting the school's annual prom and other activities. Palm Avenue provides important educational experiences and challenges every student to use their knowledge and skills to become independent members of the community.



Pajcic & Pajcic has eleven AV rated "preeminent" attorneys and is one of the few firms on Martindale-Hubbell's list of Top Ranked Law Firms in the Southeastern United States to receive the perfect 5.0 rating in client satisfaction.





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