

Many miles & smiles

A happy ending for a local otter's story



Page 16

Resident

COMMUNITY NEWS

RIVERSIDE • ORTEGA • AVONDALE • MURRAY HILL

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

5 Points walk-around points to changes at namesake intersection5

King Street to lose popular business, fundraisers to lose venue11

Local attorneys moonlight as authors, publish works of fiction36

The developer's newest set of plans for where the Commander Apartments Tower currently sits shows an apartment complex spread over three buildings of varying heights

Second community meeting held for St. Johns Avenue development

Residents fearful of 'intensity' due to proposed high density

BY KATE A. HALLOCK
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

In what may have been an attempt to allay fears that re-development plans for the properties at 4000 St. Johns Avenue would be pushed along too quickly for adequate constructive decision-making, the second town hall meeting began with an appeal from the property developer.

"This is still a work in progress, said Michael Balanky, president/CEO of Chase Properties, Inc. "This meeting is about hearing more from you guys, what else you like or don't like, and we'll continue to work these plans until we come up with a win-win for everybody."

Although Steve Diebenow, attorney for the applicant, appeared to echo those sentiments, later comments from residents indicated there is still a high level of distrust and unhappiness with the proposed plan.

The applicant has had one large meeting and a half a dozen smaller meetings, including three with local groups to allow people to react to the new plan that was presented on July 17 by Russ Ervin and Tim Miller of ELM (Ervin, Lovett and Miller), an architectural firm on the Southbank.

See **ST JOHNS** on page **38**



Batter Up

Baseball ruled for area kids this summer

Murray Hill Invitational Tournaments were held at the Murray Hill Playground baseball fields over the course of two weeks in June with 32 total teams participating and 63 total games played. The 12u and 10u tournament was held first and followed the next week with the 6u, 7u and 8u tournament.

Parks represented in the tournaments were from all over the city including San Jose, Bryceville, Sweetwater, Marietta, Lakeshore, Normandy, Whitehouse, Argyle, Tanglewood, NAS, Orange Park, West Duval, Jacksonville Beach, Julington Creek, Dinsmore, Clay County PAL and Arlington.

Catcher Ryan Napoleon from the 8u Pitching Machine Hot Rods, ponders the play



Quinn Miller, 12, Katie Cofran, 12 and Capt. Shannon Attales

Junior anglers take first place in tournament

Avondale resident Katie Cofran (12) and Quinn Miller (12) of Ortega took first place in the Islamorada Fishing Club Youth Angler Dolphin Tournament on Sunday, July 7. With six-foot seas, fishing conditions were very tough, but they managed to get out and get it done.

They fished with Captain Shannon Attales, owner of a 33' twin hull, the Warbird, out of Robbies Marina in Islamorada, FL.

Fishing in a youth tournament, the captain, first mates and dads were not able to touch the angler, rod, reel or line while each young angler were fighting their fish. Once the fish were boat side, the mate could grab the 15' (maximum length) leader and land the fish.

Katie and Quinn (with their dads watching) combined their efforts during a rough day to weigh their 3 largest fish for an aggregate of 39 pounds, beating out second place by two ounces.

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You asked for it!

Do you know who's taking mail out of your box?

From time to time, readers ask us to help get important questions answered. This month we have a question about the U.S. Postal Service. If you have a question about something we can address, let us know by sending an email to editor@residentnews.net.

A resident of Ortega Forest experienced mail theft from his own street-side mailbox last month. He reported, "On Monday 7/1, a man posing as a postman took our outgoing mail from the mail slot, and we had no incoming mail. I confronted him outside at his private vehicle, and he assured me he was filling in, would mail my letters, and that because of the rain and the absence of our regular mailman, he was working at the request of his supervisor." The question residents ask is "If requested, must a postal carrier provide proof of identification with a photo ID?"

The Resident did some research on the United States Postal System's website to determine if the USPS Code of Ethics or an Employee Handbook addressed that question. While documents were found online, none addressed the issue of presenting identification when asked. Then we turned to a postal representative with the Postal Service Inspectors who confirmed, via phone, that there

was no provision for such a request in their documentation. The representative then provided us with a contact at the post office at Wesconnett and Timuquana, where reason prevailed. A supervisor there assured us that it is a reasonable request to ask for and expect to see a photo ID from a postal worker. "It is a legitimate request," he stated. In addition, the supervisor noted that in our readers' neighborhoods, mail is only handled by uniformed postal carriers driving USPS vehicles. "In rural areas, the post office often subcontracts deliver of the mail to private citizens who drive their own vehicles and wear civilian clothes," he explained. "But that would not be the case in Ortega Forest." Should something similar happen to you or you witness a mail theft, write down the make, model and color of the vehicle, and attempt to get the license plate number. Contact the police immediately (630-0500) and then call the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at 877-876-2455.



Barbara Barsh gets a signature from a visitor at the Riverside Arts Market while Stan Porter encourages passers-by to sign the petition for a special library tax district

"Have you seen my keys?"

Have you cleaned my fleas?

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Sign the petition to save your library

Save date for big book warehouse sale

Volunteers will be asking shoppers at the annual Book Warehouse Sale this month to sign petitions, supporting the effort to hold a straw vote on creating a special tax district for libraries. Registered voters can sign the petitions to get the proposal placed on the 2014 ballot.

As of July 28, there have been 12,205 petitions collected and 7,019 verified (verification of registered voters in Duval County had been running at about 91%, according to Bill Brinton, but as time goes on a higher proportion are invalid, due to people who sign more than once or are not registered voters).

Book bargains – a whole warehouse full of them – will be available for shoppers at the Book Warehouse Sale scheduled Aug. 22-31 by Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library at the the University Park Library Book Warehouse, at 3435 University Blvd. North.

The University Park Library is one of six targeted for possible closing due to a proposed budget cut, as is the Willowbranch Library in Riverside.

This special event for book lovers all over Jacksonville includes an opening night buy-one-get-one-free offer for FJPL members. If you're not already a member of FJPL, simply pay the \$10 membership fee at the door on opening night. The popular \$10 bag (all the books you can stuff into a brown grocery bag) starts on Aug. 25 and continues for the rest of the sale.

FJPL President Harry Reagan said the warehouse has been restocked and volunteers are ready to hold another big sale. "Our Book Warehouse Sales have become very popular and they help us raise some money to supplement the Library budget," Reagan said.

Hours vary, so visit www.fjpl.org for specific times for each date of the sale.

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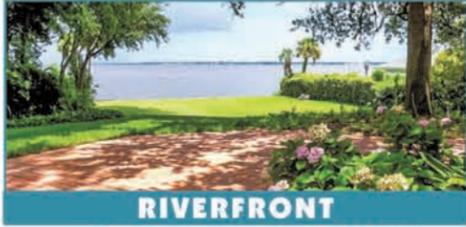
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Jason Harrah, USACE JAX Project Manager and Lisa Rinaman, St. Johns Riverkeeper, discuss some of the issues with the Harbor Deepening Project at a press conference back in early June



Obama Port Initiative threatens St. Johns

Dear Editor:

On July 19, 2012, President Obama issued the "We Can't Wait Initiative," expediting the study of the proposed St. Johns River Harbor Deepening Project. This decision dramatically reduced the study schedule by 14 months, potentially jeopardizing the integrity of the analysis by providing the Army Corps of Engineers with insufficient time to thoroughly evaluate this complex issue,

As a result, some conclusions in the recently released Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are vague, some concerns are not even addressed, and many of the required studies have not yet been completed, despite the fact that the public comment period ended on July 31. The fol-

lowing studies have not yet been completed: modeling of fish and macroinvertebrate communities, water quality modeling, tributaries and salt marsh modeling, groundwater report prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey, hydrodynamic modeling, storm surge and coastal modeling, and ship wake modeling.

In addition, the mitigation plan to offset potential environmental impacts is woefully insufficient, and the study of the potential local economic impacts conducted by a JAXPORT consultant has not been released to the public or independently peer-reviewed for accuracy.

St. Johns Riverkeeper believes that President Obama has made a significant mistake by fast-tracking this critical decision when so much is at stake for the St. Johns River and the communities of Northeast Florida.

The dredging of the St. Johns River from 40 to 47-feet could result in significant changes in salinity, increased shoreline

erosion, impacts to fisheries, more frequent algal blooms, and the loss of wetlands, aquatic grasses, trees and habitat. In addition, the dredging project is estimated to cost taxpayers at least \$733 million, including an unspecified amount for annual maintenance dredging and supporting infrastructure.

We are asking President Obama to give the Army Corps of Engineers more time to complete the study and make sure the proposed Harbor Deepening Project has been thoroughly evaluated. This critical decision has significant long-term consequences for the St. Johns and our community, requiring caution and careful scrutiny.

- Sincerely,

Jimmy Orth,
Executive Director
St. Johns Riverkeeper

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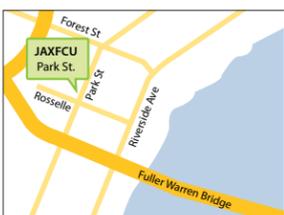
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'Concept plan' to redesign 5 Points parking and traffic flow approaches completion

BY STEPHEN KINDLAND
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Members of the 5 Points Merchants Association and Riverside Avondale Preservation are close to completing a "concept plan" they hope will lead to \$750,000 worth of traffic flow and parking improvements to the 5 Points business district.

The plan's main objective is to "shift the balance more in favor of pedestrians, bicyclists and local traffic," according to Stephen Tocknell of Tocknell Planning Services.

Tocknell told a group of two dozen people gathered on July 12 at Black Sheep restaurant on Oak Street that "the time is right" to redesign the 5

Points area because the city won't have new design standards for streets in place for at least another year. That's the earliest date a 12-member committee formed through a new city ordinance is expected to make recommendations to encourage walking, bicycling and mass transit as alternatives to private vehicle usage, according to Tocknell.

District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer, whose district includes San Marco, helped pass the ordinance because the city has only one set of design standards for streets, regardless of whether roadways are considered to be in densely populated urban areas or in rural settings.

"This is a golden moment," Tocknell said before leading a two-hour tour from Black Sheep through the 5 Points

area. "We want our design standards to be a prototype for what the city is going to do. It's a chance to be a model for the rest of the historic districts – San Marco, Springfield, Avondale, even Downtown."

Riverside Avondale Preservation is using money left over from fundraisers to pay Tocknell \$36,000 to complete

the plan by November. RAP and the merchants association plan to submit the study to city officials to bolster District 14 Councilman Jim Love's promise to seek \$750,000 for 5 Points area improvements during the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Love pledged his support while praising the efforts of the two groups in a recent letter to RAP president Carmen Godwin.

"It is impressive that the neighborhood organization and the merchants association are willing to invest private dollars in public infrastructure projects, and I will do everything I can to facilitate the construction," Love wrote.

Public support for restructuring the commercial district appears to be growing as well, according to others involved in the project. 5 Points Merchants Association president Allan DeVault, who also is a managing partner at Black Sheep, said he was delighted to see so many people take part in the tour.

"It was a good to see representation from the city and [the Florida Department of Transportation]," DeVault said. "Very encouraging."

"We want our design standards to be a prototype for what the city is going to do. It's a chance to be a model for the rest of the historic districts."

Stephen Tocknell

Tocknell Planning Services



Nancy Darlow, owner of The UPS Store in 5 Points, gestures toward an area of the historic business district during a recent tour taken by members of the 5 Points Merchants Association and Riverside Avondale Preservation. James Reed (from left) of the city of Jacksonville and City Councilman Jim Love took part in the tour, led by planner Stephen Tocknell (center).

He also said a public forum will be held to gather more community input. The date, time and location have not been determined.

Tocknell said after the tour that local pedestrian traffic has nearly tripled in recent years, a belief that is helping the search for a balance between vehicular traffic and alternative forms of transportation, such as bicycling.

Atop the plan's priority list are changes to the five-point intersection of Post, Park, Margaret and Lomax streets, from which the historic district gets its name, as well as restructuring of the intersections at Post and Margaret streets and Post and Park streets.

Tocknell said the consensus has been that the current traffic control system at the five-point intersection – which resembles a quasi-roundabout with stop signs and flashing red and yellow lights – is dangerous and confusing, especially to motorists

unfamiliar with the area.

Other study items include block-long sidewalk repairs along Lomax Street, and improvements to crosswalks at Park Street, midblock between Lomax and Post streets and at Margaret and Oak streets.

Reconfiguration of on-street parking also might be proposed, as well as additional angle or reverse-angle parking; facilitation of bicycle traffic and bicycle parking, and changes to service vehicle access.

Former 5 Points Merchants Association president David Joudi said he was impressed with the widespread interest, and that he is looking forward to attending the upcoming public forum.

"As long as one person isn't so stubborn about getting his way, we'll be all right," said Joudi, who has owned and operated Riverside Liquors & Village Wine Shop in the heart of 5 Points since 2001. "You have to think of the common good."

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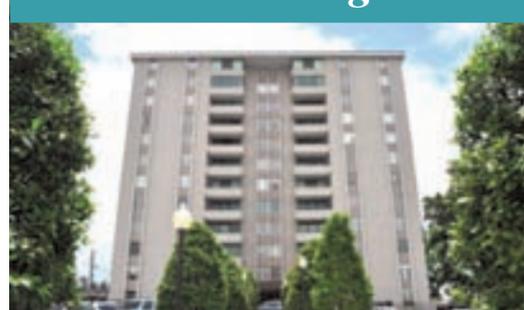
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Sales – Investments – Property Management

Interest in historic neighborhoods spurs change

NEFAR's budget shifts from Downtown Council to Historic Area Council

BY LORRIE DEFRAK
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

As more people are moving into attractive neighborhoods close to downtown Jacksonville, the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) has revived its Historic Area Council to support members and others involved in selling and revitalizing homes in areas that include San Marco, St. Nicholas, Riverside, Avondale, Ortega, Murray Hill and Springfield.

It replaces the nearly 10-year-old Downtown Neighborhoods Council of Realtors, which had been dormant for more than a year and whose budget has been transferred to the Historic Area Council. Providing a forum for education and networking for NEFAR members and affiliates remains the purpose.

"The council is important to educate members about the differences of listing and selling homes in the historic and downtown areas versus other parts of Jacksonville," said Carol Zingone, NEFAR president and broker associate, Prudential Network Realty, Atlantic Beach. "It's important our NEFAR members be aware of the new developments to the downtown and historic areas. With closings in that market area

up 42 percent year over year, the more educated our members, the better service they can provide to their buyers and sellers and help them be prepared."

"Networking is extremely important in real estate, not only with customers but other professionals in the field," said Jon Singleton, Historic Area Council chair and Realtor, Watson Realty Corp., Avondale/Ortega office. "The council can be a great resource to help educate folks who usually work in such places as Ponte Vedra, Mandarin and Orange Park on not only the boundaries but also how neighborhoods change from block to block and the various restrictions."

Singleton said the council will sponsor educational events to help NEFAR members and affiliates work in historic neighborhoods. "We have presentations lined up to help inform us on city initiatives, inspection areas of concern, historic overlays and architectural renovation requirements, and the like," he said.

The council was the topic of a recent NEFAR meeting at Aardwolf Pub and Brewery, a new taproom on Hendricks Avenue that itself is a statement to the lure of the San Marco area. Regions Bank on Hendricks Avenue hosted the meeting, where Oliver Barakat, chair of Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority, shared goals to connect downtown with the historic neighborhoods surrounding it.

Barakat believes the key is leveraging the strength of the residential neighborhoods to downtown and building off

their momentum and energy.

"The Historic Area Council creates a cumulative strength of those areas to the extent that NEFAR can bring together neighborhoods as one core district and elevate the awareness of all the success that is occurring," he said.

"It will be great to have a group of Realtors who understand the historic district and see the value in it," said Carmen Godwin, executive director, Riverside Avondale Preservation. "We are more than willing to work with them to promote this area as a great place to live."

Reese Riggle, president, San Marco Preservation Society, believes a major reason San Marco is appealing and home values continue to rise is that San Marco reinvests in itself. "This neighborhood, and many other neighborhoods that are vibrant and successful in Jacksonville, are walkable and have a

sense of pride that you can see and feel," he said.

Realtors who work in the historic districts concur that the market is improving, not only for houses but for condos as well.

"The condo market is definitely coming back in the historic area and downtown in general," said Josh Nugent, Realtor, Prudential Network Realty, Avondale/Ortega office.

"Inventory is at an all-time low, especially in the Riverside area and high rises on the waterfront."

Watch for the September edition of *The Resident* for an in-depth look at the status of the condominium market in the historic neighborhoods.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
The Historic Area Council will meet at least quarterly. For details, contact Jon Singleton at jon@jonsingleton.com.



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Illinois couple finds second home at Ortega Landing

After nearly five years sitting vacant, condominiums at The River Homes at Ortega Landing started to sell late last year. Now, with six sold and a seventh (out of eight units) under contract, the luxury riverfront property is home to a Midwestern couple.

According to Chip and Julie Clark, after shopping real estate in Charleston, Savannah and Jacksonville, they found the right community on the Ortega River.

"We love the water and boating and wanted to find a retirement home in a warmer climate than Chicago, yet we still wanted seasons. We looked for access to deep water so that we could do more boating and explore the Southeastern U.S.," said Julie. "After finding The River Homes at the Ortega Landing online, we called the marina and spoke with Warren [Hickernell, general manager and harbormaster]. Warren agreed to show us around and we were hooked!"

With just a few visits to their new home, the Clarks feel right at home in the neighborhood.

"We loved the luxury feel of the condos; we loved the activity and the proximity of the marina, and we like the community with quaint neighborhoods, restaurants, shopping and outdoor living spaces," shared Julie. "We have had the opportunity on our few trips here to attend mass at St. Paul's in Riverside, we strolled through the Saturday morning market under the bridge, and we've dined in Avondale and Riverside. Seems there is so much more to explore!"

Added Chip, "We have found the neighborhood, and the neighbors at the River Homes and the Marina, to be very welcoming. We look forward to our time in sunny Jacksonville, Florida!"



Julie and Chip Clark get The Resident each month at home in northern Illinois to keep up with the news in their second home community



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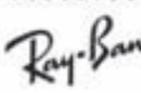
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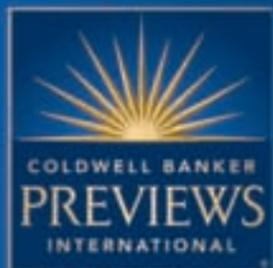
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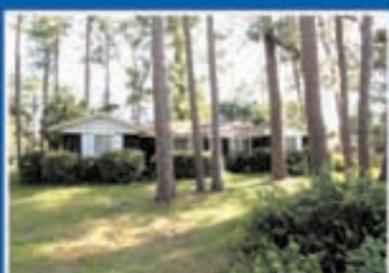
HISTORIC & REMODELED
\$699,000
WADE GRIFFIN



RARE MISSION MEDITERRANEAN
\$325,000
ANNE RAIN



GORGEOUS IN FISHWEIR
\$249,000
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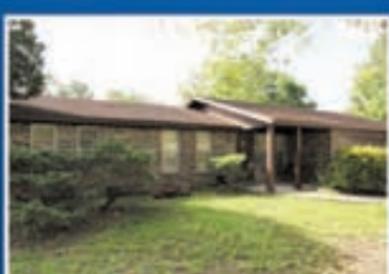
JULINGTON CREEK CIRCA 2006
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Welcome Charles Boyett



Being a resident of Clay and Duval counties for most of my life, I have grown to love Jacksonville and couldn't be happier that my family and I call it home. My wife Jill and I have been married for almost seven years and have the most amazing 3 year old son Chase. We live a very active life with

family, fitness and career at the center of it all. Chase has now started soccer and I am coaching that as well.

I have been working in the Jacksonville real estate market since 1999. Beginning my career as a Mortgage Consultant I focused exclusively on helping buyers find the best mortgage product to meet their individual needs and goals. I spent the majority of my time with a well-known real estate firm and had the luxury of working inside their sales location as my primary office.

Early in 2009, I made the decision to shift my focus to helping people buy and sell their homes rather than financing them. I found this to be an easy transition and a decision I couldn't have been happier with. My experience as a mortgage consultant allowed me to offer sound guidance and a different perspective to all of my buyer customers. After working with some of the top names in the Jacksonville real estate market and at the point of sale for over 10 years, I also knew what worked and didn't work with regards to helping a customer sell and market their home.

All my industry experience has lead me to my current position as the Director of Market Development for the Avondale office of Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty. I love what I do and sincerely enjoy helping people with their real estate needs. Since I began my real estate career in 1999, it has been my privilege to help hundreds of families and many fellow real estate agents achieve their goals. Some were making their first purchase while some were simply looking forward to the next step in life. The real estate community has embraced me and my family through the years and for that I give my most sincere thanks!



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Residents help to identify priorities for Downtown and neighborhoods

Distinctive Neighborhoods task force meets

BY KATE A. HALLOCK
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

What's in the Neighborhood Bill of Rights and why is that important? Members of a task force convened last month at WJCT Studios, the soon-to-be new home of Jacksonville Community Council Inc. (JCCI), to

start the discussion on strengthening local government communications and responsiveness to resident concerns.

The small group of 10 people was one of four groups that day discussing different action items under the Distinctive Neighborhoods theme, which appeared in three of the JAX2025 Vision targets: Arts & Entertainment, Neighborhoods & Urban Heart, and Vibrant Economy.

Ideas flew around the table, but several times during the discussion conversation became mired in frustrations with lack of response by elected officials, from the Mayor's office to district council members. "Why can't they be made to respond?" asked Celia Miller. Mention was made of the City of Jacksonville Neighborhood Bill of Rights, enacted in 1995 (Ordinance 95-247-106), but no one knew for certain the standards to which



Trey Csar, president/CEO of Jacksonville Public Education Fund, and Dr. Laura Lane, vice president of Jacksonville Community Council, Inc.

government officials are to be held under that bill. However, the bill of rights does provide for required responses by elected officials in two of the seven rules.

NEIGHBORHOOD BILL OF RIGHTS

Every organized, officially-recognized neighborhood in the City of Jacksonville has the right to expect and receive the following from the officials, employees and agencies of the City of Jacksonville:

Prompt, courteous, informed

responses to all questions regarding City business. Replies, if only to report that inquiries or research are underway and a full response will be forthcoming at a later time, should be made within one working day of the original neighborhood contact.

Advance notification of any City-related public works or utility project taking place within or adjacent to a neighborhood (e.g. road paving; water, sewer or drainage work; traffic signal installation or removal; park renovation or substantial maintenance; land purchases, etc.), including the day(s) and probable length of any street closures, utility interruptions, or other adverse impacts on the neighborhood, and the name and phone number of the City representative most knowledgeable and able to immediately answer questions during the course of the work.

Notification of the submission of any application for rezoning, zoning or land use variance or exception, Development of Regional Impact (DRI) or Planned Unit Development (PUD) application, or other significant land use action; a clear explanation of the date, time and place of all applicable public hearings and other opportunities for public input on the application; and a clear explanation of the type of testimony that is allowable and relevant from neighborhood organizations and residents.

Opportunity for formal input into the annual budget process, including the opportunity to express preferred city government priorities, suggested capital improvement projects and other statements that fairly represent the opinion of a majority of the neighborhood's residents.

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Suzanne Jenkins facilitates a group discussing local government communications and responsiveness



► The opportunity to participate in the design of publicly-funded projects within or adjacent to the neighborhood, including the opportunity early in the planning process to express neighborhood preferences about choice of location, materials, orientation, size, land use intensity, and other features.

forces, which includes Encouraging Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, Working Together for People, Government Openness and Responsiveness, as well as Distinctive Neighborhoods, will meet once a month for six months to identify priorities and action items, as well as the organizations that can and should take action.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE FORUM...

Each of the initial four focus task

If you wish to join a focus task force and be part of the JAX2025 vision process, visit www.jax2025.org.

JAMES 1:17
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NEW PRICE

3840 Herschel St - \$150,000
 2/1-1,092 sqft. Have Avondale for a Murry Hill price! Walk to the restaurants, parks and shoppes! This charming bungalow has a great front porch, cozy fireplace, gleaming hardwoods, and updated kitchen and bath.



UNDER CONTRACT

1537 Talbot Ave - \$250,000
 2/1-1,340 sqft. Does it get any cuter than this? Living room with 10 ft. ceilings and fireplace. Sunroom with lots of natural light. Plantation shutters, hardwood floors, eat in kitchen. Great Avondale character and charm!



SOLD

1418 Ingleside Ave
 3/1-1,500 sqft. ADORABLE AVONDALE BUNGALOW with an abundance of historic architectural charm! Home includes hardwood floors throughout, cozy fireplace, built in book shelves, updated kitchen.



2912 St Johns #21 - \$85,000
 2/1-882 sqft. Great Location!! Walking distance to St. Vincent's, Park and King District, the Shoppes of Avondale and the river. Third Floor Condo which provides quiet and privacy. There is an elevator in the building for ease of access.



3029 Riverside Ave - \$575,000
 4/4-1-3,354 sqft. Wonderful old world details abound from the huge wrap porch, coffered ceilings in living and dining rooms beautiful wood floors and lots of original moldings and wood work throughout.



NEW PRICE

4338 Davinci Ave - \$225,000
 3/2-1,608 sqft. Looking for a great home in a great area? This is it! Location and charm combine in this sweet gem. Great curb appeal and a lovely landscaped front yard replete with picket fence and arbor entrance greets your guest.



4945 Arapahoe Ave - \$385,000
 3/3 - 2,333 sqft. : Great 3 bedroom, 3 full bath home on corner lot. large rooms, kitchen opens to great family room, beautiful paneled den that opens out to patio, living room with fireplace. Good closet space.



4155 Venetia Blvd - \$1,400,000
 3/3-1-3,916 sqft. Looking for the perfect ten? Stop here! Located on the St. John's river, this 1995 custom home has it all. Dramatic Downtown Views from the moment you step inside!



UNDER CONTRACT

5106 Ortega Blvd - \$430,000
 4/3-3,006 sqft. Fabulous home with fantastic pool and great outdoor living space. This home lives very big with large spaces, good closet space, family room and pickled pine sunroom overlooking beautiful backyard.

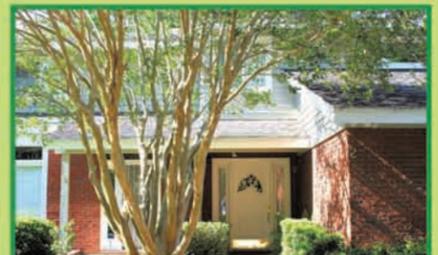


4911 Arapahoe Ave - \$500,000
 3/2-2-3,086 sqft. This home is a surprise from the moment you enter and are wowed by the hardwood floors, wonderful kitchen/family room, and the 900 SF Master Suite with a 12'X11' walk-in closet that has been totally built out with custom shelving!



UNDER CONTRACT

2109 Herschel St - \$315,000
 4/2-2,313 sqft. Live the urban life in this charming 2 story Victorian with 2 fireplaces, beautiful hardwoods, pocket door, high ceilings, spacious, eat-in kitchen, and charming front porch. Walk to MossFire, O'Brothers, Five Points, Publix and Memorial Park.



4531 Sussex Ave Unit #2 - \$215,000
 3/3-1,761 sqft. Not often do you find one of these beautiful waterfront townhomes on the market with a ground floor bedroom and full bath! This is a wonderfully maintained unit with tons of storage, and an open kitchen to a huge great room with lovely views of the waterfront.



SOLD

4760 Ortega Blvd
 3/2-2,381 sqft. Great new price on this warm, wonderful and welcoming home in the heart of Ortega! Traditional one story brick fronting Ortega Boulevard, with driveway and backyard access on Choctaw for ease.



3608 Boone Park Ave - \$207,500
 3/2-1,564 sqft. Absolutely MUST SEE 3 bedroom 2 bath Avondale home that includes a 1 bedroom 1 bath "in law" suite in back. This spacious two story home has a long list of features that you will love!



4824 Arapahoe Ave - \$700,000
 4/3/1 - 3,056 sqft. If you are looking for the American Dream Home you have found it. From the foyer on through the living room you will feel At Home. A major remodeling in 2002 updated this traditional brick home.



3881 Timuquana Rd - \$1,875,000
 5/3/1-4,904 sqft. Classic Elegance is evident from the moment you walk through the door of this lovely two story brick Georgian Home. Large entry foyer, lovely formal dining and living rooms, custom millwork, built in cabinets and more!



5598 Fair Lane Dr - \$570,000
 3/3-1-3,414 sqft. Location, location! Wonderful opportunity to live in a private setting across from Timuquana Country Club golf course. Quality of workmanship and construction is evident throughout!



UNDER CONTRACT

1678 Woodmere Dr - \$299,000
 3/1/1-2,060 sqft. Charming two story brick & frame home with recently refinished hardwood floors is across the street from riverfront homes and offers a glimpse of the water! Gracious living spaces, new coat of neutral paint throughout.



NEW PRICE

4300 Lakeside Dr #5 - \$300,000
 3/2-1,940 sqft. Stunning, riverfront condo with lots of light and fabulous water views. This third floor, end unit has all new windows, brand new spacious baths, updated kitchen, new a/c, fireplace, and tall ceilings. There is also a one car garage.



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Noise complaints lead 'frustrated' craft brewery owner to vow relocation



Intuition Ale Works owner Ben Davis and his dog, Sunday, take a walk through the craft brewery's production area

BY STEPHEN KINDLAND
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

After months of dealing with police visits and discussions with city officials about noise complaints that he says were lodged unfairly, Intuition Ale Works owner Ben Davis has shut down parts of his operation and plans to relocate his craft brewery on King Street.

Though his lease doesn't expire for another three years, Davis says he won't exercise a three-year renewal clause because he has grown weary of scores of noise complaints called in by a neighbor.

He also hasn't ruled out the possibility of moving before his lease expires.

"We are moving," Davis said. "It's just a question of when and where."

Records provided by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office indicate that deputies responded to no less than 66 noise complaints between May of 2011 and July 13, 2013. Though police couldn't contact the complainant to verify many of the calls, Davis says he believes that virtually all of them were made by the same person.

The majority of the calls were made between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m., when crowds gathered for "open-air" fundraisers and other special events held

on Intuition property, situated in an area that had been deteriorating to a point where Davis felt the need to hire a full-time security guard.

"We close at 11 o'clock [at night]," Davis said, shaking his head. "There was only one complainant. He yelled at my delivery drivers, customers and my staff. He's a nightmare."

A recent post on Intuition Ale Work's Facebook page says it all.

"After recently receiving a substantial fine for a noise violation and dealing with the stress of frequent visits by JSO, code enforcement and the Environmental Quality Division, all due to complaints made by our residential neighbor, we have made the extremely painful decision to permanently close the brewery area," the post reads.

"The frustration is that sales are affected because we can't do special events anymore," Davis said.

Those special events included Oktoberfest, Intuition's anniversaries and fundraisers in which the brewery donated more than \$60,000 in beer and merchandise to nearly 100 local charities – in addition to \$20,000 in cash.

"We look at ourselves as being an asset to the neighborhood," Davis said. "I'm losing sleep at night wondering where we're going to relocate."

Though he would prefer to stay, relocation isn't a new concept for the 39-year-old entrepreneur. Earlier this year, he was engaged in talks with the city to either relocate or expand to the Shipyards, situated on vacant, city-owned property on Jacksonville's Northbank. He also has considered other possibilities, including vacant sites in La Villa and Brooklyn, adjacent to Riverside Avenue just west of Downtown; and a parcel in the Mixon Town area.

But nothing has materialized, and Davis says the lack of movement has been equally frustrating.

"It's been a 'no, no, no' kind of interaction with the city," Davis said. "They don't think outside the box.

They aren't advocates for business."

Davis says that he still has three years to figure out what to do, even though his 3-year-old brewery is rapidly outgrowing its 16,000-square-foot home, where 17 employees have increased production from 1,200 barrels in the brewery's first year to an estimated 6,000 barrels in 2013.



Intuition Ale Works owner Ben Davis (right) discusses quality control with Andrew Cattell, the craft brewery's production manager

The beer, mostly ales, gets distributed to six Northeast Florida counties.

"The next step is to become a regional brewery," Davis said. "We'd be looking at 25,000 barrels a year."

He also said he doesn't want to continue butting heads over rezoning issues with members of Riverside Avondale Preservation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving the area's historic integrity.

"There are a lot of challenges with being in a historical district," Davis said. "We're kind of an afterthought."

Wayne Wood, one of the founders of RAP, said he wishes Davis the best with his decision to move, and that he hopes Davis can find a spot where he can balance his beer manufacturing interests with retail sales.

"Ben is a very innovative, caring and nurturing kind of a guy, and I'm hoping he finds that balance," Wood said. "I don't have a solution, but my sympathies go out to him" concerning the noise complaints.

Jared Rush, an Intuition customer with a background in sales and marketing, said he was "shocked" when he heard that Davis planned to relocate.

"It changed that whole area when he opened up," Rush said. "It became one of the hot spots. Now I'm frustrated. We need venues like that."

Rush said he wishes that Davis and the neighbor who complained could have reached "some kind of compromise" in a subsequent hearing with the city, but echoed the sentiments of many patrons who responded to Intuition's Facebook post.

"It's not about the noise complaints, it's about the reality of the bigger picture," he said. "It becomes political when you outweigh the greater good of what Ben created. To be shut down because people don't like the noise, we're not going to become a great city."

Rush said he has no doubts that Davis will land on his feet – wherever he decides to relocate. "Ben is a gentle giant, but he's a fighter," he said.

Davis says he needs to keep reminding himself that it's time to forget the past and stay focused on the future.

Still, he says, it's unsettling to think that the north end of King Street likely will go back to being what it was before he opened his brewery.

"Dark and empty," he said.



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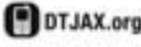
Downtown Jacksonville's dining promotion, Eat Up Downtown, returns from August 12-25 to dish out special prix-fixe menus that will leave your stomach and your wallet full. There are no passes to buy, coupons to clip or cards to punch. Simply make reservations at the restaurant of your choice and Eat Up Downtown!

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Chomp Chomp • Cinco de Mayo • Fionn MacCool's Irish Restaurant & Pub
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Price per person; does not include tax or gratuity. Some restaurants offer additional prix-fixe menu options. Reservations recommended. Street parking is free after 6 p.m. and on weekends. Additional information is available at eatupdowntown.com or by calling 904.634.0303.


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JACKSONVILLE
MAGAZINE

904
magazine

Historic districts present “historic” issues when it comes to maintenance

Blending of old with new amenities adds to livability

BY KATE A. HALLOCK
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Running into Carmen Godwin, executive director of Riverside/Avondale Preservation Society, isn't too difficult because she seems to be everywhere doing the business of the Historic District. But catching up with her to chat is easier said than done.

In the space of just one month, Godwin participated in meetings about the proposed Riverside dog park, the Riverside/Avondale parking study, the Riverside community garden, Historic District tree trimming, the 5 Points mobility study, Historic District sidewalk paver replacement, the St. Johns Avenue/Commander Apartments redevelopment, and an evening trolley program. And that's just scratching the surface. Add in concerns about bicycle and pedestrian lanes and the Riverside Avenue bridge and roadwork at Willowbranch Creek, and you can start to get a good sense of how Godwin spends her days.

While not all issues and concerns are problems unique to historic districts, RAP seems to find itself in the trenches right now trying to ensure that new development, re-development or just plain maintenance is done according to standards befitting older communities.

One such concern is JEA's approach to tree trimming. Godwin and others have been doing research in other cities' historic districts to determine the best approach to keeping the historic tree canopies intact. "Others [cities] trim more often and less aggressively to keep the tree canopy intact," said Godwin. "They may have more outages but are willing to accept less reliability to keep the tree canopy intact."

According to Godwin, JEA won't accept more outages and require 10 feet around the wires. "There are protections in the local ordinances for the tree canopy," she noted. "There are only three historic districts here so they should look at tree trimming a little differently."

Another area of historic concern is sidewalks. "We are also looking at replacing sidewalk pavers built with the



neighborhoods that are at least 100 years old)," shared Godwin. "The City is tearing them out and putting in concrete; but it's not easy to repair concrete breaks and they can't match the historic pavers."

Residents on Shadowlawn are facing the problem now, but even as the sidewalks are being torn up they've asked for a meeting with the City. Richard Skinner, who lives on that street, said "We have these octagon pavers that are part of the sidewalk's heritage, probably a hundred years old. They [the City] want to repave with concrete and there's no historic value to that. The pavers add a richness to the houses. There was no sensitivity to any of that."

Skinner noted that homeowners are maintaining their properties according to Historic District standards, while the City is not meeting that same obligation.

"We want to have an influence on what happens over here," Skinner said. "Let's come up with the right solution, with a standard set for the entire neighborhood. We would like to see the use and re-use of those pavers. There are new pavers available, so why can't we just match that? These sidewalks will stay pretty level for 10 to 20 years. It's better than pulling broken concrete out, disposing of it and re-pouring more concrete every few years."

All the pavers were pulled for the first couple of homes on Shadowlawn from St. Johns Avenue and the sidewalks were left as dirt, while homeowners and RAP wait for a meeting with the City to discuss the alternative.

"It's been three weeks. They're looking at the cost benefits. But as a general rule their attitude around maintenance and upkeep is embarrassing," concluded Skinner. "They [the City] will 'not' do something in order to save money to

the detriment of the aesthetics and the welfare of the population that lives here. We're looking to set a standard that the City can follow [in other historic areas]."

Historic streets are typically narrower and that lends itself to yet another problem of "historic" proportions: parking. Whether it's a perceived or actual lack of parking for shops in the historic districts such as 5 Points, Riverside's Park and King, or The Shoppes of Avondale, homeowners and renters in those areas are just as concerned about the solutions.

Godwin noted that a lot of data has been gathered up to this point, including information about where fire hydrants and utilities are, the length and width of driveways and the number of multi-family dwellings in the districts. "About 20-30% of the study area is multi-family dwellings, which need more than one or two parking spaces," said Godwin. "We will use this to look at current and future demand to come up with a solution."

The community meetings to present parking solutions were tentatively scheduled for early August, however, the parking study committee only met once in July and will meet again Aug. 5 to determine a schedule for the community presentations.

None of these issues, however, are quite as time-consuming or contentious as that of the St. Johns Avenue retail center and Commander Tower Apartments proposed re-development.

Godwin has been in several meetings prior to the second town hall meeting on July 17. She and others from Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) met with Michael Balanky, the developer; Steve Diebenow, attorney representing Balanky and ELM, the architects who presented a new conceptual site plan.

"It's a little bit closer," RAP's executive director said. "However, the [Riverside Avondale] Overlay provides for a 60-foot height limit and they are looking at several different heights within the property, from nine to 14 stories."

A RAP community meeting with 30 to 40 residents indicated that "overwhelmingly the top concerns were height, the lot coverage (massing and scale)," continued Godwin. "In general, the feeling was that in 2005 there was a lot of back and forth and neighbors did not get what they wanted; they wanted a lot less but now they understand that it's a different project, three times as much."

Godwin said that increases in traffic, overall safety, and buffering from the nearby single family homes were the major concerns, along with the fact that

obligations from the 2005-2006 Planned Unit Development (PUD) application are not in the current PUD.

Jeff Graf, who lives on Greenwood Avenue, explained that there were 17 obligations in the earlier PUD that were removed from the current PUD, including the escrow for dredging Fishweir Creek. "They [the developer] want to bootstrap their 2005 rights while jettisoning the obligations."

While some of these issues simmer, Godwin has been working on plans for new amenities in the community.

The Riverside Dog Park is coming together. Although RAP has not been actively promoting the project until all the details were complete, they have raised about \$10,000 to date for a park that will cost approximately \$200,000. In addition to monetary donations, they are looking for in-kind donations, such as electrical work, concrete for walkways, lighting, fencing, labor and/or materials.

Godwin said they are considering other methods of raising funds, such as kickstarter or matching funds grants. Trey Csar, chairman of the dog park committee, noted that District 14 Councilman Jim Love has pledged to match up to \$100,000 in funds, and "now it's a question for the community." Eighty percent of 450 people surveyed said they would regularly use the dog park, so it's up to the community to help fund it and one way is through the purchase of brick pavers.

Csar, a dog owner himself, is a big believer in the community. "It's less about the dogs than it is about building community," he said. "A dedicated dog park would be an attractive feature to the Riverside Avondale community."

RAP is also trying to put traction back on a community garden. "We were able to raise around \$4,000 for the garden," Godwin said. "Now we're waiting for a contract with the City for use of the space."

The City of Jacksonville is requiring disability accessibility to the site, which will cost another \$10,000 for accessible parking spaces, walkways and raised beds for wheelchair bound gardeners. Godwin is asking if the City has funds for that requirement. The garden, which will be co-managed by RAP and Sustainable Springfield with individual plots as the preferred structure, is being considered in part of a vacant lot across from the Willowbranch Park.

As if all that were enough to keep Godwin busy, she's also managing the restoration of the Buckland House, which is on hold until she receives the agreement from the State of Florida for a grant. "The State hasn't issued these types of grants in four years and they are reviewing their process," noted Godwin. "The Special Category Grant is usually for large-scale historic preservation projects for the State, but Buckland House was ranked high [on their list] three to four years ago in the grant process and was allowed to roll over every year for past three years when funds were not available. It will not roll over for 2014, so we got lucky that we got funded this year."

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Sheriff's wish list: remove unfunded pension liability

City needs to deal with "elephant in the room"

BY KATE A. HALLOCK
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

When it comes to your wish list of city spending, where you put your financial priorities is directly related to what you believe is the number one function of local government.

In the case of the current budget battle, Sheriff John Rutherford wants residents to know that the good news is that while crime in Jacksonville is at its lowest in 41 years, the bad news is that the number of officers is also at its lowest since he took office in 2003.

Should Mayor Alvin Brown's 14 percent across-the-board budget cuts be enforced, Sheriff Rutherford would be forced to cut hundreds of officers from the current roster of 1,603 in order to meet the mandatory \$29 million reduction in his budget – more bad news.

A significant portion – 26 percent – of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) 2012-2013 \$366.76 million budget included a \$96.4 million unfunded pension liability. It's expected that the 2013-2014 budget won't be much different, including the unfunded liability, which is part of the line item for personnel.

In a report published by the Jacksonville Community Council Inc. (JCCI) in early 2012, an advocacy task force on city finances chaired by J.F. Bryan IV indicated that the largest threat to the City's financial health was the "huge unfunded liability in the employee pension programs, last reported to be over \$1.6 billion and requiring an ever greater funding contribution from the City with each passing year." The report went on to state that the amount required to fund the pension plans (for FY2011-2012) was nearly 12 percent of the entire General

Fund budget and, if left unattended, was expected to grow to \$180 million by 2016 and to \$350 million by 2026.

Furthermore, in that Final Implementation Report, it stated that the "true elephant in the room" in regard to the City's financial crisis was the Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability (UAAL) which, if not sufficiently funded, will cause the City to "eventually drown in a sea of pension debt."

"It's important to see how the pension issue is driving the whole budget discussion, not just for the Sheriff's office, but for the whole city," said Rutherford at a recent presentation called "The Future of Public Safety in Jacksonville – A Thoughtful Look at the City's Budget, Pension and the Unfunded Liability."

At the presentation the Sheriff shared statistics of all kinds. From populations and crime rates to millage rates and officer response times among top U.S. and major Florida cities, Rutherford said that Jacksonville ranks high where you don't want it to because, in part, it ranks the lowest in millage rates (10.0353) among Florida's largest cities and Northeast Florida counties. "We could have raised another 2, 2.5 mills and still be tied with the bottom," he noted.

The pensions subcommittee of the two-year JCCI-sponsored task force presented a series of options to then-Mayor John Peyton and City Council. One of the many options proposed included a dedicated millage amount, such as one to two mills, to the unfunded liability.

Most of the growth in NE Florida has been in St. Johns County, which has the highest millage at 21.8822. "People want to live in a community that has the quality of life they're looking for, not just low taxes," stated Rutherford. "It's not just about low taxes. It's a balancing act."

A low millage affects all budgets

and for the JSO, that results in the lowest police budget among major cities in Florida with a per capita spending of \$326; a combined city/county spend would be \$310 per capita. "The JSO's portion of that unfunded liability is projected to be \$96.4 million on a nearly \$2.8 billion unfunded liability for all City employee pension programs combined," the Sheriff said.

"It's such a driver [the unfunded pension liability], it creates an unrealistic picture," Rutherford continued. "The JSO's portion of that unfunded liability is \$96.4 million on an actual \$2.8 billion unfunded liability in all City employee pension programs."

"The pension plan proposed by the Mayor was insufficient because it did not address the pension liability," declared Rutherford. "It's disingenuous to try to balance the \$96.4 million pension hole on the backs of the men and women's benefits."

The Sheriff wants to make the budget more transparent; and he wants to have the pension liability pulled out of his budget. "The JSO is lean and efficient; it was the first law enforcement agency in the country to go Lean Six Sigma," Rutherford said. "This is not about the pension benefits; it's about the unfunded liability." [Lean Six Sigma is a managerial concept that eliminates in seven kinds of wastes (Transportation, Inventory, Motion, Waiting, Overproduction, Over-processing and Defects).]

At a Sheriff's Advisory Committee

meeting in Ortega last month, Undersheriff Wayne Senterfitt presented the same concerns. "The JSO prepared the budget they needed to run the office; it was a realistic plan, not a wish list or a fantasy," he told the audience.

According to Senterfitt, the problem with the Mayor's budget was the decision to have across-the-board cuts, putting law enforcement in the same category as other services, when it comes to funding or cutting.

"That's the easy way out, not the right way to find cuts. You have to prioritize," Senterfitt noted. "The number one function of local government is public safety."



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Haydon Burns Library

has good bones



BY NANCY LEE BETHEA
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund purchased the Haydon Burns Library at 122 Ocean Street in downtown Jacksonville on June 19. Designed in the early 1960s by Jacksonville architect, Taylor Hardwick, the structure features more than 80,000 square feet of usable space over three floors and a 33,000 square foot basement.

A due diligence review performed in the spring found the building to be sound, according to Edward J. Burnell of Burnell Development, LLC. "The building has good bones," he said.

Plans for the first and second floors

are to provide office and common spaces for the nonprofit sector. A third floor roof is slated to be an employee play area with a putting green.

Historic features such as the mosaic near the elevator and the open stairway in the lobby will remain if possible, according to Sherry Magill, president of the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund. The popular second floor puppet theater will be kept as a presentation space and be retrofitted with current technology.

"The Haydon Burns was a deliberate pick to help the nonprofit sector," duPont Fund trustee Kitty Phillips said, "and to help the City jumpstart revitalization. The people of Jacksonville love it."

Water main improvement project going as planned

It's good news for Riverside and Avondale businesses and residents. The water main improvement project that's been underway since March is going very well. The JEA expects to be completed with the pipe work and paving by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) by November.

According to Gregory Corcoran, Coordinator with JEA Project Outreach, "The project continues

to progress nicely, even with the off and on rain we have been experiencing over the past month. The contractor has finished almost all the pipe work and connections along Riverside Avenue. The contractor is currently working on installing the water main on King Street near the St. Vincent's hospital."

The first phase of the FDOT paving project on Riverside Avenue (from Peninsular Road to King Street) was planned for Jul. 29 through Aug. 16, except for the block between Stockton Street and

Osceola Street. That particular segment is dependent on a possible FDOT drainage design and construction project at that intersection. "We anticipate that portion may be paved

in October or November 2013. This will be managed by the FDOT and completely separate from this project," said Corcoran.

The contractor moved a crew to St. Johns Avenue (from Avondale Town Center to King Street) to install water service

under the road in preparation for the pipe bursting work which was scheduled to start on Jul. 22. This second phase of the project is mostly residential in contrast to the first phase on Riverside Avenue. Most of this work will continue to occur during the day. The contractor will be required to block some parking spaces along St. Johns Avenue while installing the water main. These areas will be blocked with barricades 24 to 48 hours prior to the work in the area, according to Corcoran.

"The project continues to progress nicely, even with the off and on rain we have been experiencing..."

Gregory Corcoran
JEA Project Outreach Coordinator

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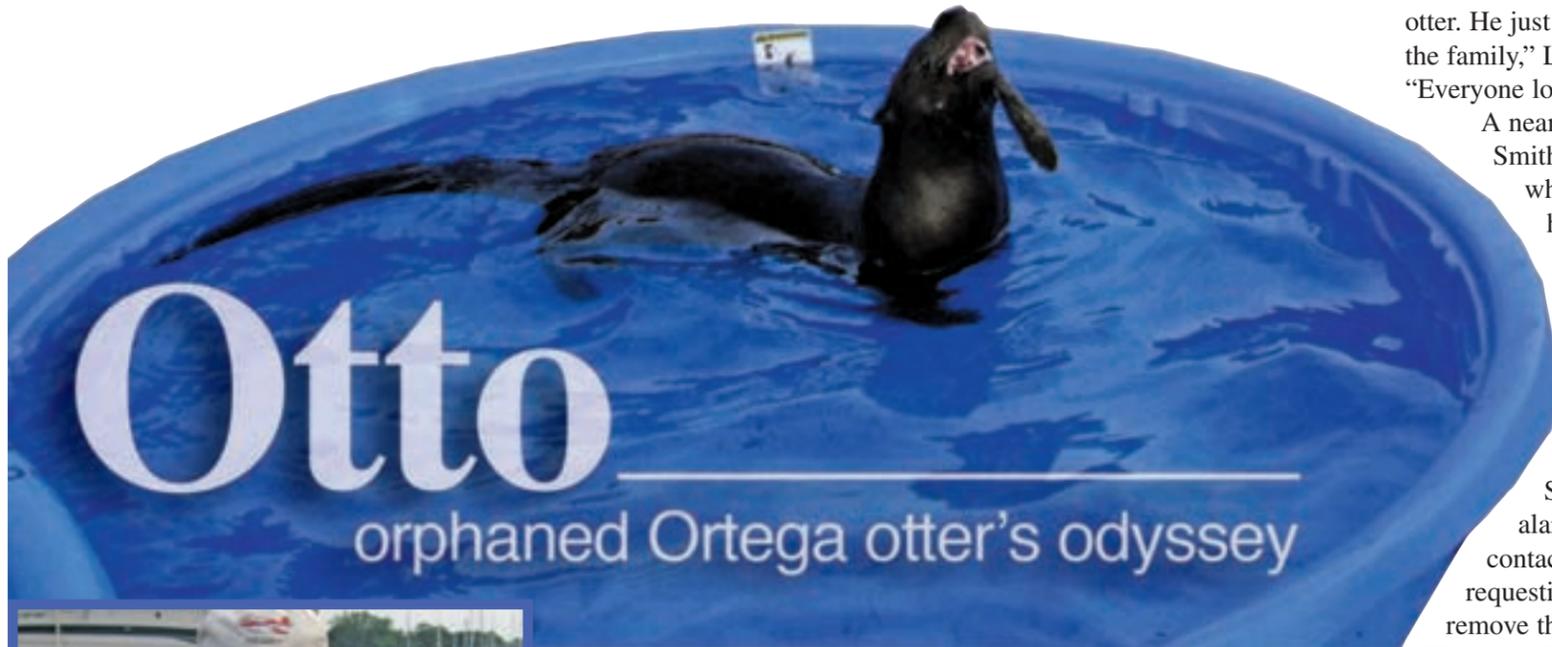
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otter. He just figured he was part of the family," Light observed. "Everyone looked out for him." A nearby office worker, Jane Smith, became concerned when she saw Otto conk himself on his head. Smith asked a friend who was a volunteer with an animal rescue and rehabilitation "rehabber" agency what to do if Otto needed medical care. Smith's friend became alarmed, insisting Smith contact the wildlife authorities, requesting they capture and remove the otter. Smith refused. However shortly after, she believes her now former friend contacted at least one local wildlife agency.



Patty Hamilton with Otto as a pup

Resident News reporter uncovers the end of the journey

CONTRIBUTED BY
DANA GREYSON

"Chirp. Chirp. CHIRP!" It was March 2011 when Nick Sharrow of Jacksonville's Sharrow Tree Service traced the disturbing high-pitched, penetrating distress call to an abandoned river otter pup in a client's Riverside yard. "It was hard to ignore," he said. The otter was so young its eyes only recently opened; he weighed about five pounds and was less than a foot long.

The next day, the otter was

still there, more upset and no mamma otter in sight. Worse, it appeared to have a cold. Sharrow brought the otter home with him to his boat at Ortega's "marina mile," and dubbed the otter "Otto." Sharrow bottle-fed Otto \$5 cans of goat's milk and tilapia. Upon recovery from his cold, Otto regained his energy and made himself at home in the marina.

In June, Sharrow tapped his new neighbor Roberta "Bertie" Weaver to take over Otto care as Sharrow's work schedule and Otto's exuberance conflicted. "Otto had it pretty good, with the tilapia and goat's milk feeding!" joked Weaver, who became known along the marina mile as "Otter Mom."

Weaver took to the role, tackling teaching Otto the basic skills he needed to survive in the wild. She and another neighbor, Patty Hamilton, began fishing locally for Otto's food. She introduced him to the water with a baby pool, and then took him to Redneck Beach where he learned to swim. She also gradually cured him of his fear of rain. By August, Otto learned to catch his own fish, and often disappeared for days at a time with his girlfriend, a wild river otter.

Meanwhile, Otto's playful, mischievous nature both charmed and distressed the neighbors.

John Light introduced himself to Weaver after seeing Otto romp in neighborhood swimming pools from his upper story condo windows. "What the heck is that?" Light asked Weaver.

"It was hard to imagine that wild otter didn't know who his mamma was. He didn't get that he was an

Smith admits she didn't want to see Otto suffer the same fate the stray cats fed by office coworkers did. They were hit and killed by cars, which often speed along Lakeside Drive. Smith was contacted when another friend found Otto wandering on Euclid near San Juan Avenue. She returned him to "his" marina.

Around that time, Weaver recalls a visit from a representative of the Wildlife Rescue Coalition of Northeast Florida. When told the visit was to check out an otter, Weaver offered to call Otto. "Oh no!" she remembers the wildlife representative responding. "They're vicious!"

That visit was followed by another from Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) inspector Kevin Larsen, spurred by complaints placed between Jul. 28 and Aug. 11, 2011 that "there was an otter held captive on a boat in a marina," requesting it be turned over to a wildlife rehabber.

When Larsen met with Weaver, she pointed out Otto to him. Otto, a bit of a ham, hopped up out of the river onto the marina dock, and mugged for Larsen's camera. Larsen snapped Otto's photo, but took no further action.

Later that fall, on a mid-November morning, Weaver noticed Otto's tell-tale footprints ended where a set of car tread marks began. She suspected Otto was gone for good.

November 12, 2011, Otto was admitted to the Wildlife Rescue Coalition of Northeast Florida, according to its founder and president,

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Barbara Tidwell. The next day they placed Otto with a licensed wildlife rehabber.

Meanwhile, Weaver and several neighbors initially thought Otto returned when they spotted an otter around the marina over the next few weeks. They realized, however, it was a little smaller than Otto, who'd reached about 25-30 pounds by then. Weaver figured out the otter was Otto's girlfriend, trying vainly to find him.

Weaver and Otto's other marina mile friends missed Otto. They had visions of his returning to the wild eventually, becoming a father, watching baby wild otters become part of the marina mile wildlife. They hoped wherever he was, that would still happen.

It was Sharrow's search for new companionship in a different form that revealed Otto's whereabouts. Ironically, on the "Plenty of Fish" dating website, Sharrow's photo of Otto was recognized by a volunteer wildlife rehab assistant, Dawn Fox. She contacted Sharrow and told him Otto was in the "care" of a longtime

licensed rehabber, Leslie Straub. Fox, a former volunteer with Straub, was so upset about the crowded and inhumane animal's conditions at Straub's, she reported her to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Fox even shot and released a series of disturbing videos of Straub's home, where she was

keeping wildlife piled in closed boxes.

Otto's former caretakers were outraged, incited by Fox's video and photos of Otto's small cage, and his filthy swimming pool. When they also discovered he was now neutered, it became clear to them it was unlikely Otto would ever return to the wild. Even when Straub was convicted, her

license suspended and all the surviving animals in her care relocated, they feared Otto would be returned to Straub eventually or suffer elsewhere in poor conditions.

Weaver contacted Busch Gardens to see if Otto was located, if they'd take him in. Busch Gardens was potentially willing, but Otto's whereabouts were still unknown.

Following the trail of Otto's

Karen Parker, FWC's Public Affairs Officer revealed Otto, since renamed Walle, is now living happily at Clearwater Marine Aquarium. He's even become buddies with Cooper, another otter at the Aquarium.

"Now we'll never have to worry about a local 'gator getting Otto, or that he'll be hit by a car."



Photo taken by the Florida Wildlife Commission when visiting Otto at his Jacksonville home.

disappearance for this story led to re-contacting the FWC. Karen Parker, FWC's Public Affairs Officer revealed Otto, since renamed Walle, is now living happily at Clearwater Marine Aquarium. He's even become buddies with Cooper, another otter at the Aquarium.

Michael Atwell, Marketing and Public Relations Manager for Clearwater Marine Aquarium confirmed Walle's residence. Walle is also featured on their website, www.seewinter.com.

Weaver was delighted to tell Sharrow about Otto's new home on Sharrow's birthday. "That's the best birthday present, ever," he replied, misty-eyed.

Weaver, Sharrow, and Light are planning a trip to Clearwater soon. They can hardly wait to see Otto again, though they want to make sure they don't do anything to disturb Otto's contentment with his new

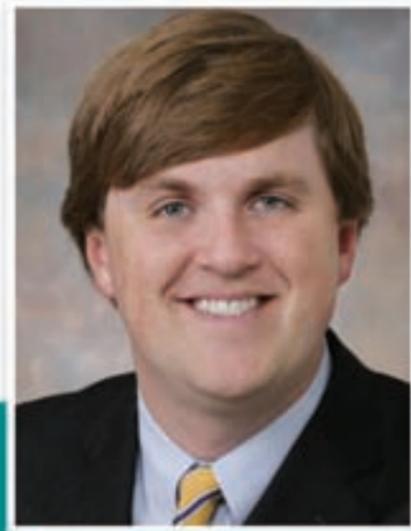
home. "Now we'll never have to worry about a local 'gator getting Otto, or that he'll be hit by a car," says Light, happily.

It's clear Otto lives on in the hearts of the village of marina mile that raised him; their faces light up with joy as they share the stories of his antics, show their smart phone Otto videos and photos, and point to the Otto Sharrow Facebook page.

Still, if Sharrow or Weaver were to find an abandoned wild animal today, they would contact a wildlife rehabilitation agency.

Parker emphasizes "It's usually the wildlife that suffers when they come in contact with people. In Otto's case, he'd lost his fear of people. That would make it difficult for him to return successfully to the wild."

"It's true. Otters are social, playful creatures; Otto loved everyone he met," concludes Hamilton.



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DEPRECIATION	\$9,512	\$4,750	\$4,182	\$3,706	\$3,326	\$25,476
TAXES & FEES	\$2,556	\$46	\$46	\$46	\$46	\$2,740
FINANCING	\$1,356	\$1,077	\$788	\$487	\$174	\$3,882
FUEL	\$2,535	\$2,611	\$2,689	\$2,770	\$2,853	\$13,458
REPAIRS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$622	\$950	\$1,572
TRUE COST TO OWN	\$17,547	\$10,320	\$9,970	\$10,502	\$11,448	\$59,787

AUDI Q5	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	5 YEAR TOTAL
INSURANCE	\$1,419	\$1,469	\$1,520	\$1,573	\$1,628	\$7,609
MAINTENANCE	\$402	\$562	\$983	\$2,568	\$2,419	\$6,934
DEPRECIATION	\$9,575	\$6,461	\$5,688	\$5,042	\$4,525	\$31,291
TAXES & FEES	\$3,214	\$46	\$46	\$46	\$46	\$3,398
FINANCING	\$1,730	\$1,375	\$1,006	\$622	\$222	\$4,955
FUEL	\$2,785	\$2,868	\$2,954	\$3,043	\$3,134	\$14,784
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Cummer officials, supporters 'giddy' about museum's makeover

BY STEPHEN KINDLAND
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Hope McMath and other officials at the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens are giddy about the expected completion next month of a \$4.6 million makeover they believe will change the complexion of Riverside Avenue.

"We're creating the synergies that could elevate not just this neighborhood but the entire city," McMath, the museum's director, told about two dozen civic leaders during a recent soiree held at the museum. "It's what can make the city a destination – not just the Cummer."

Cracked and narrow sidewalks along busy Riverside Avenue will be widened, and passers-by will be tempted to stop for an espresso drink at an outdoor café adjacent to a sculpture garden that will feature four permanent works and several others on loan by Enzo Torcoletti of St. Augustine.

Torcoletti's exhibition is scheduled to open at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept.

21, and will mark the completion of a landscape enhancement project that began last September.

Visitors to the Cummer – which once catered almost exclusively to Jacksonville's elite – will be encouraged to stroll through the renovated Olmsted Garden, which until recently had been closed to the public but has been integrated with the popular Cummer Gardens.

The combined gardens – which were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2010 – nearly double the museum's waterfront footage. But it's the outdoor sculpture garden on the museum's front lawn that will serve as an eye-catching "bridge" between two distinctly different areas, according to McMath.

"We feel like this is the first dot in a big connection between Riverside/Avondale and Downtown," she said. "We're very excited about what that connection can be."

McMath also told her audience, which included City Councilman Jim Love and Riverside Avondale



Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens director Hope McMath gives an update on \$4.6 million worth of renovations during a recent gathering of the Riverside Avenue museum



Wayne Wood (center), founder of Riverside Avondale Preservation, was among two dozen Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens supporters who recently received an update on the museum's \$4.6 million makeover

Preservation founder Wayne Wood, that the museum has become more family oriented. She said the number of young people coming to view the 50-year-old museum's 5,000 permanent pieces of art also is increasing – perhaps encouraged by free admission periods and other special promotions.

"We're still shaking that stigma" of being stodgy and elitist, McMath said. "But now we want to send this message – and send it loud and clear – that we are for everybody."

She said the makeover – paid for with money raised through a year-long fundraising campaign – also will allow the museum to hold combined music and art presentations.

"This is all an attempt to turn the

Cummer inside out and be a catalyst for the Riverside Avenue corridor," she said.

Love was quick to point out that the museum expansion is one of several development projects under way in the Riverside area, including renovations at the nearby YMCA and construction of 220 Riverside, a high rise apartment complex that also will be the site of hundreds of special events throughout the year.

"I see things happening," Love said. "This is going to be a fantastic gateway between Riverside and Downtown."

Wood, a longtime museum supporter, couldn't agree more.

"It's just another jewel in the crown," he said.

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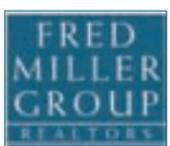
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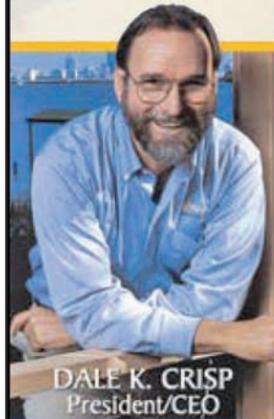
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McCoys Creek clean-up crew collects tons of trash

Sarah Nan of Riverside looks over a huge pile of debris that even included discarded tires – all collected from McCoys Creek at the intersection of McCoy Creek Boulevard and King Street



BY STEPHEN KINDLAND
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Sarah Nan has spent countless hours helping to clean up Jacksonville's polluted waterways, but even someone with her experience has a difficult time comprehending what people have done to McCoys Creek.

"People don't understand how damaging trash can be to the ecosystem," said Nan, a Riverside resident and member of the Keep Jacksonville Beautiful Commission.

Nan is among 15 to 20 volunteers representing three organizations who gather monthly to clean up the 3.5-mile long creek that begins flowing in Murray Hill and meanders through a number of Riverside neighborhoods before emptying into the St. Johns River near Brooklyn.

Members of the St. Johns Riverkeeper's Rising Tides subgroup, the Keep Jacksonville Beautiful Commission and the Jacksonville Jaycees began clearing debris from McCoys Creek last winter near Interstate 10 at Cherokee Street and

Edison Avenue. So far they have hauled an estimated 20 tons of trash from McCoys Creek and its banks.

That amount will be tripled by the time the project is completed later this year, according to Nan.

"We've pulled 400 tires from that creek," she said. "We've seen garbage piled 4 feet high.

Shopping carts are really common."

"You can see the trail of trash after it rains," Nan adds, pointing to a growing stack of plastic bags filled with objects dragged by hand from underneath the bridge at King Street and McCoy Creek Boulevard. The debris includes Styrofoam cups, plastic bottles, a car bumper, a metal bandit sign, a 50-gallon trash can and an old TV set.

"We average two to three hours [per clean-up session], depending on how

grossed out everyone gets," Nan said.

Industrial pollution used to be McCoys Creek's worst enemy, but the Clean Water Act of 1972 dramatically reduced the amount of chemicals and other waste that routinely had been dumped into the stream, according to Shannon Blankinship, outreach director for the St. Johns Riverkeeper, an environmental advocacy organization.

Blankinship says the concern has long since shifted to people who need to be educated about the value and benefits of McCoys Creek.

"This creek is our backyard, and if we treat it like a ditch, it's going to look like a ditch," she said. "It's going to take a mind shift to stop



Annie Chambers (left) and Alicia Smith donned waders before entering McCoys Creek during the clean-up

people from using the creek as a dump site. With a little community support, this could be an amazing waterway.

"The more [volunteers] we have out there, the louder our voice is," she said. Maintaining a positive attitude hasn't

been easy, according to Jaycees member Daniel Solomons, who recalls playing in McCoys Creek near Post and Bay streets as a child.

"But I don't remember any trash like this," he said. "It's annoying, but you can't let it get to you."

Avondale resident Dunnican Pullen said he knew it would be a mental and emotional challenge when he first volunteered for the McCoys Creek project.

"But it's actually exciting when you start seeing results," he said. "Especially when the river starts running quicker."

Nan couldn't agree more. "It's really a rewarding feeling when we finally see the creek flow again," she said. "It's a simple thing, but there's life coming back to the creek. It's an 'ahh' moment."

The McCoys Creek group meets on the third Sunday of each month. A schedule of starting times and locations can be found on the Rising Tides link on the St. Johns Riverkeeper website's "How You Can Help" page at www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

Information about Keep Jacksonville Beautiful is available on the city of Jacksonville's website at www.coj.net.



Sarah and Daniel Solomons lug an ironic item up from the debris – a 50-gallon trash can – pulled from McCoys Creek

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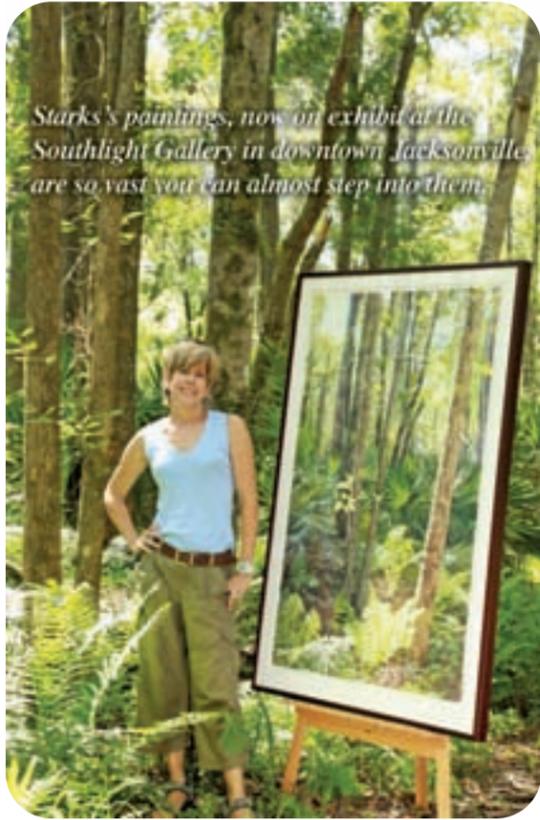
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Wilderness artist works both exciting and engaging



Stark's paintings, now on exhibit at the Southlight Gallery in downtown Jacksonville, are so vast you can almost step into them.

Artist brings area parks and woods indoors

BY CAREN BURMEISTER
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

An artist and devoted lover of the outdoors, Kathy Stark doesn't have to choose between the two. She spends as much time hiking and kayaking as she does in front of the canvas.

Her two passions are coming together in *Wilderness of North Florida's*

Parks, a multi-faceted arts project designed to drive more people to Jacksonville's 30 city, state and federal parks and help preserve the area's natural resources.

"What she's doing through her wonderful talents is to highlight these parks to the public," said Richard Skinner, an architect and chairman of the board of directors of the Timucuan Trail Parks Foundation, a non-profit that seeks to protect local parks through education, eco-tourism and fundraising. "The beauty of it is that people can go to the places she is painting."

Collectively, Jacksonville's parks contain roughly 80,000 acres and comprise the biggest park system in the country. Stark finds unique beauty in each of them and hopes the effort will inspire people to visit the region's wild and beautiful parks and experience nature for themselves.

Having recently participated in One Spark, a crowd funding festival in downtown Jacksonville, Stark was dismayed to talk admirers of her watercolor paintings who had heard never set foot in places like Tillie Fowler Regional Park, a 509-acre park off Roosevelt Boulevard.

"This park is so close to us," Stark said. "So many people right nearby

have never been there."

Many people she talked to at One Spark hadn't heard of environmental organizations like the St. Johns Riverkeeper, Timucuan Trail Parks Foundation and North Florida Land Trust, groups that Stark hopes to boost and receive support from.

Stark's paintings, now on exhibit at the Southlight Gallery in downtown Jacksonville, are so vast you can almost step into them. Her highly detailed style emphasizes the pine trees' gnarly, reticulated surface and captures bursts of sunlight bouncing off palm fronds and sparkling on ferns.

Her watercolors aren't the soft washes typical of that medium. Instead, Stark uses bold, pumped up colors and a dense overlay of brush strokes to portray the woods.

"She brings those landscapes to life," said John Ragsdale, chairman of the board of the St. Johns Riverkeeper, a citizens group that works to keep the St. Johns River and its tributaries and wetlands clean and healthy.

Ragsdale is Stark's project advisor and is helping her organize ideas and raise money. He's known Stark about 25 years and said he's seen her work blossom, especially since she began producing large-scale outdoor pieces.

"It's a great tie into our work," Ragsdale said. "I think it's a wonderful approach, using art to engage people with the environment."

With Ragsdale's help, Stark is developing a three-phase business plan that combines her art with traveling exhibits, and interactive games, contests and sketchbook journals for each of the parks.

First she wants to complete five large-scale watercolor paintings of four of the parks. She's also creating sketchbook journal pages for those parks and for the three non-profit groups.

Then she plans to build a website,

Facebook page and a traveling exhibit with her prints and map depicting the 30 parks for libraries, schools, museums and other busy public venues. As part of that phase, she will work with Wayne Wood, a Riverside-based historian, preservationist and author of a dozen books, to publish a coffee table book containing the paintings and sketchbook journals. She may also develop a guidebook that children and families could take with them to the parks.

Finally, she wants to get children excited about the parks with computer templates that will help them draw and write their own sketchbook journals. Other concepts include interactive games like a virtual geocache with coordinates for the site that's the subject of the watercolor painting and visitor contests involving snapshots to prove they were there and earn points toward prizes.

To fund the project, Stark will seek community grants through sources like the Community Foundation and the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville. She also plans to approach community philanthropists and perhaps even do a Kickstarter campaign, an online funding platform for creative projects.

"I'm drawn to nature and the beauty of our world," Stark said. "It recharges me, inspires me. I just can't imagine doing anything else."

Stark's *Wilderness of North Florida's Parks* is now on exhibit at the Southlight Gallery, on the second floor of the Dyal Upchurch Building at 6 E. Bay St. The building is at the corner of Main Street and Bay Street, at the foot of the Main Street Bridge. For more information on the gallery, visit www.southlightgallery.com or call (904) 438-4358.

Kathy Stark can be reached through her email at kartstark@bellsouth.net.

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The Nimnicht Family reinvents dealership, enhances experience

When is a car dealer not just a car dealer? When it – like Nimnicht Chevrolet – is a satisfying customer experience. There is a true difference when 'service beyond the sale' is tied to your family heritage, something most corporate dealerships don't concern themselves with.

The story of Nimnicht Chevrolet started in 1941, when it was established by Billie Nimnicht III's grandfather. But even before that, his great-grandfather, Ed Nimnicht Sr, was the assistant general sales manager for Chevrolet Motor Division before retiring from General Motors.

In 1967, Billie's father took over the dealership until his passing in 2001. Billie Nimnicht III is a third generation dealer who began his career at age 14, working part-time through his summer breaks from school. "People in the area know our name. We've touched a lot of those

families one way or another with the broad product line of the Chevrolet, from entry level cars to sports cars and SUV's. At some point in their life they've [returning customers] had a Chevrolet or desired one. I run into a lot of people who say, 'Oh, yeah, your grandfather...I knew your dad...'" shared Nimnicht.

In January 1988, Billie came on full-time for Nimnicht Chevrolet and in 2001 stepped into his father's shoes to become the dealer. Although it may be a little premature for six-year-old Billie IV to start thinking about his destiny, the family-owned dealership is a good place for an early start in business.

"My future was kind of set," Billie said. "It's a good, fun business but it's challenging."

Maybe family is why Nimnicht's business philosophy has been successful for over 70



years. "It's a family experience when people buy a car so this is not just for service, it's to keep the kids entertained for a couple of hours while you're trying to buy a car or waiting on service," said Billie. "Car service is kind of like going to the dentist. Everyone likes to buy a car but no one likes to come for service, so we do the extras that make us stand out and make the whole customer experience better."

Nimnicht recalls that back in the 1970s and 1980s the Chevrolet product was so bad that dealers and the service relationships made the difference.

Now, according to Billie, the product is so good the dealers have to be worthy of it. "We're always looking for the competitive advantage but it's always

just about the customer, giving them more reasons to come here.

These amenities before, during and after the sale hopefully makes us different and...we're shooting for better."

The Nimnicht Difference

A year ago, the dealership began the process of a facelift and careful planning to better serve the customer. His goal was to comply with the Chevrolet brand while creating a personal touch that separates his Chevy dealership from the cookie-cutter operations at other dealerships.

Construction began late last year and was completed in July, with a brand new look and feel. "We've opened up the dealership to be more inviting," said Billie.

The showroom and customer service area includes an inviting lounge with televisions – including one dedicated for children – an Xbox station, WiFi, a quiet lounge (no cell phones allowed) for people who prefer to read, an onsite café catered by Simply Sara's that serves breakfast and lunch, and free popcorn and coffee all the time. One of the true highlights is 'Nimnicht Neverland', a dedicated playground that rivals the outdoor play stations at local fast-food chains.

"It's fun to buy the car and then the rest of it is something you have to do. Nobody wants to do it, so we try to enhance the experience," Billie stated. "That's why we added the highlights, the café and we have a kids' play area."

The dealership also provides free shuttle service and courtesy cars for customers who drop their vehicles off for service before heading to work.



Nimnicht Chevrolet is located at 1550 Cassat Avenue. Call (888) 833-0204, visit www.nimnichtchevy.com, www.facebook.com/NimnichtChevrolet, or stop by the dealership from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, or noon to 6 p.m. Sunday.



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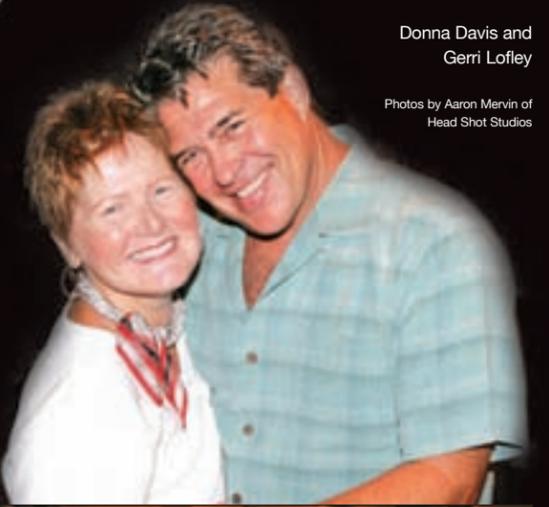
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Social REGISTER

Donna Davis and Gerri Lofley

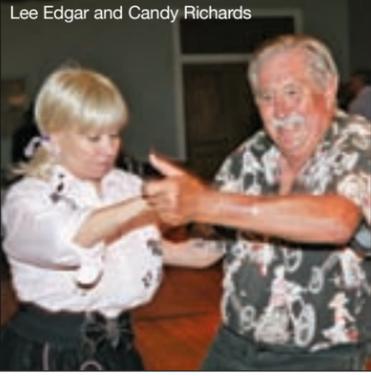
Photos by Aaron Mervin of Head Shot Studios

SOCK HOP AT CUMMER CELEBRATES WITH DANCING TO THE OLDIES



Christina Malanga, Michelle Woods, Christopher Crisp, Cherie Roberts, Kim and Tom Cox

Lee Edgar and Candy Richards



Residents enjoyed a night of oldies spinning at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens on July 12. Some patrons went all out, dressed in '50s and '60s sock hop garb, as they twisted, turned and bebopped to the spins of DJ Earl Yeomans. The Cummer hosted the sock hop as part of the excitement around the current exhibition, Future Retro: The Great Age of the American Automobile, through Sep. 8.

FAST CARS, FINE WINE – BROUGHT TO YOU BY TERRA

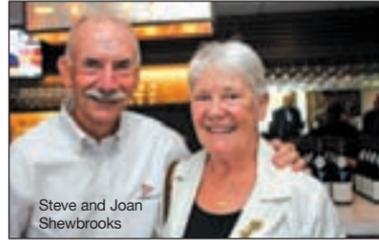
Driving, then drinking was a great mix for an evening of fun on July 15 at Terra Restaurant in Fairfax as owner Michael Thomas hosted an opportunity for patrons to first test drive one of two 2014 Maserati Quattroportes, courtesy of Maserati of Jacksonville, and then to partake in a wine tasting event sponsored by Southern Wine & Spirits of North Florida.



Andrea Ashmead in the 2014 Maserati Quattroporte



Carolyn Rankin, Susan Gullett, Wendy and John Baggett



Steve and Joan Shewbrooks



Bill and Bernadette Barrett

UNIVERSITY CLUB RECOGNIZES FIRST MEMBERS, 45 YEARS

Carson Eddings with Ronald Langley

Taylor Stafford with Carl Doan



It was an evening to celebrate, as a handful of special patrons were honored by University Club management and current members. "Life Members" were showered with cheers and thanks, as they hailed back to the beginning in 1968. Old Hollywood Glitz and Glamour was the theme, as Oscar-theme décor set the stage for the evening event on July 24. High atop the Riverplace Tower on the 27th floor, breath taking views highlighted the amenities members enjoyed as they revelled in the glory of the milestone anniversary.



Leigh Elizabeth and Aaron Bryan with Don and Robin St. Denis



Life Member Sid Gefen is congratulated by Membership Director Sarah Small

KEGS 'N EGGS ON THE ROOFTOP



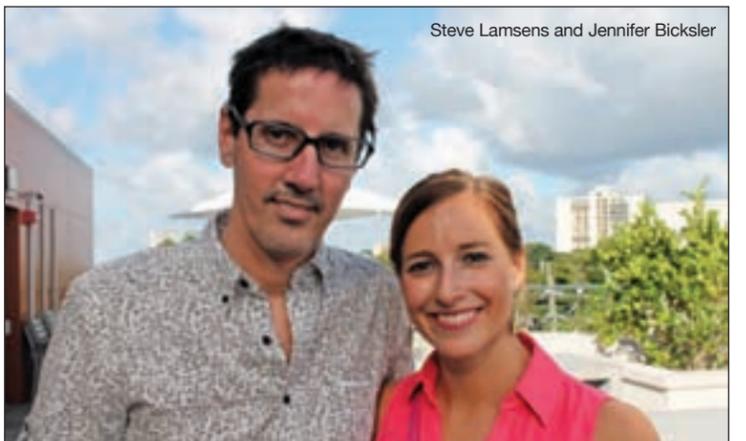
Meisha Joyce with Cari Sanchez-Potter, Intuition Aleworks' business manager



Genora Crain-Orth of Hens in Jax with Staci Bu Shea

Intuition Aleworks teamed up with the Black Sheep Restaurant on July 16 to benefit Hens in Jax, the grassroots group trying to spur change to residential zoning for chicken coops. The six-course eggs and beer dinner pairings, which

included delicacies such as poutine with fried duck egg, mini truffled egg toast and Intuition Ale ice cream, was enjoyed by fans of the microbrewery, Black Sheep patrons and hen aficionados.



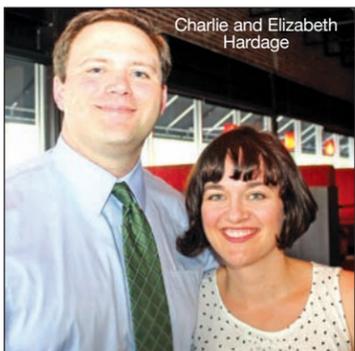
Steve Lamsens and Jennifer Bicksler

SHIRCLIFF SOCIETY BRINGS YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TOGETHER FOR A GREAT CAUSE

Fun and food – especially when it's nonperishable items collected for the St. Vincent's Food Pantry – are a winning combination for the Shircliff Society. Young professionals donated food items for diabetics at last month's Party for the Pantry, held at Pele's Wood Fire.

Josh Cockrell, one of the Society's original founders, said, "We started the Society two years ago to engage with young professionals and cultivate them to be future supporters and donors for The St. Vincent's Foundation." Added Connan Raspa, currently on the Society's board of directors, "We're a wonderful community organization and happy to continue the mission of Bob Shircliff."

Josh Cockrell, Connan Raspa and Roberta Sumner



Charlie and Elizabeth Hardage



John and Molly Roberts

School for Abundant Living

Riverside Park United Methodist Church

Low Cost Community Classes

819 Park Street in Five Points • 355-5491

REGISTRATION – Wednesday, August 21st, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Wednesday Evening Classes – Fall I Session dates – Aug. 28th – Oct. 9th, 2013

For Adults

5:00 p.m. Class

Early Bird Yoga – CYT Instructor – Jayne Parker – \$35.00 – Beginner to intermediate Vinyasa Yoga classes. Move through postures that will invigorate and allow you to tap into a more abundant life. Vinyasa means flow, the postures are linked with movement. Students are encouraged to move at their own pace as they breathe. Our first class will be dedicated to former instructor, Tess Yackshaw.

6:30 p.m. Classes

Zumba – Certified Zumba Instructor – Elissa Srulevich – \$35.00 – A rigorous work out with a dance party format. Fun and fitness rolled into one. Ms Srulevich is a professional dancer and teacher with a BFA in Dance from Belhaven University.

Line Dancing – Professional Instructor – Joy Bellemare – \$35.00 – A slower, easier way to exercise but lots of fun and fellowship. All the latest dances and no partner needed because lines of them are provided!

Beginning Guitar – Professional Artist/Instructor – Arvid Smith – \$35.00 (this class is also open to teens). Learn from the beginning, This class is for adults and serious minded youth, ages 11 and up. A guitar is required.

Dog Obedience Training – Certified Instructor – Pam Wiltgen, of “Far Fetched Tales Dog Training” – \$70.00 This class is for all breeds and sizes. The fee is per dog and can include multiple owners. Children welcome with parents.

Acrylic Painting – Professional Artist Instructor – Nancy Floyd – \$50.00. Mrs. Floyd is a professional artist with many years of instructional experience. A materials list will be available at registration.

Conversational Spanish – Certified Instructor – Diego Aragona – \$25.00 Learn conversational phrases in a relaxed setting. A fun and enjoyable class with useful information. Mr. Aragona is a specialist in linguistics with 20 years of teaching experience.

Infant Parenting Class – “Getting To Know Your Baby” – Sponsored and taught by the Seton Center for Women and Infant’s Health at St. Vincent’s – \$20.00 – Topics covered include Newborn Care, The Ins and Outs of Breastfeeding and Feeding, How to Soothe A Fussy Baby, Why is My Baby Crying?, Infant Safety and Baby Milestones. The class fee covers one or both parents. Infants welcome in the class but a free nursery setting is provided also.

Technology Helps for Sr.’s – Degreed Instructor – Jim Lewis – \$10.00 –This class is designed as a “help session” for Sr. adults looking to learn more about technology. Bring your questions, lap tops, i-phones or other devices. Come every week or until your questions are answered or resolved.

Beginner Handbells for Adults – Instructor – Dan Marks – \$10.00 – This class will be for beginners or folks with a bit of handbell knowledge. Some knowledge of music is helpful but not required.

Spiritual Study – “Living as United Methodist Christians” – Instructor – Rev. Rafael Vigil – This study is based on the book by the same name by Andy and Sally Langford. It will explore the basics of faith and beliefs in the United Methodist church and mainline Christianity in general. No charge but participants will need a book.

For Children

5:00 p.m. Class

Handbells for 3rd-5th Graders – Instructor – Bonnie Allen – (no charge). Children learn to play handbells in a fun setting. No previous musical experience required. Children must be available for a few performances during the year.

5:30 p.m. Class

Group Violin Instruction – Professional Instructor – Stephanie Lindsay. Mrs. Lindsay holds a degree in Performance from Boston University and has 17 years of experience as both a performer and instructor. Her teaching background is the Suzuki/Indiana School style and she has taught with Jumpstart Strings in the DCPS. She performs with both the Jacksonville Symphony and the Naples Philharmonic. Information about violin rental available at registration

6:30 p.m. Classes

Christian Karate – Instruction provided by United Martial Arts – Karate moves are taught in a safe, respectful, Christian environment. Ages 5 and up. Students have the opportunity to earn belts as they learn. No uniforms required.

Children’s Art Class – Instructor, Amanda Erskine – This is a fun, easy to enjoy fine arts and crafts course for any ability in grades Kindergarten through Fifth. Each child will be able to complete projects that will both encourage creativity and artistic awareness, and will be fun to take home and show off to family members. Miss Erskine, is an enthusiastic junior Draw/Paint Major at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. She is an advocate of the arts in Jacksonville through her teaching and volunteer work with Art League of Jacksonville.

The Life Center

Adventures in Learning for
Seniors 55+ • Friday Mornings

9:15-10a.m. – **Exercise** – Low impact, guaranteed to make you feel fit the rest of the day.

10-10:55 a.m. – **Technology for Everyone** – Intro to Kindle/Nook, Skype, Cell phones, etc.

T’ai Chi – A structured exercise with slow, connected movements.

Conversational Spanish – Learn some basic, everyday expressions.

11-11:55 a.m. – **Line Dancing** – Join the fun!

Current Events – An open discussion of current news events

Arts & Crafts – Great craft projects available (if you have a personal project, you may bring that too.)

12-1 p.m. – **Lunch (\$6) & Program or Activity**

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Violin, Karate and Art are all \$30.00 for the first child in a family and \$15.00 for a 2nd class or other children in the same immediate family.

**Minimum number of participants may be required for some classes.*

We Provide – On site JSO security each week.
Free nursery care for children 4 yrs. & younger for participants

Magical moments at Ben's Place



Jorge Garcia-Bengochea and Magic

Tiny horses spread joy

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Ben's Place on San Juan Avenue is a haven of fun for folks with developmental, physical and emotional disabilities who enjoy art classes, dances, games, socializing, cooking and just hanging out with friends.

Recently a resounding chorus of "ooohhs" and "ahhhs" reflected the delight on the faces of all who met a goodwill ambassador from Gentle Carousel Miniature Therapy Horses appropriately named Magic.

There were lots of smiles and giggles when Magic walked gracefully down the trailer ramp and appeared in the crowded room. When asked how he liked the little horse, Joe, a regular

visitor, responded with laughter in his voice, "Oh, she's so cute. I really liked it when I got to pet her."

Annie Candy who says she does a little of everything at Ben's Place – "facilitator, program director, you name it" – states that "everybody just loved the little horses. We have tons of photos on our Facebook page."

Magic seemed to step off the pages of a storybook as young Blake Weaver, whose aunt volunteers at Ben's, read her "biography" and Magic turned the pages. Theresa Swain was delighted with the delicate little horse and said, "Just looking at Magic makes me want to cry. She just doesn't seem real. She is so precious."

Magic's reputation is huge but her body is so tiny she wouldn't come up to Black Beauty's knee. Selected by Time Magazine as one of history's Most Heroic Animals, named AARP's Most Heroic Pet in America and featured in Reader's Digest/ American Towns "Power of a Hero", Magic quietly goes about the business of making moments magical for anyone she visits – whether comforting a sick child or an elderly patient; visiting with someone in hospice or offering solace to a victim of abuse, her calm, sweet nature brings a sense of peace and comfort.

She does what she does best – bring joy into the lives of those who need it most.

Debbie Garcia-Bengochea and husband Jorge work with Magic and other miniature horses at the Oaks Equestrian Center in Lake City, Florida; they travel all over the United States to visit libraries, hospitals, (Magic has a very special relationship with children in hospital care) or victims of natural disasters.

Debbie explained that they were contacted to visit Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut after the brutal killings which occurred there in

2012. The coordinator told her that he had no idea how many people would show up – anywhere from two to 100.

There were 600 people in attendance! It was the first time the children had been back together since the disaster. There were a lot of tears from everyone involved – children, parents, teachers, first responders and Magic's handlers.

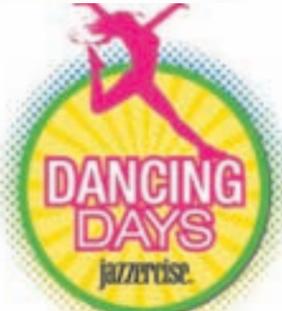
Jorge Garcia-Bengochea notes that these amazing little creatures help people focus on something besides their sorrows or illness: "It gives them a new, joyful memory to take away from the experience."



Blake Weaver and Magic read her biography

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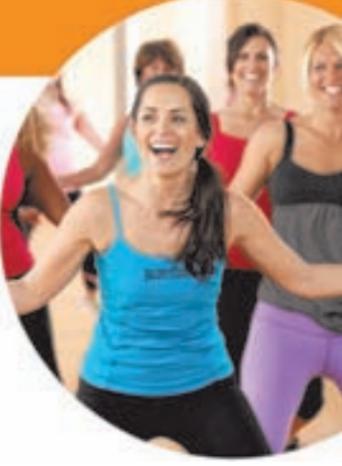
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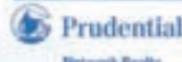
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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Ortega cardiologist also a medical pioneer

Ortega resident Dr. Samer Garas is a pioneer in the medical industry.

An interventional cardiologist with Diagnostic Cardiology Associates (DCA), which provides cardiology services at St. Vincent's HealthCare, Garas is leading the way with a new cardiac procedure. Last year, St. Vincent's was hand selected to become the first hospital in the region to provide transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR), which treats diseased valves, or severe aortic valve stenosis. Just recently two new FDA approvals have opened the door for more patients to receive this life-saving procedure.



"After Edwards Lifesciences received initial FDA approval in 2011 to implant its artificial valve using the transfemoral (through the thigh) TAVR approach, they specifically chose St. Vincent's Medical Center Riverside as one of the first hospitals in the nation to use the procedure," said Dr. Garas. "In addition to constructing the new Hybrid O-R (a requirement for offering the TAVR

procedure), St. Vincent's was selected because of the technical skill of our cardiology team. We also do the highest volume of valve, stent and coronary angioplasty procedures in the area."

Unfortunately, severe aortic valve stenosis cannot be treated with medication. The only effective treatment is to replace the diseased aortic valves. Before TAVR, this meant open-heart surgery. For many patients, opening the chest is too risky and not an option. TAVR allows a new valve to be inserted within a patient's native, diseased aortic valve through a small incision in the thigh.

While the procedure was approved in 2011 for patients not eligible for open-heart surgery, just recently the FDA broadened its approval to include patients at high risk for serious surgical complications. In addition, the FDA also approved TAVR by the transapical (through the chest) approach in addition to the already-approved transfemoral (through the leg) approach.

Avondale chef to represent Jaguars at annual Taste of the NFL



Chef Brian Siebensschuh of Avondale's Restaurant Orsay, will represent the Jacksonville Jaguars at the 23rd Annual Taste of the NFL on Feb. 1, 2014, in New York.

"Obviously, everybody here is stoked to be representing the city of Jacksonville alongside the Jaguars at the Taste of the NFL event," said Siebensschuh. "I like to think that when we opened up five years ago,

we were part of what has turned into a bit of a revolution in the dining scene here in Jax – while we've still got more than our share of volume-driven chain restaurants, there's been a ton of growth in the field of independent restaurants that are focusing on real food and real cooking, and we're committed to maintaining our standing as a leader in that scene. Beyond that, this is clearly a really exciting time for the entire Jaguars organization and all the fans, so that makes the timing of this match-up even more...well, exciting for us!"

The annual "Party with a Purpose" – held on the eve of the Super Bowl – features chefs from each of the league's 32 teams, serving their signature dish.

St. Johns Flower Market kicks off 20th anniversary with concert

When you think of celebrations, you often naturally think of flowers to commemorate the occasion. This year, Lenny and Marianne Thiesen of St. Johns Flower Market have something special to celebrate. Twenty years at a location nestled in the Y of St.



Johns Avenue and Herschel Street marks a long time of successfully enticing passers-by into making a quick stop for a bouquet or arrangement. The Thiesens will celebrate their floral longevity with a concert on Aug. 31 at the location around 5 p.m.

Passion for biking leads to career change

Bicycling to work at the Publix in Julington Creek from his Riverside home was nothing to Ben Wilson, 45, of Willow Branch Avenue. "It was only 38 miles round trip," he said. After the avid cyclist was promoted to deli manager at the Riverside Publix, he had a far shorter trek and started to miss his distance cycling.

"I started working on a plan for a bicycle-based business last November, then left Publix after 12 years this past April," Wilson shared. "Community Couriers was open for business by the first of July."

Wilson will pick up groceries, and other items, for a fee and then deliver them to homes or offices in the Historic Districts. "It allows people to put grocery shopping time into meal prepara-



tion," he said. "Maybe that will encourage people to eat healthier." To get "store-to-door" service, contact Wilson at (904) 327-6810 or place an order online at www.communitycouriersjax.com.

Jacksonville Sports Medicine Program appoints new members to the Governing Board



Miramar resident Michael D. Aubin, of Wolfson Children's Hospital, was named Chairman of the Jacksonville Sports Medicine Program Governing Board.

Aubin said, "Wolfson Children's Hospital is proud to be a founding sponsor of the Jacksonville Sports Medicine Program, which has focused its efforts for decades on helping young athletes play safely through sports injury prevention, concussion management, coach and athletic trainer education, and more."

According to Robert R. Sefcik, ATC, execu-

tive director of the Jacksonville Sports Medicine Program (JSMP), other new Board members include Board Vice Chairman R. Stephen Lucie, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon with Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute and Avondale resident; Board Treasurer Michael Spiegel, Chief Operating Officer, Brooks Rehabilitation and resident of San Jose, and Secretary Tammie Talley, District Athletic Director, Duval County Public Schools and resident of Mandarin.

Sefcik said about the governing board, "This leadership group is comprised of area executives who are committed to the health needs of our region's student-athletes. The board will be challenged with helping us to remain financially sustainable and guiding us in our vision of becoming the most recognized sports safety program in the state."

Springfield law firm moves to Park and King corridor

After seven years in Springfield, the law firm that advertises itself as Law for Creators, by Creators has moved to the Riverside/Avondale corridor that's been noted for its arts and crafts. Hyder Law Group, consisting of husband-and-wife team Joseph P. Hyder and Adrienne W. Lerner, is located at 2718 College Street at the corner of King.

"We've always been attracted to this area," said Lerner. "There was an opportunity for a visible space on King Street and we wanted to be

where it was vibrant."

The couple, who live in Springfield, specialize in helping emerging artists realize that they are in business and setting them up as a business. "We especially love working with the under 40s, who are opening everything these days," Lerner noted.

For more information, visit www.hyderlawgroup.com, or the Facebook page, or call (904) 524-8076





Riverside Commercial • \$1,185,000

One of the most visible lots on the Riverside corridor situated on a corner lot with frontage on two sides. Located adjacent to but not within the Historic District. 25 offstreet parking spaces with possible expansion of the current building on this site.



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Avondale with Pool • \$514,000

This Historic two story stucco beauty features a sparkling pool enclosed within ivy covered walls, viewed through French doors. Downstairs includes a cheery sun room, grand living room with fireplace, lovely dining room with built in corner cupboards.



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Baby boomer generation motivation for new health and well-being store



Although Tom Gaylord chuckles when he says the heat drove him and his wife Myra to open B. Boomers Health at 5393 Roosevelt Blvd., after 20 years in the parking lot striping business, the Gaylords were more than ready to find an "inside" job.

Opened just one month ago in Venetia Plaza,

B. Boomers Health offers a wide variety of products and many brands within each line. The primary focus is on vitamins and supplements, but the Gaylords also stock all natural, gluten-free food products, personal care lotions, shampoos and more, energy bars, sports vitamins and supplements, juices, teas, and diet aids, among other products.

"We're health conscious and try to avoid prescription medicine," said Tom. "We wanted to have a business that will help baby boomers make good choices." Open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tom will help customers do online research at the store if they have questions about a product or the ailment they are trying to treat.

Look for B. Boomers Health tucked into a corner next to Lillian's. Or call (904) 503-8054 for directions.

Liz Grenamyer celebrates 20 years of catering, gourmet take-out

One of Jacksonville's most popular full-service catering firms celebrates a milestone this year. Founded in 1993 by local restaurateur and Fairfax resident Liz Grenamyer, the first location was on Herschel Street. She's been at 919 King Street since 2006, after spending two years renovating the former Setzer's grocery store.



one of the first in this corridor. Now that the recession is fading I feel like Jacksonville is on the cusp of seriously great growth."

Grenamyer, who has worked in the food industry for over 30 years, is a graduate of Robert E. Lee High School and says the anniversary just sort of crept up on her. "I have some really wonderful

"A lot has changed in those seven years here on King Street," Grenamyer said. "I was

clients, very supportive and loyal. I am very blessed," she shared.

Your Place for Skin Care opens on King

Avondale resident Amanda Gray has been keeping her eye on real estate in the area for some time. In fact, since opening her business in Mandarin three years ago, Gray has wanted to work closer to home. Last month, Your Place for Skin Care moved to 1223 King Street from Mandarin.

Gray, a licensed skin therapist since 2003, offers a wide array of aesthetic services, including skin care, waxing,



Photo by Sarahendipity Photography

mink eyelashes and professional makeup application. In the near future, this newcomer to the Park and King corridor will add massage services thanks to new employee Jamie Rooke, who is licensed to practice massage therapy and is certified in eyelash extensions.

Your Place for Skin Care is available for appointments Monday through Saturday. Call (904) 712-YPSC (9772) or make your appointment online at www.yourplaceforskin.com.

Westside Rotary Club receives award, installs new officers

The Rotary Club of West Jacksonville was pleased to end its fiscal year in June with the Presidential Citation as well as the District 6970 Platinum Premier Club Award for the second consecutive year.

The Club, founded in June 1967, meets weekly for professional networking. Rotarians are also known for their humanitarian service and for this Club that meant raising \$8,000 for charity grants, volunteering at blood drives, the Sulzbacher Center and bell ringing for the Salvation Army, as well as donating 1,000 dictionaries to nine schools.

During this past fiscal year, one of the Westside club's top projects was support for John Stockton Elementary School. Together

with a District grant of \$5,000, this Club and the Riverside Club each raised \$5,000 for engineering plans and surveys for the school's track project.

The new president for the Rotary Club is Ortega Forest resident Nina Sasser, who is joined by "neighbors" Dan Dodd, president-elect, and past president John McCorvey. In addition to those Ortega Forest residents, Preston Keyes was elected treasurer and Kathy Cold as sergeant at arms; both are from



Ortega. Avondale resident Bob Hyde will fill the seat of secretary. Also of Avondale, Andy Hariton continues as director of public relations for the Club, while Ortega Forest resident Jackie Culver serves as director of membership.

Enjoy a new view of the city skyline from Foxy Lady Cruises

When you have experience as a Coast Guard 100 Ton Master captain, moving the 96-foot long Skipperliner Foxy Lady through the waters of the St. Johns River is a piece of cake. Captain John "Mitch" Michkowski, of Green Bay, WI, recently launched a public and private cruise business operating from The Landing. Although the Foxy Lady is berthed at River City Marina at night, he hopes to acquire permanent dockage at The Landing for his 12-month operation.

The 149-passenger ship is available to the public for narrated sightseeing river tours, lunches, brunches, Happy Hour cruises, dinners and more at reasonable prices. Two climate-controlled salons, three open-air decks, two full-service bars and a galley also provide a luxurious venue for private charters for weddings, parties, and corporate events, catered by Biscottis of The Shoppes of Avondale.

Michkowski is also hoping to double his



fleet next year. "Our other Skipperliner is up in Green Bay, where we run cruises from May through September," he said. "If all works out well here in Jacksonville, I plan to bring that ship down too."

The Foxy Lady is part of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra's Symphony Dinner Cruise package for both the Thursday Masterworks Series and the Sunday Matinee Series.

Schedules and reservations for the Foxy Lady Cruises is available at www.foxyladycruises.com or call (904) 398-9553. For information on the symphony cruise packages, call (904) 356-0426.

Traditions Realty adds Rory O'Brien to roster

Traditions Realty recently welcomed Rory O'Brien to the agency, located at 1046 Riverside Avenue. O'Brien brings more than 16 years of sales experience to Traditions, after working for Interline Brands for 11 years, leading a sales division focused on the multifamily industry.

O'Brien has a passion for architecture and design, which he studied for a time in college. He received his bachelor's degree in English from the University of North Florida

and has been a Jacksonville resident since 1996 with a deep affection for the city's historic districts. O'Brien has lived in Avondale since 2006 and is a past member of Riverside-Avondale Preservation. O'Brien is also a volunteer at Riverside Presbyterian Day School.



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Tonca the alligator snapping turtle celebrates his birthday in style

BY STEPHEN KINDLAND
RESIDENT
COMMUNITY NEWS

Tonca, the Museum of Science and History's star attraction, celebrated his 47th birthday in style.

Aside from a little green fuzz growing on his back and perhaps feeling a bit irritable, the middle-aged alligator snapping turtle appeared to be in good health as attendants ushered him into a room full of well wishers. Weighing in at 174 carnivorous pounds, Tonca was lifted from his home in the museum's native plant courtyard and placed onto a cart by three large – and experienced – men.

He then was wheeled into a conference room where he was greeted by more than 100 children, their parents and Riverside veterinarian Dr. John Rossi, who pronounced Tonca healthy after a 20-minute exam.

"He looks great for 47," Rossi said after the check-up, which included taking Tonca's vital signs. "He's got a little algae on his skin, but that's normal. It produces toxins that help to control bacteria."

Rossi, who has developed a relationship with Tonca since the turtle was donated to MOSH in 1994, said the dark green and brown vertebrate appeared to be "pretty mellow," much to the relief of his handlers.

"He could bite your hand off in a heartbeat," the veterinarian said. "Their strike is very quick."

Robert Hayes, the man who found Tonca in a culvert in Bayard nearly 20 years ago, also attended the birthday bash, which included donuts, balloons and a "turtle cake."

Hayes said he visits the museum as often as possible, and that he remains grateful that Tonca – whose



Riverside veterinarian Dr. John Rossi examines Tonca, a 174-pound alligator snapping turtle during the turtle's 47th birthday party held last month at the Museum of Science and History

species is the largest fresh water turtle in the world – receives excellent care at MOSH.

"He's grown immensely" on a diet of fish and whatever he scavenges in his pond, Hayes said. "He only weighed 25 or 30 pounds when I found him."

"This is where he belongs," Hayes added. "He kind of stands out here – he's the star and the kids love him."

Eight-year-old Evan Meekin can vouch for that.

"He was awesome," Evan said moments after Tonca was carted out of the crowded room. "I was surprised at how big he was."

Jacquelynn Hymes had a similar reaction. "His head looks like a rock," Jacquelynn said. "Now I want a turtle, but not that big."

Her brother, 8-year-old Jonathan, said he wanted to touch Tonca, but "it's probably just as well" that he didn't. "He could bite your hand off," Jonathan said.

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From heart wrenching to heartwarming, Gracey's story an inspiration



Jacksonville Bar Association's Young Lawyers sponsor her dream

BY KATE A. HALLOCK
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Readers may recall the heart wrenching story about Avondale resident Gracey Smith, who was diagnosed with Type D acute lymphoma leukemia at age 14 and immediately underwent aggressive twice-a-week chemotherapy treatments and then radiation. On Feb. 12 Gracey, now 15 years old, received a stem cell transplant. Test results today show that the stem cell transplant is 100% successful and Gracey Smith is cancer free.

But the journey's been long and hard. Gracey's mother, Michelle, shared some of what her daughter's been going through.

Gracey underwent 128 days of high dose chemotherapy, resulting in a chemo allergic reaction; 14 days of full body radiations twice a day; three surgeries, 19 spinal taps, 10 bone marrow aspirations, a double stem cell transplant; lung complication in ICU for four days, . 40 blood transfusions and about 42 platelet transfusions, reported Smith. "She lost 30 pounds when diagnosed and lost 20 pounds while in the hospital for 32 days for the transplant. She had 28 days of vomiting because she was so sick," Smith continued. Then Gracey contracted a bladder virus and graft vs. host issues after transplant. The many side effects require physical, occupational and speech therapies.

Throughout the ordeal, Gracey yearned for one thing. A puppy. Thanks to Dreams Come True of Jacksonville, Inc. and the Jacksonville Bar Association's Young Lawyers, who sponsored her Puppy Dream, Gracey's road to recovery is a little easier.

"This puppy will help motivate me and help me in my physical therapies," said Gracey.

According to Andrea A. Siracusa, Community Relations Manager for Dreams Come True, the eight-week-old puppy, a mini Australian Shepherd named Maverick, came from Rusilen Oaks Farm. Gracey was presented with Maverick on July 30 at a party, complete with surprises.

"We were thrilled to give Gracey a gift card to a local pet store so she can buy toys and other items that she wants for her puppy. We were able to get dog classes donated too," said Siracusa. Other gifts included \$500 from Dreams Come True to help with the dog's first vet visit, food and all the accessories she would like to get, plus a bag of toys and extra doggie gifts, like a dog bed. Bark, in Five Points donated a \$25 gift certificate, doggie blanket and a LeanLix treat and Dog Wood Park gave Gracey and Maverick a one-year membership to the park. *The Resident News* also gave a gift basket in honor of Dr. Vincent Kerr, a longtime Riverside veterinarian and father of publisher Pamela Bradford Williams.

Maverick will be to Gracey what the brave young girl is to others. "Gracey is an inspiration to many around her," said her mother. "She brightens up any room that she walks into, even on her bad days. She gives hope to others. A true angel, my daughter Grace."



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Yelp: Bethany "the pork belly skewers were wonderful.."

Urbanspoon: Tim "Duck was amazing. I've never had duck so perfectly cooked before."

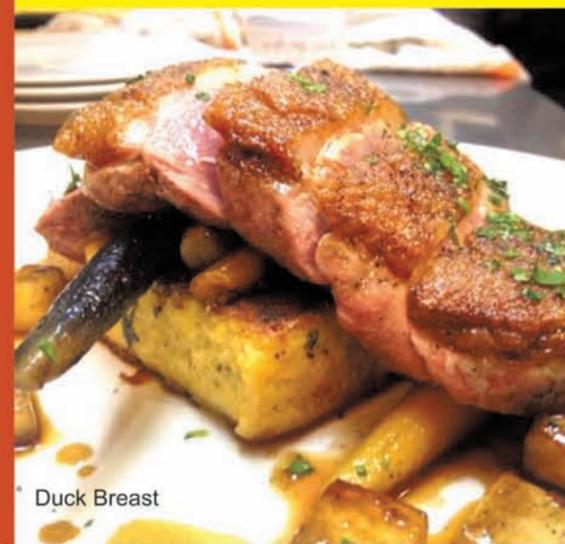
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Trip Advisor: Cheryl Flanders "Catering experience was great!"

Yelp: Heather B. "had the lemon cheesecake and it was perfection."

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Duck Breast

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- Fresh Crabcake** - 4oz., Pan seared, served with melted butter or Remoulade sauce
- Chipotle Mac 'n Cheese** - Macaroni with aged cheddar cheese and chipotle peppers for some spice
- French Fries** - parmesan cheese, truffle oil, garlic aioli
- Fried Green Tomatoes** - fresh slices of green tomato topped with a spicy Remoulade sauce
- Soup of the Day

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- Spinach** - Fresh Spinach, Nueske applewood smoked bacon, red onion, cherry tomatoes, crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

ENTRÉES

- Served with seasonal vegetables and potatoes du jour
- Beef Filet** - served with caramelized shallots
- Catch of the Day** - Chef's Choice with oven roasted tomatoes
- Scallops** - Chef's Choice
- Shrimp** - Chef's Choice
- Fresh Crabcake** - Two 4oz., Pan seared, served with melted butter or Remoulade sauce
- Fresh Salmon** - Pan Seared
- Grilled Pork Chop** - red pepper jelly glaze, served with caramelized apples
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- Lamb Chops** - 2 Double French cut Buckhead Beef lamb chops
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Organic vegetable garden takes root in Murray Hill senior living center

BY CAREN BURMEISTER
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

It takes more than a summer thunderstorm to discourage 20 volunteers from converting a grassy field into a half-acre fruit and vegetable garden at a senior living center in Murray Hill.

Edgewood Gardens is the first project for Our Fertile Earth, a non-profit that's establishing food gardens throughout Jacksonville, and the team doesn't intend to miss its fall deadline.

The volunteers work two Saturdays a month, rain or shine. Despite lightning, thunder and a

drenching rain on July 13, they hauled wheelbarrows loaded with dirt, mulch, trees and plants to the field between buildings at the Florida Christian Apartments on Edgewood Avenue.

"I was really impressed with our volunteers," said Dennis Decker, co-founder and president of Our Fertile Earth. "They're just planting trees in the rain."

The grassy field had been slated to become a parking lot. But that was nixed by the senior center's chaplain, Brent Reynolds, who knew the area had a higher purpose. Soon, the garden will provide plenty of organic fruit and vegetables for roughly 500 residents there.

It's a dream come true for Emily Dale, an 87-year-old resident of Florida Christian Apartments who is thoroughly enjoying the labor and community-building effort. Coordinators have scheduled Edgewood Garden's grand opening

in early October, right around her 88th birthday.

"That will be the greatest birthday gift I've ever had," Dale said. "This is far beyond my wildest dreams."

A Jacksonville native who moved to the federally-assisted housing center on Edgewood Avenue a year ago, Dale wanted to start a community garden to "feed residents good, healthy, local, fresh food."

Her father taught her how to grow a vegetable garden when she was a child.

"I grew up having known what freshly-picked home grown food is all about," Dale said. "It's imperative that we teach everybody how to grow their own food."

She joined Anyone Can Plant a Seed, a community organic garden program that helped her and others build seven raised beds on the site for corn, cucumbers, green beans, squash and other vegetables. They sell the produce at the mini-mart inside the senior center.

Then several months ago Dale met Jon Jessup, co-founder and



Emily Dale, 87-year-old resident at Florida Christian Apartments in Murray Hill, is active in the organic garden program

operations chief for Our Fertile Earth who was looking for the right site to kick off the non-profit's first project. He saw the raised beds and suggested that Our Fertile Earth join Anyone Can Plant a Seed and convert the entire field into a food garden.

Our Fertile Earth uses organic and biodynamic permaculture methods, so that means no fertilizer, no pesticides and no irrigation system. They use native, or nearly native, plants which derive their nutrients from plants that are chopped and dropped in place and benefit from companion plants that attract pollinators. The site is built like a maze to help capture rainfall, using swales, wood

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Our Fertile Earth volunteers got drenched while working on the garden during a summer thunderstorm



chips, logs and other organic matter to retain water and enrich the soil.

“We’re imitating the forest ecosystem rather than a field,” Decker said. “It’s a community space. Something is taking root here.”

Edgewood Gardens will include 12 varieties of trees, such as pomegranate, fig, peach, plums, grapefruit, and limes, and crops like corn, beans and squash.

Decker, who owns Early Risers Artisan Bread, and Jessup, who owns Meteor Street Produce, met at the Jacksonville Farmers Market. They began developing plans for a local network of farm and garden sites that would create volunteer and work opportunities.

“We want to change the face of food in this city,” Decker said. “Healthy food is a fundamental need and something we’re sorely lacking.”



Jesse Buckels places straw around newly planted citrus trees with Jon Jessup, left and Stephen “Squeoo” Scray, background

They presented Our Fertile Earth at One Spark, a crowdfunding event that took place in downtown Jacksonville earlier this year.

Our Fertile Earth plans to build 14 food gardens across Jacksonville by the end of 2014. For information on how to get involved, visit their website at www.ourfertileearth.org, or their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/OurFertileEarth

Be green without using greenbacks

BY VICTORIA REGISTER FREEMAN
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

With school starting soon, and gardeners’ wallets emptying to finance backpacks, field trips, lunchboxes and even iPads, it is good to know that some of the best things in garden life are still free. Yes, free.

For example, take my favorite orchid. Biking back through the vendor loading zone of the Cool Moose coffee shop, I spied the orchid in a dumpster sitting forlornly on top of a pile of cardboard. Granted, she looked like a drooping three-leaved nonentity, but her spidery roots gripping the outside of her green plastic pot gave away her true identity. I put her in my bike basket on top of the Walgreen’s vitamins and brought her home.

A few weeks’ worth of fish emulsion, a careful repotting and some retro Rolling Stones coaxed the orchid back into her royal self. In fact she developed enough blooms to star as the centerpiece at a bridal shower at my home.

For folks who do not dumpster dive under any circumstances, there is always plant pirating. Pirating is the current horticultural term for taking unauthorized snippets of public plants and rooting them. Peter Tobey’s classic book *Pirating Plants*, available on



Amazon, has become the sacred text in the pirating movement. Its subtitle is “a gardener’s guide to getting something for nothing.”

Pirates never remove more than a tiny inconspicuous piece of another person’s plant. Folks who remove large pieces or entire plants have another designation...thieves.

Unfortunately, the Historic District has recently suffered a rash of plant abductions. Some of the newly planted roses on Whiteway Corner were taken and reward posters leading to culprit identification adorn almost every Post and King lamppost.

Of course, information on plant propagation is available on the Web. There are several YouTube videos that illustrate everything a fledging pirate might need. The seeker should not give up when the Web options seem to consist entirely of Plants vs. Zombies video games. As with many a Web search, the only true advice is...keep on scrolling.

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BY NATHAN & TED MILLER

Looking for a last minute family trip before the summer ends and kids go back to school? Why not take a day and head to the Big Bend region of Florida to do some scalloping?

There are many coastal communities in this region that offer great scalloping, and all are easily accessible in a few short hours from Jacksonville. One of the more popular spots people go to from our area seems to be Steinhatchee.

Scallop season runs through Sep. 24, so there is still plenty of time to go and enjoy this great outdoor activity.

The daily bag limit per person is two gallons whole bay scallops in shell, or one pint of bay scallop meat. But the total per vessel is a maximum of 10 gallons of whole bay scallops in shell, or 1/2 gallon bay scallop meat.

Access to a boat is a necessity due to the distance from land to these grassy flats. But taking your own or jumping on with a friend are not

Last minute scallop trip fun for whole family



Evelyn, Hannah, and Quinn Miller

the only solutions. There are many fishing captains in Steinhatchee who run charters for scallops. And with their local knowledge, jumping on with them may be your best bet for success.

Captains are on the water every day and will know where to best look for and to find scallops. They should also have all the required safety equipment for the vessel to remain coast guard and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) complaint while snorkeling.

We reached out to a number of captains who offer scalloping trips in Steinhatchee and we wanted to share them with you.

- Captain@cedarkeyfishingguides.com
- captsteve@atlantic.net
- johnborn2fish@yahoo.com
- captainbradiddle@cox.net
- captlarrybarrett@bellsouth.net
- mcccampbell@bellsouth.net
- ghart224@bellsouth.net
- captsteve@atlantic.net
- reelsongcharters@aol.com
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Some questions you may want to ask your captain include:

- Length of time and cost for the charter?
- What drinks do they provide, if any?
- Can they offer a scallop report?
- Does their boat provide shade?
- Do they have the required safety equipment for the vessel?
- Do they offer a service to clean your scallops?

Last year that region experienced a lot of rain, and murky water flowed from the rivers into the gulf affecting the water clarity. These cloudy areas would move with the tides and currents and if you happened to be scalloping in one of these areas, you would have thought you were swimming in iced tea. Local captains will have a good understanding where the best clarity will be, drastically improving your chances to be successful.

Pulling a boat over there is not difficult, but there is something to be said for packing a car

and jumping on someone else's boat. The ride over there will be quicker and certainly less expensive in fuel. Plus, you won't have to put up with the traffic at the boat ramps with the mad rush of launching in the morning, and pulling out in the afternoon. Simply taking a cooler with lunch and cold drinks, sunscreen, a few towels, change of clothes and a camera may be all that you need.

And if you have a great time, a 'tip' to your captain will always be greatly appreciated.

With summer winding down, a last-minute family vacation that is sure to be a lot of fun may be just a couple of short hours away.

Have fun, and stay safe.

Send your pictures, stories and favorite destinations to
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Scallop Ceviche

Ingredients

- 6 Key limes, zested and juiced
- 1/4 cup fresh chopped pineapple (keep as much juice as possible)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 pound fresh scallops
- 1/4 cup diced red onion
- 1/4 cup diced red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup diced green bell pepper
- 1 minced jalapeno (seeded if you want a bit less heat)
- 2 tablespoons fresh minced cilantro leaves

- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups corn tortilla chips

Directions

Combine lime zest, juice, pineapple, olive oil, spices, and honey. Set mixture aside. Clean and wash the scallops (cut bigger ones). Add scallops to lime juice mixture, stir well and set aside. Add the vegetables and cilantro to the scallop mixture. Stir well. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Cover and chill at least 3 hours. Serve with tortilla chips.

Cook's note: It is important to prepare this dish at least four hours before serving to ensure the full flavors are achieved.

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Local celebs demonstrate river's "swimming health"

BY STEPHEN KINDLAND
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

The success of the recently held Celebrity Jump to showcase the St. Johns River's recreational value has Riverside resident Jim Alabiso already looking forward to next year.

"It set a really good example for the city," Alabiso said after a dozen local celebrities dove into what he refers to as "Jacksonville's aquatic centerpiece" during last month's River Ruckus, a fundraising and water preservation awareness event held at the Riverside Arts Market under the Fuller Warren Bridge.

"It turned out better than I expected," said Alabiso, an open-water swimmer and executive director of Jumping Fish, a not-for-profit organization charged with preserving and maintaining the health of public waterways. "This is the third year we've done this and we have a very focused plan."

Scheduled next is Jumping Fish's third annual "Up the River Downtown," a 10 kilometer swim featuring 12 swimmers and a flotilla of kayak paddlers who will make their



Julie Watkins, correspondent with Fox 30 Action News, entertained the crowd with her dive into the St. Johns River as part of the Celebrity Jump portion of last month's River Ruckus held at the Riverside Arts Market

way from Jacksonville University to the Riverside Arts Market on Sept. 7. The event is part of Alabiso's long-range plan to demonstrate that the St. Johns can be incorporated into the local economy by holding triathlons and competitive, long-distance swims.

"Those events attract hundreds of

competitors," he said.

"And those competitors bring their families, and they book [hotel] rooms. We insiders call it 'trickle up environmentalism.'"

"It's all about preserving what we have and continuing to bust myths" that the St. Johns is too polluted to enjoy, Alabiso added. "If we can create an economy around the river, the economy becomes its protector. It will no longer be a bunch of us holding up signs and signing petitions."

Aside from gathering research by taking part in similar events in other cities, Alabiso has drawn support from local high-profile names, many of whom joined him in the Celebrity Jump.

"I hope the word gets out about the St. Johns," said WAWS-TV correspondent Julie Watkins after her sideways, quarter-twist dive earned a rousing cheer from more than a hundred spectators. "People don't know

how healthy the river is."

Watkins, who also is president of The Girls Gone Green, a Jacksonville-based environmental awareness group, said she agreed to take part the moment she was asked.

"The St. Johns is underappreciated," she said. "This was great. It showed how much fun the river can be."

Veteran chief meteorologist Tim Deegan of WTLV-TV's First Coast News agreed.

"We get locked into the 8-to-5 thing and we forget what we have here," said Deegan, a once-avid surfer who stayed in the water to watch the remaining celebrities perform entertaining dives from a boat anchored at a river taxi stop. "I just loved it; the river is healthy."

Tony Allegretti, a San Marco area resident and director of downtown engagement for the Jax Chamber, said he enjoyed a quiet walk along the St. Johns on Riverside Drive before taking his dive.

"The St. Johns isn't underappreciated, it's just underutilized," he said. "But the upside is that more people are getting access to it."

Two Florida Yacht Club tennis teams clinch tournament, head to the nationals

Three teams from The Florida Yacht Club (FYC) represented Northeast Florida in Daytona Beach for the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Adult 18 & Over Sectional Championships. The Men's 5.0 Team, captained by FYC's Director of Tennis Louis Ballantyne, the Women's 5.0 Team, captained by FYC Tennis Professional Susan Kirby, and the Men's 3.5 Team, captained by Kevin Greene, all won the USTA Local League for the right to represent Duval in the Florida Sectional Tournament.

The FYC Men's 5.0 team (1 Line Singles/2 Lines Doubles) headed to Daytona with less than full squad as most of their players were injured. They won their first three matches to play Alachua - JTC in the Sectional Finals. However, the injury bug bit again when their Line 1 Singles player, Al Dario Restrepo, pulled a



Left to right: Frank Bronson, Kyle Rudmon, Al Restrepo, Marco Turra, Louis Ballantyne, Mark Frisk, John Jacobson (not pictured: Tim Geddes, Darren Harper, Alex Henderson)

hamstring in the Semi-Final match. With only four players remaining, the FYC team defaulted their Line 1 Singles position forcing the doubles teams of Kyle Rudmon/Mark Fisk (6-1, 6-3) and John Jacobson/Frank Bronson (6-4, 6-4) to win their lines to clinch the victory!

The FYC Women's 5.0 team (1 Line Singles/2 Lines Doubles) dominated the tournament with a 3 wins

and 0 losses tournament record. The team swept all three lines over Pinellas - YMCA to win the Sectional Title. Both the Men's and Women's 5.0 teams will represent Florida in the USTA National Tournament, held in Indian Wells, CA, Sept 27-29.

The FYC Men's 3.5 team (2 Lines Singles/3 Lines Doubles) won the Local League with an 11-1 record to

represent Duval /North Florida at the Sectional Tournament. Seventeen teams qualified for Sectionals and were broken out into four Flights. The FYC team won their Flight with a 3-0 record to play in the Semi-Finals. Unfortunately, they lost against tournament winner Marion - Country Club of Ocala two lines to three.



Left to right: Ashley Cowart, Cheryl Keller, Katerina Stanford, Susan Kirby, Narelle Parkes, Dominique Levin, Estela Solano, Casey Cohen (not pictured: Leigh Ann Bronson, Danielle Wiggins)

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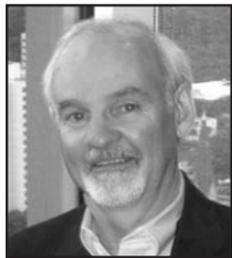
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Busy attorneys find time to spin tales of intrigue, suspense

and fantasy

Timothy J. McDermott,

63, a shareholder with the law firm of Akerman Senterfitt, practices in civil litigation and loves a good story. "I have always enjoyed being creative. Whether it be in how I approach legal issues in the practice of law, or my avocation of painting acrylic artwork



(www.tmacgallery.com), or my relationships with my family and friends, it is part of my 'wiring' to try to be creative. Writing a novel provided me with another avenue to be creative."

The Nebraska native practiced in Milwaukee and Ft. Lauderdale before landing in Jacksonville. "Having practiced since 1975 in two cities with rather widely-divergent cultures and having enjoyed an interesting client base and practice (complex products cases representing the manufacturing segment) that exposed me to a wide variety of personalities and issues, I decided that if I put my own pen to paper, I might be able to create a good yarn that arose out of my experiences."

The Ortega resident says, "There are a lot of poor novels out there. I must admit, I figured that I could write as poorly as – and maybe even a bit better – than many of the other writers that were telling their stories."

Like many part-time writers, McDermott would get up early in the morning and write until 7 a.m., then again in the evenings, on weekends and on vacations spent up in the Florida Panhandle. "I generally wrote it on my PC, although when sitting in a beach chair on the beach, I wrote longhand and then typed that work product into my computer at the end of the day."

His novel "Deadly Propensity" is a legal thriller that is a fictional and colorful exaggeration of lawyers he has encountered, along with judges, expert witnesses and issues from product cases. "I wanted to tell a good story, however I also wanted to educate the reader a little bit about the rather com-

Given that there are more than 2,100 members in the Jacksonville Bar Association, it should be no surprise to residents that Jacksonville has its own share of attorney authors. It was probably just a matter of time before four local lawyers joined the ranks of published authors. *The Resident* recently took a peek to see what motivated each to take up the pen.

plicated work up, and the process that both sides of the lawyers must perform and undergo in preparing and trying a serious products case."

McDermott intends to write another book and while he's not sure if it will be a Michael Culhane sequel to "Deadly Propensity" or something completely different, he wants to leave the reader feeling good about life when the last page is turned. "I am currently noodling on some ideas flowing from some interesting cases I have had."

McDermott's first novel is available via eBook and paperback on amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com, and via eBook on smashwords.com.

Michael G. Tanner,

59, has traveled a lot and says that he was motivated to write by the lives of many people he met during multiple mission trips to countries of the former Soviet Union beginning in 1995. "I also love to write," said the senior Principal at Tanner Bishop.



"Hemingway has always been a big influence. His spare style is pleasurable to read – fewer words are better. John Grisham, who is an excellent technician as well as a gifted storyteller, writes in that style."

The Southbank resident revealed that his initial research took about eight months and it took another 18 months to produce a working draft. "Because this was my first book, I made many mistakes along the way that hopefully I won't repeat in my next book," Tanner said. "I used a general outline and I write on the computer. I also read multiple books on writing and took one course. I always wrote early in the mornings (5:30 for an hour each day) and on weekends."

Tanner's book "Nikolai Returns" is a mystery novel. "It is based on personal experiences of people I met. I have been to all the venues in the book other than Afghanistan," he noted. "It's the story of the spiritual journey

of a young man who grew up in the USSR and in post-soviet Russia, beginning with his boyhood, his military experiences and his time in the Russian arms trade."

"Nikolai Returns" is available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

One would think that working as Division Chief, Jacksonville for the State Attorney's Office would provide much fodder for a book, but

Douglas A. Dorsey,

39, said about his novel, "It has zero to do with personal experience and is based solely on the wild ruminations of my mind."

Wild ruminations, indeed. When you know that Dorsey has spent 13 years as a crime-fighting prosecutor and that his favorite writer is Christian author C.S. Lewis, you begin to understand the basis for Dorsey's book "Never Alone". "I like the idea of making a difference in the world," he said. "One day I hope my son and daughter read the "Never Alone" series and are proud of their dad for demonstrating conviction and faith through writing. If so, that alone will be good enough for me. Well, that plus a brief stint on The New York Times Best Seller list."

Dorsey is a fast writer; it took him less than three months to write the first 300-plus page novel, which was scribed over coffee in the morning or later at night when his children were asleep. But that's not always the case. "I actually wrote a huge chunk of my latest novel – Broken Hero – during breaks on a lengthy motorcycle trip," he shared. "I'd ride for 350-plus miles down open stretches of back roads thinking nothing but storyline, then stop and immediately put all my thoughts down on paper."

There are seven books in the Never Alone series, which Dorsey describes as Christian Fiction/Suspense. After book number two – "Broken Hero" – is released this fall, the 1992 Bishop



Kenny alumnus plans on releasing one book per year until all seven are published. "While I'm thrilled with the storylines of the first six books, I expect the last

book is going to be the hardest to put down. I think readers are going to be totally surprised by the final chapter of the Never Alone series."

Dorsey is grateful for all the support he gets in the writing process. "My favorite part of the writing process is the collaboration that comes when I first turn it over to close friends and family. Some of the best twists and turns in the plot came from the suggestions of the people around me that I trust most," he said.

A Kindle edition of "Never Alone" is available on Amazon.com.

Jessie L. Harrell,

35, said that her first book was a result of a challenge. When her husband, Holt Harrell, joked that picture books couldn't be very difficult to write, Harrell decided to take an online course to see if he was right.

"I learned about everything in the children's book market, from board books to young adult (known as YA)," said the San Jose resident. "It didn't take me long to realize that I use too many words for picture books. And middle grade just didn't hold my attention that way that YA books did. So I figured if I was going to write a book, that's where I would focus my efforts."

The genre of Harrell's novel "Destined" is YA mythological romance. Though now working as an appellate specialist with the law firm of Creed and Gowdy, Harrell majored in classical studies as an undergrad and her favorite Greek myth was that of Eros and Psyche.

"I decided I would try to re-tell their story but with some modernization," Harrell said. "I didn't move the novel into the present (as most retellings are doing), but I used modern dialogue in the ancient setting. I knew this story would resonate with teens if it was easy to read, and fun and romantic."

With two young daughters, Harrell's writing time was mostly at night, but she also took her laptop to their gymnastic lessons to sneak in more writing. It took four years to finish the novel, but some of that was due to the learning curve of young adult fiction. "I took time out to learn craft and build myself within the YA community in addition to just writing. I made sure I was involved in the YA community before I asked them to help me sell a book."

Harrell published "Destined" on her own through Mae Day Publishing, but has also co-written another YA novel with an author in California and has a short story called "I Come Bearing Souls" in the charity anthology "Two and Twenty Dark Tales."



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Diebenow continued, “Everyone is not going to agree with Mr. Balanky’s and the architects’ vision for the property. There’s never 100 percent consensus but we’re going to do our very best to reflect the feedback from all the meetings we’ve had and the ones going forward.”

Early in the meeting, the attorney noted that while the property is not located in a historic district it is in the Riverside/Avondale Preservation Overlay, which will control portions of the project. However, at the end of the meeting, following remarks by representatives of RAP and the Fishweir Neighborhood Watch Group, and by residents from nearby Arden Street and Woodmere Drive, Diebenow made the statement that “the Overlay is *not* the starting point. The 2006 PUD [Planned Unit Development application] is the starting point. We are asking for a change. We will provide areas where we comply and where we fall short.”

Avondale resident Tracey Henderson states, “The intensity and density proposed in the new PUD are too much for the neighborhood, and incompatible with the surrounding uses and adjacent road networks. This is an application for a re-zoning, so the negotiations for what is appropriate today begin with an analysis of the proposed PUD under the terms of the 2008 Riverside/Avondale Overlay.”

One resident feels that the developer would like to have his cake and eat it too. Avondale resident Jeff Graf, in a follow-up interview, commented that the strategy appears to be one of looking for significant relief from the Overlay. “This could adversely affect the Overlay, which could affect the zoning for the entire Historic District,” he said. “The developer is asking for too much

relief from the Overlay in his new PUD. And contrary to his claims, he is giving us nothing in return for his very intense proposal.”

The plans unveiled by ELM revealed a surprising change in intent. Earlier meetings indicated that the developer would be building luxury condominiums where the Commander Apartments tower currently sits; the newest set of plans shows that it will be an apartment complex of 300 units spread over three buildings of varying height.

Diebenow confirmed that change in plan. “These are luxury apartments, not condos; we will be amending the PUD and the re-zoning application.”

Ervin, a principal at ELM, said “There’s not another property like this in the city and it’s exciting to be part of the revitalization. The owner wants to build as ‘condo grade’ and then convert from leased apartments to condos in the future.”

The proposed plan calls for 300 units, spread over three buildings, including 12,000 square feet of retail space in a three-story building. The current 17-floor apartment tower would be replaced by a multi-level building of 216 apartments (not to exceed 14 stories), leasing office, fitness center and include a three story parking garage. A second building would include 20 two-story townhome units above ground level retail shops, with restaurants potentially capping the ends of the building. Another three-story building would contain 64 multi-family units in the space where the current retail center exists.

When resident Douglas Coleman asked “Does this comply with the Overlay?” Tom Miller replied “It does not.”

One of the groups most concerned about the proposed development are the residents who literally

live under the shadow of the Commander. The “pocket” neighborhood known as the Arden Group includes those who live on Dupont Circle, Arden Street, Morningside Street, Richmond Street and Greenwood Avenue southeast of St. Johns Avenue.

Residents in that small community are fearful of the effect of the intensity that a much larger – triple in size – development would have on their quality of life. That includes everything from an increase in traffic, including resulting propensity for increases in accidents, to noise and to the ongoing effects of living in the shadow of a larger structure just 40 feet from property lines.

Mary Corrigan, a resident of Boone Park Avenue, said at the meeting, “A great consolation would be funds in escrow for another traffic study after the plan is developed.” In a follow-up interview, Corrigan expanded on the traffic issue. “We’re obviously concerned about the amount of traffic that’s going to be cutting through neighborhoods, mainly ours, which already gets a lot of traffic from the elementary school and from FSCJ. If you have that many apartment residents all that traffic will be coming out at the same time in the morning as children are coming to school. There’s quite a bit of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the morning at that intersection. We have walkability in our neighborhood now and that many additional residences will affect that walkability.”

Tonya Hollinger, who lives nearby between Herschel Street and St. Johns Avenue, said “I feel very strongly that the proposed development is too strong in intensity within the current guidelines. These guidelines are there to protect us and keep us from making mistakes,

to protect the integrity of the neighborhood and against inappropriate development. It needs to be a clear and obvious benefit to our community. What is that benefit?”

At the end of the meeting, Diebenow addressed Hollinger’s question. “The benefit of the project is infill, and a decrease in suburban sprawl,” he said.

A huge round of applause came when Wayne Wood addressed the audience. “You’ve just seen 40 minutes of beautiful, pie-in-the-sky drawings that are too intense for the neighborhood. We’ve fought for, earned and want to protect the Overlay. The issue is not what it looks like or even the density – it’s the intensity. Let’s start with what the zoning overlay says and the 2030 Comprehensive Plan that is already in place.”

The meeting concluded with remarks from the developer. “This is a difficult situation. People are concerned about their safety and their neighborhoods and I share those concerns with you as well,” said Balanky. “I can’t emphasize enough that the application that was put in was put in at a time when we really didn’t know what we were going to do, so you always overreach to some extent because you can’t go back; if you start too low you can’t go back up.”

Balanky continued, “I promise I’m going to be honest with you and transparent with you and I’m going to keep trying to where we can get this thing to where everyone feels good about it. Whatever we build we will build something real nice.”

A neighborhood website, commander-rezoning.com, provides additional detail about the proposed land use amendment and the proposed re-zoning application.



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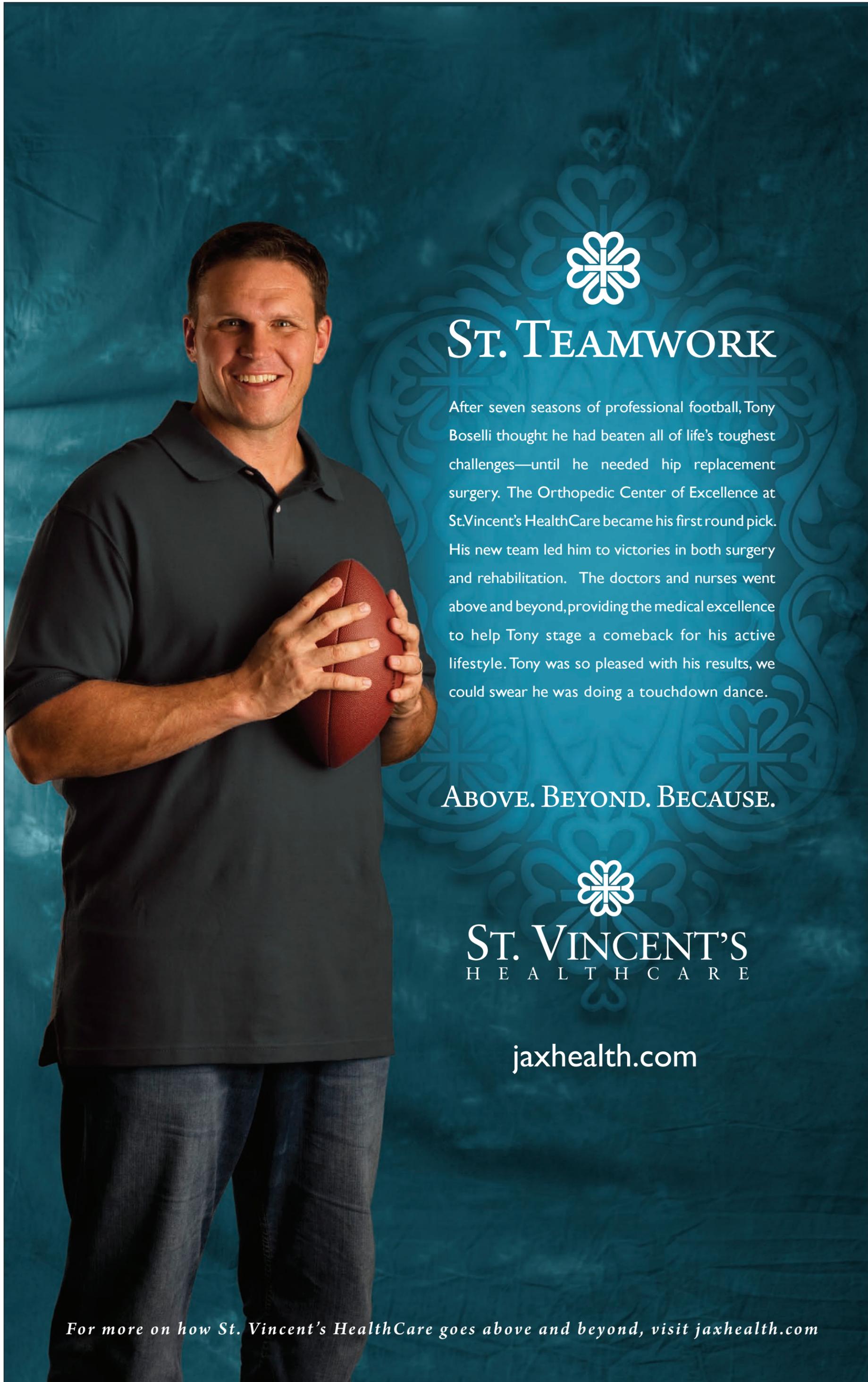
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The Way We Were

Sally Ann Freeman

BY VICTORIA REGISTER-FREEMAN
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS



The phrase 'Buy Local' occurs everywhere now – in shop windows, on bumper stickers, from radio and television pundits and on websites. In the Historic District this phrase might have been coined by Sally Ann Freeman, former Jacksonville resident. Almost a half century ago Freeman was fiercely devoted to the sale of the artwork produced by North Florida's own painters, and sculptors.

Her journey from Ortega housewife

with two children to art entrepreneur began when she took a part time job at the Jacksonville Art Museum located in the Koger Center. Freeman recalls, "I started as a part-time public relations person and eventually became a full time one. One day Rusty Hicken, the Museum director, suggested I open a gallery to display, and hopefully to sell, the work of local artists. It seemed the only gallery selling local art had closed. He was convinced my years at the museum had given me the background I needed to open a gallery.

"I was not so sure.

"One positive sign that I might be able to survive in the business world came when I held a showing for John Bunker at my Apache Street home and all of his paintings sold. I opened the dictionary and found a Spanish or Italian word that meant modern, new, novel. The word was Contemporanea and that is what I called my business, the Gallery Contemporanea.

"The first home for the Gallery was upstairs at Helen Lane's restored Queen Anne which was then on Park Street. Because of my work at the museum I knew lots of local artists and eventually represented many of them: Marilyn Taylor, Gretchen Ebersol, Allison Watson, Memphis Wood and others. I began to travel to Gainesville and Tallahassee and ended up representing faculty artists and graduate students from both UF and FSU.

"In the early '80s I was approached by KBJ architects who were designing the Independent Life building. They

wanted an art gallery in the building and Gallery Contemporanea was their choice. John Dyal, Walter Taylor and Taylor Hardwick were the architects who created the physical space for the new gallery. They knew how to create walls that would both support a 400-lb. sculpture and also move to create different floor plans for different exhibits.

"At that gallery, in addition to showcasing local and regional artists, I was able to bring a Smithsonian exhibit of Walter Anderson's paintings. I was able to get that exhibit because of an earlier local connection. I grew up playing in the Andersons' home in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Another exhibit I was able to offer Jacksonville was one I titled Women's Work. It featured art by mothers, teachers, and housekeepers.

"In 1982, to control expenses, I moved the Gallery again. This time I was acting on a dream my grandmother had inserted in my psyche when she told me tales of French Quarter shopkeepers who lived above their stores. I moved from Independent Life to Lancaster Street. My close friends were horrified by the neighborhood which was in decline at that time. A homeless man lived in my garage and Anne Hymen, the Times-Union feature writer, wrote a story about him.

"But it worked out. Geoffrey Brune, an architect, designed the gallery space. I lived upstairs. Janice Young, an interior designer, introduced business leaders to the concept of corporate collections and she introduced me as someone who could help

create those collections. The '80s were good for art.

"The '90s were not. After 18 years on Lancaster Street, I moved the gallery to St. Augustine and eventually closed it. When I return to Jacksonville and drive past Lancaster Street, I remember the receptions, openings, and luncheons I had there to encourage folks to support their local artists.

"It was a lot of hard work, but it was a labor of love."

Editor's Note: There is no relation between the author and her subject.

R.E. Lee Class of 1948 plans reunion

Believed to be the first 65th anniversary class reunion at Robert E. Lee High School on McDuff Avenue, the Class of 1948 is planning a two-night reunion for August 23-24.

A block of rooms are reserved under RE Lee Reunion at the Holiday Inn on Wells Road in Orange Park. Reservations to attend the events can be made with Nancy Lankford (904-781-4913, nanpres@bellsouth.net). Cost is \$100 per person for both Friday night cash bar and hors d'oeuvres and Saturday night dinner and dancing (or sign up for Saturday night only, \$80 per person).

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Senior rejects notion of retirement



Dr. George Trotter and Shelly Cooper

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

For many, hitting the milestone of turning age 65 suggests, “You are getting old! Feeble. Weak. It’s time to retire.”

Well, tell that to Dr. George Trotter. While some of his own children are approaching senior citizenry, Dr. Trotter keeps up a grueling medical practice at his Primary Care office in Riverside.

He also attends Tumor Board meetings, works with We Care organization, serves on the Board of the Community Nutcracker Ballet of which he is past

president and has performed in the production 21 years. He is active in Ye Mystic Revelers, dances in ballet recitals at the Baggs Studio of Ballet and Jacksonville Ballet Theatre, as well as making guest appearances in other dance and theatrical performances, including the Jacksonville Symphony. Not tired yet, Dr. Trotter plays tennis regularly, travels extensively for medical conferences and for pleasure with his wife of 54 years, Ann, and hosts the best Halloween parties in town.

When asked when he will retire Dr. Trotter just shakes his head in bewilder-

ment at such a suggestion. “Too many people, my patients, depend on me, and all my activities keep me feeling good. If you sit around and do nothing your brain goes and your body goes and then you might as well just go,” he said. “But, if you do things you like, well, it keeps you in shape. If you don’t use it, you lose it.”



Dr. Trotter’s work ethic, his youthful sense of humor, his dedication to doing the best in all his endeavors have contributed to a satisfying, fun-filled life, blessedly devoid of the self-imposed limitations of age.

Perhaps that tennis serve is not as powerful as it once was, but no one wants to be on the receiving end. Perhaps the grand pas de deux of the past are best reflected in the numerous

photographs in his home and office. Perhaps he naps a bit more in the afternoons after being on his feet all day doctoring sick folks, but that’s just a quick rejuvenation for his evening agenda – a ballet class or rehearsal, a tennis match, organizing a gathering with his wife, children and grandchildren or an evening at the symphony.

Each day is filled with productive and interesting activities. Certainly not confined by his Ortega Forest neighborhood, Dr. Trotter, dressed with distinction (after all, he was voted Best Dressed in Jacksonville a few years ago and has an image to protect) can be spotted zipping around in his convertible almost anywhere in town.

Trotter’s “dance widow” Ann says, “George is always busy. I hardly see him during recital or Nutcracker time. He is at some studio or the other, rehearsing, taking class...he just loves it.” When asked when she and her overachieving hubby will slow down she replies, “How do I reply to that? I guess we’ll just slow down when we finally realize that he can’t do the things we like to do which I hope is never but...” Laughingly, she relates that Dr. Trotter’s uncle said he knew he was “old” when he could no longer jump!

With as many joyful interests and a schedule like Dr. Trotter’s, he doesn’t have the time or inclination to slow down. After all, too many people depend on him for medical care and inspiration. To paraphrase van Halen – he’s been up and nothing gets him down – at least not for too long – so he might as well keep jumping!

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GO GIVERS

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

The experience of caring for his mother, Patricia McLeod, who suffered from Lewy Body Dementia, the second most common form of progressive brain disorder after Alzheimer's, profoundly affected Pastor Bill McLeod. His mother spent her last days peacefully at Community Hospice of Northeast Florida's Gaston J. Acosta-Rua Center for Caring on Ramona Boulevard before she died in 2010. It led Bill to become one of their most devoted volunteers. Patricia's suffering devastated her family and she required specialized care.

"Mother suffered extreme problems that devastated our family. When I met the admissions nurse at Community Hospice she knew exactly what my mother had and how to help mom, and me too. She shared with me that her own mother had the same illness. Community Hospice gave mother peace and it was the first time in two years that anyone had ever cared about me and what I was going through. I cried like a baby because I'd found a way to help her and they were going to take care of us," he said.

McLeod, a Southern Baptist minister for 34 years in Florida and Georgia, was born in St. Vincent's Hospital and has been back living in Jacksonville for 12 years. He began his volunteer work for Community Hospice in 2012 and makes twice weekly visits to the

Acosta-Rua Center and also visits the new Community Hospice Center for Caring at St. Vincent's.

"They teach you how to be a visitor, how to speak to patients and provide comfort or help them or their families...they offer what is called palliative or 'comfort care.' I spend two to three hours at a time going from room to room speaking to patients...'are you in any pain?'...'Is there anything I can do for you?' Then I'll turn to the family and friends...I ask how they are doing. Often they are so tired and may be angry, frustrated or worried. I want to assure them that their loved one is well cared for and share how the Center helped my mother and the peace it gave us," he said. "I ask if they need anything and I will go anywhere to get whatever they need. I want to encourage and support them. It is a precious privilege to do so." Community Hospice offers an eight-hour orientation and training for volunteers McLeod said.

Even before his commitment as a volunteer to Community Hospice, McLeod, a spry 70, was concerned for physically, mentally and emotionally



William McLeod

wounded homeless people at homeless shelters. For 35 years, wherever he has lived he has found the local homeless shelter and gone there to volunteer, mentor, hold chapel services and generally help in

their greatest needs.

Married to wife Bobbi for 43 years, the couple has five grown children, seven grandchildren ages 13-23, and three great-grandchildren: 3-1/2 year old twin boys and a 2-1/2 year old great-granddaughter. The family is scattered and living all over, McLeod said, but holidays are always spent together. Bobbi worked for Air Tran, was a behind-the-scenes constant support as a pastor's wife and now delights in her fulltime status as grandmother and great-grandmother.

In their free time the couple enjoys day trips together and hours spent reading. Bill pours time into research on various subjects to keep his mind "fresh" and also is a gardener. Bobbi likes to sew, cook and spends much of her time with the family.

an Batty, Community Hospice Manager of Volunteer Services said that Bill has such a compassionate heart he truly understands the mission of Community Hospice to support patients and families through the end-of-life experience.

"With his vast amount of experience over many years, with many people and organizations, he is able to talk to and connect with anyone in such a caring way, he is in one word - awesome," Batty said. Batty, like Bill, encourage readers to visit the Community Hospice website for more information on volunteer opportunities for individuals or groups.

any way needed.

"I was born in 1943 and raised in a middle class family. In 1974 when I was studying the Bible at Luther Rice Bible College/Seminary in Jacksonville, I had a friend who was interim director at the City Rescue Mission. He invited me to come there and speak. I'm ashamed now to say that I had no idea at that time that there were people in America who were hungry and had no place to live. I had never seen that and it broke my heart right then and there. I knew I had found a place where God wanted me to help others living in very different and difficult life circumstances," he said.

McLeod volunteers at the City Rescue Mission helping to feed meals, holds chapel services, mentors, trains others to do mission and volunteer work both at hospice and the homeless shelter. He especially enjoys gathering warm clothes for the shelter, one of

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How can you help?

This month **The Resident** offers another opportunity that we hope inspires residents to be change-makers for community good. "How can you help?" profiles a local nonprofit organization and showcases ways to support it. It is our sincerest hope that by creating awareness of local needs, we can all help generate solutions, funds and help for those in our community who deserve it most.

Organization: Community Hospice Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life for patients and families, and to be the compassionate guide for end-of-life care in the community. It has focused on meeting the needs of those with advanced illness in Northeast Florida since 1979.

Opportunities to Help: Community Hospice volunteers are vital members of the team – whether you offer companionship and a listening ear to patients and family members, help with clerical work

at one of the office locations, or assist at fundraising events. As a Community Hospice volunteer, there are many ways you can help improve the quality of life for people in your community. Community Hospice Foundation raises the funds needed to enhance the quality of life for its patients and families and to support the unfunded and under-funded patient care, community programs, services and support for those in the community dealing with advanced illness or grief. Your contributions go directly toward meeting the individual care needs of adults and children in Northeast Florida, along with professional education and community outreach programs that help ensure everyone in the community knows more about end-of-life issues and has access to services. To learn how you can be a part of Community Hospice Foundation, call (904) 886-3883 or visit <http://communityhospice.com/For-Donors-and-Volunteers.aspx>.

Miller still wielding gavel at woodworking club

Margaret Miller is an old hand at running the JAX Woodworkers Club. "I think I'm serving my fourth or fifth time as president," the 85-year-old long-time woodworker said.

Miller worked for First Federal Bank in charge of branch repairs and after leaving the bank in 1991, she decided to take up a hobby full-time and started making wood crafts, and going to craft shows. The University Park resident still works in her garage shop several days a week...and still sports all her fingers.

"The router is boss," she said. "I've had close calls. Don't use the router unless you've got a clear mind and are not in a hurry. The planer will play tricks on you and kick back the



wood." Right now Miller is making wood cards for birthdays, anniversaries and illnesses.

The JAX Woodworkers Club was started in 1989 and has created and provided over 40,500 wooden toys since then to 15 organizations that collect toys for children at Christmas.

"There are a lot of good people out there and our bunch is good people," Miller said about the club's members. "Most of our members are old and we'd like to recruit younger woodworkers."

The club meets the third Saturday of each month for lunch and meeting at St. John's Seafood. More information about the club and its meetings can be found at www.jaxwoodworkers.org.

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Cummer invites children to create own car designs



Jordan Tucker, age 10, loves to draw. "I've been drawing since I could hold a crayon," she said. Tucker will be attending 6th grade this fall at James Weldon Johnson College Prep School



John Glisson, age 10, says he likes to draw cars because his father has a Dodge Challenger and a Mustang



The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens hosted an afternoon of art for students ages 7 to 13. Six children had the undivided attention of artist Michael Viafora, who guided the students in creating car designs using watercolor, tempera paint and colored pencils.

Kids & Pros Camp a success for local athletes and mentors alike



BY LARA PATANGAN
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Last month 165 kids from different backgrounds came together for a football camp that teaches children as much about the fundamentals of life as it does the sport. Kids & Pros Camp held at the Shipyards property downtown was started by former Atlanta Falcons players Bobby Butler and Buddy Curry to teach character and skills through athletics.

The camp was free to attendees thanks to a generous group of local sponsors. Among them was Jeff Bogan, a San Marco resident and owner of TriStone Holdings whose son, Jack, has participated in the camp before. "I wanted to be involved because the camp stresses character on and off the field," said Bogan. "The instructors mirror that, while also teaching proper game techniques."

Former NFL players and local coaches taught campers more than the skills of the game. "Our attendees get the best in football instruction, but we believe the life lessons impact them on a much deeper basis," said Curry. "What we offer goes far

beyond the basic fundamentals of the game of football."

Sara Brackin, an Avondale resident and Director of Kids & Pros for Jacksonville, said the best part of the camp was how it integrated kids from diverse backgrounds teaching them the principles that apply as much to life as football.

"I believe by bringing children from all backgrounds together through youth sports is how we continue to build our community," Brackin said. "We don't do these camps to teach kids to be professional football players. We think the camp teaches them how to be successful in life."

Sponsors included Steve Suddath of The Suddath Companies, Brian Smith of Regency Centers, Darryl Elksnis of Life Safety Designs, Brad Edwards of Jacksonville University, Dan Murphy of Fidelity National Financial, Jeff Bogan of TriStone Holdings, and Alan Verlander with the City of Jacksonville. In-kind contributions were made by Bono's Barbeque, Biscottis and the Brick Restaurant.

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2013 Magnolia Ball presents debutantes



The annual Magnolia Ball was held on June 14 at Timuquana Country Club to formally present the 2013 Debutante Coterie. The Magnolia Ball is the traditional beginning of the Debutante season which concludes with the Commodore's Ball in December at the Florida Yacht Club.

Front Row: Darby Dame, Annie Bacon, Brooks Dame, Mary Dudley Lee, Anna Greene – Middle Row: Anna Schumacher, Betty Ann Graham, Glory Scheel, Emily Smithwick, Rebecca Adams, Chairselle Bryant – Back Row: Barbara Bent, Margaret Conolly, Rachel Rice, Marie Sullivan, Maddie Dunkle – Photo by Tom Hager

Fourth of July fun in Old Ortega

Cortez Park in Old Ortega was the place to be on a hot, sunny Fourth of July morning. From the littlest to the oldest, residents paraded around the park on bicycles and golf carts, in strollers and wheelchairs, and on foot, some with dogs on leashes.



Poppy, Will and little Lucy Larkin all dressed up for the Cortez Park parade

Emily Wheldon, age 7, beautifully dressed for the community Fourth of July parade in Cortez Park

Will Larkin, age 5, sports a trendy, mohawk-style bicycle helmet in bright blue – the perfect way to mix safety and fun on Independence Day

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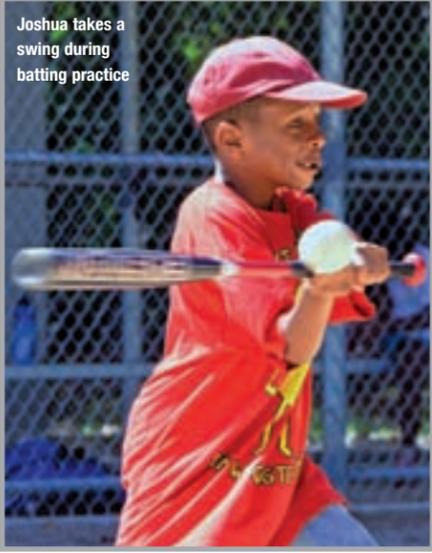
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Kids develop character, baseball skills at free local camp

BY STEPHEN KINDLAND
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS



Joshua takes a swing during batting practice

Volunteer coach Jacob Svejkovsky says it's like reliving the past every time he steps onto a youth baseball field at Murray Hill Park.

"I just see myself in their position 10 years ago," Svejkovsky says over the shouts of two dozen youngsters taking part in a practice game on one of Murray Hill Park's five baseball diamonds. "They're all looking up to me.

"There's one kid that has taken a big liking to me," the 20-year-old restaurant manager adds, pointing to a 12-year-old boy playing shortstop. "His name is Cliff, and he's probably the best player here.

"He looks up to me a lot," Svejkovsky says. "I'm his role model – and that's something that just warms your heart."

Svejkovsky is one of several volunteers who coached 130 boys and girls ages 8 to 13 during a series of three, one-week baseball camps held earlier this summer. The camps were sponsored by Riverside Presbyterian Church, and drew mostly from the Murray Hill area and Jacksonville's inner city neighborhoods.

The free camps have become so popular that organizers decided to move the program from Willow Branch Park's one playing field to the Murray Hill facility.

Jan Cox, in her first year as director of Community Life and Mission



Taylor Leach of Murray Hill takes a swing during batting practice as volunteer coach Nick Speckman keeps a watchful eye. The two were taking part in the third of three baseball camps offered free through Riverside Presbyterian Church at Murray Hill Park

Outreach at Riverside Presbyterian, said the camps were inspired by a Major League Baseball initiative called Reviving Baseball in the Inner City, or RBI. She said she was impressed with seeing an average of 60 youngsters showing up each day, and that the volunteers provided an invaluable service.

"Just getting to know the kids was fun," Cox said. "They learned a lot about teamwork and supporting each other. The coaches taught them during daily devotions that we're all different, but we all deserve the same amount of respect."

Teaching youngsters about sportsmanship isn't as challenging as teaching them how to play the game, according to volunteer Joey Sabora, who played for several years in the Navy Ortega Lakeshore youth baseball league.

"A lot of these inner city kids have never even seen a baseball before," Sabora said. "But that's OK – we're really about building character and team building."

Alonzo Jackson, a 20-year-old counselor at The Eighth Street

Sanctuary that transported 15-20 inner city children to the camps each day, says he has been involved with RBI for the past four years, and that he also thinks about role models he had while growing up.

"Kids today are really into electronics, so I try to give them as much outdoor time as possible," he says with a laugh. "They're all getting a lot out of this."

Svejkovsky can't help but agree. He remembers playing through the Little League ranks at Murray Hill, and how much he appreciated the guidance he received from adults who were doing what he's been doing for the past few years.

"It started out as just something to do during the summer, but I kept getting more involved," he said. "And then it became more rewarding helping kids I'd never met before. Like I said, it's really heartwarming."



Kaitlyn Smotherman of Murray Hill takes a swing during batting practice

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The John Gorrie – a historic building with new purpose

Flashbacks

John Gorrie Junior High, located at 2525 College Street, was built in 1923 and was open for 74 years until 1997. The Riverside school was named after Dr. John Gorrie who is credited with being the father of air conditioning and the inventor of the first ice machine, two inventions which made Florida an incredibly more comfortable place to live. Dr. Gorrie lived in Apalachicola at the time of the Yellow Fever epidemic in Florida in the late 1880's. In an effort to clear the air of the disease (which was one of the ways they treated disease at the time) and make his patients more comfortable, he designed a way of cooling the patients' rooms with ice and blowers. The Gorrie School Building shown here is architecturally significant and, as such, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2009 the property was purchased by Delores and Wayne Weaver who restored and renovated the property, converting it into condominium living space. They did an outstanding job of renewing and extending the serviceable life of this historic building.



An 8th grade homeroom class in 1949. John Gorrie was a feeder school to Robert E. Lee High School so many of its graduates went to high school at Lee.



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