

To Skyway or not...all options costly.  
Read more, page 7

Jacksonville a shady place to live, thanks to  
visionaries and activists. Read more, page 8



# Resident

Community News

San Jose — San Marco — St. Nicholas

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December 2015, Vol. 7, Issue 12



## Miramar resident crowned homecoming queen

Catherine Maige of Miramar poses with her father after being crowned Homecoming Queen during the homecoming celebration at Bishop Kenny High School Oct. 23. Maige, who is a senior, also served as chairman of the Bishop Kenny Homecoming Committee. She is the daughter of Robert and Ann Marie Maige of Miramar. (Photo courtesy of Erica Charles)



Ellen and Howard Dyal with Alex Tyson

## Artscapade lends new meaning to Stayin' Alive

Sweet Pete's and Candy Apple Café downtown played host to Artscapade, a benefit event in support of the Patrons of the HeART, a pediatric care initiative for heart surgery patients. The joint partnership between University of Florida Pediatric Cardiovascular Center at Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital – and the Jacksonville community, helps to cover the costs associated with the programs. To date, 68 children from 20 different countries have benefitted from life-saving heart surgery through the fundraising initiatives.

See more on page 14.



## Meet me in Havana a hit for River Garden

Patrons danced the night away and enjoyed festive entertainment complete with costume-clad dancers and live entertainment. The Cuban-themed River Garden Foundation Gala was held at the Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nov. 22. See more on page 14.

Zachary and Blair Sherman, Sean and Kendall Valliere with Kimberly and Richard Sisisky

## Top sellers named school's MVPs

Luke Whipple and Ella Hodgett became Most Valuable Players at Hendricks Avenue Elementary when they were named the top sellers during the school's PTA wrapping paper sale fundraiser in October.

Whipple, a fifth grader from San Marco, sold 70 Charleston Wrap items, which included wrapping paper, candies, kitchen items and magazines. Hodgett, a third-grader from San Marco, placed second by selling 66 items.

This year, the PTA's main focus was supporting the renovation of the school's kindergarten playground, and the association donated \$8,000 toward the improvements.

Ella Hodgett, Hendricks Avenue Elementary Principal Lacy Healy and Luke Whipple pose for the camera in early November.



## Two-hour parking ordinance continues to draw controversy



Soon the angle and parallel parking spaces on the southwest side of Beach Boulevard in St. Nicholas will be restricted to two hours between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Two-hour parking is coming to St. Nicholas Town Center.

In early November, the Jacksonville City Council passed an ordinance supporting the installation of two-hour parking signs by the Florida Department of Transportation in front of the businesses on the southwest side of Beach Boulevard between Walton Street and Palmer Terrace.

The resolution, entitled Ordinance 2015-0705, sailed through the Council uncontested. It was filed by District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer and sponsored by Councilmen Tommy Hazouri and Scott Wilson. Wilson holds the Council seat formerly held by Don Redman. Prior to his election, Wilson served as an administrative assistant to Redman, who served this portion of District 5 prior to re-districting.

The signs will limit parking to two hours from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday in front of the existing parallel and angle parking spaces along the southwest side of Beach Boulevard. Parallel spaces across the street lining the northwest side of Beach Boulevard near the Mudville Grille will not be affected, allowing patrons to park for an unlimited amount of time. In addition, there are 13 city-owned spaces behind the Korean Baptist Church at 3200 Utina Avenue near Palmer Terrace where shoppers can also park without a limit.

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# Residents discuss options for future of Riverfront Park

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Many residents living adjacent to Riverfront Park in San Marco say public fishing in the park has ruined their quality of life.

Responding to a litany of emails from residents, many of which requested fishing be banned from the park, District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer held a public meeting Nov. 5 to hear complaints and discuss possible solutions.

Approximately 20 residents came to the meeting, which was also attended by Daryl Joseph, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services; John Pappas, Director of Public Works Department, and Charles Moreland, Director of Public Affairs from Mayor Lenny Curry's office. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Assistant Chief Mat Nemeth of Zone 3 observed the meeting from the rear of the auditorium, but made no comment.

During the nearly three-hour meeting, most residents said they have "nothing against fishing" but that "the culture of fishing" in the park is their prime concern.

Many were aggravated by the fishermen's blatant disregard of park rules and hours. Others complained of a lack of parking, traffic congestion on River Road, loud noise, late-night partying, marijuana use, the incessant use of alcohol, profanity, public urination and defecation, littering, trespassing, theft of water from the hoses outside their homes, and destruction to the park property caused by PVC pipe being hammered into the turf near the bulkhead.

"Nighttime, daytime, all the time, they are yelling out front," complained one resident. "It's impossible to sleep or watch television late at night, even with the windows closed."

"They urinate in my yard. My backyard smells like a latrine," one furious homeowner said. "When I asked them to have some class, they threatened to kill me, my wife and my children," he said, adding he had brought photographic evidence to back up his claim. "Nothing is done about it," he said.

"They come into my yard and do whatever they want. I'm afraid to go out anymore," echoed a woman.

"They used to call this San Marco beach, and people used to sunbath here, but you can't do it anymore, you can't get between the poles," said another homeowner.

Another resident agreed. "I bought my property in the spring and thought

I could take my eight-year-old daughter out to sit on the bank in the summertime, but it's nothing but fisherman. This isn't a park, it's a fishing pier," he said.

After spending the day and cleaning their catch, the fishermen often leave fish heads and tails, bait, fishing line and trash behind, which attract vermin, said a homeowner.

"They are damaging the park itself. They do whatever they want, whenever they want," said one unhappy resident. His sentiments were echoed by another, "They've homesteaded this park. They've taken ownership," she said. "As far as they're concerned, it's their park and they can do what they want to do."

## Just say 'no' to fishing not an option

Pointing to Boyer and the other city officials, the residents questioned whether the swath of green-space near their homes should be a park. "The park is public, but is that really a park?" one man asked. "It's a strip of land that should be governed by the city. You have a responsibility to us and not the city."

It was also noted that officers with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office were "doing their best." One resident said, "JSO's hands are tied. They have to catch them doing things themselves."

After hearing specific issues, Boyer and the other city officials said closing the park for fishing was not an option. "It's the goal of the administration to have a quality of life that will allow fishing to exist," said Moreland.

"We want to put things out there to make things better without restricting complete (public) access," Boyer said.

Boyer asked whether a metal fence around the park or on the city property surrounding their homes, which would be gated and paid for by the city, would solve the problem. The city could even place a gate on the alley behind their buildings, she said. "It might impair your view, but it should keep out everyone after dark," she said.

Another suggestion posed by Boyer, which was well received by the residents, was the possibility of making a River Road a one-way street going northbound between Landon Avenue and Laverne Street. After Laverne, River Road would become two-way again. Preventing two-way traffic on this stretch of River Road could make things safer in front of their homes, Boyer said.



For a variety of reasons, not all residents who live on River Road are happy that the public is allowed to fish in Riverfront Park.

Also discussed was the idea of narrowing the street to extend more land into the park area and installing angle parking in front of the homes. While the fishermen could park off the curb, it might compound the problem because more parking would exist allowing more fishermen to fish in the park. Two-hour parking could be installed until 5 p.m., Boyer said, but that idea did not go over well with the residents.

Having the city insist fishermen have a special permit to fish in the park was discussed. "This could be revoked if they do not obey park rules," Joseph said, noting the city could then limit the number of permits available, thus helping to curb the number of people fishing in the park.

Installing picnic tables as well as concrete rod holders along the bulkhead to protect the turf was also discussed. Cameras might be installed to monitor all activity, Joseph

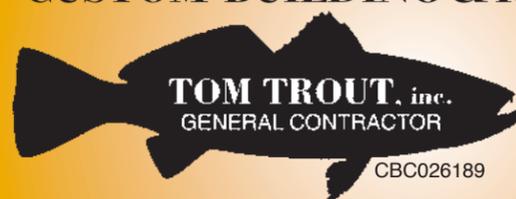
said. If fishermen damage the holders they could be charged with defacing city property, he said.

Boyer said Joseph would draw up plans illustrating some of the ideas that were discussed. Another meeting will be held in early December to discuss the issue again, she said.

"Why can't we just say no to fishing?" more than one resident asked late in the meeting. "The city will spend thousands to allow 30 to 40 people to fish," said one man.

But to city officials, limiting people's access is not an option. "We need to make a concerted effort to find a reasonable solution without the drastic step of eliminating fishing altogether," Moreland said. "You have a true advocate in this area in Councilwoman Boyer. She wants to find everyday solutions. She'll make sure money is only spent where it is needed."

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# Work progresses on Towers of Jacksonville renovation



A hoist is erected to bring building supplies to the 12th floor and remove debris during the renovation of the Towers of Jacksonville in October.

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Work is progressing on the 18-month renovation to the Towers of Jacksonville, a 194-apartment senior assisted living complex at 1400 LeBaron Avenue in San Marco.

According to Towers administrator Michael McClernon, construction officials are finding solutions as they run into unexpected issues. Since the project started in June, much of the work has been relegated to the first floor, where most of the building's infrastructure is housed, and the 12th floor, McClernon said. On Nov. 1, he expects work to begin on the 11th floor. "Once we get past these two floors, I think we'll regain speed," he said.

Earlier this year, the Retirement Housing Foundation, a non-profit in Long Beach, Calif, and its general partner, The Towers of Jacksonville, paid \$10.38 million for

the riverfront high-rise. RHF is spending \$8.5 million to renovate the building and will replace the plumbing, HVAC, wiring, elevators, and other infrastructure throughout the building, said Chris Ragon, a spokesperson for RHF in Long Beach, Calif.

At present, the building still sports the name Baptist Towers, but that signage will change sometime during the renovation, McClernon said.

"The disruption of the renovation has been hard on the residents," said McClernon. "It's stressful. There is so much noise. It's a solid concrete building and if they're drilling on the 12th floor nerve-wracking noise is telegraphed through the whole building," he said.

Although his residents are bothered by the disturbance, most are taking it in good spirits, McClernon continued. "They are beginning to see progress. It's coming. It just takes time."

# Miller's Creek Tax District to hold special December meeting

## Regular meeting schedule to change

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

The Miller's Creek Special Tax District will hold a special meeting, Monday, Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. at the Cuba Libre Nightclub on Beach Boulevard in St. Nicholas. The purpose of the public meeting is to announce that the tax assessment process will begin with the next property tax cycle in November 2016.

In order to have the city impose a special tax assessment for the dredging project, an ordinance must be passed by January 1, said Attorney Jeff Close of Lewis, Longman and Walker during a meeting of the district Nov. 2 at Cuba Libre. Close is an associate of Special District lawyer Wayne Flowers.

Prior to having the ordinance passed, the District will need to post four weeks of daily notices in a newspaper in addition to holding the public meeting in December, Close said. The daily notices will be printed in the *Daily Financial Record*.

During the November meeting

it was decided that, beginning in January, the District will hold its meetings every other month on the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m., said District secretary Sharon Johnson. The change was made to allow District attorney, Wayne Flowers, to attend the meetings.

The District is still collecting "donations" from the 28 residents within its boundaries to cover its start-up costs. At a meeting in September, District members voted unanimously to ask residents to forward between \$100 and \$1,000 to the board within 45 days of the establishment of its bank account. This money would be used to help pay for a survey of the creek and other miscellaneous operating expenses until the district secures financing.

Money donated by the residents will be credited toward the first tax bill, and according to Ordinance 2014-700, each homeowner in the district will pay an equal amount regardless of the difference in property values.

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# Elevate, eliminate, extend – or keep as is

## JTA ponders what to do about Skyway

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

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

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

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

1. Keep the Skyway it as it is but overhaul the existing vehicles and rehabilitate the operating system and infrastructure;
2. Keep it as it is but purchase new, different vehicles and modify them to operate on the existing infrastructure and operating system;
3. Use the current system until the vehicles no longer operate safely, then decommission the Skyway and tear down its infrastructure;
4. Decommission the system and re-purpose the infrastructure into an elevated bike and pedestrian walkway similar to New York's High Line in Manhattan; or
5. Extend the Skyway's routes to travel to neighborhoods adjacent to downtown such as Riverside, Brooklyn, future Healthy Town, and the proposed Shipyards and Stadium, while purchasing new vehicles and modifying its infrastructure.

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



by a public forum, 5:30-7 p.m. The JTA requested Jacksonville residents submit their preferences via a survey on its website. The subcommittee is scheduled to make recommendations on the Skyway's future to the JTA Board of Directors at its meeting Thursday, Dec. 10.

JTA had received 232 responses to its online survey as of Nov. 6, said Brad Thoburn, JTA Vice President of Long Range Planning and System Development in a meeting Nov. 12. Of those responses, the two most popular were: extend the Skyway's route system while modifying the system to accommodate new cars (80 percent) and decommissioning the Skyway it so it could be transformed into a multi-use elevated path (nine percent).

"The Skyway right now is a critical component to where we're trying to go," said Aundra Wallace, Chief Executive Officer of the city's Downtown Investment Authority. "If we're going to replace it or expand it, it's going to help us be able to

grow downtown, when the decision comes out from this particular committee, with regards to where we go with this particular system and the other systems as well."

### Slow to be embraced

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

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

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

into a monorail, which at that time was considered the vehicle of the future.

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

Overall, the cost of system construction and design was \$182 million, not including the planning study. What Jacksonville received for its money were 10 driverless two-car trains, which travel as fast as 30 mph and can carry up to 56 passengers over a 2.5-mile stretch of track downtown. The bi-directional system is touted by transportation professionals as the safest way to travel through the urban core and can connect with bus and Park-n-Ride facilities on downtown's periphery.

*Continued on page 7*

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

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

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

**Looking toward the future**

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

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

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

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

The cost of overhauling the existing vehicles is \$18 million, and adding necessary upgrades to the system could run as high as \$70.2 million. Replacing the vehicles with new cars will cost \$35 million, and when modifications to the

system are added the price could go as high as \$85.1 million, Thoburn estimated.

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

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

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

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

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

*Residents weigh in on future of aging elevated people mover*

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Even as the Jacksonville Transportation Authority is holding public forums to decide the fate of the

elevated monorail system, *The Resident* posed three solutions to residents near and far to find out what should be done with the Skyway. We asked, “Should it be eliminated, that is, torn down? Should it be maintained as an elevated bike and pedestrian walkway? Or, should JTA expand it by replacing the cars and building more stations?” Here’s what a few of you said about the city’s 2.5-mile long people mover.



**Trip Gillander, San Marco**

I would vote for bike paths. The Skyway didn’t take off the way they anticipated it would. I’ve used the Skyway twice in my 30 years in Jacksonville. If they did a walkway/bike path it might encourage people to get outside and exercise. That is more useful than fixing those cars that not many people ride.



**Elise Nowikowski, San Marco**

I would love to take it to the airport and to the stadium and to Riverside. It needs to go to places where people go. When they do the walkway over the Fuller Warren Bridge they should put the Skyway there and make it go to the Riverside parks. It needs to veer off and go to Riverside. The drawback of making it a walkway is that people would rather walk along the river and not walk to the places were it goes now.



**Tim Martin, San Marco**

Extend it to the stadium and the baseball fields. Replace all the cars. Extend it to Kings Avenue and Atlantic, Riverside, 5 Points, Brooklyn. There is a new YMCA and all those apartments. It would be great if you lived in those apartments and could go downtown on it.



**Summer Jones, San Jose**

I would like to see an elevated jogging path. I like to get out and walk and be in the fresh air and not deal with too much traffic.

**San Marco Preservation Spruces up local parks**

Thanks to the San Marco Preservation Society, Davin Park has received a major spruce up just in time for the holidays.

In mid-November a crew from Brian Box Horizon Landscaping planted more than a hundred new plants and spread mulch, said San Marco Preservation Society member Mary Toomey. In addition to the new plantings, the workers also cut ferns back from around the benches and made sure all the landscaping in the park was trimmed appropriately, she said.

The Preservation Society spent approximately \$3,000 on the landscaping, Toomey said, noting that Jamie Ross of Jamie Ross Landscaping served as a consultant.

“It’s all spruced up in time for people to take their holiday pictures,” Toomey said. “Last week I saw five different families in the park taking pictures. Families use the park for pictures two to three times a week all year around.”

In addition to the landscaping, the fountain at the end of the park, which formerly was an old artesian well, was cleaned out and fixed, thanks to the efforts of Leanna Cumber and District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer, Toomey said.

Boyer was also instrumental in making sure the Lions’ Fountain in Balis Park was fixed in time for Thanksgiving, Toomey said. Workmen from the city’s Parks and Recreation Department installed a new pump in early November.



A crew from the city’s Parks & Recreation Department fixes the pump in the Lions’ Fountain in Balis Park in early November.

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# City's tree canopy exists today thanks to charter amendment

## New tree planting initiative unveiled

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

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

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

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

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

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

"As part of the leadership curriculum,

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

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

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

The Charter Amendment efforts were spearheaded in 2000 by Susan Caven, president of Scenic Jacksonville's board of directors; William Brinton, shareholder at Rogers Towers, P.A., and John Crescimbeni, City Council At-Large Member, who together established Citizens for Tree Preservation, Inc.

Introduced to rousing applause as a "real, real community activist" by Susan Caven, Brinton recalled a last-minute attempt by a



Joan Cousar, Bill Brinton, Anna Dooley

judge to pull the amendment off the ballot, but 197,000 voters in Duval County voted in favor of the charter amendment.

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

"At the end of 1999, the laws were weakened to the point where a tree was protected only if it were more than six feet

in diameter," said Brinton, of Avondale. "A very rare thing to find in Jacksonville."

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

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# Remnants of Oriental Gardens removed

*Former tourist attraction filled in for development*

By Vince Iampietro  
Resident Community News

Oriental Gardens Road, just off San Jose Boulevard in San Marco, was once home to Jacksonville's darling of botanical bliss – its namesake, Oriental Gardens.

In operation from 1937 until the land was sold in 1954 and platted for 33 new homes, all that remained until recently were a small lake, a wrought-iron fence, and an ornamental fountain on the property of a home at 1124 Oriental Gardens Drive.

That property was recently sold by the Claire Gray Scott trust, held by Claire Scott, whose father originally bought three lots at the location in 1954.

"It was a lovely place to grow up," recounted Scott, whose family moved into its new home when she was a high-school junior in the mid-early 1950s. "I enjoyed the place and loved the fact that we were moving into it," Scott said.

Scott's father, Harold Williams, built up the concrete around the lake to prevent drainage, and fashioned a pump for the fountain from a water-based air-conditioning unit. He topped the fountain with a cherub holding a birdbath, Scott said. "I always thought there should be something oriental in the lake. I weaseled them into putting on the (ornamental Japanese) pagoda."

With the sale of the property in June 2015 to another trust, held by Scott's long-time friend, Susan Sheldon, the remaining two lots were broken out for development and will eventually be the site of two new luxury homes.

During excavation of the property in October, the concrete wall, which was built around the lake by Scott's father, was removed, as were the pagoda and remnants of the fountain. The gray, weather-beaten, wrought-iron fence stood in silent testimony to a grander floral time as heavy-equipment operator and Big Cats Construction site foreman, Josh Martin, used a large, tractor backhoe to load excavated dirt into a tandem dump truck during the site's transformation.

As the machinery chewed its way over sand and silt, it was difficult to tell this was once an idyllic, 18-acre site that attracted tourists the world over to Jacksonville.

Starting as vacant land in 1925 along St. Johns River, this site became home to Riverside resident George W. Clark's plentiful botanical undertakings. By 1937, Oriental Gardens had bloomed to life and was home to numerous oak and palm trees, bamboo and banana trees, scenic pools, and bucolic walkways which meandered throughout the site's numerous tropical plants and hydrangeas.

Best of all, it was finally opened to the public in that year.

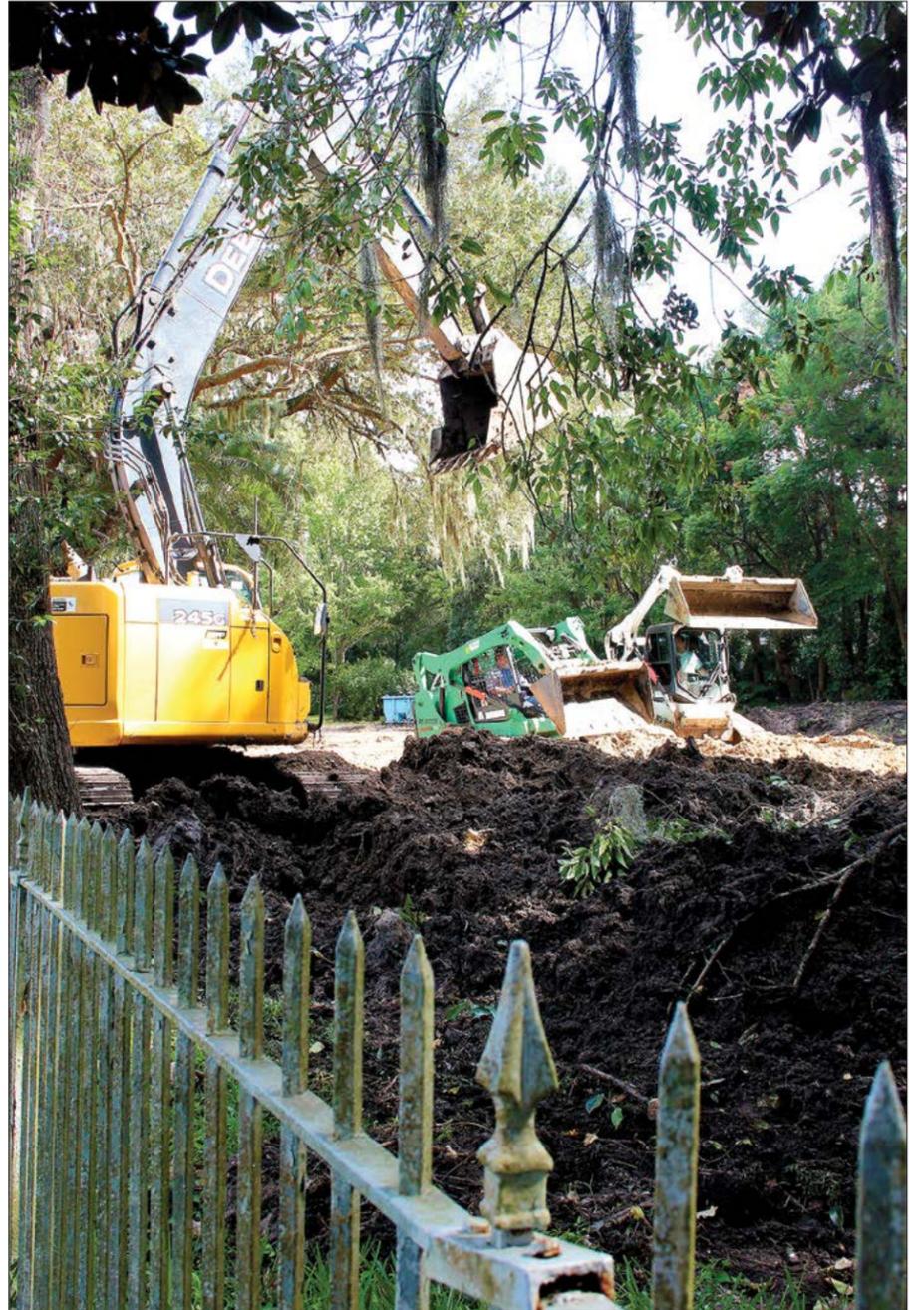
During its heyday from 1937 until 1954, Oriental Gardens' pastoral vistas provided stunning backdrops for numerous yearbook, fashion, and wedding photographs. Ornate fountains, Oriental-style archways and gazebos with benches, wooden footbridges crossing small creeks, a waterwheel, beautifully crafted wrought-iron gates and gate posts, and centuries-old oaks were only some of the features waiting to delight visitors.

While in the area, guests were greeted on the hour with a chime concert courtesy of "The Singing Gardens of Jacksonville." A gift shop sold various styles of beautiful, linen postcards, a number of which are still available as vintage items, new and used, on a popular worldwide auction site.

Scott laughed when she recalled the times in her youth she and Sheldon gained access to the gardens without paying the 50-cent entrance fee. "We lived near Laurel Road (near the gardens), and we'd throw sticks over the fence for the dogs to get, so we'd have to chase the dogs, and that was our way in," she said.

The girls' attraction to the gardens was understandable. "There were really gorgeous, exotic plants that grew in the water. There was a little Oriental building (the gift shop). It was a great setting for a development because there were so many blooming things," said Scott.

Now the two newly available lots from the former gardens will soon host new homes. The final chapter of Oriental Gardens will remain only in a street name – Oriental Gardens Drive.



A backhoe works over the remnants of Oriental Gardens

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**Happy Holidays!** Photo by Christy Whitehead



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# MOVERS & SHAKERS

## Creative groups in San Marco brand area with hopes of revitalization

Businesses on Kings Avenue are hoping to kick start a revitalization of the San Marco stretch of the road that, centuries past, took French and Spanish royalty back and forth between St. Augustine and the Jamestown Colony.

The Kings Ave Creative Corridor was originally envisioned 10 years ago by longtime businesses Linda Cunningham, ELM, Burdette Ketchum and Reddi Arts, which has a back door on Kings Avenue. Now that creative entities such as CROP Creative Media and Group 4 Design have made that two-block stretch of Kings Avenue their home, the concept was re-introduced and officially launched last month.

A kick-off party was held Nov. 12 in the courtyard at Linda Cunningham Design at 1049 Kings Ave. The group, which also includes Rinaman & Associates, P.A., will work towards establishing recognition of the Creative Corridor as well as collective enhancements, such as beautifying the street and corner of Kings Avenue and



Bill Scheerer, CROP Creative Media; Leigh Gunn, Group 4 Design; Russ Ervin, ELM; Michael Balanky, Chase Properties; Linda Cunningham, Linda Cunningham Design; Jim Rinaman, Rinaman & Associates, P.A.; Will Ketchum, Burdette Ketchum, Patrick Golden Burdette Ketchum

Prudential Drive with landscaping to make it the "front door" of the corridor, and installing branded plaques at each business with a historical perspective of the area.

"Early pioneers like Linda Cunningham, ELM and us in 2005, found this corridor and in a random way it tended to attract more creatively driven businesses," said Will Ketchum, president and CEO of Burdette Ketchum, which moved its office to Kings

Avenue in 2005. "I think it might have been that the older canvas gives the creative firms more to work with. It has some pretty rich character with a lot of potential."

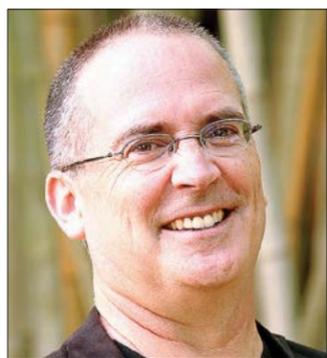
The underlying goal is to build a sense of community, a pride in our corridor and to attract others to join them, Ketchum said. "Eventually it may mean retail, but in the short term, it probably means more creative services firms."

## Women's Giving Alliance grants nearly \$400,000 in funds

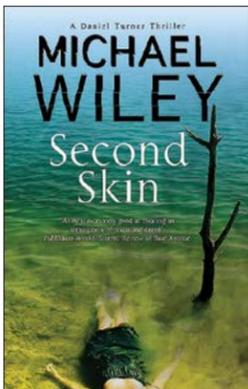
At its annual meeting Oct. 28, the Women's Giving Alliance (WGA) announced \$395,000 in grants to five Northeast Florida organizations providing mental health services to women and girls in the region. The grants are part of WGA's five-year, research-based focus on funding mental health services for women and girls in Northeast Florida, a recognition that community mental health support can create a foundation for women and girls to flourish.

"This year's grantees span five counties, and include agencies with which we have long-standing relationships, as well as a young grassroots effort, all embodying the mission of improving mental health of women and girls in Northeast Florida," said Paula Liang, Women's Giving Alliance president.

The funding will span two years and include consultation and impact assessment opportunities with WGA for: Barnabas Center, for its Women's Health Initiative in Nassau County; Gateway Community Services, for its Gender Responsive, Trauma-Informed Professional Development program; Mental Health America in Northeast Florida, for its Women and Girls Training Institute; Rethreaded, for its Survivor Advocate Program; and the I.M. Sulzbacher Center, for its Trauma-Informed Therapy for Homeless Females program.



Michael Wiley



## San Marco author set mystery series in Jacksonville

UNF English professor Michael Wiley recently published the second of two mystery novels set in Jacksonville. "Second Skin" follows a murder investigation by homicide detective Daniel Turner, who debuted in "Blue Avenue" in June 2015. Another mystery series is set in Chicago, but Wiley said the inspiration for one novel in that series came from a walk through Hemming Park.

"My mother was an avid mystery reader, my father an

avid crime novel reader, so I think it was in my blood from birth," said Wiley. "As a child, while others were reading The Hardy Boys mysteries, I was reading true case files from the FBI, and Ellery Queen magazine."

The Wiley family moved to San Marco in 1998 when he was hired to teach British Literature at UNF. Wiley started writing mysteries and crime novels in the mid-2000s, and writes every day, even while traveling.

"Good hooks come to me sometimes when I'm working on one book, or editing another, and I think of the next one. I work from some kind of a premise or interesting scene that catches my imagination," he said.

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# Donations from THE PLAYERS fund River Garden students

Thanks to a very generous donation from THE PLAYERS, each of the 11 students from the recent graduating class of River Garden's Albert Z. Fleet Geriatric Training Center was granted a full scholarship to attend the Florida licensed, not-for-profit post-secondary school and learn the skills necessary to become CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants) in the State of Florida.

Proceeds from The Players Championship at TPC are shared by non-profit organizations in the area. Making a positive impact on the community is the charitable mission of the PGA TOUR. In 2014 \$7.5 million was distributed to nonprofit organizations in Northeast Florida.



River Garden CEO Martin A. Goetz (far right) shares the stage with The Players Championship past chairs Jim Marlier (third from right) and Jack Garnett (second from right) as they congratulate the graduates of the Albert Z. Fleet Geriatric Training Center.

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

*New Class of 2016 announced for Delores Barr Weaver Fellows Program*



Courtney Weatherby-Hunter

Courtney Weatherby-Hunter of San Marco, is among the 15 young professional women who have been chosen as the 2016 class of the Delores Barr Weaver Fellows Program. The program, made possible by generous funding from the Delores Barr Weaver Fund and other sponsors, offers a group of young women from Northeast Florida the opportunity to become full WGA members through a shared financial arrangement for four years, with the Fellows continuing the membership on their own in year five and beyond.

The other 14 women in the class are Jill Auld, Shamika Baker, Bahareh Behrouz, Annie Bryant, Heather Corey, Diana E Donovan, Chanley Dudley, Barbara Finke, Robyn Lawrence, Andrea Mason, Marie OKeefe, Melinda Patterson, Madeline Warren and Kara Williams.

Each woman in the 2016 class will be partnered with a seasoned WGA member as a mentor, and is invited to attend WGA's many educational and engagement events to learn more about the issues facing women and girls in Northeast Florida. The 2016 class joins the inaugural 2015 class, now in the second year of their four-year shared agreement, as the next generation of leaders of WGA.

## Physicians' company opens new facility in Arlington

Nu-Well Physicians, a group of 12 local physicians headed by Dr. Saumil R. Oza of San Marco, has announced it is opening a 14,000-square-foot food production and administration facility located at 200 Monument Road on a large outparcel of the Regency Square Mall.

The facility will produce Nu-Well Physician's initial line of products including the OLU+ cold-pressed juice formulas – a series of physician developed ready-to-consume juices, made fresh daily with organic, non-GMO fruits and vegetables.

The company will bring new jobs to the Arlington neighborhood, including positions in food production, logistics and delivery, food safety, procurement, marketing, customer care and administration.

Oza is chief of cardiology at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Riverside and a consultant in the areas of stroke prevention, women's health, and the ongoing development of innovative technologies for implementing wellness programs which focus on a culture-of-health.



James Johnson, CEO of Nu-Well Physicians and Dr. Saumil R. Oza hold bottles of the company's Olu+ drink.

## Bistro AIX appoints new executive chef

Christopher Cohen, formerly with bb's restaurant, was appointed executive chef of Bistro AIX, which also recently hired Stephen Serokee as general manager.

Originally from Boston, Cohen brings over 20 years of culinary experience to the San Marco restaurant. Cohen moved to the Jacksonville area in 2013, having previously worked at Ela's Blu Water Grille (Hilton Head, SC), The Olde Pink House (Savannah, GA), and Beacon Hill Hotel & Bistro (Boston, MA).



Christopher Cohen

## Demetree tapped for Aviation Authority board

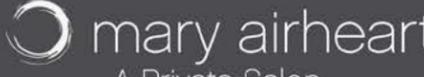
J. C. "Jay" Demetree, Jr., of San Jose, was selected by Mayor Lenny Curry to serve on the Jacksonville Aviation Authority board of directors.

Demetree has served as president and CEO for Demetree Brothers, Inc. since 1987 and president of Pentagon Properties, LLC since 1980. Demetree Brothers, Inc. is a privately-owned company engaged in real estate management, leasing, development and construction management. He has served on the boards of directors for the Jack and Betty Demetree Family Foundation, St. Vincent's Hospital Foundation, Inc., Ronald McDonald House Charities Jacksonville, among others.



Jay Demetree





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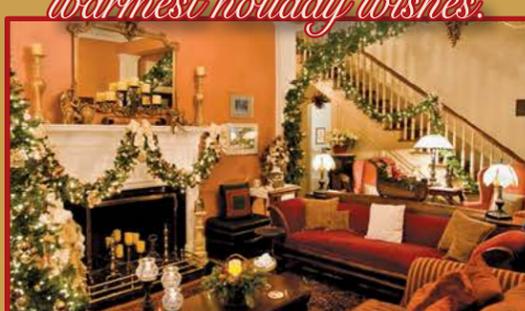
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# Gathering heightens awareness of Hope Lodge mission

## Local physician hosts evening reception

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

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

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

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



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

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

A heart-warming story was shared by local Jacksonville cancer survivor, Victoria Rosenblum, who at 26, told of her harrowing tale with poise, bravery and a colorful personality. Mrs. Rosenblum spoke to the group about her experience at Hope Lodge Boston, one that helped her battle, unencumbered, while she fought for her life against a rare form of cancer. She shared her uplifting, positive experience – one that was bettered by her stay at Hope Lodge Boston – and ultimately, became a story of recovery.

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

For more on the Hope Lodge or to donate, contact Kellie Ann Kelleher, director, major gifts campaign in Jacksonville. Email [kelliann.kelleher@cancer.org](mailto:kelliann.kelleher@cancer.org), or call 904.391.3606.

# Grant awarded to develop public gathering spaces from on-street parking places

Jacksonville community development groups are joining forces to make places out of spaces with the Downtown Jacksonville Public Parklet Program.

In early October the Urban Land Institute of North Florida was awarded a \$15,000 Innovation Grant for Building Healthy Places to help develop the process for creating parklets that will bolster small businesses and their surrounding public spaces in Downtown Jacksonville.

"Across the country, parklets have

proven to be a cost-effective method for improving a downtown's environment," said Jacksonville City Council President Greg Anderson, an Ortega resident. "The Downtown Jacksonville Public Parklet Program supports the CRA (Community Redevelopment Area) Plans and Business Investment Development (BID) Strategy by assisting in the creation and promotion of healthy living downtown set forth through our DIA (Downtown Investment Authority)."

Downtown Vision, Inc., the Business Improvement District for Downtown Jacksonville, will match \$15,000 and together with the ULI North Florida District Council and the City of Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority, the trio plans to work with a consultant to develop the policies, processes and guidelines for creating parklets in the city's public right-of-way. Parklets are generally seating platforms constructed in the footprint of one or

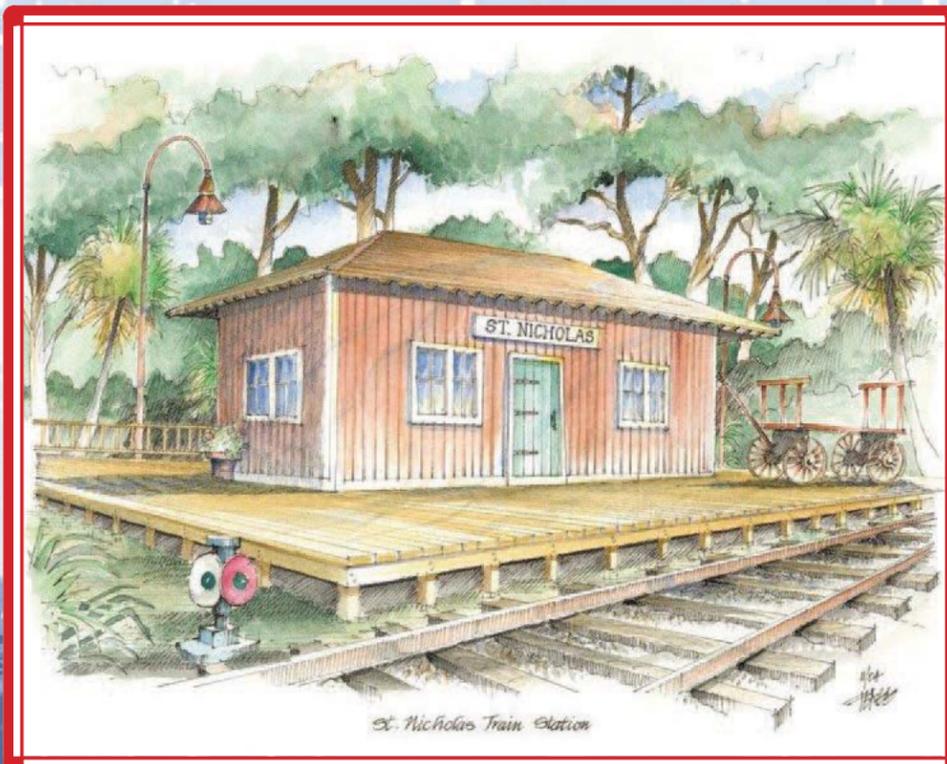
two parallel on-street parking spaces that effectively extend the sidewalks.

"Parklets will create new community experiences and foster walkability and bikeability in our urban core," said Jake Gordon, CEO, Downtown Vision, Inc.

The grant will also help to identify potential parklet locations, suggest design guidelines, promote the parklets concept to area stakeholders, and assist in identifying any regulatory challenges, which may exist to implementing the program.

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## Watson San Marco Collection



Looking for move in ready? This is it! Beautifully finished, charming Avondale home boasting a garage apt, too. Main home offers 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, large living area with built-ins & fireplace; den/flex room, separate dining with bay window, 2 deep china closets, 2 doors opening to outdoor living area, adjacent to ample size kitchen with stainless steel appliances, granite counters & deep pantry closet. Owner's retreat on 1st floor is spacious with a private completely renovated bath. Upstairs offers 2 large bedrooms, 1 features a fireplace, and a full hall bath. Garage apartment kitchen is used as an art studio, but is ready for kitchen, has a full bath & bedroom/living room. Detached 2 car garage, too! \$689,000 MLS# 796034 Butler/ Corbett Team 904-521-3288



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



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



Charming mid-century split-level home on a beautifully manicured, almost quarter-acre lot. Located in the lovely tree-lined, walkable and bike able Grove Park subdivision. Generously-sized bedroom/bathroom/kitchenette suite on first floor with private access to pool which could function as guest quarters or mother-in-law suite. \$245,500 MLS# 787472 Amanda Everett 904-415-2711



Charming, picture-perfect little bungalow with original hardwood floors & all of the fantastic architectural details that you expect in a home built in 1943. Hardwood floors & pristine tile throughout. Beautiful, high quality original wood cabinets in the kitchen. Separate dining room & cool, spacious backyard make this home perfect for entertaining friends & family. Located in the heart of St. Nicholas, this property is so close to San Marco Square, the Riverside Arts Market, downtown, and the Shoppes of Avondale! \$79,900 MLS# 784311 Joseph Poletto 904-738-6446



Beautiful updated brick, 3/2 home nestled amongst mature trees on a cul-de-sac lot. Gourmet kitchen with 42" cabinets, custom glass cabinet doors, loaded with pull-out drawers, granite countertops, trimmed in crown molding, breakfast bar & a breakfast nook. Hand-scraped hardwood flooring throughout home. Spacious bathrooms feature new marble countertops, sinks & hardware. Owner's Retreat features French doors opening to the covered patio overlooking private backyard. \$296,500 MLS# 778202 Butler/Corbett Team 904-521-3288



Lovely, well maintained home! Move-in Condition! This single story home has 3 bedrooms & 2 bathrooms plus a BONUS room. Tile flooring throughout. Stainless Steel fridge and stove. Master suite is off the family room and includes walk-in closet & window with backyard view! Split bedrooms, 2nd & 3rd bedroom sharing a full bath. Back patio is enclosed with glass windows. Backyard features a storage shed, and a tree that provides a nice shade over the designed garden! Extended driveway and more! Close to Mayport! \$157,000 MLS# 799688 Eleana Carrion 904-476-8682



This home offers a great opportunity to own in the heart of Panama Park. Views of the beautiful Trout River sets a relaxing atmosphere to enjoy a beautiful afternoon from your private 2nd floor balcony. This spacious two story home with 5 bedrooms and 2 full baths allows rooms for the whole family plus space for visitors on a generous oversized-lot. Fantastic Rental Opportunity. Convenient to schools, shopping, restaurants and the best that the Downtown/ Springfield area has to offer. \$38,500 MLS# 801100 Joseph Poletto 904-738-6446



All the bells & whistles in this Willowcove pool home! Home offers 4 bedrooms, an office w/French doors, bonus/flex room, separate dining w/extensive millwork & designer light fixtures, gourmet kitchen w/natural gas cooktop, huge island overlooking the great room, breakfast area, designer finishes and much more! Entertain large parties by opening the 12' stackable sliders from the great room to the outdoor living area overlooking stoned trimmed, waterfall, screened salt pool w/spa. Set the ambiance with the \$10K sound system. Don't miss this beauty! \$550,000 MLS# 801374 Call 904-731-5800



Fabulous San Jose home with many upgrades and a huge privately fenced backyard. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths with high vaulted ceilings, loaded with crown molding throughout, large dining room, updated & fully equipped kitchen with stainless steel appliances, large rolling island with appliance garage, built in cabinetry for trash and drawers--Plenty of storage. Oversized living area opens to screen patio with spa overlooking the huge backyard + open stone patio! \$225,000 MLS# 802059 Call 904-731-5800



Why Rent When You Can Buy!! You must see this charming Murray Hill home! This is a perfect home for first time homebuyers or investors looking for a great rental property! Newer roof, updated kitchen with stainless steel appliances, updated bathrooms, beautiful original wood floor and fenced backyard, perfect for entertaining or a hangout for our four legged friends. \$145,000 MLS# 800896 Call 904-731-5800



Gated Julington Creek Plantation Golf & Country Club Executive Pool Home on the 8th Tee This 6Bedroom 5 bath home plus an office has breathtaking water-golf-preserve views! Loaded with upgrades features: gourmet kitchen w/granite, double wall ovens, walk-in pantry, breakfast bar, breakfast nook; huge family room, opens to kitchen nook, pool & outdoor living areas. Screened pool/spa with new summer kitchen, cable ready & covered sitting area perfect for entertaining! \$685,000 MLS# 799225 Call 904-731-5800



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

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

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



Lindsay Phillips and Paige Piper



Donna Servano and Angie Meyer



Ellen Cottrill and Shiri Brandenburg



Sally Parsons with Grace Sarber



Lauren Bedford, John Bedford, Marianna Anki and Stephanie Holthouse



Faye Hedrick with Lisa Ansbacher



Shari Shuman, Martin and Susan Goetz, Tom Serwatka and Michael Breen



Ronnie and Marsha Pollock, Shirley and Abe Bielski, Sonny and Joan Waitz with Randee and Marty Steinberg



Debbie Parker, Lorelei and Janne Brandenburg

### River Garden donors enjoy Cuban nightlife

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

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

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## Libations, music and the Treaty Oak

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

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



Tarik and Melissa Bateh



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



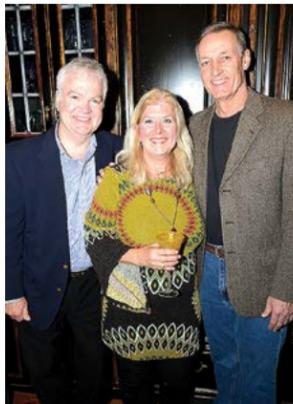
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Carolyn and Barney Von Hermann with Laura and Mike Langton



Karen McCombs, David Rinzler and Joe Barton



Frank Houston, Melanie Jensen and Jim Atnip



Laurie and Jason Rimmel



Sandy and Cy Marshall



Moxie Kitchen and Cocktails' Tom Grey and Sarah Marie Johnston

## Red, White and Blues delivers on the River

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

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

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

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 The Shoppes of Ponte Vedra (904) 280-1202  
 Avondale 3617 St. John's Ave. (904) 388-5406  
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# March of Dimes cooks up culinary delights



Chef d'Cuisine Alex Yim, Felecia Windham and Sarah Waibel

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

Returning as the event's lead chef for a third consecutive year was Hector Gonzalez, Director of Food & Beverage at TPC Sawgrass. The 'chef's choice' theme this year resulted in some creative healthy dishes, creating a perfect pairing with March of Dimes' message that a healthy diet and exercise for expecting mothers can improve the health of their unborn babies.

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



Ray and Teresa Oliver



Randy and Brianna Swift with State Senator Aaron Bean



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

# Peoples-Waters recipient of first Aikens Renaissance Award

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

The first annual Dr. Chester A. Aikens Renaissance Award and Scholarship Gala was held on Oct. 17, in the school's atrium. The recipient of the award was Attorney Rhonda Peoples-Waters.

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



Dennis Stone, president, Florida Coastal School of Law, Attorney Rhonda Peoples-Waters



Hanya and Jim Farah

(Photos by James Robinson Photography)



Elizabeth Bates, Jean Aikens, Chae Aikens, Alicia Edwards

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# Red Rose Ball theme to focus on St. Vincent's Centennial

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

Hosted by the St. Vincent's HealthCare Foundation, the event will be held at the Jacksonville Marriott at Southpoint on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2016. The gala will feature a cocktail hour, dinner and dancing, as well as live and silent auctions.

The Red Rose Ball raises money for various projects at St. Vincent's HealthCare; last year the event raised almost \$400,000. This year, all proceeds will benefit the St. Vincent's Mobile Health Outreach Ministry, which provides free medical care to those who are struggling the most, including uninsured or underinsured men, women and children throughout the area.

"The Red Rose Ball is a wonderful event which helps us fulfill our Mission to provide compassionate care to all people in our community, no matter where they are in life," said St. Vincent's HealthCare Foundation President, Jane R. Lanier, CFRE. "Each year, our sponsors and patrons help us raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for programs that help make our community healthier for all."

For more information about the Red Rose Ball, including how to make reservations or to become an event sponsor, contact Jessica Waugaman at St. Vincent's Foundation at (904) 308-7306 or Jessica.Waugaman@JaxHealth.com.



Mark and Rosalind Travis, Lou and Jan Walsh, Dr. Mark and Rhonda Mostovych

## Two-hour Parking

### Ordinance FROM PAGE 1

After a public meeting on the issue Sept. 10, Boyer filed the request at the urging of several St. Nicholas merchants, including Jean and Barbara Proulx, owners of the building housing Jean's Wig Shop; Eric and Janet Johnson, owners of Jean's Wig Shop, and Shana Stark, owner of the Skate Shop St. Nicholas.

"My husband and I, we're very pleased with it," said Barbara Proulx after hearing the news. "This means our tenants (Eric and Janet Johnson) will be able to stay in business with it."

Stark was also thrilled with the news. "Thank goodness," she said. "It's awesome. That's really going to help me," she said, noting clients and employees from other businesses often take up all the spaces for extended periods of time, which severely

impacts her sales. "Recently I had my worst month ever. They almost put me out of business," she said.

But not everyone was happy with the new ordinance. Liz Gavalin, owner of the building that houses Happy Viking Games was furious when she heard the news. "They did not notify me (it was being filed with City Council). Lori Boyer promised she would let me know. I will be storming the City Council about this," Gavalin said.

Gavalin said the parking ordinance was "predicated on the lie" that the Florida Department of Transportation had posted two-hour signs, which were removed years ago when it resurfaced the road. Producing photos of the signs, Gavalin said they were not FDOT signs but signs which had been installed and paid for by Proulx. She also claimed plenty of parking is available for everyone on the street and that the signs are unnecessary.

"The signs are not needed," Gavalin said in a phone interview. "I'm going to

raise hell. I'm going to contact the state of Florida. If we really needed them, it would be one thing, but those signs were not put there by the state. It was all predicated by a lie."

Later, in an email to The Resident she wrote, "I put a lot of money into my building this year, upgrading it so we could get a change of use to assembly. I made the investment so my tenant could hold tournaments on the weekends. They don't do this often, just occasionally. Another reason I did it was so when that tenant departs, I will have greater flexibility for leasing the building. Restricting parking to two hours will impact my ability to lease the building and will impact me personally when I have a need to be there - which is not often but is needed at times. When I painted the inside of the building this spring, the guy helping me paint parked there all day - because he was working inside. I may need to go there and clean or do something inside for more

than two hours, and I don't want to have to go move my car every whipstitch."

In a phone interview, Boyer said she had notified all the merchants impacted by the change that she was filing the ordinance. "It is incumbent on anyone who is interested to come to the Council meeting," she said, adding FDOT said it would only install the signs if it had a resolution from the city.

"I'm not sure whether the state put them in. It doesn't matter," Boyer said. "The point is they were there and existed, regardless of who put them in. The resolution is not predicated on who put them in, it's on what I think is best for the retail area," she said, adding she is currently working on getting a crosswalk installed across Beach Boulevard at Palmer Terrace and having other road amenities such as slower speed limits and possibly narrower roads put in the area to help make St. Nicholas Center more pedestrian friendly.

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# Trained for terrorism, K9 dogs “married” to trainers

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

For dogs trained to help combat terrorist attacks, the bond with their trainers is similar to a marriage, said TSA K9 trainer Donald “Bubba” Deason.

“When you are working with a dog you are working with an individual that can’t communicate with you. They know only what you teach them,” said Deason. “Your dog reads your behavior and you read their behavior. They detect your feelings. It goes up leash or down leash,” he said.

Deason and his black Labrador retriever, Balu, were one of two highly trained K9 teams that gave a special bomb-sniffing demonstration at the Kings Avenue Skyway Station Nov. 12.

The demonstration came about when the Jacksonville Transportation Authority partnered with the Transportation Security Administration to give media outlets an inside look at an enhanced security program with TSA’s Multi-Modal Explosive Detection K9 teams. The mission of the K9 teams is to conduct explosive screening in various transportation environments and to identify and mitigate potential criminal activity or terrorist threats.

Overseeing the demonstration were Colin Mulloy, Safety and Security Manager with JTA and Sari Koshetz, Public Affairs Coordinator with TSA.

Deason was joined by handler Tom Pomeroy and his yellow Labrador retriever, Bobby. The demonstration, which took place aboard both a Skyway train and a



Donald “Bubba” Deason and his black Lab, Balu

bus, showed how, through their exceptional sense of smell, the dogs could recognize a black canvas bag filled with explosive components when it was left on the floor of Skyway car and bus. Once the dog smelled the bag, it has been trained to sit quietly at the point of discovery and face its handler. After identifying the bag, the dog is given a toy to play with as a reward.

TSA K9 team dogs are trained at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas before being matched up with their handlers.

Deason and Balu, who live in Fernandina Beach, were named the top TSA K9 Team of the Year this year out of 1,000 teams across the country. Although two-year-old Balu has been lucky enough never to run across any hidden explosives, Deason said he and his dog were recognized for their relationship and the fact he scored 100 percent on his past two certifications. Deason was also credited with good work at Florida Gov. Rick Scott’s inauguration in February.

A K9 handler for 30 years, Deason, who formerly worked for the U.S. Customs Service, said in the past he and other dogs have discovered “all kinds of narcotics, but explosives, thankfully no.”

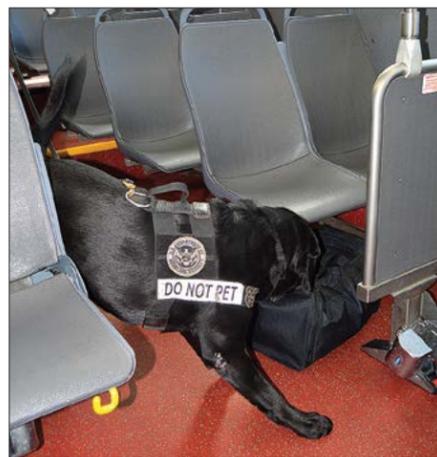
“I love my job. I’d never do anything else. I get to play with my dog all day,” he said, noting he has worked with Balu since 2013. The black Lab lives with

Deason full-time and is expected to work for eight to 10 years before retiring to continue to live with Deason as his pet.

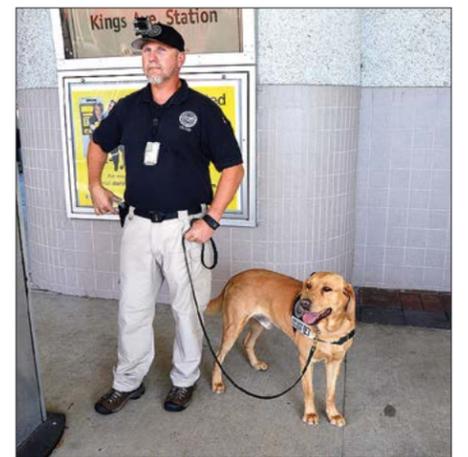
Meanwhile, Pomeroy, who lives in Southside, said he became a TSA K9 explosives specialist after retiring as a police officer with the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Department.

Unlike Balu, Bobby has discovered explosive components while on duty. During the Jacksonville Airshow at Naval Station Jacksonville last year, the yellow Lab sniffed some ammunition in a vehicle while he and Pomeroy performed vehicle checks at the base entrance.

“We found some ammo, but it was not anything malicious,” Pomeroy said, adding that the driver had forgotten the ammunition was in his toolbox as he tried to enter the naval base.



Balu, a black Lab trained to search for explosives, discovers a suspicious bag on a bus during a K9 security demonstration at the Kings Avenue Skyway station in San Marco Nov. 12.



TSA canine handler Tom Pomeroy and his dog, Bobby, are trained to seek out explosives aboard all forms of transportation. They gave a demonstration at the Kings Avenue Skyway Station Nov. 12.

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# Medical group spearheads assistance for growing Hispanic community

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

In an effort to improve and help Jacksonville's growing Hispanic community, Dr. Rene Pulido and his brother, Dr. Danny Pulido, of St. Nicholas brought together representatives from numerous organizations for a Hispanic-oriented meet-and-greet in what turned out to be a politically star-studded event at Emed Multispecialty Group in St. Nicholas Nov. 12.

The highlight of the evening was the bestowal of a new Beaches Habitat House on 22-year-old Hilda Torres deJesus of Atlantic Beach. The Pulidos, who head up the Northeast Florida Hispanic Medical Association joined Tomas Jimenez de la Cruz, president of the North Florida Hispanic Leadership Alliance, and District 13 Councilman Bill Gulliford by teaming up with Mary Anne Christiansen and Joyce Freeman of Beaches Habitat for Humanity to present deJesus with a new two-bedroom, two-bath townhouse in the OceanGate subdivision of Atlantic Beach. The group worked for a year and a half to assist in helping a Hispanic candidate be placed in a Beaches Habitat home, said Jimenez.

Torres deJesus, who is a native of Puerto Rico, works at the Ponte Inn and Club. She will be able to pick out flooring, countertops, cabinets and blinds for her

new abode, Christiansen said.

"We feel this is a wonderful opportunity to introduce a wonderful partnership with the Jacksonville Hispanic Community, and we look forward to exploring future opportunities to partner together," Christiansen said, noting Torres deJesus was a perfect candidate for the home in that she applied for the home, she holds a full-time job and will be able to afford living there.

"Hilda is a prime example of the kind of person we can serve," said Freeman. "She's a hard worker with a full-time job. She needed a place to live and this is a great opportunity for her to get into affordable housing at the beach."

During the event the group also announced efforts to spearhead a "get out the vote" drive," said Jimenez, as well as a new website, [comunidadjax.com](http://comunidadjax.com), it is offering the Hispanic community.

The purpose of the website is to assist the rapidly growing Hispanic community in Jacksonville by listing local Hispanic doctors, and other kinds of assistance offered by local Hispanic businessmen, such as translation, legal and transportation services.

Pulido who, with his brother, owns Emed Multispecialty Group in St. Nicholas, said the website is necessary because so many Hispanics are moving to Jacksonville from South Florida making Emed a fast-growing



Dr. Rene Pulido of the Northeast Florida Hispanic Medical Association, Mary Anne Christensen of Beaches Habitat for Humanity, Hilda Torres deJesus, Joyce Freeman of Beaches Habitat for Humanity, Dr. Danny Pulido of the Northeast Florida Hispanic Medical Association, Tomas Jimenez de la Cruz, president of the North Florida Hispanic Leadership Alliance

"beacon for the Hispanic community."

During the event, Emed also donated five bicycles, termed "cycles for change," to Urban Geoponics, a grassroots social, urban agricultural movement established to eliminate food deserts and to build better human beings through education and empowerment.

Organizations that were represented at the event included the First Coast Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hubbard House, the Mayor's Hispanic American Advisory Board, Norsan Media, the H.I.L.L. of Northeast Florida, the Florida Department of Health in Duval County, the Hispanic Health Council of Jacksonville, Eco-Latino, VITAS, Synovus Bank, Molina Healthcare, Florida Blue, Kindred

Healthcare, Univision Jax, UHC, Haven Hospice, Coventry Healthcare, Puerto Rican Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Novo Counseling, St. Vincent's Health Care, Everest University, the Office of the Property Appraiser, the YMCA, Mandarin Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Aetna Healthcare, CarePlus-Humana, Economy Dentures, 21st Century Oncology, SOS Projects, World Relief Organization, Clerk of Courts, and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

During the event, Jose Paredes, Vice President of Operations at Emed Multispecialty Group, announced the Northeast Florida Hispanic Medical Association is partnering with Hunger Fight to distribute 4,000 free meals to needy families in the Jacksonville area.

# Heavenly music greet guests at reception

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



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



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

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# Group aims to bring civility to region

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

It goes deeper than just being polite. It's civility, it's courtesy, it's a respect for others and for their boundaries.

"Civility is not just the Golden Rule. The idea of civility is what little kids imitate. If it's taught it's something that goes deeper and would help end bullying," said San Jose resident Suzanne Teate, a member of the American Civility Association (ACA).

To seek funds in its quest to raise awareness of the rising tide of anger, rude behaviors and bullying permeating society today, the American Civility Association held its Inaugural "Friend-Raiser" Nov. 10 at Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club in San Jose.

Carson Tinker, a long snapper for the Jacksonville Jaguars, was the special guest speaker. Tinker, who played college football for the University of Alabama, is author of *Season to Remember: Faith in the Midst of the Storm*, which details his experience in the 2011 Tuscaloosa tornado when his girlfriend was killed, as well as the 2011-12 Alabama national championship season. Tinker, who was accompanied by his wife, Annie, signed copies of his book during the event.

The American Civility Association has the goal to educate individuals and families about the dangers and repercussions of incivility. It seeks to become a national benevolent organization, which aims to demonstrate to American society "what can happen when we create environments where kindness and respect flourish," said ACA President Amy Barnett of San Marco.

"We want to become the Good Housekeeping Seal for civility; we want to be the authority of how to bring civility back," Barnett said. "We began with

children and now we are evolving into families as well."

A 501(c)(3) charity, ACA has created its first strategic plan to enable the organization to focus on the needs of its constituency: children and families. The association produces civility awareness and educational materials for young people from pre-kindergarten through high school as well as for teachers and school support staff. It supplies resource materials, teaching aids and training modules as well as volunteers to provide instruction within schools.

In just over three years, ACA has instituted pilot programs in three Florida counties – St. Johns, Clay and Polk – having educated more than 1,000 educators and impacting 7,000 students. As a result of the pilot programs, 40 percent of the students showed improvement in reading, and up to 80 percent demonstrated improved behavior, according to association literature.

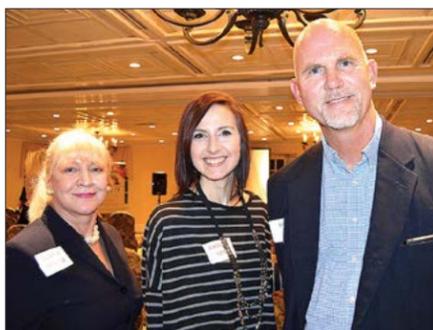
A pilot program in Duval County is underway as well on seven juvenile justice school campuses, and a bus safety program is in development.

"Rudeness leads to violence and rudeness is an epidemic," said Barnett. "Unlike cancer, where we are always looking for a cure, here we have a cure and we want to get the word out. Rudeness is a disease, and we have the cure – civility.

"Civility begins with thankfulness, then kindness, goodness and respect follow," Barnett continued. "There is brain science behind this. When you practice gratitude, you get rid of stress, anxiety and anger in your brain. They won't co-exist," she said. "When we practice thankfulness, it opens up the blood flow to the front of the brain and that's where learning, creativity and expansion happen and that means problem solving."



Suzanne Teate of San Jose, American Civility Association Board member Bill Barnett of San Marco with Janne Brandenburg of San Jose



Suzanne Berglind of Mandarin, Jeannette Yates of San Marco with Southside United Methodist Pastor Bruce Jones of Miramar



Jacksonville Jaguar's snapper Carson Tinker and his wife, Annie, with American Civility Association Board member Sarah Troup of San Marco



American Civility Association Board member Cynthia Williams of St. Johns County, American Civility Association President Amy Barnett of San Marco with American Civility Association Board member Barry Henry of San Jose



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# Seniors on a Mission celebrates decade of community service

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

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

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

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

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

Over the past 10 years, Seniors on a Mission has brought together over 850 senior adults through day-long "mission" trips. During these outings they accomplish team-oriented, community

service projects in partnership with other local nonprofit organizations throughout Jacksonville and the surrounding region.

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

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

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

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



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



Lakewood resident Ann Crenshaw repairs new clothes that have been damaged so they can be given away by Dignity U Wear during the Seniors on a Mission 10th Anniversary celebration Nov. 6 at Lakewood United Methodist Church.



Taylor Homes resident Sue Birks repairs some clothes during the Seniors on a Mission event at Lakewood United Methodist Church Nov. 6.



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# The Way We Were - Bill and Eleanor Coalson



Eleanor and Bill Coalson with Aristotle and Benji; Juan Miguel, Luisa and Lane; Kristine, Paul, Hannah and Emma

By Julie Kerns Garmendia  
Resident Community News

Only once in 41 years of living on Greenridge Road did Eleanor Coalson's husband suggest living elsewhere. He even went so far as to select a lot in Deercreek.

"Our home is perfect for us, and I love our street and neighborhood, so I told him he would have to move without me!" said Eleanor.

"I didn't want to live with the same kind of people in the same income bracket. I like living in a place where there are a variety of ideas," said the 76-year-old Eleanor. "All I need is a bed and a pretty, cozy room. We didn't need a mansion."

Needless to say, the Coalsons remained in Miramar, where they have spent 55 happy years of marriage.

Florence Eleanor Akin Coalson (who uses her middle name) was born to Paul Roy and Julie Akin, who lived on Talbot Avenue in Avondale and later on Almours Drive in San Jose. Eleanor attended Ruth Upson Elementary, John Gorrie Junior High and graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1957.

Eleanor met her husband, William "Bill" Lane Coalson, on a blind date when she was 16 years old.

Bill was born to William Columbus Coalson (W.C. or "Dub") and his wife, Hallie, at St. Vincent's Hospital. In 1934, his father had moved from Birmingham, Alabama to Jacksonville to work as the soda fountain manager for Lane Drug Store at Main and Forsyth Street. Later he opened Dodson's Restaurant at the corner of Bay and Main Street as well as a second location on Forsyth Street.

Bill grew up in Riverside on Herschel Street near West Riverside Elementary until he was seven years old when his family moved to Kelnepa Drive in Miramar. As a student at Hendricks Avenue Elementary, he served on the "boy patrol" with his longtime friends Ronald Gardner, now a retired cardiac surgeon residing in Hickory, North Carolina, and James Harrell, who at that time lived on River Road.

Bill also attended Landon Junior-Senior High School and was a member of the football, golf and swim teams. He recalled that in 1956, during his senior year, the football team held its awards' banquet

at Dodson's, a restaurant owned by his father, which was located on Forsyth Street near the Old Seminole Hotel.

Bill was getting ready to graduate from Landon when he was introduced to Eleanor Akin by Gardner's girlfriend, Camille Mallard. "My mother and father were going on a trip to Savannah and my sister was away at college. I was only 16 so I decided to spend the night at Camille's house," Eleanor said. "She had a boyfriend at Landon who asked Bill to go out on a blind date with me."

The couple enjoyed dinner at the elegant Le Chateau Restaurant in Atlantic Beach, attended a graduation dance and later saw an Audie Murphy movie at the St. Johns Theater, which was across the street from Dodson's.

Sometime after the date, Bill was hospitalized at Baptist with hepatitis, Eleanor said. "He got sick. When I didn't hear from him, I called the hospital from a pay phone at Lee High School to find out how he was doing. He was so impressed that a girl my age would call somebody she hardly knew. That sparked his interest," she said.

Bill and Gardner were classmates in college in Georgia. Bill played football and graduated in 1958 with an associate's degree in pre-dentistry. He later took classes at Jacksonville University, transferred to the University of Florida where he graduated with a degree in real estate in 1961.

Before Bill graduated, Eleanor and he were married in 1960 at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Riverside. Their first apartment was on Cedar Street in San Marco.

In college Bill had been a member of the U.S. Air Force ROTC. He completed flight officer training school in Amarillo, Texas from 1961-1962. He later was stationed in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and at the remote Northeast Cape Air Force Station on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska.

Before Bill returned home after his military service in 1963, Eleanor had rented a house on Inwood Terrace. They also lived in San Souci on Hirsch Avenue and at Woodlake Apartments on San Jose Boulevard before buying their 1936-vintage bungalow on Greenridge Road in 1975.

Bill's career as a successful eminent domain attorney specializing in appraisal

and real estate came after a variety of work experience. He first worked at First Guaranty Bank (now Center State) under bank president Julian Fant, Sr., then moved to a surveyor's assistant job with Max Garcia Surveying. He was also employed as a rigger at the shipyards and as a real estate appraiser with his father-in-law, Paul R. Akin of Akin & Coalson Appraisers & Realtors, before heading off to law school in the late 1960s.

Bill graduated from Florida State University School of Law in 1969. After working in the Public Defender's Office, Fidelity REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) mortgage investments on Riverside Avenue; W. Barnett Winston REIT on Gilmore Street and the Jacksonville General Counsel Office, he partnered with C. Ray Greene, Jr. and Thomas H. Greene in Greene, Greene & Coalson Law Practice in Gulf Life Tower. Ten years later, Coalson opened a solo law practice in San Jose. He retired in 2008 celebrating with a combined retirement/birthday party at San Jose Country Club.

Meanwhile, Eleanor enjoyed a career in education after attending Wesleyan College, Florida State University and graduating from Jacksonville University in 1970. She taught English at Jacksonville University for three years when it was located in a two-story red brick Riverside house across from The Row Restaurant.

"In 1938, when Jacksonville University was still in Riverside and struggled to stay open, my father helped rally the

community and raised money to keep it going, something I was very proud of," she said. "There are no records of this, but I know it's true because he told me so many times and it happened before I was born."

Eleanor taught second grade at Greenfield Elementary, but left for a brief period to teach at Grace Chapel before it was named San Jose Episcopal Elementary. Later she returned to Greenfield where she spent 26 years, retiring in 1998. "I wrote articles about teaching for the local newspapers because my heart is with the teaching profession and public education. I am deeply concerned about our public schools," she said.

In addition to teaching, Eleanor has published three children's books *Hannah & Emma Go To Chicago Via CSX*, which was inspired by a trip she took to Chicago with her granddaughters; *Simon Says Run*, a true story about a horse that was briefly lost during Hurricane Katrina; and *God's Colorful Respite*, a book written as a memorial to her late sister Virginia Elaine Akin Greene, who had married Bill's former law partner, Thomas H. Greene.

The Coalsons have been members of All Saints Episcopal Church since the early 1960s.

They have two sons: William Lane Coalson, Jr. of Tampa, and Paul Akin Coalson of Mandarin. William is married to Luisa, and Paul's wife is the former Kristine Skinner. They also have three grandchildren – stepgrandson Juan Miguel, and granddaughters Hannah, 18 and Emma, 14, of Mandarin.

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# Students use real-life criteria in urban planning competition

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

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

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

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

The students were placed into groups of five students. Each group was required to submit a portfolio that included pictures of its Legos plan, financial prospectus, vision statement and list of specific uses within their development. Two groups presented in each of two locations with a winner chosen from each location.

Altman was a member the winning team



David DeLeo, Kendall Sealey, J.F. Tullis from San Marco and Conor Chepenik of San Jose competed in the UrbanPlan contest at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville Oct. 29.

Prestige Worldwide LLC. Her teammates were Parker Dickson, Alexis Terkonda, Anish Mirjankar, and Taylor Hulsey.

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

“The winning teams were consistent in their ability to effectively communicate their vision for their development as well as effectively defending their uses

per the requests of the RFP (requests for proposal),” said Perry Walthour, an economics teacher at Episcopal.

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

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

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

## Jaguars lose championship to Cardinals

The Jaguars tackle football team, coached by Lenny Curry and Todd Osburn, won its playoff game against the Broncos, but lost the championship to the Cardinals. The teams of 9- and 10-year-old boys are part of the Venetia Athletic Club’s 2015 football league, which plays at Venetia Elementary School. The Jaguars, a Southside-based team, were thrilled to have Blake Bortles, the “real” Jaguars quarterback cheer them on during the championship game, held at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville.



Coach Lenny Curry, also Jacksonville’s mayor, huddles with the Jaguars, one of the teams in the Venetia Athletic Club. (Photo by Lori Magyar)



Front: Wesley Loveless, Carson Magyar, Ben Helton, Christian Shore, Luke Sheffield, Mason Terry; middle: Boyd Curry, Nicolas Driussi, Harper Osburn, Ethan Luker, Wyatt Jackson; back: Assistant Coach Nino Driussi, Coach Lenny Curry, Coach Todd Osburn, Assistant Coach Marty Terry (Photo by Lori Magyar)

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# Fun, learning go hand in hand in Think Tank

Learning and fun go together every day at San Jose Episcopal Day School, and now it's more fun than ever.

That's because Think Tank, a schoolwide enrichment program specifically designed around students' individual interests, provides unique, hands-on learning experiences at San Jose Episcopal Day School.

The smiles and excitement seen among the students has been the program's strongest measure of success, as every Thursday at 1:15 p.m. a bell sounds, signaling the start of Think Tank.

"You would think it was the last day of school," said Jenny Clarke, Director of Development and Marketing for San Jose Episcopal Day School. "The students are all so excited and can't wait until Thursdays."

Think Tank is based on a model developed by husband-wife team Dr. Joseph Renzulli and Dr. Sally Reis, of Connecticut, to bring high-end learning to all students, not just those identified as gifted or talented.

The enrichment program utilizes a software program to identify patterns and interests of students. Based on those findings, groups or "pods" are set up for different subjects. Students choose the three pods they find most interesting and are selected to work in one of their three choices.

"It really enables the school to let the students tap into their own given talents," said Clarke, who explained this program is currently used in a small percentage of schools across the country.

Clarke shared some examples of the pods that San Jose Episcopal Day School students are exploring.

The Science Behind Surfing combines science, creativity, practical knowledge and safety. Students actually design a surf board and learn about physics and the dynamics of a board. Students also create their own surf board brand and design a logo during this pod. A local company helps students make the fiberglass

and the finished product is auctioned off at the school's auction.

In Game Time students learn strategy and creativity by developing their own board game. They explore how board games challenge the mind and even plan a family board game night at the school.

Say Cheese enables students to learn about digital photography, drone photography, and photo editing. They also learn how to print and matte their own photos for display in a student gallery.

Older students in Kid Code Masters learn about different programming languages and create actual games for younger students to practice their math skills.

In Helping Hands students venture into the community to clean up trash, visit assisted living/nursing facilities and buy Christmas presents for those in need.

"The whole purpose behind this is to take things students are learning in the classroom and apply that to real world problems. It gives students

an opportunity to go as deep as they want or any direction that they want – all in the same pod," Clarke said.

The parents actually get something out of this, too, said Clarke. They receive an analysis of their child's interests and strengths that may help them identify possible career paths for them in the future.

"It's really about identifying talents the kids did not know they had. At San Jose Episcopal, we see each student as an individual and recognize that everybody has their own strengths and challenges. That is really the core of who we are, so this program really fits well with our Episcopal identity," said Lori Menger, Head of School.

San Jose Episcopal Day School is located at 7423 San Jose Blvd. Call Teresa Hall, Director of Admissions, at (904) 733-0352 to schedule a personal tour. Now accepting applications for the 2016-2017 school year.



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# Decades of love wrapped up in teaching

## Part 1

By Marcia Hodgson, Resident Community News



**Antoinette Jenkins**  
San Jose Elementary, 35 years

As the daughter of two Duval County principals, it comes as no surprise Antoinette Jenkins would seek a career in education. Her father was principal of William Raines High School in the 1970s, and as she grew older she spent a lot of time with the children at Beulah Beal Elementary School where her mother was principal. "I enjoyed working with young children, and I felt that I would be able to make a difference in their lives," she said. A teacher for 35 years, all at San Jose Elementary, Jenkins is an English Language Arts Inclusion teacher, and credits her fourth-grade teacher with inspiring her love of reading. "It was she who taught me

that through books, one is able to explore the world, its people and many other interesting avenues," Jenkins said. Jenkins earned a degree in Elementary Education from Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach and a master's degree in specific learning disabilities from Nova Southeastern University. Organization and preparation are essential to success in teaching, she said. "It is important to develop outstanding organizational skills from the moment you enter the classroom," said Jenkins. "The importance of being prepared each day cannot be overstated. I enjoy building a rapport with students and hopefully making a difference in their lives as they prepare for the future." Although she remembers many students, Jenkins said she developed a special bond with one little boy in her fifth-grade inclusion class. "He had some behavioral issues. Initially he was a very angry, sad little boy. In time I was able to gain his confidence and trust. Upon getting to know him, I learned he had lost both of his parents. I guess you could say he looked at me not only as his teacher but also as a mother figure. Because of this special bond, he made academic progress during that school year. He is now a senior in high school and continues to visit and contact me occasionally," she said.



**Sharon D. Thomas**  
Julia Landon College Preparatory and Leadership Development Middle School, 36 years

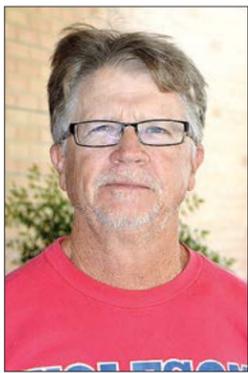
Teaching runs in Sharon D. Thomas's family. A Duval County teacher for 36 years, 23 at Julia Landon College Preparatory and Leadership Development Middle School, Thomas was inspired to become a teacher by her mother, Floreta Dismuke, who taught in Duval County for 27 years. Thomas is married to Coach Harrell R. Thomas, lead tennis pro and teacher at Southside Tennis Complex for the

past 29 years. The couple has passed the "teaching torch" to their daughter, Sharrell V. Thomas, who is in her first year of teaching at John Love Elementary School. Thomas, who is a graduate of Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU), teaches Exceptional Education Inclusion. "I have always had an interest in students with disabilities, whether they are students who are culturally and linguistically diverse, or students at-risk," she said, adding she also enjoys teaching gifted and academically talented students. "All children can learn no matter what type of disability or life circumstance makes that challenging, as long as they have drive, commitment," she said. Noah LaChance is one student that stands out in Thomas's mind over the years. Although LaChance had a rare lung disease, through perseverance and steadfastness he excelled over his difficulties. "My favorite part of teaching in middle school is to witness the students' growth over the course of three years. They mature over their time with us, and I see this time as quite a transformation in their adolescence," she said.

advanced to the University of Mississippi, where he earned his bachelor's degree before getting a teaching job back at his high school alma mater. "The students today are more diverse and of an overall lower social economic class compared to the students when I first started teaching," he said. "A lot of the students today are not from the neighborhood, they're from all over town." Farrar said he loves interacting with his students and advises new teachers to get involved with them, not only in the class room but also after school by coaching, sponsoring a club or some other educational activity.

A graduate of Samuel W. Wolfson High School, Coach Mark Farrar has spent a significant part of his life haunting its halls, first as a student and then in his 30-year tenure as a science and physical education teacher. "I became interested in PE because I always wanted to be a coach," Farrar explained. "I got out of college and tried to find a job in PE, but they were very hard to find. I went back to school and got a minor in science and found a job quickly and have been doing that ever since." After graduating from Wolfson, Farrar earned an Associate's degree from Florida Community College, Jacksonville, then

Over the years, Farrar, who coaches track and cross country, has trained many state champions including Conner Vaughn, this year's mile and two-mile winner, and Shannon Davis, 300-meter hurdles; Rod Owens, 110-meter and 300-hurdles; and Kenny Payne and Adrian Mann, both 300 hurdlers. "All of the kids were great kids, and I am lucky to have known them," he said. "A lot of these athletes I have had in my science classes over the years. As far as making a difference, I don't know, they say I did, but I always tell them, it's what you make of yourself, don't blame me for your success."



**MARK J. FARRAR**  
Samuel W. Wolfson High School, 30 years

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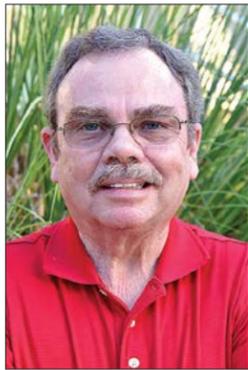
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**Michael Federico**

Hendricks Avenue Elementary School, 33 years

As far as Michael Federico is concerned, teaching is more than a paycheck.

Having been in the classroom 33 years, 28 of which have been at Hendricks Avenue Elementary, Federico believes teachers take on a high level of responsibility when they head into the classroom full-time.

“Prospective teachers should get as much teaching experience in the classroom before taking on the responsibility of becoming a full-time teacher,” said Federico, who is also an adjunct professor of reading at Florida State College Jacksonville. “It is my observation that teachers are in the classroom because it is a higher calling. For some teachers, teaching is a career. Regrettably, teaching for some is just a job that gives them a paycheck.”

Federico knows of what he speaks. He gave up a lucrative military career with the Florida Air National Guard to

become an elementary school instructor. “I took a considerable cut in pay the day I became a teacher,” he said. “Looking back through the rearview mirror, I am happy with my transition from military life to life in the classroom,” he said. “I became a teacher to serve. Teaching is exactly where God wanted me. My entire teaching career has been a special calling to serve students and their parents.”

Federico has worked for six different HAE principals and has taught every grade at Hendricks except for kindergarten and first grade. “Since I am not subject-centered like some educators, I take on any teaching assignment where my principal feels I am best needed.”

Currently a second-grade teacher, he has seen the student population balloon from 400 to 700 students. When he first came to HAE, the school accommodated kindergar-

ten through fourth grade, but several years later expanded to include fifth grade.

Hendricks now has a more multicultural and diverse student body, Federico said. “When I first started my teaching career at Hendricks, most of the mothers in the school did not work. As the years have passed, most Hendricks mothers are now in the workforce.”

When asked whether any particular student stands out in his mind during his years at Hendricks, Federico recalled Lorie Redfern, a quiet fifth grader whose father passed away while she was in his class. “I guess I somewhat became a father image for her,” he said. “I must have made a difference in Lorie’s life because she is now a dedicated Duval County elementary school teacher making a difference in the lives of many students.”



**Ace Martin**

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, 35 years

Playing the trumpet, performing, writing arrangements and teaching is in Ace Martin’s blood.

A music instructor at Douglas Anderson for 31 years, harmonious melody is perhaps part of Martin’s genetic make-up. His mother sang opera in college and his grandfather, a director of a drum and bugle corps band in Kentucky, made him learn standard bugle calls when he was 10 years old. From there Martin learned the cornet and trumpet, performing ever since both in school and for his living.

“I knew in junior high I wanted to play professionally and teach on a very high level,” said Martin. “It’s a goal I’ve had since I was 13 years old.”

After graduating from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Music Education,

Master’s in Music and certificate in trumpet performance, Martin began teaching 35 years ago, eventually switching to DA to head the Instrumental Music Department at the school’s inception 31 years ago.

Watching the growth of his students from freshman year until graduation is his favorite part of teaching, especially students who never believed they could achieve their goals, Martin said. “Plus, at Douglas Anderson, I have been able to create over the years some very creative performances and collaborations with all arts areas of the school for the students and general public (through Extravangza).”

To illustrate the kind of student progress he witnesses daily, Martin cites Barry Cooper, who played the trombone in a mediocre fashion when he started at DA as

a freshman. “Barry played trombone okay but always seemed to be slightly out of tune on his instrument,” Martin explained. Soon he realized Cooper’s note positions were slightly off and assigned him to the bass trombone instead. “What a transformation. The rest is history,” Martin said. Cooper eventually played with Count Basie and Duke Ellington and today is a member of the West Point Knight Big Band.

As Martin eyes retirement, he has a few words of advice for new teachers starting out. “Pick the brains of seasoned teachers and be creative in the presentation of material and your knowledge of subject matter,” he said. “Nothing can substitute learning from those with experience. Ask questions of those people so you can get better at your craft quicker.”



**David Holley**

Alfred I. duPont Middle School, 32 years

Science teacher David Holley, 57, has spent more than half of his life at Alfred I. duPont Middle School. A former San Jose resident, Holley attended duPont Middle for three years as a student and later returned as a teacher after graduating from college.

“It was interesting to come back as a teacher,” Holley said, noting how awkward it was at first to teach alongside his former junior high instructors. “Many of my former teachers were still here. I didn’t know whether to call them by their first names or their last names.”

As duPont Middle makes a transition from neighborhood school to a magnet for international business and world

languages, Holley, who earned a degree in animal science from Clemson and a Masters of Education from the University of North Florida, continues to teach integrated science courses, which combine life sciences, physics and chemistry.

The school in San Jose has changed dramatically from when Holley was a student. Class sizes are smaller, making teaching more manageable. Students at the school speak more than 20 different languages, and the new dual-language curriculum should help give students a more “global” sense of the world, he said. “It’s not just English anymore.”

“When I first came back as a teacher we

had electives,” he said adding that shop, home economics, band and field trips are no longer in the curriculum. “For the kids, it was more fun to come to school.”

Social media is a big influence in the classroom, he said, noting students are now asked to do more work online. Holley said he hopes a more challenging curriculum and the introduction of school uniforms at duPont will help students concentrate more on academics than their appearance. “Education is important. If you can get educated, you can do anything. An education is the key to going anywhere in life. It’s a big stepping stone to what you want to do.”

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