

**A heart for children  
strengthens the future**

Public schools get special  
boost from local groups.  
Turn to page 34.



**Neighborhood love affair**

Generations with roots in historic districts share  
why they never leave. Turn to page 42.

Lell Pinkston Burpee on Hedrick Street in 1952



**CONTEST  
WINNER**

★★★★

Sarah Henderson, of  
5 Points, captured  
why she loves her  
neighborhood with this  
stunning photo. For  
more contest winners,  
turn to page 54.



**Resident**  
*Community News*  
Riverside — Avondale — Ortega — Murray Hill

[www.ResidentNews.net](http://www.ResidentNews.net)

Fiercely Local News ... Fiercely Loyal Readers

February 2016, Vol. 9, Issue 2



Brooke and Fernando Acosta-Rua. Fernando is a former Board Chairman and a current Foundation Board Member.

**Community Hospice  
recognized Guardians of Light**

The Community Hospice Foundation brought top philanthropists together to thank the group of top givers in late January. The event was held on the Florida Blue Deerwood Campus Jan. 28.

**‘Not rain...tears of joy’ for dog park groundbreaking**

By Kate A. Hallock, Resident Community News

Officials from Riverside Avondale Preservation, the City of Jacksonville and key donors gathered in a light rain under the canopy of I-95 to formally kick off construction of the John Gorrie Dog Park at Riverside Park, a new off-leash dog park in 5 Points.

Speaking at the Jan. 22 groundbreaking were RAP Executive Director Carmen Godwin, Dog Park Committee Chairman Trey Csar, City Councilman Jim Love, and philanthropist Delores Barr Weaver, who gave a \$50,000 match donation on behalf of the John Gorrie Investment Group.

Continue reading on page 6



Carmen Godwin,  
Trey Csar, Delores  
Barr Weaver

**AT A GLANCE:**

- Neighbors rally to put brakes on Oak Street restaurant...page 5
- Local Middle Eastern residents share thoughts on refugee crisis...page 11
- Excessive speed on US 17/Roosevelt Boulevard claims two lives...page 13
- Brrr! Hemming Park celebration frozen out by cold weather...page 16

**Blue barks bring attention to urban forests**

Residents may wonder why more than 100 trees in Jacksonville are wearing coats of blue on trunks and limbs. For more on what Greenscape is up to, turn to page 25.



Front: Joe Anderson, Adele Dimopoulos, Anna Dooley, Carol Worsham, Bob Chabot, Mike Robinson. Back: Konstantin Dimopoulos, Susan Caven, Jennifer King, Jason Worley, Becky Henson

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IN HOMES BY JANUARY 5TH, 2016

# Publishers' Note

## A Love Story of Our Own...

It's been almost 10 years since we moved to the Riverside-Avondale neighborhood from the beach. We had fallen in love with our new home, a place surrounded by trees with a small creek running the entire edge of the property. But the attraction was greater than a single house. It was the neighborhood that drew us in with its rich history, homes with varying architectural styles, quaint boutiques, restaurants and the tributaries of the mighty St. Johns River. We were sold, and we were here to stay.

One day, as the two of us walked along the shady streets near our home, it came to us to start a community newspaper, one we hoped would shine a light on great ideas, fascinating people, and become a vehicle to bring neighbors closer together.

Over the years, *The Resident Community News Group* has grown to two editions covering historic neighborhoods on both sides of the St. Johns River, and we're proud to deliver the news each month. We also added two new magazines this past year, a Newcomer's Guide titled *Historic Life-Neighbors and Newcomers Edition* and a citywide nonprofit and social magazine that highlights philanthropy in our city titled *Circles-Social Datebook & Charity Register*.

Our work has become a labor of love, one that allows us to continue learning about the families, organizations, business owners, elected officials, cultural institutions and countless nonprofits that are so instrumental in bettering the community's quality of life. In the effort to deliver "fiercely local news", our love for Jacksonville has deepened and the thrill of its continued prosperity and growth has grown. We're grateful to be able to provide publications that bolster our highly regarded, sought-after historic neighborhoods and amplify their collective voice.

In *The Resident* this month, you will read about neighbors who have such a fondness for the area that they wouldn't consider anywhere else to live. Some have had descendants before them pave the way and others have laid down roots of their own. The common thread is that they all find our neighborhoods to be a great place to call home.

Also this month, we received a strong response from readers for our Valentine's Day contest. We appreciate the many readers who took the time to express the love they have for our community in words and photographs, we share some of their entries on the pages of this issue.

Happy Valentine's Day,

*Pamela and Seth Williams*  
Publishers

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**A** It sounds like Riverside or Avondale is the spot for you. There are several great condo buildings in the Riverside area. Broadview Terrace, Broadview Towers, Park Plaza and the Park Lane are a few good ones. In Avondale, you might consider Beau Rivage. I just sold #902 at Broadview Terrace and #1B at the Park Lane in December and have another unit at Broadview Towers under contract. Condos are a hot commodity right now and inventory is low. Prices have spiked up over the last two years and the projection is that they will continue to climb. If you're considering this option, I recommend you act right away.

Email your questions to [steilberg@comcast.net](mailto:steilberg@comcast.net)



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## Letter to the Publisher

I just wanted to send word of appreciation for the papers you are publishing. I read both editions, as I have property in both areas, and find news in each that I cannot find in any other local media. For instance, your recent stories on the upcoming developments on the Southbank, the Skyway, and the removal of the Lady St. John were in-depth, well-written, and for the most part not even mentioned in the Times-Union.

Thank you for offering a valuable resource for our community.

John Ragsdale  
Southbank



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**REDUCED**

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**SOLD**

12205 GOVERNORS DR W  
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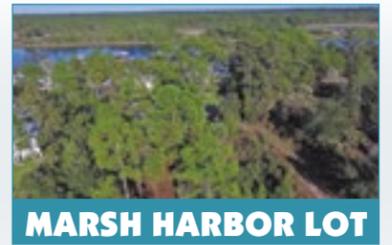
**SOLD**

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Orange Park remodeled brick 3/2, 1589sf



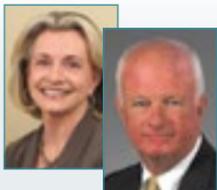
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## Letter to the Editor

### Riverside resident supports new restaurant on Oak Street

I recently read the article in the December edition about the development of the planned laundry center to a restaurant/bar called The Roost. I am a long-time resident of Riverside (1996) and fully support this development. Presently, the structure is in complete disrepair with compromised roofing and has been vacant for the better part of a decade. The residents surrounding the area should count themselves lucky to have found an investor willing to make the large financial commitment to launch the project. In order to attract the investment dollars necessary to make such a project profitable, the project will need to meet some economy of scale that exceeds the present zoning restrictions and from what I see, the investor is applying for the variances allowed by the law to request changes in the existent zoning. The high investment required should indicate that this project is a higher-end project targeting more upper-end clientele. This should be very good for the neighborhood.

I lived for eight years on Oak Street and the lack of a close-by entertainment option frustrated me. I moved four blocks away closer to such pedestrian entertainment near King Street. I have asked many friends and acquaintances about their support of the project and they overwhelmingly support it. In fact, I find it completely baffling why the neighborhood would favor a dilapidated vacant property in place of the proposed project. Vacants attract activities that are far more nefarious than the nuisances associated with a pedestrian entertainment venue. Such venues generally attract interest to the area and increase the property values of adjacent properties.

The SOS (Save Oak Street) group have rallied against the existing businesses including the Snap Fitness gym next to the proposed project. I cannot understand what business would satisfy the very vocal opposition to this project if they oppose both gyms and restaurant/bars.

To present the area of Oak Street as 'residential' is a bit disingenuous too. This block of Oak Street has businesses that outnumber residences. Adjacent blocks include the Publix shopping center and St. Vincent's parking lots. So rather than worry about the project eroding property values, it is more likely that values will increase if marketed to attorneys or doctors who would welcome a presence in a vibrant area of Jacksonville alongside the many other professional offices on the street.

I would welcome this kind of large-dollar investment to bolster value, to bring in greater tax revenues to the entire City of Jacksonville rather than being the present blight that exists at this location today.

*Kevin Morris*  
Riverside

### Should The Roost rest on Oak Street? Residents weigh in.

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

A new 150-seat restaurant is being proposed for the old Deluxe Cleaners building on Oak Street in Riverside. Would you support the addition of a new restaurant in this area of the Historic District, or do you think it is out of character to add a restaurant to this neighborhood location?



I think it's wonderful. I think it's good to have more restaurants in the area. There are a lot of cute little retail shops around there and a restaurant would be a nice addition.

**Calli Marie, Murray Hill**



I think that's probably a good idea. Older areas are adding restaurants because it's a walkable area. As long as they keep it in the character of the surrounding buildings.

**Pauline Rosenberg, Avondale**



A 150-seat restaurant is too much for the Historic District, especially if it is a chain. I think it will damage the looks of the place, the origin and the antiquity of it.

**Pjerin Logoreci, Avondale**



I think it's a good thing. We've seen a lot of good come out of these areas. It revitalizes these areas. We've seen it do good things for Edgewood Avenue and on King Street.

**Nick Patterson, Murray Hill**



I don't think food can ever be a bad idea, but parking again is always a struggle. Even in the daytime that area there has so much traffic and it is hard to navigate the roads as it is. A new restaurant opening will attract a large crowd regardless of the kind of restaurant it is.

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# Proposed restaurant faces strong opposition

## Despite concessions, local group readies offensive

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

If the proverbial kitchen heat wasn't something that local developers J.C. Demetree and Ted Stein weren't willing to withstand, they wouldn't be moving forward with plans to develop a restaurant on Oak Street in the Riverside area of the historic districts.

Less than 12 weeks following submission of the application for The Roost – one that requires a zoning exception, as filed in the Planned Unit Development (PUD) by Steve Diebenow of Driver, McAfee, Peek & Hawthorne – the Land Use and Zoning Committee introduced [Bill 2016-55] on Jan. 12 to City Council.

Despite the forward motion of the developers' legal representation, a local, passionate opposition group continues to battle development of the proposed 150-seat restaurant on the site of the former Deluxe Dry Cleaner and Launderette.

Addressing one concern, Positive Riverside Optimized Urban Development (PROUD) has sent a five-page letter to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in Tallahassee about remediation of the site to prevent potential spread of dry cleaning contamination around the site during construction.

### Soil contamination questioned

At an informational meeting open to the community on Jan. 20 at Willow Branch Library, PROUD founder Kevin Pettway addressed concerns about groundwater pollution from the former dry cleaning company, which began operating in 1927. Although the site was placed on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Dry Cleaner Program in December 1996, the remediation is still in question.

Adjacent property owners had expressed concerns about soil contamination at a Nov. 12, 2015 community meeting with The Roost developers. The property is number 1,350 out of 1,400 dry cleaning sites ranked in Florida for remediation, according to Diebenow, attorney representing the property owner, Anthony Saleeba, and the developers, Demetree and Stein.

But PROUD believes the low priority for remediation is not reflective of the present or future uses of the property.

"We sent a letter to the Florida DEP. They have responded and have started an investigation," said Pettway, who has lived for more than 17 years across the street from the proposed development. "They have set the 14th of next month (February) as the deadline to have a formal response."

The letter, sent to Jon Severson, Florida DEP Secretary, requests the development of the property include remediation of soil and groundwater and asked the FDEP to "immediately conduct a long-awaited site characterization to identify the extent of offsite contamination." PROUD also requested copies of documentation relating to the dry cleaning facility's acceptance into the cleanup program in 1996.

*The Resident* reached out directly to Saleeba for comment on the property regarding waste remediation, but calls were not returned.

### 'Sounds like a great idea'

To learn about the efforts opposing The Roost, about two dozen Riverside residents attended the informational meeting where Pettway provided an update on the application.

"The only concession the developers made was to change weekend closing hours from 2 a.m. to midnight with a rider allowing them to change the hours back at their discretion," said Pettway.

Some residents attending the meeting did not live in the immediate area around the former dry cleaner, but were there to get a better understanding of the opposition to a new restaurant in Riverside.

"I hear comments from people who are not directly surrounding this parcel that a restaurant doesn't sound like such a bad idea," said Fred Pope, who lives two lots down from the project site. "People forget, if you're four blocks away and not affected by what's happening around the restaurant, then yeah, it sounds like a great idea, but when you consider the people who have to live with it on a daily basis, then it's a problem."

### Informal traffic study

Since the application was filed Oct. 28, 2015, PROUD has not been idle. Members

have canvassed the neighborhood for petitions against the proposed PUD, created a petition on change.org opposing the development, and conducted an informal traffic study.

In an effort to determine the effect increased traffic may have on the neighborhood, especially the length of Oak Street from Stockton Street to Margaret Street, PROUD members counted vehicles during rush hour times for a period of a few weeks.

"There are, on average, 478 vehicles heading into town each morning," said Roxanne Henkle, who lives across the street from the proposed restaurant. "In the evening, it's not as concentrated, but there are around 300."

A study supplied by the Institute of Transportation Engineers enabled PROUD to estimate the restaurant could generate an additional 750 trips a day in that corridor, according to Pope, but no official traffic engineering studies have yet been conducted. "We're looking at possibly more than 1,000 vehicle trips each day on this block," he said.

The group has also contacted or met with City Council members, contacted the Florida Department of Environmental

***"The only concession the developers made was to change weekend closing hours from 2 a.m. to midnight with a rider allowing them to change the hours back at their discretion."***

— Kevin Pettway, Oak Street resident, PROUD founder

Protection, and gave a presentation to CPAC (Citizen Planning Advisory Committees) District 5.

### Next steps

A private meeting was held Jan. 28 by Councilman Love between PROUD, RAP and the developers to see if an accommodation could be reached, but the outcome of that meeting was not available as of press time.

"In the end, our position is pretty straightforward. The development is noncompliant with our basic zoning, it is noncompliant with our historic residential overlay, it is noncompliant with our city's comprehensive plan, it is far too intensive a use for a residential neighborhood, and the parking would further tax an already stressed area," said Pettway. "Also, allowing this PUD sets up a very dangerous precedent for our community, making further development a very real likelihood. It is simply the wrong place."

Currently, Bill 2016-55 is slated to be heard by the Planning Commission on Feb. 4, however, Pettway said according to the office of Councilman Love it will most likely be deferred due to issues with the PUD.

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# Pavement glitch hampers Overland Bridge lane opening

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Since the Florida Department of Transportation opened new northbound lanes along I-95's Overland Bridge Jan. 11, it's been smooth sailing for motorists – with one minor glitch.

FDOT finished the newly built lanes Sunday night, Jan. 10, only to find at 3 a.m. Monday morning, when the road was opened to traffic, the pavement started to crumble in the far right lane on I-95 near the ramps leading to the Acosta and Main Street bridges. Conditions quickly became unsafe once motorists began to drive on it, said FDOT spokesman Ron Tittle.

"It was an asphalt issue," explained Tittle, noting that the problem was a "material failure."

To remedy the trouble, FDOT immediately closed the two far right lanes of I-95 in order to remove the faulty pavement and replace the asphalt. Workers started to pour new blacktop late the morning Monday, Jan. 11, Tittle said, adding the two lanes continued to be closed until late Monday afternoon while repairs were made.

As only one lane was open to serve all northbound traffic, traffic moved slowly through a bottleneck as it headed toward the Fuller Warren Bridge, said Tittle, who also stated FDOT is in the process of researching the reason for the asphalt failure.

FDOT instituted the major traffic shift on the I-95 Overland Bridge project during the weekend of Jan. 8-10. Northbound traffic moved to new lanes. The Main Street and Acosta Bridge ramps were temporarily closed and detours were put in place for Atlantic Boulevard and Philips Highway motorists.

By Jan. 11, just before morning rush hour, all lanes going northbound from the San Diego Road overpass to just south of the Fuller Warren Bridge were shifted to a new roadway in order for the existing bridge to be reconstructed. Signs



Florida Department of Transportation workers repair the asphalt in the northbound lane of Interstate 95 Overland Bridge Replacement Project Jan. 11.

directed traffic onto the new roadway, which will ultimately be used as a local service road that will allow traffic to enter and exit I-95 in short segments, rather than mix with I-95 thru-traffic.

At no time was I-95 traffic detoured off the interstate. There was no change for Southbound I-95 traffic, however, the southbound traffic pattern is scheduled to be switched to new lanes this spring.

The speed limit for both north and southbound traffic remains at 45 mph.

The lane shift removes all traffic from the northbound I-95 Overland Bridge so that it can be replaced. The original structure was built in the 1950s and designed for substantially less traffic than it accommodates today. The road closure allows traffic to be removed from the older structure and reduces the impact on motorists

caused by routine maintenance on the existing northbound Overland Bridge.

The traffic shift is another milestone toward the completion of the project, which is scheduled for completion in late 2016.

For up-to-date lane closure information see [www.I95overlandbridge.com](http://www.I95overlandbridge.com). A project hotline has been established at (904) 491-2110, to answer questions and concerns from the public.

## Dog Park Groundbreaking

FROM PAGE 1

In her remarks, Weaver said she and her husband, Wayne, initially came to Jacksonville 22 years ago because it was the home of the Jaguars, but stayed here because they love the city. The Weavers, former owners of the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars, settled in Riverside.

"We love the people of Jacksonville, so whatever we can do to help, have done, will do, or hope to do, is all because of you right here," said Weaver. "It is not raining now. This is tears of joy from all our four-legged friends who are 'up there.'"

The John Gorrie Dog Park – funded by more than \$150,000 in private funds, including a \$30,000 gift from the Elizabeth Brown Foundation, and \$150,000 from the City – culminates a nearly three-year effort by community supporters.

**"One of the things that makes me really proud to be a resident here is when the community comes together."**

— Trey Csar

"Today is a symbol of a whole lot of dedication and hard work by a whole lot of people for several years," said Godwin. "If you look at this space, it has been an unused, unsafe, unsightly storage space for FDOT for years and now it will be incorporated into Riverside Park to become a place that makes our neighborhood really vibrant and amazing."

The dog park will be located on the northeast corner of Riverside Park, and re-uses land formerly designated as a construction equipment storage yard for the Florida Department of Transportation.

"One of the things that makes me really proud to be a resident here is when the community comes together," said Csar, who moved to Riverside six years ago with his family. "This is a great example of what happens when community works. This is a labor of love."

When complete, the 1.5-acre park will consist of separate areas for large-breed and small-breed dogs, featuring decomposed granite ground cover, significant old-growth tree coverage, water fountains and bench seating. The project, by Hager Construction Company, is expected to take one to two months, leading to a park opening in March, hopefully on a sunny Saturday, said Csar.

"There are so many dog lovers here who are waiting for this amenity," said Godwin. "Dog parks are a great place for dogs to get exercise and socialization they need to be healthy. It's a great place for people to socialize too."

Godwin also stated, as part of the negotiations, FDOT will remove the retention ponds all the way to the Riverside Arts Market, and that space will become public space. "You will be able to walk, bike, run from downtown to the dog park here," she said. "That will be amazing for our neighborhood and for the city as a whole."





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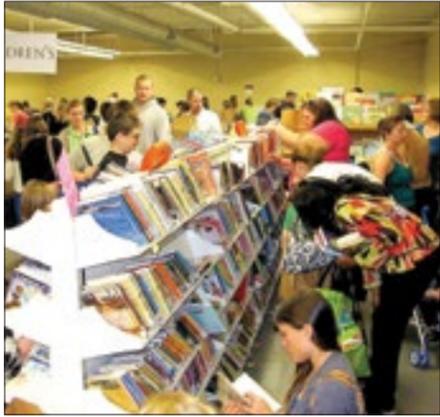
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## Support libraries, buy books at two-day sale



The Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library are planning a two-day book sale, offering a free bag of books for every purchase of two bags.

The sale hours are Saturday, Feb. 20, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 21, noon to 5 p.m. Bags are provided and can be filled for \$15 each with books, music CDs, DVDs and books on CD at the University Park Library, 3435 University Blvd. N.

There will be unannounced special deals offered, according to David Wells, book sale manager. "Come early to get the best selection," said Wells. "It's fun watching customers fill their bags with great bargains."

For more information, visit [www.fjpl.org](http://www.fjpl.org).

## Murray Hill library re-opens after water damage repairs

### Friends of Murray Hill Library in sixth year as advocates

By *Kate A. Hallock*  
*Resident Community News*

Little more than a month after the Murray Hill Library suspended service Dec. 14, 2015 for repairs, the branch library re-opened for service Jan. 19. The library, located at 918 Edgewood Ave. S., closed after it sustained interior flooding and other damage due to a main water line break, which leaked through the foundation into the building near the restrooms on the west side of the structure.

Although no books were damaged, some computer equipment was replaced as a result of the leak. A window broken during the clean-up was also replaced.

"The plumbing has been repaired, the carpet is dry, computer network cables were replaced (the conduits through which they ran collected some moisture), and dehumidifiers were brought in to remove any and all residual moisture," stated Chris Boivin, assistant director of community relations and marketing for the Jacksonville Public Library. "Once all of that was completed, an air quality test was performed and the branch passed with flying colors."

During the five-week repair, customers were directed to visit the Willow Branch Library, which re-opened Nov. 7 after a 13-month closure while undergoing window restoration, water damage repairs and repainting throughout.

### Library supporters to hold annual meeting

The Friends of the Murray Hill Library will hold its annual Members Meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 16, at the Maple Street

Biscuit Company, 1171 Edgewood Blvd. South in Murray Hill.

Social time will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting underway at 7 p.m. This is an opportunity to hear from prominent library advocates, learn about what's planned for 2016, review last year's accomplishments, and renew memberships.

The Friends of the Murray Hill Library was formed in 2010 after a budget crisis almost shut the library down. The hours at the Murray Hill Library had been reduced to 20 hours per week and closure appeared imminent for the historic library which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in two years, according to Judy Klein, treasurer for the Friends of Murray Hill Library board of directors.

A group of concerned Murray Hill residents, as well as others from surrounding neighborhoods, got together determined to save the library. "One of those involved was local lawyer Bill Brinton, who currently serves as president of the board. Bill's father, Harry Brinton, was director of the Jacksonville Library System in 1968 when the Murray Hill Library was built," said Klein.

The library's prominent location on the Edgewood Avenue business corridor in Murray Hill makes it a vital part of the health of the Murray Hill business district as well as satisfying a need for computer access and children's services in one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Jacksonville.

The mission of the Friends group is to promote education and a higher quality of life through a strong library system, advocate for neighborhood libraries, strengthen support of the Murray Hill branch, and ensure that the Murray Hill branch library is open to all seven days a week. Through its advocacy efforts, the Friends of the Murray Hill Library aim to reach beyond its Murray Hill borders to help support and strengthen the entire Jacksonville Library System.

## 2016 grant applications available from The Community Foundation

Applications for grants through The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida are now available for early childhood and for the arts.

Nonprofit organizations in Duval County which, through work with parents and caregivers, promote the growth of creative and efficient services to at-risk children under the age of six may apply for grants of \$2,500 to \$10,000. Applications are due by April 11 for grants beginning August 1, 2016.

Individual artists pursuing the next step in their artistic development may apply for grants of up to \$3,500. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age, and reside in Duval, Clay, Nassau, St. Johns or Baker County. Applications are due by April 4 for grants beginning August 1, 2016.

Grants up to \$5,000 are available for small arts organizations interested in professional development and capacity building. Applications are due by Feb. 25 for grants beginning May 15, 2016.

Applications are available at [www.jaxcf.org/apply](http://www.jaxcf.org/apply).

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# JEA tree trimming crews start process in historic district

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

The JEA began its regular maintenance tree trimming last month in the Riverside/Avondale Historic District. Beginning in the Fishweir Creek area on Parrish Place, the crews will proceed north to Day Avenue at McDuff, then move east to the river, targeting 24 streets. The entire process will take about two months, as part of a 30-month trimming cycle.

At the onset of the last trimming cycle in 2014, residents objected to lack of notification prior to the project and lack of supervision by a qualified arborist or forester, noted Paul Bremer, a Riverside Avondale Preservation Neighborhood Watch coordinator. The trimming cycle was stopped until JEA and RAP came to an agreement about how power-line trimming should be done in the Historic District.

After a series of meetings and workshops, mutual agreement on standards and protocols for the cyclical trimming around the power lines in the neighborhoods was achieved.

“Right now we have a great relationship, we meet with them quarterly to review the upcoming projects,” said Carmen Godwin, RAP executive director. “In December they drove four of us around the neighborhood, stopped in spots to point out areas with an issue. They are thinking ahead about the issues we’re going to have and how to address them. I don’t know how we can ask for better results.”

**“We look at tree trimming as an art ...our job is to maximize the benefits of the tree canopy and minimize the liabilities.”**

— Joe Anderson,  
JEA Urban Arborist

The process includes supervision by certified arborists on each crew, careful directional trimming rather than “clearance” trimming, special selection and training of crews working in the district.

“We look at tree trimming as an art,” said Joe Anderson, JEA Urban Arborist. “Our job is to maximize the benefits of the tree canopy and minimize the liabilities.”

Anderson said the JEA also looks for the right places to have trees planted to minimize the effects of future utility trims. “Partnerships with organizations like Greenscape and Green ReLeaf help us with the planning and the communication,” said Anderson.

All residents are notified by mail before trimming is started and door hanger notification to any resident of tree trimming in front of their house.

Although Godwin is happy with the relationship forged with JEA from concerns



In the buckets, Jordan Elder, Billy Fox, Brian Vandergriff and Jerry Young trim trees along Boone Park on Herschel Street under the supervision of arborists John Felker and Steve Harrison.

during the previous trimming cycle, she feels that the residents should remain vigilant.

“The tree trimming issue can never be laid to rest,” she said. “We’re always going to be dealing with trees because we care about trees in this neighborhood.”

The JEA asks that you not engage the crews directly as they are doing extremely dangerous work around high voltage wires

and should not be distracted, Bremer said in a recent Neighborhood Watch communication. “If you watch them work you will see how carefully and methodically they work. Safety is the primary concern,” he said.

If you have a concern or comment about the tree crews’ work, call JEA’s Tree Line at (904) 665-6050, or email jeatreecare@jea.com.



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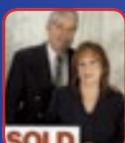
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# St. Johns Quarter gets new zoning

## Bill will protect residential character

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

In what appears to be a pre-emptive strike against future intense commercial development of the area known as St. John's Quarter, owners of 57 properties in a 10.47 acre portion of Riverside received approval for rezoning.

Following the July 2015 enactment of Bill 2015-338, which introduced a new zoning district to the City of Jacksonville Zoning Code, District 14 Councilman Jim Love introduced Bill 2015-737 to City Council on Oct. 27, 2015 specifically for the purpose of rezoning a small portion of Riverside. The bill was approved City Council on Jan. 26, 2016.

The change to the Zoning Code was proposed last year by property owners in the St. John's Quarter to return historically residential character areas to Residential Office usage.

The intent of the rezoning from CRO (Commercial Residential Office) to RO (Residential Office) is to protect the residential character of this historic neigh-

borhood within the Riverside area, and prevent the intrusion of generally more intense commercial uses present in nearby retail areas such as Historic 5 Points, Riverside Avenue, Oak Street, and Park Street, according to the Planning and Development Department staff report.

"This little piece of paradise needs to be saved," said John Hurtubise, a property owner in the St. John's Quarter. "This is the most spectacular part of the river; it should be protected."

Hurtubise said CRO zoning was applied in the 1980s to accommodate St. Vincent's Medical Center and the area began trending toward what he described as "institutional."

"CRO is a slow death for a neighborhood," he said. "It's not favorable zoning for the long-term viability in an historic district."

### Push to take back district began decades ago

The fight began in the 1990s when a group of property owners first opposed the development of a nursing home on Riverside Avenue and then battled the conversion of an old home into a medical building.

"In 1993, the Florida Retina Institute was going to put in a high volume clinic, and we had to fight this as a neighborhood," Hurtubise said. "Now at least when you say 'residential' it will prevent large institutions from coming in here."

After getting a residential buffer from the city, Stockton Street became the dividing line between commercial development and what is now the St. John's Quarter. The Quarter was named by the late Jerry Spinks, who 20 years ago helped put into place a restriction that prevent-



Alexandra Deas, John Hurtubise and Joanne Purdie toast the approval of Bill 2015-737, which protects the historic St. John's Quarter from commercial development.

ed residential buildings from becoming commercial, according to Hurtubise.

"Jerry was one of the most magnificent people. He said we need to do something that makes this a special area, and he came up with the name," said Hurtubise.

"The city basically gave us a residential buffer and forced everything [commercial] to go up and down Stockton Street," said Joanne Purdie, who lives on St. Johns Avenue. "Our old zoning in 1989 was RMOI (residential multi-family office and institution), then got converted into CRO. This brings the "R" back for residential office," said Purdie.

William Deas has operated a law firm in the St. John's Quarter since the 1980s, and his daughter, Alexandra Deas, is an attorney in the firm as well. She was part of the small group who helped push the rezoning.

"The character of the neighborhood is so important, and we need to preserve it. The goal is to limit incompatible uses,"

she said. "It's such a small, special neighborhood, and we have to do everything we can to protect it."

Nearly a year ago Hurtubise, Purdie and Deas approached Councilman Love about rezoning this specific riverfront area, then the plan morphed into something more encompassing.

"Susan Grandin [of the Office of General Counsel] wanted to develop something that could be used all over the city," said Purdie. "And then after that [Bill 2015-338] passed, we applied for our own RO zoning."

Hurtubise spearheaded the movement to get Bill 2015-737 introduced, and went to each of the 57 properties in the St. John's Quarter, garnering 87 percent in support. Those who did not respond were primarily non-local landlords.

"The message is getting driven downtown," said Hurtubise. "From all the battles, we learned that as an individual or a group you can make things happen."

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# Syrian Refugees – The Conversation

*Community comes together to listen, learn, ask questions*

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News



Sabeen Perwaiz organized a community conversation about the Syrian refugee crisis. (Photo by Tiffany Manning)

The highly charged issue of immigration policies makes it a challenge for residents with ties to the Middle East to safely to express their concerns. Sabeen Perwaiz, a Pakistani immigrant, decided to organize Coming Together: A Conversation about Syrian Refugees to provide a safe place for residents of Middle Eastern descent to share their experiences and address concerns.

“I know the people of this city are capable of more and I want to provide them a safe space for this conversation. This way people could address their concerns and work off of facts rather than their fears,” she said. “And I think that occurred, based on the responses I have been receiving and the number of people that either tuned in or showed up that night.”

Riverside Presbyterian Church was one of five churches across the city that Perwaiz asked to host the event. “They were the only ones that came back and said yes,” she stated.

At the public forum on Jan. 7, the Rev. Bill Hoff, associate pastor of family and youth at Riverside Presbyterian, welcomed a standing-room only audience of nearly 200, plus another 75 who watched it online.

“It’s an urgent conversation and that’s evident by the fact that so many of you are here in this room tonight,” said Rev. Hoff. “It’s urgent because many lives hang in the balance and a world of peace in the future depends on acting with justice and compassion now. We hope tonight will be a great opportunity to listen with respect and sow seeds of peace and hope.”

The focus of the event was a panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Parvez Ahmed, University of Florida professor of finance.

Each of the three panelists with ties to the Middle East – Ghaith Mitri, M.D., Mark Toney, M.D., and Sarah Ascha – shared their own or their families’ immigration stories as well as their lives

in Jacksonville, and their experiences with (sometimes unconscious) profiling.

Mitri is a Roman Orthodox Syrian who grew up in Kuwait. He has lived all over the world and, in Jacksonville, worked as a rheumatologist before moving to Chicago. Toney is Division Chief General Pediatrics-Hospitalist at Nemours Children’s Specialty Care, and the fourth generation of a Syrian family who immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s looking for a better living. Ascha, who was born in southern California, is a Syrian Muslim whose father came to the United States to escape religious persecution and started a thriving dental practice in the Los Angeles area.

Prior to the panel discussion, Travis Trice, Church Mobilizer and Immigration Advocate for World Relief Jacksonville, shared statistics on refugee resettlement in Jacksonville and described the lengthy screening process that all refugees must undergo to enter the United States.

Last year, World Relief Jacksonville helped approximately 50 Syrian refugees find a permanent home in the city, according to Trice, who anticipated the organization would settle over 500 refugees total from all countries in Jacksonville in 2016.

“Jacksonville is a unique city in the United States, as we are one of the receiving cities for Syrian refugees, so some of them will be coming here,” said Trice. “We don’t know how many; sometimes we only get days’ notice, so it’s hard to prepare services.”

### Immigration simpler, but not any shorter

The screening process can often take years to accomplish and Perwaiz knows what that’s



Sarah Ascha, Dr. Mark Toney, Prof. Parvez Ahmed, Dr. Ghaith Mitri were panelists at Coming Together.

**“I know the people of this city are capable of more, and I want to provide them a safe space for this conversation. This way people could address their concerns and work off of facts rather than their fears.”**

— Sabeen Perwaiz

like from the standpoint of an immigrant.

“I moved to New York City at age nine. Emigration was a much simpler process but did take over five years as well,” said Perwaiz. “I can’t really compare it with resettlement since my circumstances were much different. I went to a British school in Pakistan and was already fluent in English as were my siblings. My parents had a tougher time because they had to adjust to a new culture and societal norms.”

Perwaiz works as Earn Up project manager for JAXUSA Partnership, a private, nonprofit division of the JAX Chamber, and is executive director and co-organizer of TEDxJacksonville, as well as a Women’s

Giving Alliance Fellow and a Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2016 member.

Having moved to Florida in 2011, Perwaiz made her home in Riverside, which has less than 100 residents of Arab ethnicity, according to zipatlas.com. “I love the walkability and community-mindedness in Riverside and never considered any other neighborhood when I was looking to move from New York City,” she said.

Perwaiz said she plans to do more events like this, but is not sure about when or how many. “I think the overall response to the event was positive. Audience members have reached out and asked for more conversations.”



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# Celebration of Life, large and small, at annual Memorial Park Association meeting

## 2015 a good year for park statue and its working model

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Last January, local historian Wayne Wood thrilled those attending the Memorial Park Association annual meeting by sharing the discovery – thanks to the diligent efforts of Dr. Dianne Taylor – of a broken plaster model of the winged statue, Life.

After having been on display at the Jacksonville Art Museum in the late 1950s, the model was misplaced and eventually located by Taylor in a closet at Jacksonville University.

During the past year, Sally Corporation repaired the model with the intention of creating a new mold and, subsequently, reproductions to be sold to benefit preservation-minded organizations.

At the 2016 Memorial Park Association Annual Meeting on Jan. 6, Taylor and Wood unveiled the first reproduction to the delight of the audience. Art collectors and supporters of Memorial Park lined up after the meeting to place their orders for one of the 30 replicas of the iconic sculpture's working model. Wood donated 10 replicas each to Memorial Park Association, the Jacksonville Historical Society and Riverside Avondale Preservation to sell for \$2,500 apiece.

Prior to the unveiling at the Garden Club of Jacksonville, a four-part presentation was given by Agnes Danciger, president, Pattie



Dr. Dianne Taylor and Dr. Wayne Wood with the new Life statue model, unveiled at the Memorial Park Association annual meeting.

Houlihan and Jake Ingram, past presidents, and Wayne Wood on the history of the association's work to maintain and enhance the park, which led to the November-December 2015 restoration of Memorial Park's iconic sculpture, "Life" and the surrounding fountain.

Memorial Park Association celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2016. A review of the previous year highlighted a number of events, including the passing of founder Anne Wright Freeman in January 2015, the restoration of Life statue and fountain by McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory, and the hiring of Susan Tandingan as a part-time administrative assistant/coordinator/database manager.

Also during 2015, the association completed the \$200,000 capital grant match as well as raised \$136,066 in gifts and pledges

through a variety of fundraising events and programs to be used for the park's Master Plan and MPA operating funds.

At the meeting, retiring board directors Joan Van Vleck and Jake Ingram, also a past president, were honored for their contributions to the restoration, preservation and promotion of Memorial Park.

New 2016-2017 officers include Karen McCombs, executive vice president, and Matthew Cochran, treasurer. They join Agnes Danciger, president, Robin Patton, secretary, Barbara "Bobby" Arnold and Patricia Houlihan, both vice presidents-at-large, on the executive committee.

New to the board of directors are Timothy Burleigh, Frank Bioteau, Alden Howell, Percy Rosenbloom III and Tim Tyler (returning), who join 13 other board members: Emmett C. Bearden, Janet H. Blackstone, David W. Foerster, W. Robinson Frazier, F. Terry Hallihan, Holly Keris, Emily R. Lisska, Elizabeth G. McRae, JoAnn F. Meyer, Joan W. Newton, Susan D. Ober, Paula Skitsko, and H. Warner Webb, M.D.

During first quarter, the Construction Task Force for drainage and irrigation – consisting of Co-chairs Houlihan and Michael Blackstone, and members Keris, Ingram, McRae and Arnold – will initiate the drain-

age and irrigation project at the center oval field, to be completed by fall 2016.

A fundraiser, Claws for a Cause, is planned for Saturday, March 5 at Cool Moose Café on Park Street. Last year the lobster bake, hosted by Tony and Laurie Jarvis, netted over \$1,000 for the park restoration fund.



Joan Van Vleck and Elizabeth (Bitty) McRae



Helen Lane, Bobby Arnold, Melissa Tyler

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# Rising home values, low inventory creates seller's market

By *Kate A. Hallock*  
Resident Community News

Homes in the historic districts retain their value, so it's no surprise to find they are hard to come by when seeking to purchase a home.

Since 2011, historical median prices in Riverside/Avondale and Ortega have risen 38.2 percent – good news for residents contemplating putting their homes on the market.

In addition, sellers in these neighborhoods enjoyed an average sale price of \$230,000, 35 percent more than the average median of \$170,000 in Baker, Clay, Duval, Putnam and parts of Nassau

and St. Johns counties, according to a report released by the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR).

Last year was a notable year in local real estate; the 2015 Annual Report on the Northeast Florida Housing Market indicated residential real estate experienced its best year since 2009, the beginning of the economic recovery.

"The past year, 2015, was a banner year for Northeast Florida home sales, and inventory is scarce as a result," said Sally Suslak, 2015 NEFAR president and broker with Traditions Realty in Riverside. "Having only 3.7 months of supply on hand – when five to six months is considered a balanced market – is a situation we hope will change."

Even though December 2015 closed sales were relatively flat over 2014, prior months more than made up for it. According to the 2015 NEFAR Annual Report, 26,605 homes in the region changed hands during the year, marking the largest number of closed sales since 2006, when more than 35,000 homes were sold in Northeast Florida.

In Northeast Florida, 36,707 new listings were added to the market in 2015, but the year ended with only 8,537 active listings, an 18.8 percent decrease in inventory from last December.

In 2015 there were 833 new listings in Riverside/Avondale and Ortega, a 7.1 percent increase over 2014. Of those

listings, 573 resulted in closed sales. Despite more homes being listed in this area during 2015, the year-end inventory was just 187, a 25.5 percent drop from the 251 in inventory at year end 2014, according to NEFAR – reinforcing the point that homes in the Historic District are more popular than ever.

NEFAR noted that inventory increases in 2016 would depend on "new construction along with would-be sellers tapping into a market already in their favor."

If December's data holds up for Riverside/Avondale and Ortega in first quarter 2016, sellers could, on average, see homes sell in 72 days for 93.6 percent of original list price.

## JEA fuel rate decrease takes rates to 2008 level

The JEA Board of Directors approved a fuel charge decrease of \$6.85 per megawatt hour with an effective date of February 1, 2016, which will result in \$7.28 per 1,000 kWh in savings for residential customers.

This reduction translates to a 5.56 percent decrease and lowers JEA electric rates to the 2008 level. Commercial customers should receive a six to nine percent decrease depending on their rate class.

The fuel charge rate, one of four JEA charges on each residential bill, will decrease from \$43.60 per megawatt hour to \$36.75 per megawatt hour.

When fuel costs are lower than anticipated, JEA returns excess dollars to customers in the form of fuel credits or by lowering the fuel charge. Over the past three years, JEA has returned almost \$170 million to customers in fuel credits. JEA reviews this rate annually as part of its pricing policy requirements.

## Excessive speed claims two lives in Roosevelt collision

*FDOT data shows nearly 800 crashes in two years*

By *Kate A. Hallock*  
Resident Community News

The afternoon of Saturday, Jan. 9, 2016 may have been a bit rainy, but weather did not factor in to the reason a horrific two-car crash claimed the lives of two men.

Witnesses told police the driver of a Mazda sport utility vehicle was speeding south on Roosevelt Boulevard at approximately 100 mph when it struck another vehicle. The driver of a northbound Toyota Avalon sedan was attempting to turn left onto Long Bow Road when he was hit.

The Mazda SUV spun into a concrete pole where it burst into flames, killing the 18-year-old driver, Richard C.L. Knight, a graduate of Bishop Kenny High School and Ortega Farms resident.

For four hours that afternoon, both sides of Roosevelt Boulevard were closed while the scene was under investigation and crash debris was removed from the road.

The driver of the sedan, 90-year-old Dr. C. Park McGeachy, of Ortega Forest, died the following day, Jan. 10, from the injuries he sustained. A retired dentist, McGeachy had a practice on St. John's Avenue for four decades. He was an honorary life member of Timuquana



The remains of an SUV after the young man driving southbound on Roosevelt Boulevard struck another vehicle northbound attempting to turn left onto Long Bow Road.



Country Club and a member for 63 years of Riverside Avenue Christian Church.

According to the Florida Department of Transportation, there have been four fatal crashes, 249 injury crashes, and 532 non-injury crashes on Roosevelt Boulevard between Timuquana Road and McDuff Avenue for the years 2012-2014. Of those crashes, five were vehicle vs. pedestrian and five were vehicle vs. bicycle, stated Ron Tittle, FDOT public information officer.

The FDOT was not able to provide statistics for the vehicular accidents regarding single vehicle vs. two or more, nor were they able to provide data on reasons for the

accidents, such as speeding, wet pavements, red-light running or other causes.

Just little more than two and a half years earlier, Ortega Forest resident Michael Goodbread was killed when a driver ran a red light at a high rate of speed as Goodbread was turning left into the northbound lane of Roosevelt Boulevard from Verona Avenue.

When asked if the FDOT would consider decreasing the speed limit on Roosevelt Boulevard, Tittle said the question came up in a recent weekly Duval Traffic Safety meeting, but had not further information.

### Early Winter Surge

The flood gates are open and so is my office door - which happens to be an iPhone that is ding-donging away. Spring has sprung even though it tried to snow yesterday and is too cold today. When interest rates dropped again, buyers came streaming back cold or no cold. I'm out trying to show them every new listing before it sells and at the same time I'm buzzing around like a bee trying to help sellers prepare for market. Life is good in our historic communities and beyond. If your house is well prepared, it will sell quickly no matter where it is. No doubt about it.

I am quite thankful for all this busy-ness. From texting during my gym workouts to preparing paperwork late at night, I appreciate every minute of your support. Does this early winter surge mean 2016 will be a banner year in real estate? Time will tell but all signs point that way. CNN doesn't always get it right...at street level, I'm seeing movement everywhere. If this activity stays the course, there will be many happy new homeowners claiming homestead exemptions in 2017.

Be on the look out for some wonderful homes soon. Adorable and beautiful two stories, one stories, pools, creeks and decks are all about to hit the market. A wonderful variety of homes are coming your way. I love the challenges you bring me. Finding a new home, selling an old home - the magic and the math of your challenges fill both sides of my brain as I doggedly meet your goals. Need a good Realtor who's all in? Why not call me...I love my job because of you and your beautiful homes.

—Anne Rain

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# Park Street corridor to include more pedestrian, cyclist safety

## JTA considers alternatives in future planning models

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

With an eye to a future that puts walking and bicycling into the transportation mix, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority began in August 2015 to hold a series of charrettes focusing on 14 mobility corridors throughout Duval County.

The charrettes – meetings allowing all stakeholders to identify issues and develop solutions – came on the heels of the introduction of the JTA's Route Optimization Initiative in November 2015.

Last month residents from Orange Park up to 5 Points were invited to attend a charrette to help improve the transit corridor along Blanding Boulevard and Park Street.

"We've restructured the routes but we have to fill in the gaps for the bicyclists and pedestrians who are trying to access the system," said Fred Jones, JTA senior transportation planner. "We've spent the last 50 years thinking more about vehicles while pedestrians and bicyclists are been left behind in the equation," he said. "We're trying to step back and find out what we can do differently. A lot of our metropolitan areas developed after World War II and the design has been built around the automobile."

Jones said Jacksonville is the third worst metropolitan area in the country for pedestrian deaths, "which is an indictment. It's possibly the worst health threat that Northeast Florida is facing."

The JTA is reviewing vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle movements within each of the 14 mobility corridors, looking for short-term and long-term improvements that benefit safety and accessibility for all users of the road, with the intent of having the ability to do some "place-making," according to Jones, who is project manager for



Linda and Paul Bremer affix their "wish list" stickers to one of 10 potential Park Street enhancements identified by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority.

the Complete Streets Program, a philosophy about re-conceptualizing the right of ways to maximize access for all users.

An allocation of \$15 million will be used for a combination of prioritized corridors/projects, including \$10 million for the Complete Streets program and \$5 million for transit amenities and ADA access (i.e., new shelters, pads, ADA access and ramps) throughout the 14 mobility corridors.

When asked what the timing was for short- and long-term improvements, Jones said short-term was two to five years, while long-term was five to 10 years and contingent on funding.

"The success of the potential enhancements is contingent on partnerships with the city, with Florida Department of Transportation, and on getting transportation dollars from the Federal Transit Authority," he said.

### Desired improvements

For two days the workshops, held Jan. 27-28 at Riverside Baptist Church, drew concerned residents and invited suggestions for improvements along Park Street from its "gateway" into Avondale east of Florida State College Jacksonville's Kent Campus on Roosevelt Boulevard.

The top desired improvement on Park Street in Avondale and Riverside was to narrow travel lanes where possible. Avondale residents would also like to see sidewalks added where needed, crosswalks with pedestrian signals at all signalized intersections, median refuge islands with mid-block pedestrian crossings and a neighborhood greenway for bicyclists. Speed and parking were also top priorities for Riverside, where comments suggested a reduction to 25 mph as well as either widen existing sidewalks or add striped parallel parking when travel lanes are narrowed.

Of note, there were no votes for angle parking along Park Street, but there were suggestions to remove the current angle parking. Some of the comments posted on the workshop boards included requests to slow traffic at Edgewood Avenue and Park Street with speed humps or a roundabout; install bicycle corrals in 5 Points; close the Park and King Street intersection on the weekend to encourage walking and bicycling; make Post and College Streets one-way; put bicycle lanes on Edgewood Avenue, and reduce the number of bus stops at Acosta and Park Streets.

**"We're trying to step back and find out what we can do differently. A lot of our metropolitan areas developed after World War II and the design has been built around the automobile."**

— Fred Jones, JTA Senior Transportation Manager

### Why Park Street?

A question was asked regarding the rationale for Park Street to be part of the First Coast Flyer corridor after buses come up Blanding Boulevard from the Orange Park Mall. Instead of entering Roosevelt Boulevard at Park Street, the rapid transit buses cross U.S. 17, then continue up Park Street through Avondale, Riverside and 5 Points.

According to JTA officials, during a past environmental assessment in which Riverside Avondale Preservation was involved, there was a community desire to have services along Park Street accessible via public transportation. The Park Street corridor has more retail, medical and education services than Roosevelt Boulevard north of Florida State College Jacksonville. "[A route on] Park Street provides more access for the neighborhoods," said Leigh Ann Rassler, JTA spokesperson.

Over the next six weeks, Jones said they will wrap up preliminary planning and design with the goal of having draft reports available in mid to late March. "The next step is to prioritize the corridors," said Jones. "We're going to try to emphasize the leading candidates and then work on implementation."



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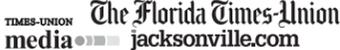
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# JTA opens public CNG fueling facility

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority, in partnership with Clean Energy Fuels, celebrated the opening of the public-access compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling facility at JTA's Myrtle Avenue operations campus located at 100 N. Myrtle Ave. Jan. 26.

Several politicians and other city officials attended the mid-morning ribbon-cutting ceremony, which also included a fueling demonstration. Cutting the ribbon were Peter Grace, Senior Vice President Sales for Clean Energy; Jeff Sheffield, Executive Director of the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization; District 9 City Councilman Garrett L. Dennis; District 14 City Councilman Jim Love; Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr., CEO of JTA; Scott L. McCaleb, Chairman of the JTA Board of Directors; Ari Jolly, Treasurer, JTA Board of Directors and Isaiah Rumlin, Vice Chairman of the JTA Board of Directors.

The CNG project was made possible through a public-private partnership with Clean Energy.

The new station, which is adjacent to the existing, private JTA-dedicated CNG station, will provide access to fueling for both public

and private vehicles, including heavy-duty fleet trucks and passenger vehicles.

The entrance to the station is located at the intersection of Bay Street and Myrtle Avenue. It will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Customers will use a public access card reader system. Presently the station includes only one single-hose dispenser, but has the capability of adding three dispensers.

"By allowing the public and other agencies to fuel their vehicles, the Authority



James Olp of Clean Energy demonstrates how to use the compressed natural gas pumps at the new Clean Energy public fueling station on N. Myrtle Avenue Jan. 26.



Cutting the ribbon at JTA's new compressed natural gas facility on N. Myrtle Street were Peter Grace, Senior Vice President of Sales for Clean Energy; Jeff Sheffield Executive Director of the North Florida Transportation Organization; District 9 Councilman Garrett L. Dennis; District 14 Councilman Jim Love; Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr., Chief Executive Officer of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority; Scott McCaleb, Chairman of the JTA Board of Directors; Ari Jolly, Treasurer, JTA Board of Directors, and Isaiah Rumlin, Vice Chairman of the JTA Board of Directors.

will begin contributing to the available supply of CNG in the region, which in turn will help make our region cleaner by eliminating fewer pollutants into the air we breathe," said Ford. "CNG vehicles produce up to 90 percent less smog-producing pollutants and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40 percent."

JTA's goal is to build a fleet of 100 CNG buses over the next four years, and it is well

on the way toward that goal with 23 vehicles currently in the fleet, said JTA spokeswoman Leigh Ann Rassler.

The CNG project is one of JTA's transformative Blueprint 2020 initiatives. Also included in this plan is a modification to the bus maintenance facility and a bus fueling facility. Fueling CNG busses began in December 2015 with the rollout of the First Coast Bus Rapid Transit "Green Line."

# HabiJax, Wells Fargo 'rocks the block' in New Town for Day of Service

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

For five years a major corporation and a well-known nonprofit have worked side by side to help ensure that residents in Jacksonville's New Town community have safe and affordable housing.

Thanks to Wells Fargo, an initial corporate supporter in 2010 in New Town, Habitat for Humanity of Jacksonville (HabiJax) has built or renovated 125 houses for first-time homeowners and repaired 100 more homes in the past five years.

Wells Fargo provided HabiJax at that time with a four-to-one matching grant to kick start the New Town project, but it didn't stop there.

"They have also provided volunteer support for many of our projects each year in New Town," said Mary Kay O'Rourke, president/CEO of HabiJax. "Most recently we were awarded a priority market contribution from Wells Fargo, which supports the

entire neighborhood investment including block improvements along with new and rehab construction."

On Jan. 18, Martin Luther King Day, 75 Wells Fargo employees joined HabiJax in the first Rock the Block event on State Street in New Town, taking on more than 20 projects to boost homes' curb appeal, such as completing landscaping enhancement, Right-of-Way cleanup, exterior repairs and painting projects.

"Since Wells has promoted a Day of Service on Martin Luther King Day with tremendous employee support for the last few years, we decided to kick off their priority market investment with this day of service," O'Rourke said. The Rock the Block project investment for canopy and individual tree trimming, plants, paint, materials, supplies and equipment was \$10,000, funded through the priority market grant from Wells Fargo.

"We are fortunate to have many ongoing corporate supporters especially EverBank, Wells Fargo and Chase," said O'Rourke.



Ta'Shaunda Townshend, Austin Davis, Ana Novakovic and Jessica Burgos



Troy and Jennifer Ferguson, Chris Middlebrook, Amy Chaney and Mark Middlebrook

"Besides financial support many businesses provide volunteers to assist in our housing initiatives as well - neighbors helping neighbors."

To date, HabiJax has raised over \$16 million for investment in New Town, including donations from two families, Ann and David Hicks as well as Delores and Wayne Weaver, who led the new Town initiative with \$1 million contributions each.

HabiJax, which is the largest affiliate of

Habitat for Humanity International in the United States, plans to continue working in New Town for the next four years, even while looking for other "hot spots" in the urban core for another housing initiative.

We feel it is very important for us to have a real and active presence in the community we are involved in alongside our homeowners and the residents," said O'Rourke. HabiJax meets with clients and the community at a model home on Tyler Street.

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# Chilly weather dampens Hemming Park celebration

## Future of park to be determined this month

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Mother Nature had little regard for the big plans of Friends of Hemming Park on Saturday, Jan. 23. Low temperatures, high winds and even a snowflake or two conspired to keep attendance at Hemming Park's 150th Anniversary celebration lower than organizers hoped for.

The event was kicked off with a members-only social at 11 a.m. and a recap of the strides made by Friends of Hemming Park since it took over management of the park 17 months ago.

Originally designated as a public square, the 1.5-acre parcel that now comprises Hemming Park is Jacksonville's first and oldest park. On January 23, 1866 it was sold to the city for \$10 by the heirs of Isaiah D. Hart, the founder of Jacksonville.

First called City Park, then named St. James Park after the St. James Hotel, now site of City Hall, it was originally a center of commerce, activity, celebrity and political events. When Civil War veteran Charles C. Hemming installed a 62-foot-tall Confederate monument in the park in 1898, it was under the condition it would be renamed Hemming Park.

"For a long time everyone would come down here to see what was going on. In the late 1970s, the park was 'plaza-fied' and through the 1980s and 1990s, it saw a gradual decay," said Vince Cavin, CEO of Friends of Hemming Park, which won a proposal to take over management of the park in order to make it safer and more attractive for visitors.

"We had a blank slate to work with, and spent the first 90 days figuring out how we can make this a place for visiting," he said. "Ultimately the goal is to show this is a destination worth visiting and it's a safe, clean, attractive place for kids and families."

### Future of park being determined this month

Weather wasn't the only element overshadowing the celebration. Just days earlier, Cavin and Friends of Hemming Park Board President Wayne Wood found



Robin Patton with Wayne Wood

*"Ultimately the goal is to show this is a destination worth visiting and it's a safe, clean, attractive place for kids and families."*

— Vince Cavin,  
CEO of Friends  
of Hemming Park



Silvia Cavin and daughter Valencia



Mary Lou Sutherlin, board member of Friends of Murray Hill Library



Derek and Lisa Distenfield with son Duke

themselves again before City Council discussing the future of the park.

The nonprofit's agreement with the City of Jacksonville is set to expire on Feb. 29. The group estimates it will need \$800,000 to run the park and can raise about half that amount. The city has been asked to match that amount.

Friends of Hemming Park touts both quantitative and qualitative successes, even while expressing frustration over continued issues of bad behavior by some park visitors.

Since the group took over the park in September 2014, there have been over 560,000 visitors to regular programs and special events at the park, of which 62 events drew

more than 500 people, according to Cavin.

He also noted that the demographic mix of visitors was almost even by gender – 47 percent female, 53 percent male. In previous years, only one in 10 visitors was female.

The park has more appeal for people of all ages, except for visitors age 65 or older, said Cavin. Visits by those in age groups under 65 were also almost even – 30 percent under age 18, 31 percent age 19-34 and 33 percent age 35-64.

Cavin said Friends of Hemming Park has worked to make the urban park an intentionally-programmed public space by bringing in regular programming, big events, food, interactive experiences and

color, in the form of landscaping as well as both permanent and temporary art.

Should the agreement be renewed and funds supplied, Cavin has plans for the park. "Projects in Public Places worked out two concepts for the park's future, based on a collection of recommendations from park visitors," he said.

Even if funds aren't found for that magnitude of change, Friends of Hemming Park have plans in the works for a food and beverage kiosk by the owners of Black Sheep Restaurant, and for a new, large performance stage along the Hogan Street side, to be funded, they hope, by Community First Credit Union.



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4/2/1-2,498 sqft. SOLD by Nelson Higgins and Shannon McKinnon. Enter a world of Elegance and unparalleled Craftsmanship as Handmade Homes welcomes you to luxury living in the heart of Historic Riverside.



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**3618 BOONE PARK AVE**

2/2-1,966 sqft. SOLD by Jane Slater and Heather Buckman. Front porch charm with beautiful updates located in the heart of Avondale, one of Jacksonville's Great Neighborhoods, this is neighborhood living at its best!



SOLD

**2358 RIVERSIDE AVE 1104**

3/3-2,725 sqft. SOLD by Lee Elmore. It's the Urban Lifestyle on the edge of downtown in the beautiful Historic neighborhood of Riverside. Absolutely phenomenal riverfront views from this 11th floor unit.



Claire Franson  
REALTOR®  
(904) 923-5331



Juli Gordon  
REALTOR®  
(904) 576-1278



Anita Vining  
REALTOR®  
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**1846 MARGARET ST 1B**

3/2/1-1,583 sqft. SOLD by Allison Steilberg. Seize your chance to own this amazing and unique space -- listed for the first time in 30 years! One of Jacksonville's landmark properties, The Park Lane Condominium is on the St. Johns River.



Susan Tuohy  
REALTOR®  
(904) 707-6548



SOLD

**2514 ALGONQUIN AVE**

3/2-1,588 sqft. SOLD by Heather Buckman. Welcome home to this extremely well-maintained Ortega home on spacious lot with additional private-entrance rental property! Rental property is occupied by long-term tenant.



SOLD

**1820 VAN WERT AVE**

4/2/2-2,247 sqft. SOLD by Sarah Leuthold and Linda Maxwell. Beautiful traditional 2-story brick home in the heart of Historic Avondale. This Classic Avondale Home features: New roof in 2015, 3 Bedrooms and 2.5 Baths.



LISTED AND SOLD BY US

**2940 CHEROKEE**

3/2/1-2,862 sqft. SOLD by Jane Slater. Historic charm meets modern style in the Heart of Ortega... One of the great Neighborhoods of Jacksonville. Entering the front door, you will delight in the well maintained features.



Nelson Higgins & Shannon  
McKinnon, REALTORS®  
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(904) 686-4312



Geni Jet  
REALTOR®  
(904) 802-0820



Leighton Tesche  
REALTOR®  
904-608-5481



SOLD

**1403 AZALEA DR**

3/1/2-1,734 sqft. SOLD by Liz Bobeck. Motivated Seller says bring an offer! Located in the fabulous Fishweir school district, this POOL (3/1 plus 2 1/2 baths) home in Avondale is within walking distance to Orsay and Boone Park.



Kathy Suber  
REALTOR®  
(904) 509-0587



LISTED AND SOLD BY US

**4152 LEXINGTON AVE**

3/2-1,887 sqft. SOLD by Taft Alexander, Josh Nugent, and Dee Burnett. Beautifully updated 3 bedroom 2 bath home just a few blocks from the River. The home features a split floor plan with an open feel.



SOLD

**5027 LONG BOW RD**

4/2/2-2,506 sqft. SOLD by Elizabeth O'Steen and Susan Donnell. From the moment you step through the front door, the water beckons you! This four bedroom home invites you to have fun - both indoors and out.



SOLD

**1560 LANCASTER TER 902**

3/2-1,791 sqft. SOLD by Allison Steilberg. According to the Huffington Post, Jacksonville is a GREAT place to live! There's an incredible DIRECT view of the downtown skyline from this unit. Every room captures the river and skyline views.



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Melissa Lewis & Marcia  
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Jane Slater  
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Linda Maxwell & Sarah  
Leuthold, REALTORS®  
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(904) 233-5533



Dylan Rigdon  
REALTOR®  
(904) 540-7672



Camilo Ramirez  
REALTOR®  
(954) 805-0428



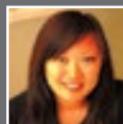
Caroline Powell & Allison  
Steilberg, REALTORS®  
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(904) 252-5181



Elizabeth O'Steen  
REALTOR®  
(904) 465-1706



Josh Nugent  
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Lisa Ly Nguyen  
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Margee Michaelis  
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# MOVERS & SHAKERS

## New CEO, president at Feeding Northeast Florida

Feeding Northeast Florida has tapped Luke Layow, a local fundraising professional with more than 15 years of progressive management experience, as their new president and CEO.

Layow, who previously served as the director of philanthropy at The First Tee of North Florida, said he is looking forward to the opportunity to lead an organization that has “such a broad-reaching, positive impact” on the local community.

Prior to his position at The First Tee, Layow was director of advancement for Prison Fellowship; director of institutional advancement at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and managed an outsourced business development company. With degrees in exercise and sports science, he also worked in the sports industry with the Carolina Panthers, THE PLAYERS Championship, and is a board member of the Ponte Vedra Family YMCA.



Luke Layow, new president and CEO for Feeding Northeast Florida shares a cupcake toast with Bruce Ganger, retiring president and CEO, who helped found Feeding Northeast Florida two years ago and will remain on its board of directors.

## Real estate agency welcomes three new realtors

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty announced the addition of three new realtors to the agency. Michelle Arseneau, Kim Kessler and Michelle Legier joined the agency’s locations in Avondale and San Marco.

Arseneau has a background in education as well as a graduate certificate in educational leadership. Kessler has over 20 years of experience in the real estate market, possessing several certificates for training, a Broker License since 1987, and Graduate Realtor Institute (GRI) and Certified Site Agent (CSA) designations. Legier has 16-plus years’ experience in residential, commercial and investment sales.

All are warmly welcomed by Sheron Willson, Broker/Manager of BHHS.



Michelle Arseneau



Kim Kessler



Michelle Legier

## Judge’s family donates portrait to county courthouse



John Lloyd Layton, longtime friend Nancy Nix Mahon and her son Judge Mark H. Mahon in Courtroom 212 of the Duval County Courthouse

The family of Judge A. Lloyd Layton (1902-1977) has donated to the Duval County Courthouse an oil painting of the first Duval County judge of the newly formed Provisional Criminal Court of Record. Judge Layton’s portrait resides in Courtroom 212 along with other judges on display.

Layton was appointed in the early 1950s to the Duval County Court by Governor LeRoy Collins following a career as an attorney for the City of Orange Park and as a partner in the law firm of Ragland, Kurtz and Layton.

The judge and his wife, Merceda Layton, who died in 2005 at age 101, lived in Avondale during his career. They had a son and daughter, six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

“His Saturday morning favorite relaxation was fishing from his long dock/boathouse at his riverfront home,” said his son, John Layton.

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--	--	--	--

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## MOVERS & SHAKERS

### HandsOn Jacksonville promotes Daddario to president, CEO

LeAnn Daddario joins HandsOn Jacksonville as president and CEO following the retirement in December of Dr. Judith A.M. Smith after nearly 21 years as CEO.

Daddario started at HandsOn Jacksonville in 2014 as Development Director and then Sr. Vice President and COO.

"It is both my honor and privilege to be the new board appointed CEO for HandsOn Jacksonville," said Daddario. "Dr. Judy Smith made a tremendous impact at HandsOn Jacksonville and was instrumental in promoting volunteerism in Northeast Florida."

Daddario said her vision for HandsOn Jacksonville is to continue to elevate volunteerism and service in all of Northeast Florida. Coinciding with the change in leadership, HandsOn Jacksonville has also moved its offices downtown to the Jessie Ball duPont Center.



LeAnn Daddario

## New executive director hired at ILRC

Lela Jordan has been hired as executive director for the Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC), a nonprofit organization empowering independence for people with disabilities since 1978.

"I am very excited to join the team at ILRC and look forward to establishing new collaborative relationships, to advance and promote programs and services for all individuals with a disability in the Northeast Florida Community," said Jordan, who was hired after a national search and selection process.

Jordan brings 17 years' experience as an executive director, most recently serving as Director of the Youth, Family & Community Resources Division for the Mayor's office in the City of West Palm



Lela Jordan (Photo by Tiffany Manning)

Beach. Jordan, who holds a bachelor's degree in communications, is preparing for a master's degree in education.

With her master's preparation in education and bachelor's work in communications, Jordan brings passion

and vision to the ILRC. Lauded for successfully obtaining Federal and State grants, as well as grants from Foundations throughout the State, Jordan's special skill set in resource management will bring continued growth for the ILRC.

## Avondale resident joins Sports Technologies LLC

Jeffrey S. Legeer has joined Sports Technologies LLC (ST), a Jacksonville-based company developing concussion mitigation equipment for athletes and the U.S. military. As Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Legeer will lead efforts to promote the relatively new company, its technology and protective products, and manage government contracts.

Prior to joining ST, Legeer worked in a variety of program management positions with Lockheed Martin, SAIC and Leidos. He also spent 22 years in the Air Force and Air National Guard, retiring as a captain. Legeer volunteers with the Jacksonville Area Golf Association and is vice chair of the Hyde Park Men's Golf Association.



Jeffrey S. Legeer

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**REDUCED**

2165 Oak Street

4BR/2BA Victorian home on a corner lot, walk to 5-Points and the river. 3rd floor has flooring and potential conversion possibilities to a master retreat. 2,836 sq. ft. \$369,000



3883 Walsh Street

Avondale 2BR/1BA features a recently updated kitchen with granite counter tops and a unique wood burning fireplace in the living room as well as original hardwood floors throughout. 910 sq ft. \$165,000



2884 Olga Place

Spacious 2BR/1BA bungalow in great walkable area near Willowbranch Park, King St. and Avondale shops. Inside utility room. Fenced yard completes the package. \$189,000



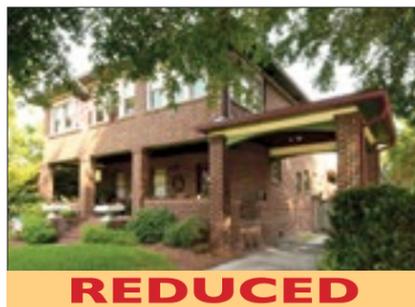
4561 Prunty Avenue

3BR/2BA Vaulted Ceilings, Kitchen w/granite tops, 42" Maple Cabinets, Stainless Appliances, wood laminate floors in living spaces. Covered screened lanai, and 2-car garage. 1,214 sq. ft. \$189,000



2970 St Johns 3C

Beautiful 3BR/2BA in the Beau Rivage. The amenities are numerous, riverfront pool, fitness room, full time staff with 24 hour manned concierge. 1,822 sq. ft. \$249,900



**REDUCED**

2163 College Street

2,480 sq. ft., 3BR/2BA brick home has it all! Spacious rooms with separate dining and living rooms. Beautiful hardwood floors throughout. Updated kitchen with beautiful built-ins. 1 car garage/workshop with a 1/1 apartment above. \$409,900



1474 Talbot Avenue

Large open sunroom, living room with fireplace, separate dining room, hardwood floors in the living area, new carpet in the bedrooms, freshly painted inside. 2BR/2BA and 1,707 sq. ft. \$269,000



**REDUCED**

2877 Sydney Street

3BR/1.5BA Craftsman style, open & renovated kitchen with solid wood cabinetry and granite countertops, renovated bath well as a relaxing porch overlooking Willowbranch park. 1,381 sq. ft. \$229,000



2570 Post Street

This charming 3BR/2BA bungalow is move in ready and features living room, dining room, carport with storage, hardwood floors, large front porch and has been newly painted. 1,470 sq. ft. \$219,000



2325 Myra Street

4 units all 2BR/1BA, living room, dining room, updated kitchens, CHA, approx 1000 sf, hardwood floors, stackable washer/dryer, and fireplace. 4,522 sq. ft. \$450,000



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# Jacksonville Humane Society earns four-star charity rating

The Jacksonville Humane Society's sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, for the third consecutive year. According to Charity Navigator's website, out of the thousands of charities evaluated, only 25 percent earn four stars and only 14 percent have received three consecutive four-star evaluations.

"JHS supporters should feel confident that their hard-earned dollars are being used responsibly," said Michael Thatcher, president and CEO of Charity Navigator.

"This rating means a great deal to the Jacksonville Humane Society because it demonstrates that we are grateful for every gift and take our responsibility as stewards very seriously. It is important for our supporters to know that we are using our funding wisely to accomplish our mission of saving animals," said Denise Deisler, JHS executive director.



Adoption counselor Dinah Sepulveda, with Rodger, who was adopted in November.

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

### Historic home restorer joins Traditions Realty

Stephanie White, a recently licensed real estate agent who comes to the real estate business after working for more than 20 years for the State of Florida Department of Revenue, has joined Traditions Realty.

White, who holds a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of North Florida, with a minor in Psychology and English, has restored a turn-of-the-century home in historic Riverside.

Customer service was a major part of White's job with the Florida Department of Revenue and she believes the excellent skills she honed in her former job will make her a great asset to her real estate customers.



Stephanie White

# New ice pop shop opens in Brooklyn

The Hyppo, a gourmet ice pop store, has settled into Brooklyn Station. The St. Augustine-based all-natural handmade dessert in more than 400 flavors is now available at 90 Riverside Avenue, next to Zoe's Kitchen and Burrito Gallery. The popsicles are available at local grocery and natural foods stores as well. Owner Stephen DiMare's fifth retail location in five years, The Hyppo was named after the Feast of Saint Augustine of Hippo and Hypolita Street, where its flagship store is located. For store hours, visit [www.thehyppo.com](http://www.thehyppo.com) or call (904) 551-0361.



Britt Daniel, store manager

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# MOVERS & SHAKERS

## Day spa grand opening



Falli Shah

Falli Shah, owner of Seventh Wonder Holistic spa, has a new location after 13 years on Roosevelt Boulevard. After renovations, Shah reopened her popular spa at 4236 St. Johns Ave. where the day spa provides a relaxing sanctuary away from stress with a wholesome approach to treatment of the mind, body and soul. For more information visit [www.seventh-wonder.com](http://www.seventh-wonder.com) or call (904) 381-8686.

## Building named for, dedicated in honor of long-time supporter

James H. Winston, long-time supporter of the Episcopal School of Jacksonville, was honored by the Jan. 20 dedication of a building in his name. Winston House, a renovated house on St. Elmo Drive will serve as the office for Head of School Charles Zimmer.

Winston was a member of the founding committee of Episcopal in 1966, served on the Board of Trustees and on the Foundation Board. He was named a Trustee Emeritus in 2002.

“Episcopal’s gratitude for Jim, his family, and their deep affection and love for the School cannot be overstated. Jim’s leadership and dedication to ensuring the School’s mission has never wavered,” said Zimmer.

Winston raised funds in the 1970s for the school to pay for construction and start-up loans, and helped manage complicated financial and legal issues during that time. He was instrumental in bringing close friends, Jane and William Wilson Munnerlyn, Sr., into the Episcopal community. The Munnerlyn Campus is named in honor of the bequest of their entire estate to the school.



Head of School Charles F. Zimmer and Jim Winston (Photo by Laura Evans)



## Massage spa opens in Venetia

Guijun “Jun” Ma, a former pharmacist in China, recently opened Zazen Massage Therapy in Venetia Plaza. A massage therapist certified by the Florida Board of Massage Therapy, Ma arrived in the United States in late 2012, and overcame cultural, language and financial barriers to open her own business.

Zazen Massage Therapy is located at 5393 Roosevelt Blvd., two doors down from Lillian’s Sports Bar & Grill. For more information, call (904) 518-0776.

Hua Ma, Jin Smith, Guijun “Jun” Ma

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## Big day for baby Bilanhone

Reet and Patrick Bilanhone celebrated Avery’s first birthday at home followed by a trip to the beach. Happy Birthday Avery!



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 <b>SOLD</b> 1512 TALBOT AVENUE \$243,784	 <b>UNDER CONTRACT</b> 1346 MURRAY DRIVE \$170,000	 <b>904.994.1840</b>  BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HomeServices Florida Network Realty  A member of the franchisee system of BHHSA Affiliates, LLC.
 <b>UNDER CONTRACT</b> 928 WOLFE STREET \$189,900	 <b>UNDER CONTRACT</b> 4745 SHELBY AVENUE \$154,800	
 <b>UNDER CONTRACT</b>	 <b>UNDER CONTRACT</b>	

# A new home for local business owner, entrepreneur

Thanks to the patronage of locals, a sound approach to business growth and demand for her services, Dr. NaTalla McCoy of the McCoy Institute of Hearing & Balance has bought a building to house her business.

McCoy, a Jacksonville native and Board Certified Audiologist, has moved from her former location on Roosevelt Boulevard to the new address at 5114 San Juan Avenue, just west of the corner of San Juan and U.S. 17.

*“I love this community and I set up my business here for that reason.”*

— Dr. Natalla McCoy

McCoy is excited to open her new office and serve the needs of the local community. She is also proud to have purchased her new building as part of her business model. “I love this community and I set up my business here for that reason,” said Dr. McCoy of her recent purchase. In addition to serving the locals, McCoy also works on outreach to those less fortunate with a mobile outreach program and mobile office.



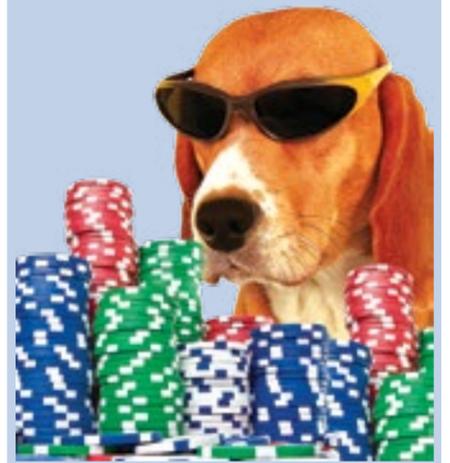
NaTalla McCoy

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

### Charity poker tournament to benefit K9s for Warriors

Cards for K9s, a charity poker tournament benefiting K9s for Warriors, will be hosted by The Jacksonville Bar Association Young Lawyers Section on Feb. 11, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at bestbet Jacksonville, 201 Monument Rd. Prizes will be awarded throughout the evening, including awards for knocking out local celebrity bounties – community leaders, media personalities, and prominent attorneys – in this Texas Hold ‘Em tournament.

Register online at [k9sforwarriors.donorpages.com/MyEvent/JaxBar-Poker2015](http://k9sforwarriors.donorpages.com/MyEvent/JaxBar-Poker2015) or contact Cyndy Trimmer at [cynthia.trimmer@ansbacher.net](mailto:cynthia.trimmer@ansbacher.net) for information.



## JAX Chamber council boards swear in new presidents



Jonathan Smith



Tanya Guydos



Mike Nolan

New board presidents for the JAX Chamber councils were sworn in last month and include local residents. Riverside resident Jonathan Smith, of Duss Kenney Safter Hampton & Joos, is the new Downtown Council president. Mike Nolan, with Global Infonet, is new IT Council president and lives in Avondale, as does Tanya Guydos, president of the Transportation and Logistics Council, and vice president at IberiaBank.

Other new council presidents include Chris Boetcker, Member Benefits, West Council; Brett Goodnough, Culture Index, Mandarin Council; Ed Lombard, Ameriprise Financial Services, North Council; Kinita King, AFLAC, Professional Women’s Council JB Roth, Roth Law Firm, South Council; Shawn Devries, The DeVries Law Firm, Arlington Council, and Joanne Reinhart, New York Life, Health Council.

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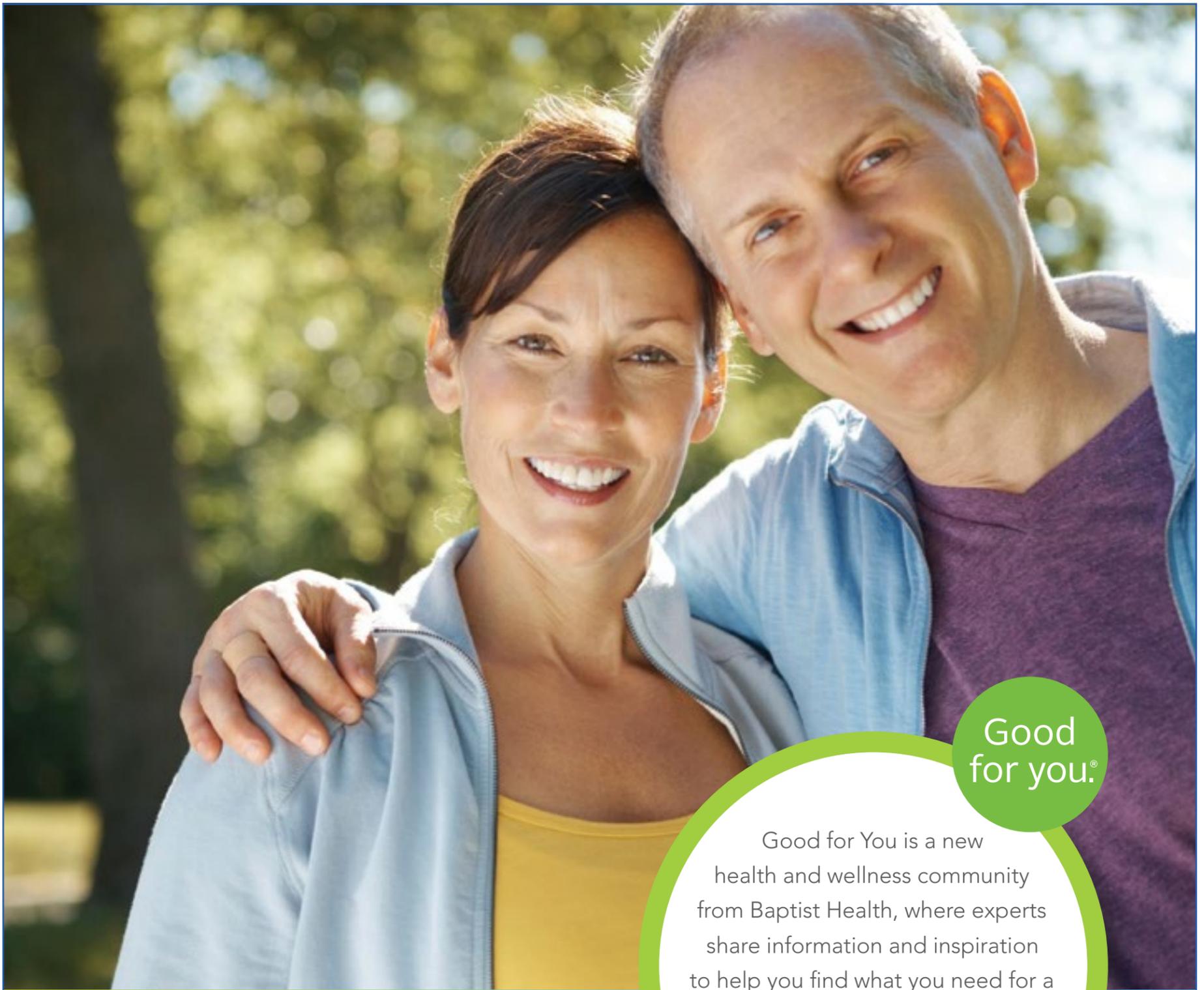
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# The rules —

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Tune in to Good for You this month to learn about advances in heart repair that give us new options, and preventive action you can take to eat and exercise your way to a healthy heart.

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# Residents paint trees blue for art and awareness

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Blue is the new green – at least temporarily. Thanks to grants from The Late Bloomers Garden Club, the 2016 SPARK Grant Program and Wells Fargo, with additional support from Deutsche Bank, more than 100 trees in several locations in Jacksonville are sporting a coat of a blue pigment.

The Blue Trees, a project conceived by international artist Konstantin Dimopoulos to prompt conversation about deforestation and its global impact, was hosted in Hemming Park on Jan. 16 by Greenscape of Jacksonville, Inc.

Dimopoulos, who describes himself as a humanist, uses his art to address social and environmental issues, including an awareness for urban trees.

“People don’t realize the importance of trees...once the trees are gone, all the other issues we have won’t be an issue if we can’t breathe,” said Dimopoulos. “Organizations like Greenscape have an important

role working for trees. Without them every city will be lessened by a huge amount. We’re losing forests the size of 50 football fields every day.”

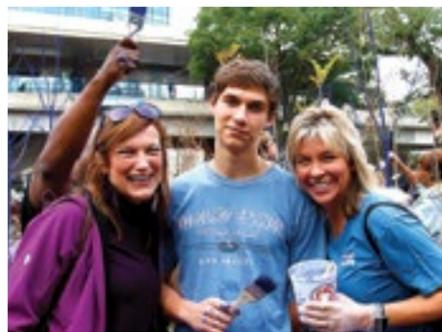
Among those who came out were residents from Riverside, Avondale, Murray Hill and San Marco, who took up paint brushes to coat tree trunks and limbs with a biologically-safe, water-based ultramarine mineral pigment, which will gradually wash off.

In addition to 50 trees in containers and four large trees in Hemming Park, 27 trees at Edward Waters College on Kings Road were “painted” on Jan. 18 by students, faculty and Wells Fargo volunteers. On Jan. 20 the Late Bloomers Garden Club assisted in coloring 15 trees at three sites at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. Fourteen trees were made blue at Veterans Memorial Arena.

The container trees, supplied by the JEA, will remain on display in Hemming Park until Greenscape determines where to plant them. It will take about six months for the blue pigment to wash off.



Konstantin Dimopoulos, Ryan Ali and his niece Isabella, Darnell Smith, Kristi Aiello, Adele Dimopoulos, Anna Dooley (front)



Taylor McDonald, Peter Valaer, Kristi Aiello



Sarah Dooley and Alex Mejias



Gavin Costello, Alana Costello, Gayle Rice, Andy Gallagher, Justin Chovanec and Mason Taylor made up some of Deutsche Bank’s “blue team” in Hemming Park.



April Turner, Heather Jenkins

## New residents to Murray Hill step up, clean up

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Thanks to the efforts of two new Murray Hill residents, Edgewood Avenue South is looking a little cleaner.

Shortly after moving into a house on Trask Street last fall, April Turner and Heather Jenkins began an exploratory walk around the Murray Hill neighborhood with thoughts of how they could become involved.

“We want to be part of the community,” said Turner. “I like that we can walk everywhere.”

Noticing quite a bit of street trash along

Edgewood Avenue, the women decided to show their love for the community by helping keep it clean and get in a little exercise, too.

Every Saturday morning Turner and Jenkins bring plastic trash bags and gloves to Bold Bean Coffee and proceed to sweet-talk passers-by into picking up trash along both sides of Edgewood Avenue from Trask Street to the railroad tracks. They’ve even offered to buy their helpers a cup of coffee.

“One gentleman turned the tables on us and bought us a coffee,” said Turner.

With enough help, the weekly clean-up project could take less than an hour, but often it’s just the two women who don

gloves and tote the bags, so it becomes a two-hour job.

The women have tried different times and days to determine when they might enlist the greatest number of helpers, but so far it’s been hit or miss.

Turner has reached out to the Public Works Department to see if the city would supply the plastic bags and gloves. “It gets expensive to have to keep buying them,” she said. “But it’s important to help the community look good.”

If you are interested in being part of the weekly clean-up effort, contact Turner at florida0374@yahoo.com.



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# For the love of art

## Artist's legacy lives on in Murray Hill

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Slightly more than seven months after Jacksonville artist Craig Erskine passed away unexpectedly at age 51, his artistic legacy lives on at the Murray Hill Art Center.

On Jan. 3, family, friends, and supporters of the Art League of Jacksonville gathered to celebrate the second re-opening of the community art center which had been closed due to renovations. They dedicated the building to Erskine, who died May 21, 2015.

"I took over as director [of the Art League of Jacksonville] to keep my husband's legacy alive. We will continue to touch lives and fill the city with art," said Carol Erskine at the dedication ceremony. "He was an amazing artist. He gave up work as a creative director to start the art league because this was his passion. This is how we are keeping his memory alive."

In 2009 the Murray Hill Art Center was closed – for the first time – for three years, due to lack of funds.



Clockwise from back: William McMahan, Marielle Erskine, Carol Erskine, Amanda Erskine pose in front of a portrait of Craig Erskine, founder of the Art League of Jacksonville.

"I started coming here in 2007 to take clay lessons prior to Art League coming," said Patti Moss, artist and owner of Soma Wellness Center in Murray Hill. "At that time the city had an employee who ran the classes, then they never hired anyone else and the center closed. We spent two full years bug-ging the city, trying to get the center opened again. Because of Craig and the ALJ we were able to get this place open again."

Erskine's daughter, Amanda, said her father used his connections with Riverside Arts Market and the Cultural Council to get into the building in late 2011.

"I was in eighth grade when my dad was working really hard with the community to get momentum for an art center," said Amanda. "He was really passionate about the Art League of Jacksonville and spearheading the nonprofit."

In early 2012, Erskine, his family, and local artists re-opened the building after clearing away years of squatters' trash. Local artists Will McMahan, Roger Bailey and Patti Moss, among others, helped rake leaves out of the building, make minor repairs and clean it up enough to start classes in drawing, painting, ceramics and printmaking.

McMahan said the first art class was held Feb. 21, 2012 and he continued to teach until October 2014, when the

center was closed again – this time for extensive renovations.

The City of Jacksonville initiated a \$185,000 ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) renovation project, resulting in upgraded restrooms, new flooring, an ADA ramp, ADA parking space, and work area enhancements. The project start was delayed six months in the permitting process, finally commencing – ironically – the month that Erskine died. Final cost, after the addition of unforeseen expenses, was nearly \$225,000.

The Art League of Jacksonville operates the center in partnership with the City of Jacksonville under a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services.

The Murray Hill Art Center was the first true base of operation for the Art League, according to McMahan, who serves as building manager and instructor. The Art League currently offers arts programming in Mandarin and San Marco, as well.

"Craig's mission was to make the arts accessible to all, and to provide teaching opportunities for local artists," said McMahan. "His passing is a huge loss for the art community and for the city of Jacksonville, but his memory and vision lives on through the Art League of Jacksonville."

# Neighbors come together to tile the community beautiful

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Murray Hill could become Jacksonville's first total mosaic destination if Kate and Ken Rouh have their way.

Their artwork can be found all over Jacksonville, including Hemming Park, Main Street Park, Yacht Basin Park, West Riverside Elementary School, Daniel Kids, Haven Hospice, among other locations, so Murray Hill was a logical choice for their "Let's Tile Jacksonville" mission.

"Murray Hill is on the upswing, commercially and residential real estate-wise," said Ken Rouh. After opening a studio on Edgewood Avenue in 2014, the couple began sleuthing locations for tile installations.

Patti Moss, who had "become addicted" to mosaic tiling by participating in the Rouhs' Mirrored River installation under the Main Street Bridge on the Southbank, was eager to see something happen in Murray Hill.

Moss, who owns Soma Massage and

Wellness next door to Roux Art Studio, spoke to her landlord, Dr. Sayaf Konstantine of All Smiles Dental Center, about the possibility of turning a blank wall into a work of art. He was agreeable.

"It's a great sight-line [northbound on Edgewood Avenue] because of the setback of the building next door," said Ken. "So is Tradewinds down the road. It would be nice to do something there eventually."

Since Konstantine is Greek, Kate Rouh wove a Greek key into the mosaic, along with playful, energetic figures, and orbs in the primary colors of blue, red and yellow. She also incorporated into the design old hardware hanging on the side of the building.

During the month of January, volunteers first created and then installed tiles on the 14-foot by 10-foot wall, followed by grouting and cleaning. Many of the volunteers, like Moss and Emine Zander, are artists and have helped in previous projects. Others, like Jered and Missy Jackson, Amanda and Alex



Emine Zander and Patti Moss affix tiles and mirrors to the exterior wall of a Murray Hill dentist's office.



Kate Garcia Rouh displays the tile colors for a new mosaic installation in Murray Hill.

Haupt, April Turner and Heather Jenkins are Murray Hill residents, who want to see their neighborhood beautified.

Ken Rouh estimated the cost of the project to be roughly \$100 per square foot. To help

fund the \$14,000 project at 1147 Edgewood Avenue S., he created a GoFundMe project hoping to raise \$5,000. Sponsors will have their names listed on a plaque.

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We were so shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of a dear friend of our firm, Compassionate Families, Inc. co-founder, Margaret Mitchell. Compassionate Families offers grief recovery and support services to families of homicide victims. Her son Jeff was murdered in 1993 at Terry Parker High School. Margaret and her husband Glen were at Pajcic & Pajcic just last fall, pictured here with Michael Pajcic. Margaret demonstrated such grace and strength in her life, always helping others while dealing with her own tragedy. We offer prayers and comfort to her family and know that her legacy will live on.



It's now been 23 years since Steve and Gary Pajcic established a \$1 million endowment for certain graduates of their alma mater, Paxon High School, to attend the University of North Florida. We are proud that in that time a total of 82 students have taken advantage of this unique offer. To qualify the students must earn acceptance to UNF and maintain their grades. They also must live in the historical school boundaries of Paxon. There are currently 5 students at UNF who are Pajcic scholars. All say they are extremely grateful for having the ability to study and earn their degrees without a financial burden weighing over them.



You may call it a case of competitive climbing. Racing up the stairs to our offices on the 19th floor has become a tradition at Pajcic & Pajcic. The goal is to beat our founding partner, Steve Pajcic, who is quite speedy up the steps. This year 12 employees were able to make it just ahead of Steve. The overall winner was Antonio Kirkland with a time of 4 minutes and 30 seconds! Steve was very impressive beating well over a majority of the participants!



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



**Evening of Awareness puts spotlight on future Hope Lodge**

The American Cancer Society held an Evening of Awareness for the Richard M. Schulz Family Foundation Hope Lodge capital campaign at the Ortega home of George and Dr. Annie Egan on Jan. 19.

The Society is seeking to raise \$19.2 million to construct and operate Hope Lodge Jacksonville, a residence that will provide lodging at no cost to cancer patients visiting the Greater Jacksonville area. Over \$12 million in gifts, pledges and verbal commitments have been received, according to Kellie Ann Kelleher, Director of the American Cancer Society's Major Gifts Campaign.

Gifts of note include a \$500,000 pledge from the Bryan Family though The Henry and Lucy Gooding Endowment of The Community Foundation and an anonymous pledge of \$500,000. Carter and Cheryl Bryan are Campaign Chairs Emeritus. Other naming opportunities at varying amounts have been secured by many local families supporting the project, including the Zimmerman Family foundation, the Eric Friedheim Foundation, Mary Virginia Terry (C. Herman Terry), Mary Virginia Skinner Jones, Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Gay, Sunrise Rotary Club of Orange Park, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Shircliff, Hap and Brooke Stein, the Addison Hines Charitable Trust, Mr. and Mrs. Michael McKenny, and Mel and Debbie Gottlieb.

Photos by Brian Kaiser Photography



Susan Williams, Wyndham Manning, Hope Lodge Campaign Chair Charlie Tomm, Bunny Manning



Ralph DeVitto, Carol Tucker, Rita Joost, Therese Yarochik



George Egan, Tim Torgerson



Dr. John Montgomery, George Egan



Debbie Tanzler, Mel Toran



Dr. Emily Tanzler, Debbie Tanzler, Margaret Foerster

**Auxiliary members gather, plan for coming year**

It's a big year for the ladies of the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary as they celebrate 30 years of the annual Celebrity Chefs Tasting Luncheon. The milestone was discussed, along with many other items of business, at a recent mid-morning coffee at the riverfront home of Marilyn and Pete Carpenter.

The highlight of the meeting, aside from Danishes, scones, and other elegant pastries, was a guest appearance by Southside Baptist Pastor Gary Lee Webber. Webber shared a story about his adventures ringing the Red Kettle bell for the Salvation Army at the holidays. With a touch of humor and some important morals to his story, the pastor engaged the group about the meaning of service.

This year's big anniversary will be highlighted by Celebrity Chefs from all walks of the faith-based community in Jacksonville. It is scheduled to take place March 31, at the Prime F. Osborn Convention Center, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Sally Evans with Marilyn Carpenter and Diane Bailey



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Lecky Kalousdian with Lucy Hawkins, Mary Acosta and Linda White



Rita Joost, Mary Love Strum and Dianne Lott



JJ's Bistro Owner JJ Vigoureaux with Angelwood Executive Director, Diane Tuttle, Development Director, Tera Williams, and Director of Community Engagement, Alexis Bohrer



Jim Houston with Brett and Brooks Cannon



Darlene Sierocuk, Dee Wagner and Susanne Schuenke

## Winter Wine social raises funds for Angelwood

A supportive group gathered to taste over 15 varieties of French wines and pair selections with French cuisine at JJ's Liberty Bistro, located in The Shoppes at Ponte Vedra. Owner JJ Vigoureaux, a native Frenchman, played host to the evening's festivities that included heavy hors d'oeuvres, desserts and outstanding silent auction items. The most sought after item was the ticketed drawing for Underwood Jewelers prized Ippolita necklace and pendant; tickets are still available.

Angelwood is a local nonprofit that assists families in caring for the special needs of their loved ones through a variety of programs suited to each person's individual goals. The Winter Wine Social is one of five events the organization hosts to raise funds each year. Founded in 1993, the organization has grown from one group home for three children with developmental disabilities to serving over 300 area families. For more information visit [www.angelwoodjax.org](http://www.angelwoodjax.org), or visit them on Facebook.



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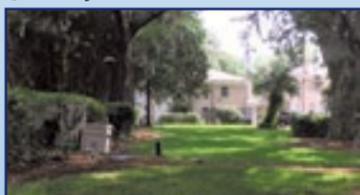


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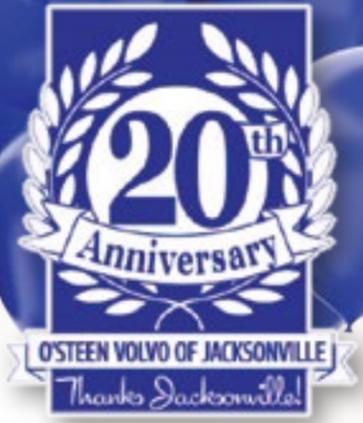
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# 'Cancer Perks' author speaks at Power to the Purple fundraiser

Lisa Lampe Rogers of Ortega was the featured speaker during the Power to the Purple fundraiser for the American Cancer Society at Intuition Ale Works in Riverside Jan. 9.

Rogers, who is currently battling Stage 4 colon cancer, is a longtime volunteer with the cancer society – including past chair of the Cowford Ball, and shared with donors the story of her cancer experience. A graduate of Episcopal High School, Rogers daily posts "Cancer Perks," uplifting messages to her Facebook friends and greater community concerning her battle with the disease.

In addition to Rogers' talk, the powerful purple evening included a silent auction,

live auction, raffle, food from Mojo's and music by the band Lucky Stiff.

The purpose of the event was to spark interest in the American Cancer Society's annual Power to the Purple walking relays, which will take place at Unity Plaza in Riverside Saturday, April 30.

"This is a community-driven event," said Cheyenne Overby, chairman of the occasion. "This event raises money for our annual The Relay For Life of Riverside team. The team fundraises year around for The American Cancer Society."

The American Cancer Society will host 24 Relay For Life events across the greater Jacksonville area this year.



Riverside's Relay For Life team includes: (Back) Lilli Behrens, Cheyenne Overby, MJ Schroff, Emily Huth, Brenda Jo Schawang, Becky Joyce and Brian Hughes; (Front): Addie Hall, Katie Robinson and Lindsey Williams



Lindsey Williams, event organizer Cheyenne Overby, Maddie Taylor, Addie Hall and Jacquie Wojcik



Peg Greene, Pam Yonge and Lilli Behrens



David and Cara Callahan with one-year-old Mikey



Emily Huth, Jeremy Cooper and Logan Sincavage with Lilly Chiquin



Gary Hall, Kemp Howell, Donna Toran and Mel Toran, American Cancer Society Senior Director of Community Engagement with Teri Howell

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**Celebrate Heart Health by wearing RED to spread awareness.**  
**Red Event Raffle:**  
 Visitors wearing red will be entered into a raffle.

# Local church supports program to keep foster siblings together



Camp Davis, Judy Davis, Jeff Matthews, executive director of Downtown Ecumenical Services Council, Cheryl and Carter Bryan, serve pizza supplied by Mellow Mushroom at a Neighbor To Family event.

By Peggy Harrell Jennings  
Resident Community News

Keeping siblings together during a foster situation is often difficult, but thanks to Neighbor To Family, Inc., sisters and brothers have a chance to stay together while plans are made for a permanent home.

An agency under Family Support Services of North Florida, Inc. and in partnership with the Department of Children and Families, Neighbor To Family provides aid and care for sibling foster children in Duval, Nassau, St. Johns and Clay counties with the goal of preserving family unity.

“Neighbor To Family-Jacksonville recruits caregivers, provides case management and therapeutic services, and provides nurturing parenting to the clients,” said Aida Seeraj, executive director of the nonprofit.

“They are a great bunch of caring women and their leader, Aida Serraj, is ‘one of a kind,’” said Judy Davis, a local

volunteer. “They work diligently, along with their foster families, to better the lives of these children, and even their parents when possible.”

Additionally, since the holidays can be an emotionally difficult time in such situations, the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Riverside and the Downtown Ecumenical Services Council came together to help make Christmas a little brighter for foster sisters and brothers.

In December, Good Shepherd Church hosted a dinner for 72 children, parents, and caregivers. The children received clothes provided by Downtown Ecumenical Services Council, as well as gifts as part of a grant from the Lucy and Henry Gooding Foundation administered by the Bryan family.

“I don’t know what Neighbor To Family would do without Good Shepherd Church and [Rev.] Jeff Reichmann,” said Davis. “They’ve just warmly opened their doors to Neighbor to Family to make this possible – another type of adoption.”

## Reinvigorating Jacksonville’s Marina Mile

If you have driven by Sadler Point Marine Center on Lakeside Drive recently, you may have noticed our renovations of the old Pier 17 building.

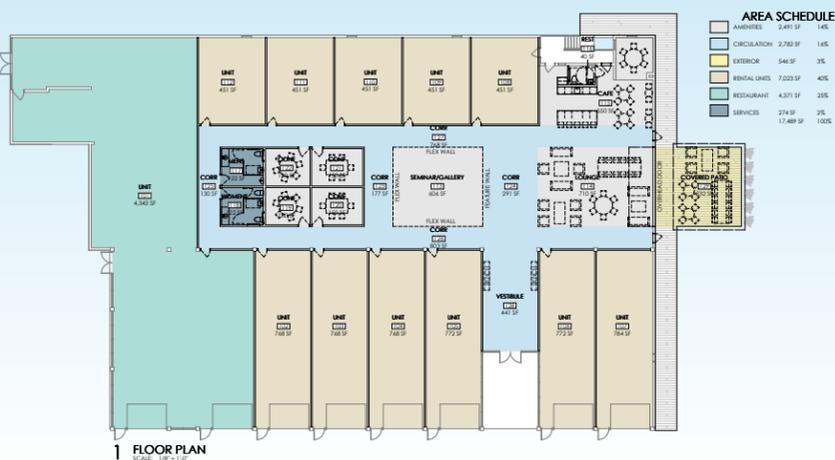
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# MOCA undergoes rebranding, unveils new look

A favorite downtown landmark has taken on a new image, a message that's fresh for the mobile age. One of Jacksonville's most prized cultural institutions continues to evolve with the times and has now reached a place where modern art meets modern technology. With over 40 percent of visitors now discovering the museum on a mobile platform, the digital front door and related logos have now been redesigned and rebranded.

With this in mind, leadership at the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville (MOCA) invited special guests and patrons to a reception titled "Have we Met?" As a play on unfamiliarity and reintroduction, the new logo and vision were shared at the special cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception Jan. 12, where patrons celebrated the new relationship with their favorite arts institution.

MOCA's new identity now spans all of its print and digital products – from signage on the building and museum directories to email communications and

social media accounts. Museum officials liken the changes to a more sophisticated, metropolitan institution, one that they feel MOCA has become over the past several years under director Marcelle Polednik's leadership.

"With this reinvented identity, MOCA Jacksonville is poised to continue its growth on a national scale, highlighting Northeast Florida as a burgeoning center for arts and culture," said Polednik, who is also the museum's chief curator. "This work is the culmination of a multiyear process of identifying our strengths and goals."

The museum logos and redesigned website were managed by the collaborative efforts of a staff creative team led by Creative Director Casie Simpson. The other contributors were Polednik, Director of Communications Denise Reagan and the dynamic web development creative duo from UNE, Pasquale Ciazzo and Marian Watters. Visit <http://mocajacksonville.unf.edu> to visit the new website and see the rebranding and new logos firsthand.



MOCA Creative Director Casie Simpson, UNF IT and web development members Pasquale Ciazzo and Marian Watters, MOCA Director and Chief Curator Marcelle Polednik, Ph.D., and MOCA Director of Communications Denise Reagan

# Lift a pint for epilepsy

Intuition Ale Works will host a Pint Night on Thursday, Feb. 25, 6-9 p.m., to raise funds for the Epilepsy Foundation of Florida's (EFOF) outreach program, "Heads Up for Epilepsy."

The goal of the "Heads Up for Epilepsy" prevention program, sponsored by The Epilepsy Foundation of Florida, is to raise awareness by educating the community on the importance of helmets and bicycle safety. By providing helmets and fittings to the community, it will help prevent head injury, which is a leading cause of epilepsy, especially in children.

The free event will feature a Beer Basket Giveaway donated by European Street Café and a food truck. The first 20 people to enter will receive a one of a kind, limited edition pint glass, provided by Renaissance Pools & Spas. Intuition Ale Works will donate \$1 of each pint sold from the events proceeds to the EFOF.

To obtain more information on the prevention and education programs, contact the local EFOF office at (904) 731-3752 or visit [www.efof.org](http://www.efof.org).



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# Public schools served well by local churches, businesses

## CONSISTENT SERVICE COMES FROM THE HEART

By Kate A. Hallock, Resident Community News

Long before Hillary Clinton popularized the phrase “it takes a village” in her 1996 so-named book, the proverb existed in different forms in many African languages. The emphasis on familial and societal relationships stresses the coming together of community to raise a child.

Locally, business and church leaders are putting the village concept into effect, providing supplies, funds – as well as personal time – at a number of public schools to ensure that every child gets a chance to have a quality education.

### CHURCH VOLUNTEERS BUDDY UP WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN

Despite having its own large day school to support, Riverside Presbyterian Church also champions local public schools. The church is a founding member – along with Trinity Lutheran Church, Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, and Riverside Avenue Christian Church – of Children’s Enrichment Workshop (CEW), which provides after-school enrichment opportunities for students at Central Riverside, West Riverside and Fishweir Elementary Schools.

Started in the late 1990s to provide a safe, loving environment for area school children, each congregation in CEW focused on a different activity. Riverside Presbyterian coordinates a basketball league, while Trinity Lutheran funds male and female coaches and a bus to transport the children from schools to the churches. Riverside Avenue Christian Church provides an after-school art component and Good Shepherd offers music, plus holds an after-school computer class.

The four congregations also hold a Teacher Appreciation Luncheon before school begins each fall, giving teachers from those elementary schools classroom and art supplies.

Additionally, for nearly 20 years Riverside Presbyterian Church has also provided mentors for West Riverside Elementary, relaunching the program this year with a new name: Lunch Buddies.



Kindergartener Cody Green with Lunch Buddy Laura Crooks at West Riverside Elementary School

One adult is paired with one student and they meet during that student’s lunch time in the school building to talk or play games, providing positive adult attention for students who might need a little extra encouragement.

“The students appreciate having a Lunch Buddy,” said Jean Grant-Dooley, RPC program co-coordinator with Bud Para. “And the volunteers enjoy meeting with a young person. We have 14 Lunch Buddies and eight more waiting to be matched up.”

The volunteers take a mentoring class provided by the Jacksonville Children’s Commission and go through a background check.

### YOUNG CHURCH INVESTS SELF IN COMMUNITY

One of the tenets of The District Church is a commitment to serve local public schools. Financial, moral and physical support are given to Ruth Upson, Central Riverside and West Riverside Elementary Schools, and to Robert E. Lee High School, where the members worship each Sunday in the auditorium.

The young congregation, just barely over three years old, grew steadily from a small group of 12 meeting in Pastor Bettis Boyd’s living room to more than 200 who worship and serve. Even while in the church’s early stages of formation, it began partnering with Ruth Upson Elementary. Before school began last August, 50 volunteers prepared the school grounds for students and staff.

“Throughout the year we also



Volunteer paints railing at Ruth N. Upson Elementary School.

financially partner with the school to help provide for the needs that Principal [Theresa] Stahlman believes will most help their students and staff. We have been able to provide things like sanitary



Volunteers from The District Church held a Back-to-School Clean Up Day at Ruth N. Upson Elementary School

wipes for the cafeteria to stay clean and to teach kids responsibility, as well as a reward field trip for students who performed well on their testing,” said Meagan Mayo, director of operations

at The District Church. “It’s truly an honor to be able to come alongside the leadership at Ruth Upson as they educate, serve and care for the children of the Murray Hill neighborhood.”

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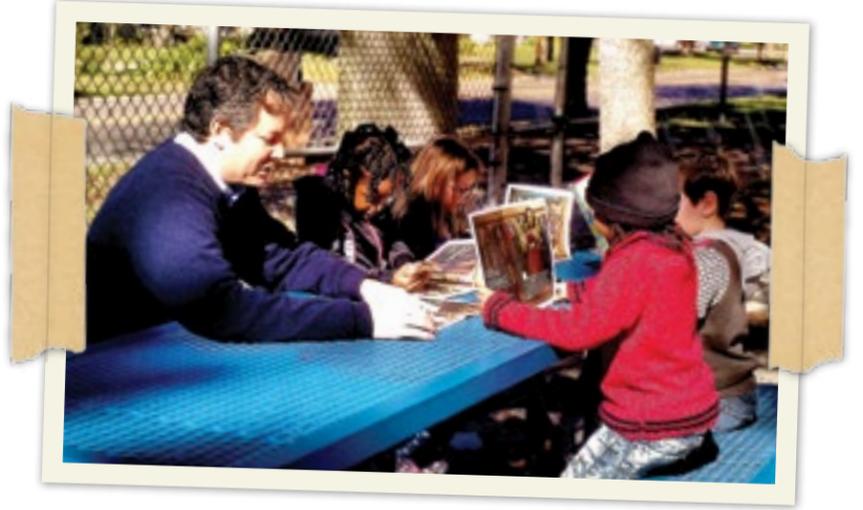
In an effort to increase literacy and instill an interest in reading among students, Dixon Hughes Goodman's (DHG) Jacksonville office partners with West Riverside Elementary School in a student literacy program called Dreamkeepers.

As part of the program, 17 professionals from the public accounting firm visit West Riverside Elementary once a week to read chapter books aloud to groups of three to four kindergarten to second grade students, who are selected to participate based on teacher recommendation. The books are selected according to reading level and interest.

Additionally, DHG makes a monetary

contribution so each child can receive their own copy to begin building a home library after the groups finish reading a book. As students go through more books with the DHG volunteers, their home libraries continue to grow.

"We've seen great success with this program and as much as we believe to have impacted these children, our staff has been equally moved by the experience," said Rachel Olivera, DHG marketing coordinator. "In fact, we have gathered interest from other companies who want to participate at West Riverside Elementary and other schools, which is great because that was really our intent."



Professionals from the public accounting firm of Dixon Hughes Goodman visit West Riverside Elementary once a week to read chapter books aloud to small groups of kindergarten to second grade students.

'ASK, DON'T TELL' A BETTER APPROACH TO SCHOOL SUPPORT



Ruth N. Upson Elementary School dance

For more than a dozen years, Murray Hill Baptist Church has reached out to Ruth N. Upson Elementary School with outstretched hands and a policy of 'ask, don't tell.'

"From the start, our approach was to offer whatever help we could versus going to the school to tell them what we wanted to do for them," said Stacie Ponton, children's minister at the church. "This has led to many different actions - both small and large - and has been a life-changing adventure for our membership."

In April 2003, Ponton began to steadily develop a relationship with the Murray Hill-based elementary school and when school began in 2004, the church collected school supplies specifically requested by Dr. Theresa Stahlman, school principal. Later Murray Hill Baptist Church began donating back-to-school supplies for the teachers as well.

Members of the church also give time, listening to children read, helping with math, assisting in classrooms, the media center and the school office, and joining the PTA, where Ponton has served for the past 10 years.

The church also financially underwrites some of the school's events, such as a Festival of Nations, the Arts Showcase, the Fall Festival, and more.

"Our deacons and staff lead a community prayer event before school begins in the fall and again in January," said Ponton. "Over 20 members and school staff voluntarily meet on a Sunday afternoon to pray for the coming semester. We have prayed and labored for the students and staff consistently through the years, and we continue to look for ways to encourage and participate."

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# LOVE FOR COMMUNITY AT HEART OF CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

By Marian Johns and Kate A. Hallock, Resident Community News

Wanting their community at large to be the best it can be for all residents is just one of many reasons donors support a variety of capital campaigns. Sometimes personal tragedy prompts the desire to donate, but whatever the underlying reason, several area nonprofits will see the seeds of their capital campaigns begin to sprout, and even bear fruit, this year.

From new facilities for the homeless and for abandoned pets to temporary housing for families undergoing medical care in Jacksonville, supporters share why these projects are near and dear to their hearts.



### Winston Family YMCA

**Project:** New community health and fitness facility in Riverside  
**Goal:** \$22 million, launched in 2014  
**Milestone:** Almost 90% funds raised, facility to open summer 2016

## New Y considered 'game changer' in community health

Children in the Central and West Riverside Elementary School neighborhoods will be among the additional 5,000 who will benefit from literacy summer enrichment, leadership development, health-focused and other youth development programs, according to John Baker, YMCA of Florida's First Coast chairman of the board of trustees.

"For the health of the First Coast, particularly our underserved communities, the new Winston Family YMCA is a game changer," said Baker, of Avondale. "All community members will have access to the new Luther and Blanche Coggin Healthy Living Center, which offers Y and Baptist Hospital programs and services that promote good health and will increase access to quality care and services."

Ortega resident Mike Kelly echoed Baker's sentiments about the city's youth. "The new Winston Family YMCA is a

bold and iconic addition to the bustling Riverside Avenue corridor. Those who support the Winston Y – whether as a member, volunteer or donor – are playing an important role in strengthening our greater Jacksonville community," said Kelly, YMCA of Florida's First Coast chairman of the board of directors. "Through this support, you're helping to ensure all community members have access to programs that focus on healthy living, youth development and social responsibility – three areas that are key to any community's quality of life."



## More rooms in the House

With three sons, and grandchildren, the Bryan family of Ortega has sympathy for families who face the prospect of being separated while caring for a seriously ill child in another city, and therefore have been tremendous supporters of the Ronald McDonald House for many years.

"We recognize the importance of this incredible mission to help keep families with sick children together when they find themselves in Jacksonville for exemplary medical care," said J.F. Bryan. "We are honored to be a part of this incredible project."

Seeing the passion others have put into supporting and serving the Ronald McDonald House hit a nerve with Steve

and Sue Day, putting a special meaning on Jesus' admonition, "Go and do likewise."

"We have been familiar with the nature of the Ronald McDonald House mission for many years. As Jacksonville develops as a tertiary medical center, many families find themselves in dire need for a "home away from home," said the San Marco couple. "We read about the need for financing to complete the House expansion, and it hit us both that we should help. After Carol Harrison provided us a tour, we were knocked over by the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff and volunteers. We both felt that so many folks giving so much of their time and resources spoke volumes about the mission, and that very night we decided to do what we could to help make the expansion a reality."

**Ronald McDonald House Jacksonville**

**Project:** Ronald McDonald House renovation and expansion  
**Goal:** \$13 million, launched in 2010  
**Milestone:** Almost 90% funds raised, portions of facility re-opened November 2015

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## Triumph over tragedy 10 years later

Plans are underway for a grand opening celebration when the Jacksonville Humane Society opens its new headquarters in April 2017, 10 years after a devastating fire destroyed its main building and killed 86 animals.

But JHS Board Vice President Lisé Everly is rightfully proud of the amazing work done by Jacksonville Humane Society staff in temporary buildings for the past nine years.

“Not only is JHS nationally celebrated for our work, we also adhere to the highest level of financial management and transparency. We were recently given a 4-Star rating by Charity Navigator for the third year in a row. We do all of this out of substandard facilities, and I can’t wait to see the amazing things we can do with the new shelter,” said Everly, of Riverside.

The launch of the Campaign for a Compassionate Community was enthusiastically supported by many generous donors,

including Michael Munz, President of JHS Board of Directors, and JHS Board Member and Campaign Chair Linda Stein, who each pledged \$1 million.

“Some of the most well-known philanthropists in Jacksonville have made gifts to help build the new shelter and education center. They understand, as we do, that the shelter will be a reflection of the compassionate, animal-loving community we have here. They also know that JHS is more than a shelter – it is a vital community resource,” said Munz, a San Marco resident.

Just over the halfway point in the campaign, Stein is ceaseless in her efforts to raise funds to take care of the community’s homeless pets.

“The Jacksonville Humane Society is nationally recognized for its work that enables Jacksonville to be a no-kill community. David and I felt strongly that the animals deserve a home that reflects that level of excellence,” said Stein. “We have made amazing progress, but there are still funds left to raise. We encourage others to join us by making a gift to this once in a lifetime project.”



### Jacksonville Humane Society

**Project:** Brand new animal shelter

**Goal:** \$15 million, launched in 2014

**Milestone:** Over 50% funds raised, facility to open April 2017



## Independence is key to achieving goals

Caring for a “differently abled” child, as Kit Thomas puts it, includes the very real worry of that child’s future when the parents are gone. For Thomas, The Arc Jacksonville Village will lay some of her fears to rest.

“We, like so many other parents of a ‘differently abled’ child, worry about Betsy’s future after we are gone. Even though she has sisters who are good to her, we want Betsy to have a place that she can call her home...a safe and nurturing neighborhood she can return to after work, and friends to socialize with,” said Thomas of San Marco. “The Arc Jacksonville Village is the answer! We are so grateful to Arc Jacksonville and the many community philanthropists for

making this dream become a reality for so many individuals and their families.”

Joyce Eyrick also rejoices her child will have an opportunity for an independent and fulfilling life.

“As a parent, the community support for The Arc Jacksonville Village has been an affirmation that individuals with developmental disabilities are capable of living independently and achieving whatever their individual goals may be,” said Eyrick of Ortega. “Recognition of this is such a vital step for removing barriers and opening up future possibilities. What a blessing for the entire Jacksonville community.”

Part of the blessing can be attributed to the Davis family, which has fond memories of their mother’s generosity and caring nature for the homeless, the elderly homebound, and for battered

women and children. They chose to honor her memory by supporting The Arc Jacksonville Village.

“My mother, Mary Lou Davis, always cared for folks who were seeking to become independent to make a future for themselves,” said Ben Davis of Avondale. “That is what The Arc Jacksonville Village is about. Diana and I believe Mom will be pleased she inspired our gift to dedicate the Village Community Center in her memory.”

For one local philanthropist, love for the members of her community drives her passion for giving. Delores Barr Weaver wanted to make sure that residents of The Village didn’t flounder when faced with a temporary halt in income.

“My support of The Arc Jacksonville Village is based on my belief that independence is an important factor in everyone’s

### The Arc Jacksonville Village

**Project:** Affordable, independent-living apartment neighborhood for up to 120 adults

**Goal:** \$23 million, launched in 2012

**Milestone:** More than 90% funds raised, facility to open April 2016

life. The Arc Jacksonville Village will offer that independence. Village residents will be working at jobs in the community but just like all of us, they need a ‘rainy-day fund’ when faced with an illness or loss of a job. Thus, establishing an endowment that will be available to help residents weather a time of financial hardship was important to me,” said Weaver of Riverside.

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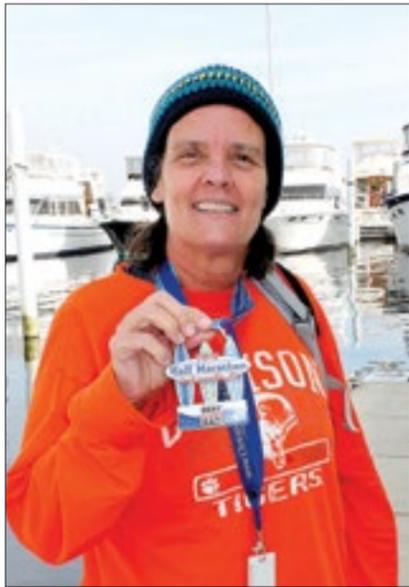
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# Race runners dash through fog

Fog gave an eerie feel to the course as participants chose between a 5K, 10K or half marathon trek from Metropolitan Park through downtown, along the Riverwalk through Riverside and Avondale during the Best Damn Race half marathon Jan. 16 in Riverside.

Sponsored by Best Damn Race CEO Nick Zivolich of Tampa, the event differs from other running competitions in that its unique registration process allows participants the opportunity to register for as little as \$1, giving athletes of all levels an opportunity to race regardless of income level, according to the race website.



Della Ebersole proudly shows off her medal before heading to the hot tub at the Marina at Ortega Landing.



PRS Triathlon Club members Robert and Erin Newell, Keri Dennis and Leona Foxworth cheer on the runners along Riverside Avenue during the Best Damn Race half marathon Jan. 16 in Riverside.

# Business owner gets serious about heart health for love of company and family

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

When he began to experience palpitations, Gary Register did not ignore the symptoms or the recommended treatment for atrial fibrillation (Afib), the most common type of abnormal heart rhythm and a leading cause of stroke.

Because he loved his family and his company, Register, 68, knew he would have to do something that would help ensure he could care for both of his lifelong loves well.

The Avondale resident runs J. Register Company, a local roofing business he started with his wife, Joanne, nearly 40 years ago. A father of three sons, Register manages about 50 employees, most of whom have worked for him 15 to 20 years.

The businessman knew ignoring his Afib symptoms could result in a serious health problem and create upheaval in the business.

Shortly after developing Afib in 2014, Register sought care and received a catheter ablation – a non-invasive procedure – at St. Vincent’s Riverside. Register also took his long-term health to heart and went one step further by committing to a lifestyle change through the Ornish Reversal Program, recommended by St. Vincent’s physicians.

As part of the program, Register changed his diet and found that cutting back on fish, chicken and nuts was not easy. A self-proclaimed “BBQ King,” Register also knew he had to adjust his orders when eating at Mojo No. 4, one of his favorite restaurants.

“I know you are thinking, this is a BBQ joint, but they have good sides such as collard greens, mashed potatoes, corn and green beans,” said Register. “The sides are probably not fat free, but I can eat them and be perfectly satisfied without the meat.”

He also learned to split orders with his wife, Joanne, whose diet also changed a good bit as a result.

While Joanne does not have a formal exercise regimen, Register works out five



Gary and Joanne Register

times a week at Riverside fitness club. “I do one hour cardio, bike and treadmill, and 20 to 30 minutes on the weight machines,” he said.

After addressing diet and exercise, Register knew he had to tackle stress management, something he found difficult to find time for.

“I think my biggest stress relief is spending time with my beagle, Huckleberry,” he said. “I committed to join a yoga class, but have not done that as of yet.”

Although group support is part of the Ornish program, Register’s wife said she did keep an eye on him secretly. “I did not nag him as this would have made everything so much more painful,” said Joanne. “His accountability was his group, not me.”

Nor do they “talk much shop” at home, something that could increase stress. “We have completely different areas of responsibility,” Joanne said. “We now have our son in the business to carry a lot of the stress.”

For Register, getting and staying healthy is a sign of love. For Joanne, it is the best Valentine’s Day gift ever.

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# Going the Distance for Customers of All Skill Levels

When Dan Wilson began training over six years ago in competitive endurance sports, he never imagined the toughest part of becoming an Ironman would be leaving a corporate career to run the uncharted course of the entrepreneur.

While brainstorming one day about his desire to forge a new path, he began soul-searching for the way to turn his passion for sports into a business. As it turns out, his search eventually led him to a local storefront in Avondale and a build-out for a unique business concept not known to most consumers in Northeast Florida.

“One day I was finally ready to take the leap and jump into something that would finally make me happy,” he said. “I sat down at my computer and searched ‘Triathlon Franchise’...and there it was.”

Wilson discovered Endurance House online, a franchise that offers a one-stop shopping experience for endurance athletes and others seeking a unique retail destination. The pillars of the business are not based in pushing products and sales, but rather, delivering outstanding customer service, growing camaraderie, and building friendships. The mission statement of the company spoke to Wilson, it reads— to provide gold standard guest service for triathletes, runners, walkers, and athletes of all abilities in a genuine and encouraging atmosphere.

Echoing the tenets of the founders, Wilson is dedicated to the core values and has had experiences in his own shopping excursions that left him feeling ignored and often times deflated. “I want to show the customer that no matter what their skill level or fitness goals, we will serve them with respect and understanding— not intimidation.”

The best part about the new concept is the opportunity that Wilson had to hand-pick his staff for the new store. “I think it’s important in the culture [of business and customer service], in the process of hiring, that we have teachers and former coaches...those that understand how to help all skill levels and abilities.” Wilson wants to be clear that you don’t have to be a super athlete to shop, that’s why he’s focused on creating a place to learn, inspire others and simply enjoy good company.



From customer service to the clean atmosphere, one that includes a fireplace and lounge, the store exhibits an inviting place to shop and explore. Endurance House delivers an entirely new experience to athletes in Northeast Florida by offering a plethora of specialized equipment and technology under one roof. It will serve the young aspiring kid down the street as well as the needs of the extreme athlete preparing to board the plane for Kona to compete in the Ironman World Championship.

No longer will the multi-sport athlete have to travel to one store for shoes, one for gels and recovery products, another for the bicycle and yet another for a specialized wetsuit, better yet, online when something is unavailable. According to Wilson, “It was all too often an exhausting experience to shop for multiple products in town,” he continued, “...and who wants to try and

buy a specialized wetsuit online?”

In order to get to the triathlon one had to go through a shopping triathlon, this is now a thing of the past for area athletes. Helping to solve that problem for so many who enjoy the active lifestyle that endurance athletes maintain fuels Wilson’s fire for the growth of Endurance House.

### The crucial component— the right ‘fit’

From running shoes to bicycles, race tires, specialized wetsuits, gels and supplements, recovery products, compression socks and gear, the needs of each athlete differ. With this in mind, the shop will be a destination for active individuals of all stripes who seek the right fit for their needs.

By utilizing a unique set of systems offered at Endurance House, knowledgeable fitness consultants help customers analyze their gait, posture and other important traits and habits. The Endurance House training tools start with a FREE, no obligations total body movement evaluation on a treadmill with an iPad interface and proprietary app integration. This program, titled Personalized Movement Profile (PMP), enables the consultant to advise a personalized approach to your equipment. From fitting to the test drive, a history can now be incorporated in order to facilitate the achievement of goals.

Another outstanding and unique sample of the equipment integrated into the Endurance House experience is the Guru Bike Fitting System. This interactive, computer-controlled riding experience allows the cyclist to pedal while riding adjustments are being made, in one fluid session, without interruption. A revolutionary rider scan analysis and comprehensive fit report are just the tip of the iceberg for cyclists, as they are then ready for the dynamic bike fitting session.

It’s time to get ready for this new groundbreaking concept that’s coming to your area and there’s so much more in store. Get in to Endurance House for their community open house planned for February 19th so you can reach your fitness and lifestyle goals.

More information about Endurance House can be found online at [www.endurancehousejax.com](http://www.endurancehousejax.com) and you can contact a representative by phone at 904-501-3143. The shop is located in the Shoppes of Avondale at 3562 St. Johns Avenue between Biscottis and the Florida Creamery.



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# Instruments for Change lives up to name

By Vince Iampietro and Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

Given the opportunity to take piano lessons at age five, Jeff Smith never forgot the thrill of his first recital. In high school he was encouraged to learn all of the percussion instruments and inspired by his band director to become a music teacher.

Now, as Duval County Public School District (DCPS) Director of Arts, Smith finds himself in a unique position to make music a reality for the district's underserved music students.

As a first step toward ensuring all public school students have the same access to an arts education, Smith visited 50 schools throughout Duval County to assess their needs. Though a shortage of band instruments arose partly from an expansion of the district's secondary music program, Smith realized some students couldn't afford to buy, or even rent, their own instruments.

"I was looking through the requests of teachers and the cost of instruments – I'm a bargain hunter – and I said, 'What resources do we have that can help get instruments into the hands of kids?'" said Smith. "I hate to say no – I believe in meeting the needs of everyone, and I couldn't look into a student's face and say 'No, you can't have an instrument.'"

To orchestrate a solution, Smith researched how the Barry Manilow Music Project, and Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, help provide disadvantaged school students with needed instruments, then he came up with a plan.

Working with DCPS Superintendent

Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Smith held a press event in November 2015 to express the public schools' need for instruments to the community at large.

DCPS partnered with the Jacksonville Symphony, Jacksonville Public Education Fund, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, Riverside Fine Arts Association, Music Time and Florida Blue, to increase public awareness of the students' musical needs.

Called "Instruments for Change," the program's first drive took place in December 2015, with many community partners participating by providing instrument drop-off points, education, and collaboration in order to bring awareness to the Jacksonville community at large. Donated instruments are reconditioned as needed by contracted technicians.

"I started receiving phone calls, partners started receiving instruments, and people were sharing the idea over social media," said Smith, who stated enrollment in secondary instrumental music programs has grown from 3,000 students in 2010 to over 6,300 students this year. "Our Superintendent and School Board are committed to supporting arts education, but we need the support of the community to meet growing demand and help provide instruments for hundreds of students who need them."

As a major player in Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville Symphony is proud to provide music education, along with instrument drop-off points for the school district and Instruments for Change. "We're excited the Duval School District is growing its music programs, and we're glad to be



Jeff Smith at Instruments for Change table, with donated instruments, at the Times-Union Performing Arts Center before a recent Christmas concert.

part of it," said Amy Rankin, Jacksonville Symphony Director of Public Relations.

Both the Symphony and Riverside Fine Arts offer vouchers for certain performances within their venues when cleaned, gently used instruments are donated.

For advanced students ready to pass a competitive audition, the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestra provides in-depth music studies while helping young musicians develop real-world orchestral skills.

## Music education matters

"No students should lack opportunity because they can't afford it, and this is a great first step," said Deirdre Conner, Director of Advocacy & Communications for the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, who explained how the fund plays its part with Instruments for Change.

"Research shows arts education fosters academic achievement," said Conner, of Riverside. "This is a great way to make the arts available for students; children, wherever they are, no matter their background, can get a musical education."

When it comes to the importance of music education for school-age students, Darnell Smith, Florida Blue's North Florida Market president, echoed Conner. "Studies show that students who participate in performance ensembles stay in school longer, and receive better test scores. That's why we're excited to be part of this," he said. "We understand how much the arts contribute to a strong community, and we very much want to be part of that."

"We think it's important to get involved with other organizations to bring culture to the city," said Lucas Meers, Development Coordinator for Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, which served as one of the many

instrument drop-off points for Instruments for Change. The zoo is part of Jacksonville's Cultural Fusion Group, whose mission is to create unique offerings through collaborations, with the goal of heightening expectations for valuing culture in the community while helping each organization become stronger and more impactful.

San Marco resident Olga Bayer, who provides community relations for the Jacksonville Public Library, said nearly 50 instruments which were dropped off at six branches in December, and the Symphony Guild also donated 40 instruments. To date, Instruments for Change has received just under 100 instruments, including violins, trumpets, trombones, saxophones, guitars, flutes, clarinets, cellos, pianos, recorders, hammered dulcimer, didgeridoo, and an accordion.

All instrument donations are appreciated, though higher-priced instruments, including tubas, French horns, euphoniums, pianos, marimbas, and xylophones are harder to come by. The instruments, including those from the Mary L'Engle Trust, are all stored in a warehouse overseen by the District Arts Office.

"Some of the instruments can be several thousand dollars, so being able to put them into the hands of disadvantaged students can make such a difference in their lives," said Smith. "I'm grateful to the community and give thanks to all the partners for making this a successful effort."

While another Instruments for Change collection drive is being planned for May 2-31, Smith said both monetary and instrument donations before then are welcome. Monetary donations offset the cost of reconditioning instruments. To donate, contact Jeff Smith at (904) 855-3349, Ext. 2, or email smithj1@duvalschools.org.



Stanton College Preparatory School baritone horn player Elias Wiley, Band director Brian Damron, tuba player Naveen Perisetla



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# Riverside Avondale Night Trolley service to expand

Beginning Friday, March 4, the once-a-month Riverside Avondale Night Trolley will run every weekend, from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority's Board of Directors approved the change in service at its board meeting Jan. 28.

Allan DeVault and Dylan Phillips, members of the Riverside Avondale Preservation board of directors, enlisted the support of community businesses to find advertising sponsors for the trolleys. Champion will be the premiere sponsor, with an advertising wrap displayed on the exterior of the trolleys.

To assist with impromptu rides, a new mobile app – MyJTA – will enable riders to purchase a \$4 one-day pass online and display a QR code to show the driver. Live tracking of the trolley, or any JTA bus, lets riders see exactly where their ride is, making dining and entertainment in the Historic District a lot easier. Mobile passes require a phone's GPS functionality to be on, and a countdown timer shows the user when the pass will expire.

# Florida Master Naturalist Program offers two ecosystem courses

Adults who want to learn more about Florida's environment may register for one or both upcoming programs through the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Florida Master Naturalist Program.

The first course, Upland Systems, is sponsored by the St. Johns County Recreation and Parks and Duval County Extension, and will be offered March 3, 5, 12, 15, 24, and 31 (day classes 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at Trout Creek Park, 6795 Collier Road, in St. Augustine. Advance registration, which closes Feb. 26, is required.

The second course, Coastal Systems, is sponsored by Duval County Extension and the North Florida Land Trust, and will be offered March 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26, and May 3 (day classes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) at the North Florida Land Trust Big Talbot Island Biological Research Station, 12134 Houston Avenue in Jacksonville. Advance registration, which closes March 23, is required.

Topics include ecosystems, key plants and wildlife, and the role of humans in shaping the environment. Individuals as well as educators and those in the eco-tourism business can benefit. Teachers may receive up to 40 hours continuing education credits. Each module includes classroom presentations, videos, field trips, and practical interpretation.

The fee for each course is \$225. For registration and program information visit [www.masternaturalist.org](http://www.masternaturalist.org) or contact Carol Wyninger at (904) 220-0232 or [wyninger@comcast.net](mailto:wyninger@comcast.net), or Ayolane Halusky at (904) 209-0348 or [ahalusky@sjcfl.us](mailto:ahalusky@sjcfl.us).

# Locally-owned health club puts socks, shoes on homeless

For the second year, City Rescue Mission and Jacksonville's Bailey's Gym partnered for a sock and shoe drive. Many of Bailey's 15 health and fitness locations participated in this event.

"A lot of people don't know Bailey's is locally owned and operated. The Bailey brothers feel passionate about helping their community, especially growing up in Jacksonville," stated Adie Starks, Director of Corporate Sales. "Our members also

help embody the spirit of giving demonstrated by the large number of donations we received this year."

Throughout the holiday season, employees and gym members were encouraged to bring in lightly worn tennis shoes and unopened packages of socks. Total donations exceeded last year's few hundred pairs of socks and shoes, to over a thousand this year.

"We are so fortunate to have great partners like Bailey's Gym. The kindness shown to City Rescue Mission and those we serve is demonstrated through their commitment to helping the less fortunate through the sock and shoe drive," stated Penny Kievet, Executive Director for City Rescue Mission.

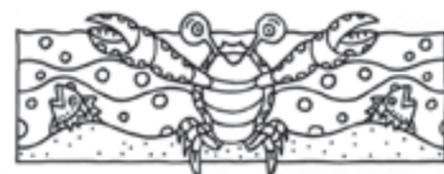


Adie Starks, Bailey's Health and Fitness director of corporate sales, poses with boxes of socks and shoes donated to City Rescue Mission.

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# LOVE IT, NEVER LEAVE IT

NEIGHBORHOODS DRAW, HOLD RESIDENTS MOVE AFTER MOVE

By Lorrie DeFrank,  
Resident Community News

There's something to be said about the comforts of a well-known neighborhood. Many residents enjoy their close-knit community and its amenities so much they wouldn't consider living anywhere else. From starter homes to family-sized abodes to retirement cottages or condos, moving up the road or down the block, for some families living in the Historic District is a lifelong passion.



Michael Pajcic and Katy DeBriere and their daughter with Anne and Steve Pajcic

## In love with the 'little village'

For over four decades, the Pajcic family has been savoring life in Jacksonville's Historic District. For Steve Pajcic and his son, Michael, attorneys with The Law Firm of Pajcic and Pajcic, the fun lifestyle means being able to ride their bicycles to work in their downtown office, through wide tree-lined streets crossing over winding creeks.

Raised in Woodstock Park on the other side of Beaver Street, Steve moved after he graduated from law school to Avondale, where he lives with his wife, Anne. Michael, his wife Katy DeBriere, also an attorney, and their young daughter live a block away. Steve's late brother, Gary, who co-founded the law firm with him, lived in the area at one time, too. Three of Gary's sons, Curt, Curry and Seth, practice with the firm and live in the historic neighborhoods of Avondale, Ortega and San Marco.

"It's like a little village that has everything you need within walking or biking distance," said Steve, who served six terms in the Florida House of Representatives and was the Democratic nominee for governor in 1986.

He said he also appreciates Avondale's diverse housing and population, architectural elegance, majestic trees, numerous accessible parks, good restaurants, and location on the river, and particularly the nice people who live there.

Michael is thankful for "neighbors who have three generations spread across adjacent properties and give my daughter a 'secret' backyard passage to her Gan and Pop's house."

The Pajcics are only the third family to live in their 100-year-old house on Montgomery Place, a one-block street that is a village in itself. "We all exchange Christmas gifts and have an annual get together where everybody brings food," said Steve. They also host at the house an annual yard golf tournament using Wiffle balls to benefit Jacksonville Area Legal Aid. "It's a nice, quiet street with good neighbors who look out for each other."

The family also enjoys the new restaurants and entertainment, shopping and cultural opportunities of nearby Brooklyn. "I've always thought that stretch of



An old photo of the Steve Pajcic family home in historic Avondale

Riverside Avenue had potential to have the most urban appeal of any residential area of Jacksonville," said Steve.

Steve credits historian Wayne Wood and organizations such as Riverside Avondale Preservation with preserving the history as well as the historic treasures of the Riverside-Avondale area. "It's

designation as an historic district and the prevention of demolition of historical properties made a real difference," he said. The only time Steve ever appeared before City Council after leaving politics was to testify in favor of the Historic District designation, "Which I think has been a huge success."

## All in the family

Five-month-old Holden Levi Podeyn is the fifth generation of his family to call 2152 Herschel Street home. He lives in the 5 Points two-story 93-year-old house with his mother, LeAnn Podeyn, and his grandmother, Orchie Lea Podeyn, who was born a few blocks away at St. Vincent's Hospital and came there as a newborn herself in April 1963.

Orchie Lea's grandmother, Orches Leoma Brown – who also went by Orchie Lea – bought the house in the mid-1950s for \$10,800 with Orchie Lea's mother, the former Freda Templeton, when they moved to Jacksonville from the Carolinas. When Freda married Forrest Hulsey, he moved in, too, and they raised their family there.

Before closing it in the late 1970s, Forrest's parents owned Forrest Bakery, which had been in three locations in the Historic District, most recently the present site of Hooshang Oriental Rugs in Avondale.

Orchie Lea's son, Richard, lives nearby,

and her other two children, Morgan and Wolfgang, live elsewhere in Jacksonville.

The family cherishes warm memories of their home on Herschel, such as the "morning room" where Freda sipped her coffee. "Back in the day all the rooms had cute little names," said Orchie Lea.

An independent gardener who does the flowers at Derby on Park and other area locations, Orchie Lea gushes about living in Riverside. "I love it. You can walk everywhere, look out the window and wave at someone, sit on the porch in the afternoon and have someone stop by to say hi, and go get a bite to eat or a beer," she said. "Everything you really want is here."

Orchie Lea also enjoys having the church she attended since childhood, Riverside Presbyterian, right on the corner; and being able to walk four blocks to the Riverside Arts Market and Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens.

LeAnn said she looks forward to raising her son in the friendly neighborhood that has good schools and nice parks. So the tradition continues with the Podeyn family.



A young Orchie Lea in front of her grandparents' bakery in Avondale.



Orchie Lea in front of her home at age 4.

*"I love it. You can walk everywhere, look out the window and wave at someone, sit on the porch in the afternoon and have someone stop by to say hi, and go get a bite to eat or a beer ...everything you really want is here."*

— Orchie Lea



Orchie Lea Podeyn, right, in front of her home with her son, Richard, daughter, LeAnn, and grandson, Holden.

## Roots going back more than a century

Fred Miller's family has deep roots in Jacksonville's Historic District that continue to grow with each generation. He and his wife, Carol, live in Old Ortega within a mile or so of their three sons, Ted, Nathan and Matthew, and their families.

Five generations of Alfred Millers – Fred is No. III – have lived there since 1910 when Fred's grandfather, Alfred Sr., moved from Tennessee to Springfield and later Riverside, and started Miller Press in 1911. Ted is Alfred Miller IV and his son Quinn is Alfred Miller V.

"Especially in a city as big as Jacksonville, it's unusual to find families who have been here for more than a century," said Carol. "We now have seven grandchildren, and our sons and daughters-in-law are raising their families alongside friends with whom they grew up in the neighborhood, so the generations are very connected."

The Miller family ran the printing company until Fred's father sold it in the mid-1980s. Growing up, Fred lived in Avondale and Venetia. His first wife, Mandy Harby Miller, who passed away in 1985, also had deep roots in the district, growing up on McGirts Boulevard on the Ortega River. The couple lived in Avondale and Ortega before renovating and enlarging a home on the river, also on McGirts.

Fred and Carol, who met through Fred Miller Group, were married 21 years ago and live in Old Ortega, where in 2007 they



Carol and Fred Miller at home on Apache Avenue



The home on McGirts Boulevard renovated by Fred and Mandy Miller.



The Avondale home where Fred Miller's mother, Betty Jane Phillips, grew up in the 1930s.

bought an interesting home on Apache Avenue that is partially historic. The main part, built in 2000, was built onto a garage apartment which was part of a parcel that dates to the 1920s.

Living three blocks from their office in Ortega Village, the Millers can walk to work. "We see old friends every day. This is such a convenient area in which to live," Carol said. "You can hop on Roosevelt

and go anywhere in town within 15 to 20 minutes. We like the quiet, very residential nature of Old Ortega, and the access to the river. We've all put down roots here and don't plan to live anywhere else."

LOVE IT, NEVER LEAVE IT

<< Feature continued from page 43

### Deep roots create lifelong bonds

Anne Burpee Rain's roots reach deeply into Jacksonville soil.

Her great-great-grandparents lived in Springfield and, as far as she knows, the first Burpee in Jacksonville was buried in Evergreen Cemetery in the 1850s.

Rain's great-grandparents moved to Riverside on King Street, her grandparents raised her father in Avondale on Hedrick Street, and she was raised in Ortega Forest where her childhood friends have become lifetime friends.

"It's pretty unique the way we tend to keep the same friends around here. I lived in other cities when I was younger, and I never found this connectedness of community except in one other place," said Rain. "I think the family bond I grew up with, the bond of neighbors and friends relying on one another throughout the years, makes me who I am today."

Her family history in the Historic Districts benefits her business as a community realtor; Rain finds the bulk of her sales in Avondale, Riverside and Ortega, but is returning, in a way, to the historic district where her ancestors settled.

"I've had a number of calls from people wanting to live in Springfield lately," she said. "The upswing is happening in there again."

No matter where the Burpee family put

down roots, they bloomed where they were planted.

"My late father, Leland Burpee, loved Jacksonville. Both he and my granddad never left," said Rain. "Why leave? It's not only one of the prettiest and safest places to live, it's full of good people with wonderful stories."

Some of those 'good people' include her father's generation. Rain marvels that her father and his friends are still close after more than 80 years.

"It's tough seeing that generation die. They were all true advocates of our community and did wonders for building what we now enjoy today," she said.



Leland Burpee's last home on the St. Johns River in Ortega, where Anne Burpee Rain now lives. Her son, Jesse Rain, started his fishing career from the family dock.



Classic Burpee family photo in the 1970s in Ortega Forest



Anne Burpee Rain's father, grandmother and mother in front of her grandparents' home in Avondale on Hedrick Street, circa 1953.



Leland Burpee's first home in Old Ortega on Shawnee Street, around 1956.

### Five homes in five blocks

Over the past 81 years, Emma Spence has lived in seven homes in Avondale and Ortega. "I bet we haven't gone five blocks," she said.

She credits the camaraderie of the "very welcoming" neighborhood with keeping her heartstrings so firmly attached there.

Mary Emma Grady was just two when she moved with her parents and siblings into a home on Talbot Street in the mid-1930s. Her grandfather, Thomas P. Grady, was the first of their family to settle in what is now the Historic District when he was transferred from Nashville by the railroad and moved to Avondale in the mid 1920s. Emma's parents, Thomas and Rose Mary Neuhoff Grady, grew up and met in Nashville, married in 1927, lived for several years in Miami, then moved to Avondale to raise their family.

When Emma was four, the family moved to Edgewood and St. Johns Avenues – the pink house, which wasn't pink then, according to Emma – where

she grew up with her two brothers and sister and where her mother lived for many years after her father died.

In 1955, Emma married Dick Spence, her brother's college buddy from Wisconsin. The couple bought a house in Westfield, which they outgrew after having two children and built a house three blocks away on Ivanhoe Road in Ortega Forest. They later built a bigger house on Long Bow Road along the canal in Ortega Forest, where they lived for more than 20 years before downsizing on the same street and staying in that house another 20 years. Last summer, because of her husband's health, they bought a townhome at Pirate's Bay, a couple of blocks away. "We've been in kind of a circle all those years," Emma said.

The youngest of their five children lives in Ortega, said Emma, who enjoyed being a stay-at-home mom in a close neighborhood. Dick works as a financial representative for Northwestern Mutual.

"We love it here. It's very neat and tidy, and we know pretty much everyone around," she said. "I would not know how to start out in a new neighborhood."



Dick and Emma Spence in their newest home in Pirate's Bay



Emma Spence's favorite home in Ortega Forest, designed by her husband, Dick



One of the five homes owned by the Spence family in Ortega Forest

# Never Too Old

Thanks to healthier lifestyles many seniors have the energy to explore new activities and hobbies, often taking up something secretly yearned for earlier in life. *Never Too Old* takes a look at senior residents who are thinking out of the box and stepping out of their comfort zones. If you know someone who has a similar story to share, send information to [editor@residentnews.net](mailto:editor@residentnews.net).

## Popular with seniors, 'new' sport taking country by storm

By Peggy Harrell Jennings  
Resident Community News

No one knows better than a chiropractor the toll an athletic life can take on the human body. Retired Avondale chiropractor David Huber, 62, has felt the effects firsthand.

An athlete his entire life, Huber has scuba dived, played tennis, practiced kung fu, ran and bicycled. "Any time a joint would wear out, I'd switch to a different sport," said Huber, who would see a peer "for the places I can't reach" when he found he needed chiropractic treatments.

Now in retirement, Huber and his wife, Margie, keep fit in the Silver Sneakers program at the YMCA. After the opening of the Ortega Family Life Center, Huber recently took up a new game – pickleball.

"It is a game of skill, not a vigorous game, and it's so much fun," said Huber. "When I first played, I hurt my neck and shoulder because I thought you were supposed to



Jan Jacobs and Dr. David Huber pair up for a game of pickleball.

smash the ball like tennis. Someone said, 'Hey, relax – don't go for every ball. There is a thing called skill – thinking it over the net, being more strategic.'"

Huber, who plays two or three times a week at the Ortega Family Life Center at Ortega United Methodist Church, said it's all about staying mobile and doing something you enjoy.

"Personally, if I'm going to exercise I want to have fun and I come away from pickleball feeling really, really good!" Huber said. "You can be lonely in a gym but playing on a team

is a great workout and a great social event."

Huber plays pickleball with other retirees at the Family Life Center and finds the game challenging. "At 62 I am a younger retiree and these older guys I play can kick my butt," he said.

### A sport made of 'leftovers'

Pickleball is drawing players from across Jacksonville, but don't feel out of touch if you've never heard of the sport. Although there are now over 2.46 million pickleball

## Open Pickleball

Pickleball is free and open to the public at Ortega Family Life Center, 4807 Roosevelt Blvd. Games are played Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information, visit [ortegaumc.org](http://ortegaumc.org), call Ginny Ray Steedley, (904) 389-5556, ext. 121 or email [ginnyray@ortegaumc.org](mailto:ginnyray@ortegaumc.org).

participants worldwide, the paddle sport came about only 50 years ago.

In 1965, three men in the Seattle, Wash. area put together whatever gear they could find – an old badminton net, some paddle ball racquets, a plastic ball – to create a game the whole family could play. Legend has it that one of their wives came up with the name because it reminded her of the term pickle boat in crew where oarsmen are chosen from the leftovers of the other boats.

Pickleball rules are made up "leftovers" from badminton, tennis and ping pong. Some terms are familiar – volley, serve and lob, but there are a few new ones – dink, poach and rally, and players should try to stay out of the kitchen, the area in front of the net.

Not as strenuous as tennis because it is played on a smaller court with a wiffle ball and a short-handled racquet, pickleball is a fun game for all ages, not just seniors. However, be forewarned, this fastest growing sport in the U.S. is habit-forming. The United States of America Pickleball Association warns, once addicted, there is no cure!

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**2 Cellos**  
February 2 at 8:00pm

**Alan Parsons Live Project**  
with The Jacksonville Symphony  
February 10 at 8:00pm

**Patty Griffin with Sara Watkins & Anais Mitchell**  
February 13 at 8:00pm

**Wild Kratts Live!**  
February 15 at 1:00pm & 4:30pm

**Foreigner**  
The Hits Unplugged  
February 20 at 8:00pm

**Adam Trent: The Futurist**  
February 21 at 3:00pm

**O.A.R.**  
February 24 at 8:00pm

**Vince Gill & Lyle Lovett**  
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**Experience Hendrix**  
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– In Memoriam –

# Hazel Monsky Wolfson

September 10, 1920 – January 2, 2016

By Lorrie DeFrank  
Resident Community News

Hazel Monsky Wolfson's dedication to her family and community, especially its children, is a legacy to be cherished. She passed away Jan. 2 at age 95 at River Garden.

She was a founding member of The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital, the hospital her late father-in-law, Morris David Wolfson, was instrumental in creating. A contemporary of Ellen Cavert, who handpicked 40 compassionate women to start The Women's Board in the 1970s, Hazel contributed her time and talents to raise money for the hospital on behalf of Jacksonville's children and their families. A breast cancer survivor, Hazel also was active in the American Cancer Society and other charitable organizations.

Beautiful, generous and determined are words frequently used to describe her.

Karen Wolfson, also a strong supporter of the hospital and a past president of The Women's Board, recalls rarely seeing her mother-in-law not perfectly dressed with makeup and jewelry. "She always looked



Hazel Monsky Wolfson

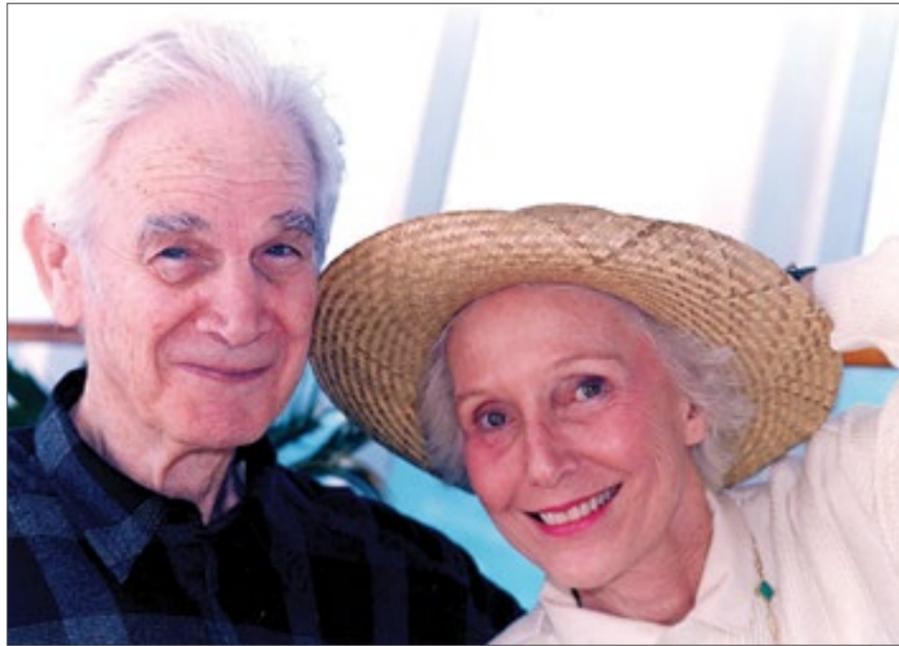
gorgeous," Karen said. "Dressing elegantly all the time was part of that era."

Hazel glowed on the inside, too. Sweet and demure with a distinctive Alabama drawl, according to Karen, she was

devoted to her husband, the late Saul Wolfson, and the causes they supported. Karen can still visualize Hazel cooking and helping in the tea room for the hospital's benefit antiques shows, "wearing a stylish leather skirt, heels and hose and carrying dirty dishes back and forth."

"She was truly a gentle woman in every way – kind, loving and a true lady," said Grace Sarber, current president of The Women's Board and Ellen's Cavert's granddaughter. "She especially loved children and helping them"

Grace said her 96-year-old grandmother was saddened by Hazel's death. "My grandmother loved her and Saul dearly and



Hazel Wolfson on a cruise with her husband, Saul

was grateful for their partnership in those early years of The Women's Board," she said.

Hazel met her husband when she was 15 on the weekend her sister married Saul's brother. She married Saul four years later. "She was totally devoted to him, as he was to her," said Karen, who is married to their son Donald. "They traveled a great deal. They enjoyed cruising and walking around Disney World."

The Wolfsons' children have fond memories of the loving woman they affectionately called GaGa MeMaw.

Born in Montgomery, Ala., to Abe and Jennie Brockman Monsky, Hazel moved to Jacksonville in 1940 when she married Saul. In addition to Donald, Hazel is survived by a daughter, Maura Wolfson-

Foster, seven grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and one great-grandson. A son, Richard, preceded her in death.

Despite the challenges of aging, Hazel never complained and unfailingly expressed gratitude to her caregivers, Karen said.

"The Wolfsons have very big hearts, passed down generationally, and Hazel is largely responsible for that," said Grace. "Jacksonville would not be what it is today without the Wolfsons."

Memorial contributions may be made through The Women's Board for the Saul and Hazel Wolfson Endowment for Pediatric Research at Wolfson Children's Hospital, 1325 San Marco Blvd., Suite 802, Jacksonville 32207, or to River Garden, 11401 Old Saint Augustine Road, Jacksonville 32258.

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# – In Memoriam – Eleanor H. King

July 26, 1914 – January 2, 2016

*By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News*

In love with music from early childhood until the day she passed away Jan. 2, 2016, Eleanor Haight King, 101, was an integral part of Jacksonville's cultural scene for almost 70 years.

In Part One of her memoir "My First Hundred Years," Mrs. King notes she was just a toddler when music entered her life. "My earliest memory is standing in a crib...my Daddy was playing piano duets with a friend. They were laughing and having such a good time that I wanted to be there," wrote Mrs. King.

As a child and teenager, Eleanor Haight performed on stage, singing, dancing and acting. When she was a junior high student, her piano teacher wrote, "She is the best student at Kirby-Smith Jr. High School and about one of the slowest among our own piano pupils, yet one of the sauciest and most talented comediennes among the Gary Ford ensemble."

In her early 30s, Mrs. King joined Friday Musicales in Riverside and re-started the Junior Friday Musicales Symphony in 1947. Shortly before she passed away, she attended the Friday Musicales Scholarship Laureates Concert and was first in line to speak with the students after the event.

"She told them exactly what she thought, giving them her advice," said Mandie McKenzie, Friday Musicales executive director. "She was really pleased with each of them, but told them things like 'You're really terrific, but you need a spark, go fall in love!'"

Mrs. King was also a member of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra's first board, a trustee of the Mary L'Engle orchestral fund benefitting students, president of the Duval County Medical Society Auxiliary, secretary of the Civic Music Association and on the Cultural Council of Jacksonville's organizing committee. A scholarship fund named in her honor assists members of the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestra with tuition.

Eleanor King was a very special friend to the Skinner-Houlihan family, who nicknamed her Elking or Elle.

"Our daughters always considered her like family; in fact, it was Eleanor who was 'on call' to stay with Greta when I went to the hospital to deliver her sister Claire," said Pattie Houlihan. "As it turned out, she was the clutch, because I couldn't find Richard's mom, Ann [Skinner]."

Houlihan's daughters became willing chauffeurs for Mrs. King when she stopped driving at age 91.

"I remember looking forward to the Thursday afternoons we'd go grocery shopping together," said Claire Skinner. "I never thought of it as a chore, but more of a play date; she'd listen attentively to all my high school gossip and sympathize with unbridled enthusiasm."

Claire's sister, Greta Skinner, agreed. "One thing I always loved and appreciated about Elking was that I always felt connected to her no matter how old or young I was," she said.

"Even moving into my teenage and adult years when conversation can become challenging between a 16-year-old and a 90-year-old, there was always an easy way to connect with Elle," Greta said. "She could relate to our stories as if she was going through the same high school boy drama with us and never made us feel as though we needed to modify our stories or take out certain details because of our age difference."

Mrs. King played duplicate bridge until her 100th birthday, stopping when her failing eyesight made it difficult. Up to her death, she watched Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy every evening while knitting caps for babies. "She didn't take calls during that hour," said her son, Raymond H. King. "You didn't dare call her then."

In addition to son Raymond, and daughter Kathryn King Conoly, survivors include 10 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and eight great-great grandchildren. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made in Eleanor's memory to the Eleanor H. King Tuition Fund of the Jacksonville Symphony Guild, C/O Mr. Ric Goodman, Treasurer, PO Box 10443, Jacksonville, FL 32247.



Eleanor Haight, cellist

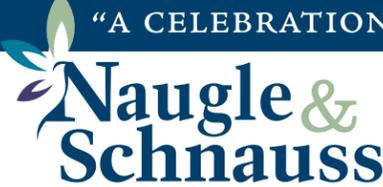


Eleanor King with Jennifer Carsillo, wife of former Jacksonville Symphony conductor Michael Butterman



Eleanor King, age 95, teaches great-great-granddaughter Danielle Urban to play piano

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# The Way We Were - George and Eleanor Carswell

By Julie Kerns Garmendia

There are many benefits to a long married life and, for George and Eleanor Carswell, one benefit is being compatibly in tune with each other after 63 years of marriage.

The deep affection and respect between the two, married in 1952 at Riverside Baptist Church, is evident. Their memories are of a beautiful day, a perfect service by Pastor James Stewart and a joyful reception at Timuquana Country Club. Since then, their marriage has the elements of an old-fashioned love story.

"It's having many interests...activities in common and doing them together. We both love music. Some of our favorite things have been singing together in church choir for years, which we still do, and traveling to Atlanta to see opera performances by the Metropolitan Opera. We like to work on our home, stay active and busy doing things - together," Eleanor said.

George Carswell and Eleanor Lanford first became friends singing in the choir and participating in the youth group at Riverside Baptist Church. Eleanor recalled George as the handsome young man who played trumpet for services and always on Easter Sunday.

"When we were young we were lucky to have a mentor who encouraged us to do and see many things and to explore our interests...that mentor was C. Edward Bryan, our longtime friend," Eleanor said.



College years, 1950-1951



60th Anniversary Portrait, 2012



Nov. 22, 1952

Bryan was the Riverside Baptist Church choir director/organist from 1942 until his death in 1977.

The lifelong romance began in 1948 when George, a student at Jacksonville University in Riverside, finally asked Eleanor, a slim girl with a lovely smile, then a Lee High junior, for a date. Their first date was a Lee High School basketball game; although they don't remember where they had dinner, they do remember that date as the beginning of an enduring love that grew from long friendship.

Eleanor, 83, moved to Jacksonville in 1934 from Georgia when she was two years old

after her father, Thomas Alvin Lanford was transferred here for his job with the Federal Reserve Bank, where he worked for 49 years. Her mother was Patricia (Garwood) Lanford, and Eleanor's only sibling was the late Barbara Patricia (Lanford) Bowers, who passed away in 2009.

The Lanford family lived in two apartments, San Juline overlooking Memorial Park and an apartment at 2055 Herschel Street, and a home at 1467 Avondale Avenue before buying their last home on Van Wert Avenue in 1954.

Eleanor attended West Riverside Elementary, John Gorrie Junior High School and was a 1950 Lee High School graduate. She was among the first class of freshman students to attend the new Jacksonville University campus in Arlington. Eleanor finished the last semester of her sophomore year at the University of Florida before the couple married in fall 1952.

Meanwhile, George, 84, was also originally from Georgia. He moved with his parents, George Franklin Carswell, Sr. and Katherine Louise (Williams) Carswell, to an Ingleside

Avenue home when he was in elementary school. He attended West Riverside Elementary and John Gorrie Junior High School two years ahead of Eleanor.

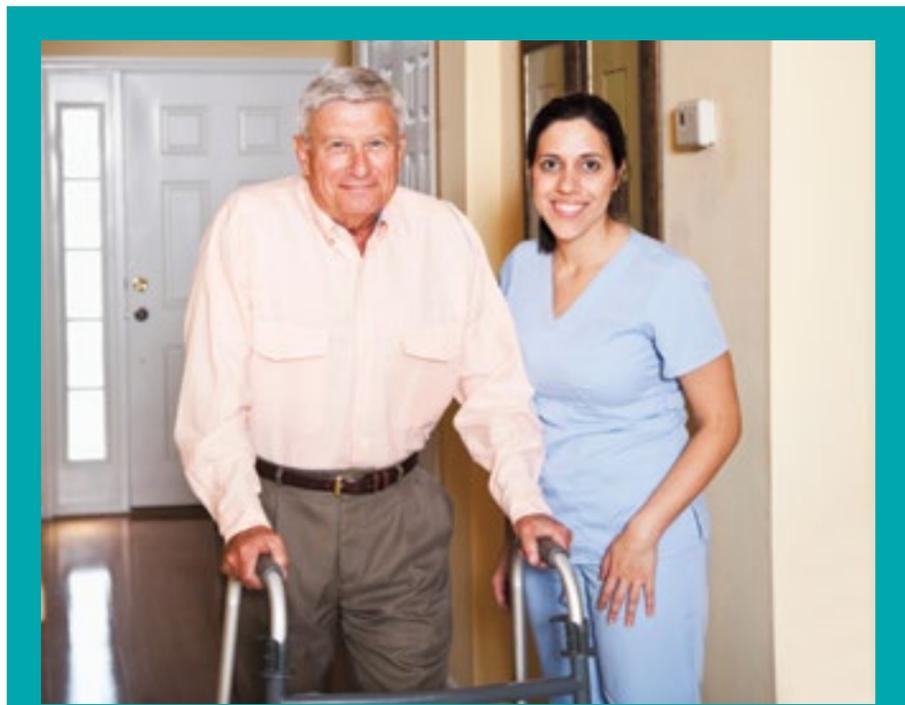
George started work for the Federal Reserve Bank downtown at age 17 immediately after graduating from Lee High School in 1948. He completed many intensive law and graduate banking courses, was a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, attended JU two years, then transferred to UF where he graduated with a degree in business administration in 1952.

Upon graduation, George went to work for the civil service in security screening. He then worked for Prudential Insurance until 1960 when he was called to active military duty, stationed in Ft. Meade, Maryland.

After his military duty ended, George returned to Prudential, before taking a job in accounting with Independent Life Insurance until his 1997 retirement.

While her youngest son was still in elementary school, Eleanor served as a

Continued on page 49



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substitute teacher at Ortega Elementary during the late 1960s and early 1970s. She especially remembers Principal Velva Scheibel who insisted on daily music and art education along with academics.

“One year she coordinated a student performance of the opera *Madame Butterfly*...they made scenery, costumes, sang simple songs and had speaking parts. The children loved it, there was a photo in the *Florida Times-Union* and people still remember that performance,” Eleanor said.

The couple’s first homes were Avondale apartments until 1957, after which they bought a new home on Brookridge Road where they raised three children and lived until 1983.

Two of the Carswell children now live in Atlanta: daughter Katherine Patricia Milligan and husband Rodney have two children; son Thomas Franklin Carswell and wife Brenda (Hankins) and their two children. Lee Edward Carswell and his wife Debora (Morgan) of Orlando also have two children.

One Sunday afternoon in 1983 the couple were leisurely driving through Avondale when they spotted a For Sale sign in a yard near her parents’ home on Van Wert Street. They bought the 1924 two-story brick home and moved to 1820 Van Wert.

A great loss to Eleanor was the 2009 death of her dear friend, Margaret Alice “Peggy” (Miller) Young. Eleanor and Peggy were best friends and classmates from second grade through college at JU. Like the Carswells, Peggy and her late husband Rev. George Dibrell Young, Jr. were longtime sweethearts, married 57 years.

“I miss Peggy, we had such a special friendship. I lived on Avondale Avenue when she lived on Tivoli Street growing up. We rode bikes everywhere and swam together at the Good Shepherd Pool. We’d leave early and be gone all day by ourselves. We had the freedom to explore, be independent and do activities on our own....which is unheard of for children today. That is very sad to me. On Saturdays we’d each get \$1 to spend. We

rode the bus for five cents downtown to the Florida Theatre, to watch a five-cent movie or the children’s matinee movies. We loved to sing along with the children’s songs and follow the bouncing ball on the movie screen. The organ would rise up out of the floor and Jimmy Knight would play organ music. Afterwards we went next door to a photography booth where we sat inside and it cost 15 cents for a photo. We ate at the Krystal’s, then wandered in the dime store to buy something small like lipstick. Our very last stop was always the Donut Machine in Cohen’s, where we got two donuts for 10 cents. They had delicious homemade candy for sale, too,” she said.

The Carswells have been members of Riverside Presbyterian church and its choir for 33 years. Eleanor plays bridge, knits and sews. There have been several beloved Carswell dogs; their current canine is a Chinese Crested long-haired shelter dog, Ming Tu, who seems to have no idea she is a dog.

## Elvis rocks with local seniors



Bill Puskas, an Elvis Presley impersonator gives a scarf to Glenda Carter, a resident at St. Catherine Labouré Manor.

Elvis impersonator Bill Puskas gave residents at St. Catherine Labouré Manor a little thrill on Jan. 19. His performance included tossing silk scarves to residents as he performed some of The King of Rock and Roll’s well-known songs.

“We frequently have musical guests visit, but Elvis was a special treat and we are thankful to Johnson & Johnson Vision Care for bringing him here,” said Maureen Gartland, Vice President and Administrator, St. Catherine Labouré Manor. “You could tell many of our residents had fond memories of Elvis, and we are thrilled to help them relive these great memories while also making new ones. From our musical programming to our new pet therapy program and so much more, our goal is to maintain a vibrant community with plenty of activities for our residents.”



Carswell family, 1975: Eleanor, George, Lee, back: Tom and Kathy



Eleanor, left, with her mother and big sister, Barbara



1955, with daughter Kathy

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# Jr. Residents

## New tree to shade playground

A 12-foot live oak tree was planted on the front playground of St. John's Presbyterian Kindergarten and Preschool by Kay Hazlehurst, executive director, and Gai Gai Quarterman, as part of the Jax Digs Trees Campaign. The tree will supply shade and a resting place for years to come. Students and staff offered a prayer for the tree's well-being in a short ceremony.



## Bottle-washing Avondale mom helps turn trash into art

Cathleen Murphy, whose son, Tom, is a sophomore, and daughter, Catie, a freshman at The Bolles School, took part in the preparation of a massive environmental sculpture at the San Jose campus last month by washing bottles.

"As a parent, I am very proud of Bolles commitment to the environment and this bottle installation project is a wonderful example of how students can thoughtfully address an issue, start a conversation and effect change," said Murphy, Green Team Chair on the Bolles Parents Association Executive Council.

The large installation on Bolles Hall was a combined lesson between a sculpture class and an Honors Environmental Science class, with assistance from the Parent Association Environmental Committee and the Student Environmental Club.

The sculpture is a visual reminder of plastic waste, and depicts the number of plastic bottles generated each week on the campus. Students worked for several months prior to the installation, stringing more than 2,600 bottles set for recycling.

"The project was quite an undertaking and I think everyone involved should be very pleased with the outcome and very proud of the project," Murphy said. "It has created quite a buzz on campus and sparked some important conversations



**Above:** Trish Haskell, Cathleen Murphy and Laura Watts with bags of plastic bottles they helped clean for an environmental sculpture at Bolles School.

**Right:** Bolles Hall draped with plastic bottles representing a week's worth of recycling at the school.



about plastic waste. Simple things like carrying a reusable water bottle and using the water bottle filling stations on campus can have a big impact on the amount of plastic waste generated."

Visual art instructor Jim Smith, a renowned local steampunk assemblage artist whose work has been shown internationally, helped direct the students' vision for the Bolles Hall piece.

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# Ben Franklin presents at 10th annual historical reenactment

## Jr. Residents

By Kate A. Hallock  
Resident Community News

It's fitting that for the 10th anniversary of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Florida's historical reenactment, Benjamin Franklin was the honored guest. After all, Mr. Franklin kicked off the first reenactment in 2007.

In the years that followed, the Dames sponsored George Washington (twice) and Thomas Jefferson – one time with Alexander Hamilton – Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Lewis and Clark, as well as John and Abigail Adams. Their performances were underwritten by the Roger L. and Rochelle S. Main Charitable Trust.

The annual two-day presentation at the Main Library for nearly 1,600 Duval County fifth graders is also an opportunity to sharpen pencils and write essays about the historical speaker. This year two of the five winners included Graham Worley of Riverside Presbyterian Day School, and Ben McCormick of St. Mark's Episcopal Day School.

Worley wrote about Franklin's invention of the lightning rod for his winning essay.

"It's just awesome," he said of his award. "I worked so hard, I'm so glad I won... that my hard work paid off. I wrote about how the lightning rod helps us, how it developed over the years and the ways and why Benjamin Franklin invented it."

Philip Little, coordinator for Duval County Public Schools, was charged with selecting the winning entries. When asked if there were other essays, which didn't win



Benjamin Franklin signs an award certificate for Graham Worley, student at Riverside Presbyterian Day School, one of five essay contest winners

a prize, that were particularly memorable, Little mentioned the composition written by Isabel Leonard of St. Marks Episcopal Day School. A student of Mrs. Bast, Leonard wrote a piece about Franklin's invention of the flexible urinary catheter.

"I wasn't aware Franklin had invented the catheter so I had to look it up," Little said. "I just loved her essay. It made me laugh," he said, sharing one sentence from Leonard's essay, which particularly made him smile: "If it wasn't for the urinary catheter, hospitals would be more loud than quiet."

Franklin, portrayed by Barry Stevens, a professional actor from Arlington, Virginia, signed each winner's award certificate with a flourish and presented each winner with a red kite, symbolic of his work with electricity and the invention of the lightning rod, among others.

Stevens has been presenting Franklin for over 10 years, although he was not the first Franklin reenactor presented by the Colonial Dames in 2007. The first performance was given by Dean Bennett, who passed away in 2014.



Ben McCormick was one of five essay contest winners, but was unable to attend the presentation to accept his award due to illness.



Barry Stevens, aka Benjamin Franklin, with essay contest winner Graham Worley, student at Riverside Presbyterian Day School



Ellie Digesare and her mother, Jamie, check out her cookie sales progress online.

# Girl Scout uses 'cookies' to track sales

Ellie Digesare, a nine-year-old Brownie in Girl Scout Troup 1080 at Riverside Presbyterian Day School used Digital Cookie, a new web and mobile app last year to become the top online cookie seller in her troop. Ellie's total cookie sales (Digital Cookie, cookie booths, pre-sales orders) exceeded 400 boxes in 2015. Her goal this year is 500.

For security reasons, Ellie worked with her mother, Jamie, to set up her Digital Cookie site for this year's cookie drive, which brings cookie booths to local retailers Feb. 19.

Ellie, who has been computer-literate

since first grade, found the Digital Cookie site easy to use. "It makes it easy to view my orders and how far I have to go to reach my goal," she said. Ellie's easy domain name, elliesgirlscoutcookies.com, redirects the user to a secure Girl Scout website.

Jamie rates Ellie's prowess on the computer as a six out of 10. "She started using email in the first grade when each week she was able to complete a spelling assignment by emailing her spelling words to her teacher. She got a computer for Christmas last year and has been able to start emailing her grandparents

(and parents) to keep in touch or share something she created online," Jamie said.

Jamie is very involved with Ellie's cookie sales, helping her sell to family, friends and neighbors. "This year she was able to sell 228 boxes by the initial order deadline," said Jamie. "I also sign up with her to go to cookie booths to sell cookies. Last year she was able to sell at multiple booths to help her reach her goal."

When it comes to cookies – the real ones, not the digital kind – Ellie's favorite is the Thin Mint. "I like to eat them cold and especially with ice cream," Ellie said.

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# Middle schools encouraged to enter cooking challenge

The Dairy Council of Florida is hosting its third annual Gridiron Cooking Challenge, a fun-filled food competition for elementary and middle school students throughout Florida. The initiative is created and supported by the Florida Dairy Farmers and is part of Fuel Up to Play 60, an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by the National Dairy Council and NFL to help encourage today's youth to lead healthier lives.

Through Feb. 29, elementary and middle school students in groups of four are encouraged to create and submit an original recipe that features dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yogurt.

The top four student teams in each Florida NFL market – represented by the Miami Dolphins, Tampa Bay

Buccaneers and Jacksonville Jaguars – will compete for the grand prize at the Gridiron Cooking Challenge as they create their recipe onsite in under 60 minutes. The students' creations will be judged by a select group of distinguished professionals including NFL players, local celebrity chefs, Florida Dairy Farmers and Fuel Up to Play 60 student ambassadors.

The winning team in each NFL market will receive a prize pack for their school valued at up to \$2,500. Each student on the team will receive an iPad mini 2, among other prizes.

Recipe entry forms can be found on the Florida Dairy Farmers website, and can be submitted via mail or email. For more information, visit [www.floridamilk.com](http://www.floridamilk.com).



Students at James Weldon Johnson College Preparatory were finalists in the 2015 Gridiron Cooking Challenge sponsored by the Dairy Council of Florida.

# Spelling bee won with topical word

Sixth grader Gracie Buxton, won the St. Mark's Episcopal Day School Spelling Bee on Dec. 18. It was a close competition with the runner-up, Lauren Wilson, also in sixth grade, as the two went head-to-head through several final rounds. Gracie's winning word was bicameral, relevant for current events in U.S. politics.



Gracie Buxton, Lauren Wilson, Kevin Conklin, Head of School

# Students participate in Year of Mercy

Pope Francis declared a Holy Year of Mercy to be celebrated in the Catholic Church from Dec. 8, 2015 until Nov. 20, 2016. This jubilee year, a very special event in the Catholic Church, is a time for Catholics to celebrate being a witness of mercy. In support of the celebration, the St. Matthew's Catholic School student body has conducted food drives to benefit those less fortunate.



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# Bolles Brain Brawl team goes national

The 2016 Bolles Brain Brawl team qualified to enter the June 2016 National Competition Quiz Bowl following a rigorous performance at the Duval County Brain Brawl single elimination tournament Jan. 9-10.

The Bolles team was one of 16 schools competing in the Jan. 9 contest. Bolles won the first three rounds, whittling the competition down to a final round match against Stanton College Preparatory School. While the Bolles team took second place in the contest, their strong performance qualified them for the national battle.

Bolles Brain Brawl team – front: Amy Song and Isabella Array; middle: Coaches Clare Lange and Melissa Tyler, Kunal Kanaparti, Ria Joglekar, Harrison Dinsbeer; back: Evan Siewart (captain), Anthony Hakim, Robert Pooley



## Jr. Residents

### Family time for the Salvation Army

Ten St. Mark's families participated in the St. Mark's Christmas Day of Service on Dec. 22 as Red Kettle Bell Ringers for the Salvation Army. Parents and students were seen donning the red aprons, ringing bells, and spreading Christmas joy outside of the Publix at Roosevelt Square.



Mamie and H. Burkett

### Stockton science students make school proud

Three students from John Stockton Elementary School had a good showing at the 3rd Annual Elementary Science Fair, held Jan. 27-28 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center.

Blythe Benton, Grade 4, was coached by math and science teacher Latane Brown, for her project "Measuring Starch in Root

Vegetables." Ian Rash, also in fourth grade, was coached by Melissa Endrina, also a math and science teacher; Rash's project was Pick Up Clips. Fifth grade student Kohlton Schnetzler's project was Melting Mania and he was coached by science teacher Johanna Willingham.

After being selected as the top three science projects at John Stockton, all three students moved onto the interview round at the Duval County Public Schools science fair, where they placed with Honorable Mentions in their grade levels, said Matt Walker, assistant principal.



Kohlton Schnetzler, Ian Rash and Blythe Benton

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# Illustrating a true *love* for the neighborhoods

## The Resident's "Why I Love My Neighborhood" contest winners announced

The Resident's staff is proud to report an outstanding response for this year's Valentine's Day-themed contest. It is one that reflects a true love for the areas in which we live. As readers both young and old submitted essays, poems and best photographic depictions of an aspect of community that they love, we share them with their fellow neighbors. It was a difficult task to choose the winners and even harder not to share a few more, so we're printing some of the other entries that left a lasting impression. Happy Valentine's Day!



The day I snapped this photo was ordinary. Running errands, I decided to take my favorite detour – Memorial Park. Any given day there, you'll witness picnics and pick-up Frisbee games to weddings and babies' first steps. Aren't we lucky to live in a neighborhood where "ordinary" is always extraordinary?

Sarah A. Henderson, 5 Points



I love Riverside for many reasons. One is my commute. I work downtown, and I get a beautiful commute through the RAM parking lot down to the Riverwalk. Beauty can be found all around us here, if we chose to open our eyes. Even on a rainy week day morning, the RAM stage can be creative. Riverside challenges me to grow as a person and an artist. And that's what I love.

Mark Krancer, Riverside



### Jr. Resident WINNER



#### My Safe and Friendly Neighborhood

I love many things about my neighborhood. One of those is that I can ride my bike to school and to most of my friends' houses. I feel safe when I ride and I can enjoy the nature outside instead of riding in a car. Another thing I love is that my school, St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, is so close by! I can ride to school and talk with my buddies while we ride our bicycles. I also love how most of the people that live here are so kind and caring for others. For example, the mail lady always gives my brother and I cinnamon candies. She is one of the nicest people in my neighborhood, in my opinion. Finally, my neighborhood is where my home is, and that is the most important thing of all.

Gracie Buxton, Ortega



### Jr. Residents Honorable Mention

#### Avondale

Avondale,  
After school, I return to you,  
Skipping to the Florida Creamery,  
Waiting in line for my vanilla custard,  
Walking to the shops every day,  
Playing at the Green Alligator toy store,  
Becoming hungry and walking to The Fox,  
For my usual coyote burger,  
Safe,  
Calm,  
Fun,  
Looking at the trees,  
That are swallowed in white lights,  
Small,  
Historical,  
Avondale

Grace Huie, Avondale

#### My Neighborhood

The reason why I love it so,  
Is not because of how the dandelions blow,  
Flowing in the breeze.  
Or the brilliant colors of the leaves  
All around my house  
in  
My Neighborhood  
The reason is,  
Now listen here  
I'll make my voice loud and clear,  
just because of  
my family and friends  
sitting in the den  
in  
My Neighborhood

We eat cookies,  
We drink milk,  
And share stories  
About when the old were young.  
Also about what they did  
to have fun  
in  
My Neighborhood  
That is why I love it so...

Olivia Nolan, Avondale

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**HISTORIC LIFE**  
Newcomers Guide to the Historic Districts

Introducing people to our neighborhoods is one of *The Resident's* favorite things to do. Within the pages of this Newcomer's Guide you will find local eateries, places of worship, city parks, schools, hospitals, city services, and great attractions to visit within an hour's drive of your front door. This magazine is published annually in July.

**CIRCLES**  
Charity Register and Social Datebook

Serving as the definitive guide to Jacksonville and Ponte Vedra's charitable organizations and their major fundraising activities, *Circles* is a must-read for the area's social season. The Charity Register features a comprehensive listing of events and essential information for those who attend or plan them. The magazine is published each November.

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