

# HOUSING MARKET *SIZZLES* AS BUYERS SEEK 'SAFE HAVEN' IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS DURING COVID-19

READ MORE, PAGE 10



## SCOUTING HEAVEN

Ortega's Boy Scout Troop 26 camped on Big Munson, a "deserted" island in the Florida Keys as part of a "high adventure" trip in August. The scouts ended their trip in Key West at the Southernmost Point in the U.S.

READ MORE, PAGE 44

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

*National commentator says keep Lee High name*



Armstrong Williams

The proposal to do away with Lee High School's name just got a national downvote.

Armstrong Williams is an African American author, a political commentator, a nationally syndicated columnist, and an owner of six TV stations. Recently, he weighed in on the Robert E. Lee High School naming debate.

"The movement to rename Confederate namesakes, like Robert E. Lee High School, does nothing to improve race relations...It only divides people," Williams said.

Williams likened the Duval County School Board's proposed change of nine namesakes to a "bulldozing of history." Instead of that controversial move, he suggested increasing the number of named schools.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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RESIDENTNEWS.NET | OCTOBER 2020, VOL. 14, ISSUE 10

# Resident

COMMUNITY NEWS



Peyton Phillips, Jacob Christy, and Emma Cate Hurd

## Ortega Pumpkin Patch Celebrates 28 Years

"The Pumpkin Patch," or "The Patch" as it is often called, is familiar to nearly everyone who lives in Ortega. Approximately 15,000 cars pass the oak-lined, grassy knoll along Roosevelt Boulevard at Ortega Church, and families often gather for colorful fall photos and to select the perfect pumpkin.

The youth ministry of Ortega Church has hosted the Pumpkin Patch for 28 years. Proceeds from the sale of the pumpkins support church youth who participate in the church's Summer Youth Mission Trip, which most recently, sent the youngsters to assist with hurricane clean-up as well as other program ministries. Members of the Ortega Church Youth Ministry, parents and church members work together to unload semitrucks and to stack thousands of pumpkins

to create the beautiful setting for neighborhood family outings and for many passersby.

Last year, the patch added a "Family Movie Night in the Pumpkin Patch" and this year it has created a new layout for additional parking, a picturesque photo backdrop, and expanded space for movie night. "It was a treat!" shared Aaron Thivierge. "Our family joined neighborhood families for a child-friendly movie night event that created a great feeling of community."

The Ortega Church Pumpkin Patch opens Sunday, Oct. 4, and is open every day through Oct. 31. "During this season of COVID-19 concerns, we will be taking additional precautions for the safety of families and volunteers," said Ortega Church Youth Director Kirby Tyler.



The Rev. Tom Murray of St. Mark's Episcopal Church blesses backpacks during a drive-thru event in September.

## Backpacks are blessed as school begins

School has started and to get the students who attend St. Mark's Episcopal Church off to a good beginning, the Ortega church held an in-person and drive-thru backpack blessing event for its families in September. Everyone who attended received a backpack tag with the Bible verse from Luke 12:32 printed on it: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The blessing was bestowed by Rev. Tom Murray, St. Mark's rector. "We live in a time in which there is a lot of fear," Murray said during the outdoor blessing. "We have this encouragement from the Lord not to be afraid. We have everything that we need. We have one another, the hope of our salvation and Christ with us in everything we endure."

In addition to having backpacks blessed, the families showed support for their neighbors in need by bringing baby formula, children's books, and baby gear for St. Mark's partner organization, Community Health Outreach.

## New sculpture beautifies Hogan Street



David Engdahl and Preston Haskell celebrate the installation of the fifth sculptural masterpiece within Jacksonville's Art in Public Places program on Sept. 12.

READ MORE, PAGE 39

## Rapid development transforms Brooklyn

Brooklyn, a vital link between Riverside, LaVilla, and Downtown is experiencing a renaissance that is transforming the historic neighborhood of vacant lots and run-down buildings into a sparkling hub of high-rise residences and busy shopping centers.

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- P.15 | DEP fines contractors working on the Ortega Park Mall for stormwater violations
- P.32 | Lost twins remembered during National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month
- P.40 | Zoo Vets experience world, one animal at a time
- P.47 | Merit Scholar semifinalists announced

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Publishers' Note

# Brinlee Belle Poling

It is with grateful, happy hearts that we introduce our second grandchild, the beautiful Miss Brinlee Belle Poling, to this wonderful community. Miss Brinlee was born July 2, 2020 to our daughter, Tarryn, and her wonderful husband, Brandon, and she joins a very proud and delighted big brother, Bradford.



Brinlee's precious, new life has energized all of us with fresh excitement and renewed hope for a better, brighter future. We are thrilled that our family is growing, and that she has joined not only our family but can also be part of the extended *Resident* family that we so dearly love.

It is true that our children expand our hearts, and our grandchildren further show us how limitless love truly is. We share our joy with every reader, and hope that this small glimpse of new possibilities can better help us all adapt to both the changes and new challenges we all face due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Thanks to our caring community, together, we will survive this storm.

Although it may mean continuing to wear masks that make us look like surgeons, instituting handwashing as our most important new hobby, or being forced to temporarily forego warm Southern greetings that include hugs and kisses, we feel certain this temporary time of trial will only bring increased strength and unity to our community.

As we celebrate Miss Brinlee, our family's newest blessing, we look forward to a fresh focus on the future while finding joy in every moment along the way.

Although we are required to remain socially distant for now, please remember that the staff of *The Resident* is just an email or phone call away.

Thank you for continuing to share your inspiring stories, news, and ideas that reflect the spirit and heart of our neighborhoods. It is our privilege to ensure that *The Resident* continues to make certain those important and uplifting stories reach as many readers as possible through our newspapers each month. We appreciate your support, and we are especially grateful for our faithful advertisers.

Most sincerely,  
Seth, Pamela & Sophia Williams

# FWC to revive legislation to regulate overnight anchoring in Ortega River

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Riverfront Ortega homeowners and local boaters who desired a law be drawn up prohibiting vessels from anchoring overnight in the Ortega River should not give up hope.

Although the bill – HB 417 – introduced by State Representative Wyman Duggan died on the vine during the last legislative session, which ended in March, there is a very good chance the issue will be revived when the Florida legislature meets again next year, he said.

For years, Duggan has heard a litany of complaints from constituents about abandoned and derelict boats and liveaboard seafarers who dump raw sewage into the waterway or cause a collision hazard by mooring their vessels without proper nighttime lighting in the Ortega River. His solution had been to introduce a bill which would amend state statute 327.4108 adding the Ortega and Cedar Rivers to a short list of waterways where mooring is prohibited during the nighttime hours just after sunset until just before sunrise in “densely populated urban areas, which have narrow state waterways, residential docking facilities, and significant recreational boating traffic.”

“The bill that I filed did not get a hearing in the House and got one hearing in the Senate,” Duggan said, noting that he was encouraged when incoming Senate President Wilton Simpson had amended the bill to add a waterway in his district.

Simpson's interest was indicative that the issue was a problem statewide, and not something that pertained only to waters in Ortega, said Duggan. And when the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), which regulates state waterways, contacted him two months ago, he was even more encouraged. Recognizing there are similar issues statewide, a legislative liaison from FWC told Duggan the organization may address the issue in comprehensive legislation to be introduced next session.

“It is a good sign they are acknowledging the problem and are willing to hammer out a legislative approach to address it,” Duggan said. “We had a conference call, convened by FWC, that I participated in with other stakeholders from the boating and maritime industry. There was a discussion and feedback, and FWC has circulated its draft legislation very recently. There will be one or more follow-up stakeholder meetings, which will have more stakeholder review, discussion, and input about the draft legislation, including this issue. The end result of that process will be a bill that FWC will want introduced next session that among other things will

address this issue in a way that will get at the problems we are experiencing on the Ortega River.”

Although Duggan did not want to discuss specifics of the draft legislation, which he referred to as “raw batter” that still needs to be cooked, he did say there will be time for Ortega residents and others to discuss the matter with him through town meetings or by getting in touch with him at his legislative office.

He also said he expects there will be some opposition to any changes that are made, particularly from the “cruising” community that lobbied against the measure before. “There is a boat lobby that does not want there to be a patchwork of local regulations that impact cruisers – those who travel up and down the coast – who might not easily know what the local rules are,” he said. “Cruisers might want to pull into the Ortega River and won't necessarily know that they can't anchor overnight. The lobby does not want to impede that kind of intrastate and interstate cruising. They don't want to create additional regulations. That's why they opposed the bill last year,” he explained.

*“There is a boat lobby that does not want there to be a patchwork of local regulations that impact cruisers – those who travel up and down the coast – who might not easily know what the local rules are.”*

– Wyman Duggan

In the past, FWC was reluctant to add the precedent of continually adding small waterways constantly to the mix, allowing that to snowball in a piecemeal fashion, he said. “The fact that the incoming Senate president articulated that this is a problem has showed FWC that it needs to come up with some kind of uniform state approach before somebody else does it,” Duggan said, adding that the legislative language in the draft bill has not yet been agreed upon.

“I'm very encouraged that they have acknowledged the issue, and that they have engaged in seeking a solution that all the stakeholders can try to come to a consensus around,” he said.





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**GOT NEWS? EMAIL US AT editor@residentnews.net**

The Resident is a monthly newspaper mailed to homeowners in Riverside, Avondale, Ortega, Murray Hill, San Marco, San Jose and St. Nicholas. For advertising information please call 904.388.8839. Editorial submissions are welcome, but subject to editing at the publisher's discretion. Facts and statements expressed in the editorial content are not necessarily those of The Resident. All content is copyrighted and may not be reprinted, copied or reproduced without written permission from the publisher. ©2020. Locally Owned and Operated

## Nominate your favorite Hometown Hero

Nominate your special hero for a chance to win them a \$200 gift card to



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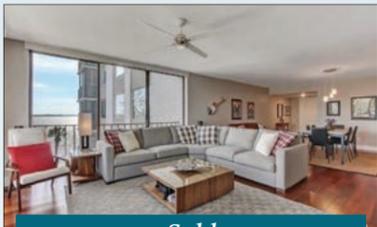
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Is there a first responder you know who has gone the extra mile during the Coronavirus pandemic and deserves some recognition? Perhaps you know a healthcare worker, fire fighter, or police officer who has put in extra time or gone the extra mile to make sure those in our community are healthy, safe, and secure. *The Resident* would like to join with you in celebrating our true neighborhood heroes by awarding one extra-special hero with a dinner for two at Bellwether Restaurant, a downtown eatery famous for its made-from-scratch sauces, house-cured meats, and farm-to-table ingredients. Also, in the cards is a feature article celebrating the winner in the November issue of *The Resident*.

To enter, please write up a nominating statement explaining why the person is a hero, and what they have done to make an impact on others and/or help those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. We ask that you limit your statement to 500 words or less and send it to us by Wednesday, Oct. 21. Don't forget to include your contact information as well as that of your hometown hero. Statements can be emailed to [editor@residentnews.net](mailto:editor@residentnews.net) or to Marcia Hodgson at [marcia@residentnews.net](mailto:marcia@residentnews.net) or sent to us by snail mail to Marcia Hodgson, Managing Editor, c/o The Resident Community News, 1650-302 Margaret Street #310, Jacksonville, FL 32204. Winners will be announced via *The Resident's* Instagram and Facebook pages as well as within the pages of the Riverside and San Marco editions of *The Resident*.



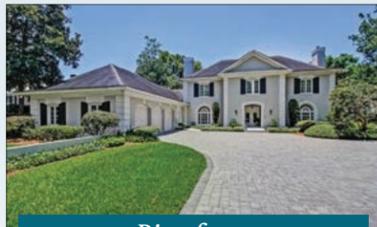
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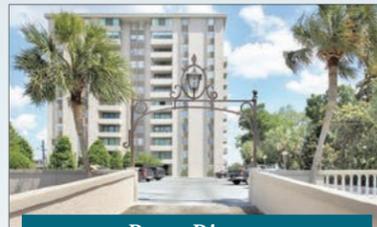
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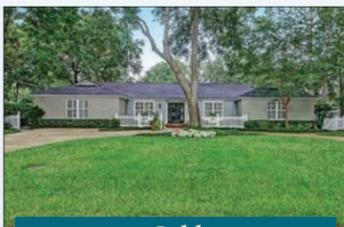
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# Iconic mural bites dust in bank demolition

Murray Hill's sprawling "Calvin and Hobbes" mural that was painted by Jerkface, a famous New York streetscape artist, was demolished along with the Bank of America Building 840 Edgewood Avenue South in early September. The building's playful cartoonish mural stretched along the southern side of the former Bank of America branch facing Kerle Street.

The Vestcor Companies plan is to build a workforce housing project – a four-story, 117-unit multi-family residential complex called the Lofts at Murray Hill – on the site. Included in plans for the building will be

11,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor.

The project has drawn community discussion and dissension about how the new building will affect the area in terms of traffic and density. The City Planning Commission approved zoning exceptions for the new complex last year despite vocal opposition from some Murray Hill residents who were worried about whether the project would attract low-income tenants and make it harder to park. Some business owners viewed the project, which will bring more residents to the area, as a boost.



The colorful "Calvin and Hobbes" mural, which adorned the side of the Edgewood Avenue South branch of Bank of America, was destroyed in September when the bank building was demolished to make way for workforce housing.



The Bank of America Building, at 840 Edgewood Avenue South, was demolished in September of make way for the Lofts at Murray Hill, a Vestor Companies' workforce housing project.

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# Texas company takes over development of The District

By Lilla Ross

The Resident Community News

A young, feisty independent specialty finance company has taken over The District project on the Southbank.

Preston Hollow Capital of Dallas bought the Elements Development of Jacksonville LLC, including the 30 acres of land, from Peter Rummell and Michael Munz in early September. “They stepped into our shoes,” Munz said.

Preston Hollow was founded in 2014, the same year Elements Development was formed. It has \$2.1 billion in assets, \$1.3 billion in equity capital, and has closed on \$2 billion in projects. It specializes in the municipal bond market and has worked on projects for schools, hospitals, and senior living. It prides itself on speed and flexibility.

“We put a lot of money, heart and soul into the District,” Munz said. “They’re a really good company. They like the master plan. Preston Hollow is committed to that concept. We made the decision that they’re the right group to make sure the vision is realized. We are looking forward to how it all comes together.”

The District is a 30-acre site formerly occupied by JEA’s Southside Generating Station. Preston Hollow gave Elements a \$20 million mortgage on the property last year.

Rummell and Munz planned to develop the site as a mix of residential, retail, office and hotel space, with a marina and waterfront park with a completion date in 2022.

But the \$600 million project was mired in complications, including environmental issues, and delays.

In 2018, the City Council approved a redevelopment agreement that would give Elements \$56 million in property tax rebates. The rebates, called Recaptured Enhanced Value or REV grants, are 75% of the property taxes and are dependent on how much of The District is built and added to the tax rolls.

The city committed to paying \$26.5 million to construct 3.5 acres of park space, a 1,900-foot Riverwalk extension with bulkhead, a boardwalk trail, 100 parking spaces and three road extensions.

Elements agreed to issue \$31 million in Community Development District bonds to finance the infrastructure, transfer property to the city and submit the permits for the horizontal construction. The deadline was Jan. 13 this year but the company asked for and received an extension until April 13.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit, Elements requested a suspension of performance deadlines, citing a “force majeure” provision.

Lori Boyer, CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority, put the deadline on hold until Sept. 1 and then gave Elements until Sept. 30 to issue the bonds.

On Sept. 4, Elements issued a press release announcing that Preston Hollow had assumed “all the rights and entitlements” to the project, including the land. Two weeks later, Preston Hollow said it would issue the bonds by the end of the year.

Preston Hollow has financed a similar project, Pinecrest, in Cleveland, Ohio.

The 58-acre Pinecrest has 87 luxury apartments, 400,000 square feet of retail and dining space, a dine-in movie theater,

*“They’re a really good company. They like the master plan. Preston Hollow is committed to that concept. We made the decision that they’re the right group to make sure the vision is realized. We are looking forward to how it all comes together.”*

— Michael Munz

two Class A office buildings with 164,000 square feet of space, a 145-room AC Hotel by Marriott apartments and a 754-space parking deck. Retailers include Whole Foods, Urban Outfitters and Sephora.

While Preston Hollow provided the financing, the lead developer was Fairmount Properties, an company in Orange, Ohio, that specializes in large-scale, mixed use specialty districts.

Last year, Pinecrest received the gold designation — the top honor for mixed-use developments — in the New Developments category at the International Council of Shopping Centers Global Awards for North American Design and Development.

In comparison, The District is a small project, with 950 residences, 134,000 square feet of retail, a 147-room AC Marriott, 200,000 square feet of office space and a

125-slip marina. The city plans to use four acres on the riverfront to extend the Riverwalk, add greenspace and trails.

In a David vs. Goliath move, Preston Hollow captured the attention of the financial world last year when it sued the old, established asset manager Nuveen, owned by TIAA, for defamation, antitrust and business interference.

Preston Hollow accused Nuveen of organizing a boycott against the smaller company and issuing “a series of threatening and anticompetitive communications,” including threatening to withhold business from Deutsche Bank if it did business with Preston Hollow.

This spring, Preston Hollow won the case when a Delaware judge ruled “Nuveen used threats and lies in a successful attempt to damage the plaintiff in its business relationships.”



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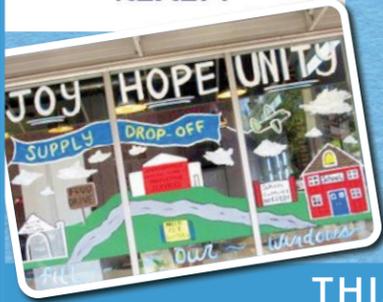
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4600 MUNDY DR S - \$3,500,000  
5 BR | 5 BA | 2 HBA | 8,119 SQFT.  
Listed By Wade Griffin



12926 RIVERPLACE CT - \$2,750,000  
5 BR | 5 BA | 1 HBA | 5,540 SQFT.  
Listed By Pat Nodurft



2375 SEMINOLE RD - \$2,297,000  
3 BR | 4 BA | 3,791 SQFT.  
Listed By Robert VanCleve



4520 MUNDY DR - \$1,325,000  
568 x 100 FT. | 1.35 ACRES  
Listed By Wade Griffin



3032 SAINT JOHNS AVE - \$1,245,000  
3 BR | 2 BA | 1 HBA | 4,034 SQFT.  
Listed By Wade Griffin



1560 LANCASTER TER 1104 - \$875,000  
3 BR | 4 BA | 3,317 SQFT.  
Listed By Nancy Pedrick Cusimano



3002 RIVERSIDE AVE - \$699,000  
4 BR | 3 BA | 1 HBA | 3,677 SQFT.  
Listed By Wade Griffin



11715 MANDARIN TERRACE RD - \$595,000  
4 BR | 3 BA | 2 HBA | 4,072 SQFT.  
Listed By Ed Akers



10013 MELROSE CREEK DR - \$375,000  
5 BR | 4 BA | 1 HBA | 3,389 SQFT.  
Listed By Nancy Pedrick Cusimano



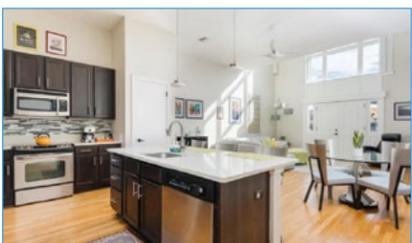
1127 N LIBERTY ST - \$375,000  
4 BR | 3 BA | 1 HBA | 2,406 SQFT.  
Listed By Ed Akers



121 E 5TH ST - \$370,000  
4 BR | 3 BA | 1 HBA | 2,186 SQFT.  
Listed By Ed Akers



20 ROPEMAKER CT - \$357,500  
2 BR | 2 BA | 1,937 SQFT.  
Listed By Alan Apthekar



2525 COLLEGE ST 1106 - \$339,000  
2 BR | 2 BA | 1 HBA | 1,382 SQFT.  
Listed By Leslie Rios Wilkins



1823 MEMORY LN - \$299,900  
3 BR | 2 BA | 1 HBA | 2,972 SQFT.  
Listed By Erin King



5439 WEAVER RD - \$259,999  
4 BR | 2 BA | 1,871 SQFT.  
Listed By Lyndsi Boyett



400 BAY ST - \$235,000  
1 BR | 1 BA | 959 SQFT.  
Listed By Tony Caribaltes



11839 SEABURY PL - \$179,900  
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,066 SQFT.  
Listed By Ann Abercrombie



4975 SAN JOSE BLVD 301 - \$82,000  
1 BR | 1 BA | 752 SQFT.  
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# Brooklyn renaissance transforms historic neighborhood

By Lilla Ross

Resident Community News

Architect Joe Cronk said nobody had to sell him on Brooklyn.

“We’re ex-Haskell guys. We grew up on Riverside. Brooklyn is a vital link between 5 Points and LaVilla and Downtown,” he explained.

And Cronk isn’t the only one who is “sold” on Brooklyn. In the last five years, the historic black neighborhood has undergone a renaissance that has transformed vacant lots and dilapidated buildings into high-rise residences and busy shopping centers.

And, the renaissance isn’t over. A hotel, a major office building and more apartments are in the works, along with road and infrastructure improvements that will add momentum redevelopment in neighboring LaVilla as well as Downtown.

Cronk’s contribution to the renaissance is the proposed Hub Brooklyn.

In its promotional material, Cronk Duch Architecture describes the concept for the Hub as “a place to meet friends for coffee and artisanal fare, a refuge from the office grind, a spot to refresh after walking the Emerald Trail, perhaps cocktails and al fresco before the evening’s big event.”

It was warmly received by the Downtown Development Review Board, which still must give its final approval.

The Hub will be two stories built on 0.2 of an acre, what Cronk described as a “lost lot” at Forest and Riverside. The firm’s design studio will take up part of the second floor, but the rest of the space will be devoted to food and beverage by their primary vendor Southern Grounds.



Rendering of The Hub

The food space will be divided into three pods for fast casual, including a coffee shop and a bar. Seating will be available inside and outside on the second-floor terrace or under cover on the first floor. Cronk hopes to have it completed by next fall.

Cronk envisions people stopping by for their morning coffee, coming back for lunch and lingering over a beer after work.

The site is well positioned to become a neighborhood gathering spot.

## New FIS headquarters

Across Riverside Avenue, Fidelity National Information Services Inc., a Fortune 500 company, is building its new 12-story world headquarters. Retail space will be included in the adjacent eight-story garage, which will have parking available for the public.

FIS, which has offices down the street, bought the former Florida Blue parking lot in June for \$14 million. Florida Blue is building a new \$22.5 million garage on Forest Street.

Lori Boyer, CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority, said those projects add some important elements to the redevelopment of Brooklyn — people and parking.

FIS, which has 1,200 employees, is expected to add 500 more when the building is completed in 2022. And both FIS and Florida Blue are allowing public parking in their garages.

FIS will tower over the new residential district that has sprung up in the last five years.

“It was a collaborative effort with a lot of people,” Boyer said. “When 220 and the shopping center came together is what helped Brooklyn take off.”

In 2016, the Winston YMCA opened its new facilities that replaced the Yates YMCA.

The Brooklyn Riverside, a five-story modernistic complex of 310 units, emerged behind Brooklyn Station.

The \$55 million Vista Brooklyn project is quickly taking shape between 220 Riverside and Brooklyn Station. The 10-story building, developed by Bristol Development Group and NAI Hallmark, will have 308 units, 14,000-square-foot of ground-floor retail, a roof-top pool, dog park and bar.

Next door to Brooklyn Station, another shopping center, 12,500-square-foot retail Brooklyn Place, came along this year, featuring Chipotle and Bento Asian Kitchen.

## A hotel on Oak Street

And, Brooklyn is getting its first hotel. A Residence Inn by Marriott is planned for 357 Oak St., west of Unity Plaza. The \$10.2 million project is a seven-story hotel with 136 rooms that will be built by Pinkerton & Law Construction of Orlando Inc. Baywood Hotels of Miami owns the site.

The DDRB approved the project design and the city has issued permits for demolition and construction of the hotel and pool. Pinkerton

## 220 Riverside

Boyer said the two projects that launched the redevelopment of Brooklyn were NAI Hallmark’s 220 Riverside and Regency Center’s Brooklyn Station shopping center, anchored by Fresh Market. 220 Riverside is a multi-use development with 294 apartments and 17,000 square feet of retail space fronted by Unity Plaza with an amphitheater and pond. The city contributed major road improvements to Riverside Avenue and Forest Street as well as a stormwater pond.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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& Law Construction of Orlando was issued building permits for the project in July.

Another hotel is rumored to be under consideration for the multi-use redevelopment of 1 Riverside, the former home of The Florida Times-Union.

Morris Communications of Augusta, Ga., has proposed a 200-room hotel, 300,000 square feet of office, 400-500 multifamily units, plus retail. But the company has yet to make a presentation to the DDRB.

**McCoy's Creek**

A much-anticipated aspect of that project is the "daylighting" of McCoy's Creek, which runs under the buildings. The creek is a key part of Groundwork Jacksonville's Emerald Trail project, a 30-mile network of trails that will encircle Downtown.

The part of the 10-year, \$31 million project that includes Brooklyn will involve restoring the creek from the river to Myrtle Street to improve water flow, promote a natural habitat for fish, plants and wildlife and create recreational options like kayak launches.

The city added the Gefen kayak launch several years ago. And now, the city is putting in a new public dock at Jackson Street near the YMCA, which is expected to be complete next year, and another at Post Street in 5 Points. The goal is to have public docks at regular intervals for recreational boaters who might want to come to the Arts Market or for dinner, Boyer said.

A new park dubbed the Artists' Walk, will be put in under the Fuller Warren Bridge from Riverside to Park street. Work on that project won't begin until the multi-use path being added to the bridge is complete sometime next year.

That path will give pedestrians and cyclists dedicated space over the busy

bridge and connect the Northbank and Southbank Riverwalks.

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority plans to build a Skyway station at Leila Street and Riverside. The \$800,000 project will link the Central Skyway Station at West Bay and Lee streets in LaVilla to the Northbank.

**Park Street Road Diet**

The DIA's Park Street Road Diet project will reduce Park Street from four to two lanes and add on-street parking, a bike lane, and landscaping. The goal is to slow down vehicular traffic and open the area to pedestrians and cyclists and connect with the Emerald Trail. Money is in the budget for construction but it is still in the design phase, which Boyer expects to be complete by the end of the year.

The road diet project will launch another phase of development with the focus on Park Street, Boyer said.

Trevato Development Group plans to renovate commercial buildings at 301 and 339 Park St. into a food hall, similar to Krog Street Market in Atlanta. It would have multiple tenants with artisanal foods, retail and dining.

"They're ready to go with some of it, but they don't want to get ahead of the road diet," Boyer said.

Redevelopment in that area is already underway with the Lofts at Brooklyn, by the Vestcor Companies. The five-story, 133 units will be affordable and workforce housing, along Spruce Street between Jackson and Stonewall streets.

Boyer said the Lofts are important because they are the first project on the other side of Park Street, and they are mixed income, which gives people who live in Brooklyn the option of staying.

**Modest history**

Brooklyn has been a black neighborhood since after the Civil War when Miles Price bought the Dell's Bluff plantation. He sold the southern half to Florida Union editor Edward M. Cheney and Boston developer John Murray Forbes, who developed the suburb of Riverside.

Price kept the northern half and renamed it Brooklyn. One of Brooklyn's streets is named for him.

The shotgun houses and other modest dwellings were built on streets named for Confederate heroes — Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson — and occupied by former slaves and veterans of the Union Army known as Buffalo Soldiers, a name given to them by Native Americans.

A decrepit, boarded-up house at 328 Chelsea St., known as the Buffalo Soldier's Home, is the last remnant of that time and considered one of the most endangered historic buildings in Jacksonville.

Brooklyn was annexed by the City of Jacksonville in 1887.

The residential character began changing with the arrival of the Florida East Coast Railroad line in the late 19th century that cut through its eastern border.

The opening in 1921 of the Acosta Bridge, first to span the St. Johns River, brought a growth spurt to the area and new interest in developing it commercially. In the 1950s, Interstate 95, cut across its western border.

In the 1960s, desegregation gave blacks the opportunity to live anywhere, and they began to move out and commercial and industrial moved in.

Office buildings sprang up along the riverfront corridor. But without a strong neighborhood advocate like Riverside Avondale Preservation, the rest of Brooklyn fell into decline.

**Building a restaurant district**

In the 21st century, a new emphasis on downtown redevelopment pulled Brooklyn into the boundaries of Downtown Jacksonville. It now had an advocate — the DIA.

The DIA could offer incentives and Boyer said the Hub is the only Brooklyn project that hasn't received incentives — property tax rebates, loans, grants, property swaps, infrastructure.

Retail and restaurants quickly filled in the Fresh Market shopping center and 220 Riverside's retail space. Some of the early comers, like Corner Bakery Café at Brooklyn Station closed, and eventually was replaced by First Watch, a restaurant serving breakfast and lunch.

The retail space at 220 Riverside had a tougher ride. Sbraga & Co., Hobnob, and Brixx Wood Fired Pizza are restaurants that have come and gone. The vacant retail space was sold a year ago to Mid-America Apartments LP of Memphis, Tenn. Anejo Cocina Mexicana, a Ponte Vedra Beach restaurant that eyed expansion into Jacksonville, is the new tenant at 220.

The Unity Plaza amphitheater, which had been expected to be a community venue for concerts and venues, has fallen silent. But Boyer thinks it will get a second wind when the new apartments around it fill up and the transportation pieces fall into place.

The 2010 Census recorded about 40 residents in Brooklyn, but by 2023 the residential population will be well over 1,000 and the workforce about 8,000.

"You really need a targeted food and beverage district. It's really hard to get people to come from six blocks or six miles on a regular basis," Boyer said, "But if there's a cluster of things with thousands of people working and living around it, you create an atmosphere that is attractive."



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Listed by  
Natalie Dreyer

# COVID sparks dramatic uptick in residential market

## REAL ESTATE MAY LEAD THE WAY TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

The residential real estate market in Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods is sizzling hot, and believe it or not, much of this is due to COVID-19.

Although there is no question that the Coronavirus pandemic has negatively impacted many businesses on the First Coast, the opposite has been true of the housing market, according to many local real estate professionals.

"The entire area has seen increased demand including the historic neighborhoods," said Jeff Chefan, CEO at Manormor Sotheby's International Realty. "Our business has increased over 39% year-to-date from our best year ever."

"My office has closed on more year-to-date than in all of last year, and there are still three months left in 2020," said Lorri Reynolds, vice president/managing broker/state instructor of the Avondale/Ortega office of Watson Realty Corp. REALTORS®.

"The economy is very strong. I'm selling more houses than I've ever sold," agreed Missy Cady-Kampmeyer, owner/broker of Cady Realty. "The buyers and sellers are solid. People are willing to work and make the transactions work. I feel like it is a very strong housing market."

### Perfect storm of events

Contributing to the red-hot residential market may be a perfect storm of events. The Coronavirus shutdowns in March and early

April caused many residents who were housebound in their homes to desire to move to a place with more space indoors and outdoors to better accommodate the needs of their isolated families. Also, historically low interest rates, which have given buyers more purchasing power, coupled with a lack of inventory have caused many realtors to enjoy multiple offers on their listings.

Another factor is a large influx of out-of-staters, particularly from California, the Midwest and the Northeast, who have discovered Northeast Florida, with its lower number of COVID-19 cases and death rate, as a great haven to shelter in place. "One reason people want to be here is that Florida has been less restrictive in its restaurant and bar policies," said Kimberly Smith, vice president/managing broker of San Marco/San Jose Watson Realty Corp. REALTORS®.

In fact, more than 1,000 people a day are heading to the Sunshine State with many recognizing Duval County as the place to be. Its low-density metropolitan area with arts, entertainment, and restaurants as well as beaches, waterways, parks, and breathable greenspace, is especially attractive during the pandemic, said Chefan, adding the region also seems safer because it has not encountered a direct hit from a hurricane since Hurricane Dora in the 1960s.

As they arrive, many out-of-staters are seeking maintenance-free condos near the ocean or river as secondary homes hoping to have an escape where they can work remotely if COVID-19 flares up again, he said.

"Jacksonville has become even more hot for relocations," said Heather Buckman, an owner/broker with Cowford Realty & Design. "In a time where social distancing is the practice, and we all are spending more time in our homes, Jacksonville has a lot to offer. We are the largest city in the contiguous United States, and we have a relatively low cost of living, making Jacksonville a great

place to escape crowded urban settings. Also, many of us believe that the shift towards telecommuting will continue after COVID-19 fades. As people find they can work from anywhere, places like Jacksonville are even more desirable. Why stick to a crowded, expensive metropolitan area when you can move to Jacksonville with its lower cost of living, extra space, and all the amenities of a larger city?"

### The Domino Effect

According to *Florida Realtors* magazine, the 30-year average mortgage rate dropped to 2.86% in September, down from its previous record-low Aug. 13 of 2.88%. It is now cheaper than the average adjustable-rate loan of 3.11%. And this inexpensive money coupled with a low inventory of homes has created a sellers' market, where 18% of homes in Jacksonville are selling over list price, said Buckman. "The sellers' market puts them at an advantage, and we are seeing a lot of multiple offer situations. If someone is looking to sell, they truly couldn't pick a better time."

Also good news is that the Federal Reserve plans to keep interest rates low until 2022 causing a stimulus that has affected every corner of the housing market, said Chefan.

"What we are finding is a lot of first-time buyers who would normally be renting can now come into the market. This creates a tremendous move-up buyer market. First-time buyers are shopping now when the interest rates are low, and the price point those families can get into is a lot higher. This creates a domino effect where it continues to move up the ladder. The \$200,000-\$400,000 range has gone up and the \$400,000-\$600,000 range has gone up because that initial first-time buyer is looking for a place under \$200,000, which has pushed up the values of the homes. The low interest rates enable all buyers to get into higher-priced houses. People who may have bought their homes for \$150,000 are now selling them for \$250,000 and taking the equity they have in that house and putting it into a new home," he said.

As Managing Broker of Berkshire Hathaway Florida Network Realty, Josh Cohen concurred. "In the current market climate, all price ranges are in high demand. We really haven't slowed down in any sector. The luxury space is busy down to the entry-level market. Many renters are transitioning into home ownership. With rates as low as they are, there really has never been a better time to enter the market. People are able to move up as well as they now qualify for more."

But a healthy real estate market is nothing new to the First Coast because inventory has been low for some time, said Jill Mero, realtor, broker/owner of Mero Realty. "The

*"We see some folks moving here from out of state. Most are moving for tax reasons and the fact they can get so much more for their money here as opposed to their home state."*

— Sally Suslak,  
Traditions Realty

real estate market in Northeast Florida was booming before COVID-19 and has barely been affected by the pandemic as buyers are still buying in a market with less inventory," Mero said. "What has changed the most is the way we conduct our business. We are seeing more virtual showings and virtual open houses. We are careful to make sure we follow the CDC guidelines of social distancing, mask wearing, and sanitizing when showing property to buyers or when buyers enter our listings. Real estate technology has already progressed to the point where almost all of our transactions are handled electronically so we were kind of ahead of the game in that respect," she said.

### Business adaptations

When the Coronavirus shutdown caused many businesses to close or drastically curtail their services, realtors were deemed "essential" and were able to continue working, while adapting their protocols and standards of practice to the new reality. "The realtor community has done a wonderful job of making sure the public is safe," said Ted Miller, president and broker of the Fred Miller Group. "We wear masks, socially distance, and have hand sanitizer at all showings. We also ensure that no one involved is ill within the household. We wipe down surfaces afterwards, and encourage only decision makers to attend the showings," he said, noting all clients are vetted to make sure only qualified buyers with an immediate need take in-person tours.

"The real estate industry has not missed a beat," agreed Cohen. "In fact, we have grown and evolved during the pandemic. We have become more familiar with new technology like virtual meeting platforms that enable new and efficient ways to communicate and service our clients."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

*"The world will never be the same. In our profession, the home has become a safe haven. People want to have a place they come home to, where they love to eat dinner. Because people are not going out as much, they are looking to have that yard space. Pool homes are a hot commodity. Pool homes are selling like you can't imagine."*

— Missy Cady-Kampmeyer, Cady Realty

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The demand for “comprehensive digital marketing,” so buyers can familiarize themselves with houses without setting foot on the property has been accelerated by the pandemic, said Miller. “Buying a home is still the largest single investment most people make, and to buy it off a video walk-thru, virtual tour and floor plans is pretty remarkable. Buyers can do it nowadays and know what they are getting.

“This is a big shift in buying behavior,” Miller continued. “Buyers know the homes very well before they go into them. We are using every piece of technology that’s available to help buyers and sellers. It’s expedited the process, especially for the buying public because they are looking at things they already know they are interested in,” he said, adding that since the pandemic began, he has sold more homes sight unseen than in his previous 22 years combined in the industry.

And the need for realtors to hold open houses has also waned due to the pandemic.

“There are fewer open houses available in the market due to COVID-19,” Miller said, adding that because new listings frequently encounter 10 to 20 showings per day and attract multiple offers on the first weekend, there is no need to hold an open house. “We’re selling things before we can get to it,” he said. “The biggest reason open houses have dwindled is the lack of inventory. Things are selling so fast. People don’t seem to mind because they are a little more cautious about where they go and the environments they are entering into.”

### Lure of historic communities

And while all homes are selling fast all over Northeast Florida, Jacksonville’s historic neighborhoods are particularly attractive to buyers due to their proximity to downtown and the St. Johns River. Buyers love the small shops dotting the commercial areas, the physical beauty of the landscape, as well as streets that are bike friendly and walkable, and the sense of community that pervades the area, said Miller.

“People like being able to see or wave at your neighbor without having to sit in their living room. You know you are part of a community and not closed off because you have to keep your distance,” he said.

Other than St. Johns County, where parents might seek a “better” school district, the historic neighborhoods are the most requested area of Jacksonville due to their “walk score,” said Cady-Kampmeyer. “People want parks, biking, and outdoor activities. They want outdoor bars and wine tastings with bistros and rooftops. Hands down, the walk-score ability of the historic district is the No. 1 calling card in the community. People also want the tight community feel, the little boutiques, the little shops. Essentially, they want Mayberry. They want to know their neighbors,” she said.

Another reason that buyers are flocking to the historic neighborhoods during the time of COVID-19, is that people are not as interested in communal amenities such as community swimming pools, clubhouses, or waterslides, said Reynolds. With Coronavirus lurking they would rather have a more spacious yard with a pool. “Neighborhoods like Ortega, Avondale and Riverside are true neighborhoods,” she said. “They don’t have HOAs.”

Chefan agreed. “What we are finding is that people are looking to be more spread out. They are looking for that lifestyle with more space, more outdoor living area. They are looking for more space within their property and a further proximity to their neighbors. They want a larger footprint to maneuver, one that is near parks or greenspace,” he said. Homes in the historic neighborhoods are highly desirable, especially those that front community treasures such as Whatley Park in San Marco or Boone Park in Avondale. Greenspace is a big boon for the neighborhood, he said.

*“Interest rates are at a historic low. When they started hitting sub-3% numbers, buyers really started taking notice. Between low interest rates and home never being more important than it is today, most buyers want to find something they love today – not tomorrow. We’re also seeing a lot of refinancing going on. Lenders are extremely busy and many are backed up due to the surge of refinancing.”*

— Heather Buckman, Cowford Realty & Design

And that also accounts for an uptick of sales of riverfront homes along the St. Johns, which had previously slowed down after Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. “We see more sales on the riverfront and a lot of it has to do with lifestyle and people’s ability to spend time in a boat. They want something they can add to their day-to-day lives without being cooped up indoors and isolated,” he said.

“Homes that are the most popular right now have extra outdoor space or – better yet – a pool! We are all spending more time at home, and that will not change at least for the foreseeable future. For that reason, homes that have an extra-large lot, or some kind of outdoor feature are extra popular!” explained Buckman.

In fact, multiple offers are coming in on homes at all price points, even at the higher end, but the sweet spot is the \$250,000 price range and below, with some homes having as many as 20 showings per day. “As a listing agent, you will not be growing old with that listing,” said Reynolds, adding she attributes the buying surge to a loss of confidence in the stock market by some investors. “They are turning their wealth into real estate because real estate is more tangible,” she said.

Broker and owner, Sally Suslak of Traditions Realty said \$350,000 is the average price of homes in the historic neighborhoods, because there are small and large homes within the community. “Homes below this price point are ‘flying off the shelf’ as long as they are priced right,” she said. “Every buyer has a different idea of how much space they want and need. Some people are nesters and others love the wide-open spaces.”

“We’re selling everything \$600,000 and under very, very fast, and the mansions are going, too,” added Cady-Kampmeyer.

In fact, real estate may be what spearheads the local economy back to recovery. “When the world experiences a life change, real estate is always involved. Realtors were considered essential in the beginning when the Coronavirus was announced in March, but more than just being essential, I believe real estate is going to lead the local economy back into recovery because every life change a person has can mean a change of location. Everyone needs a place to live,” said Reynolds.

### Re-examining life due to COVID-19

One thing is for certain, the Coronavirus and the subsequent shutdown caused many residents to reexamine their lives and lifestyles. For some, there is a desire to move closer to children and grandchildren. For others, being cooped up with a spouse has become grounds for marital discord. Others may see a need to downsize after being furloughed, losing a job, or deciding to retire early.

Regardless of the reason, COVID-19 has provided the opportunity for many North Florida residents to become “intimate” with

their living spaces, and many discovered their houses did not work for them anymore. Clients now are seeking “flex” space for more privacy, so they can install a home office or a quiet location where their children can attend school virtually.

“A lot of people have been working from home since March and still don’t have a date on which to return back to their office permanently if at all,” said Smith. “This is forcing people to look for more flexible living space.”

“Space is at a premium,” agreed Buckman. “With many of our day-to-day functions moving into our homes, the need for space has never been greater. Flex spaces, whether for a home office or homeschooling area, are no longer a luxury but a necessity. Homes are doing triple duty – acting as schools,

workplaces, and family headquarters. Having more square footage and larger outdoor areas helps to make people feel like they can fit it all in without feeling cramped.”

“There’s no question homes with a true home office or guest suite are in high demand,” said Cohen. “Many people are still working from home and these newly desired features offer a better work-at-home experience.”

Also, during the shutdown, when residents found they had nothing to do by stare at the four walls, many also decided to renovate their homes in an attempt to make them more liveable. “Once things began to loosen up, many decided to put their homes on the market because they looked great,” Reynolds said. “They’ve been saying, ‘the house looks good, interest rates are low, but the house doesn’t really suit us anymore, let’s sell it,’” she said.

Cady-Kampmeyer agreed. “Nobody is on the fence anymore. Because the seller market is so strong, if people were thinking about it before, they are selling and for more than what they expected. Then they are buying a house for less of a payment because of the interest rates,” she said.

### A strong finish to 2020

In years past, as the holidays near, the market often slows down after Halloween, but because this is 2020 that may not be the case. “We may have fewer buyers looking, but they will be more serious,” Reynolds said. “No one thinks that COVID-19 is going away anytime soon. If you are going to have to stay in a house and spend more time in it, you might as well make the best of it.”

Suslak concurred. “This market will only stay as strong as it is now as long as the interest rates are low, and the COVID-19 virus is still a serious threat to their well-being,” she said. “Who knows how long that will be?”



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# LETTERS *to the* EDITOR



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“Rather than changing Confederate names, we should name new schools after civil rights leaders,” he said.

Williams said while a school honors its namesake, it also takes on a life of its own.

“There’s a pride in Lee, in all things Robert E. Lee,” he said. “Now, slavery was a key issue in that war. The bottom line is that is our history. It has nothing to do with defending an era of history. It simply has to do with defending the history and legacy of the class that you graduated from.”

Williams considered name changes as a form of intimidation. “We cannot give in to this political direction until we’ve been bullied, until we’re oversensitive,” he said.

Williams expanded his alternative view of race relations in his recent book “What Black and White America Must Do Now.” “We need a direction of passage, a formula to follow, leading toward racial comity, equality under the law, and the deep harmony that only unfettered liberty can provide,” he wrote.

*Marcos Protheroe, Avondale*

## Constitution Week, a time to reflect on liberty, freedom

The United States Constitution stands as a testament to the tenacity of Americans throughout history to maintain their liberties and freedoms to ensure those inalienable rights to every American. The Daughters of the American Revolution initiated the tradition of celebrating the Constitution in 1955. DAR petitioned Congress to set aside the week of September 17-23 each year to observe Constitution Week. After adoption by Congress, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the resolution into law on August 2, 1956.

The DAR Regents Council of Northeast Florida urged citizens to reflect on the United States Constitution during September’s 65th observation with the following three goals: to encourage the study of the historical events that led to the framing of the Constitution in September 1787; to remind the public that the Constitution is the basis of America’s great heritage and the foundation for its way of life; and to emphasize U. S. citizens’ responsibility to protect, defend and preserve the U. S. Constitution.

Constitution Week is an opportune time to learn more about this important document and celebrate the greatest vision of human freedom in history, the U.S. Constitution.

*Toni M. Weatherford*, President, Regents Council of Northeast Florida

*Carol Eleftherion*, Regent, Amelia Island Chapter, NSDAR

*Brenda Onur*, Regent, Fort San Nicholas Chapter, NSDAR

*Maria Miller*, Regent, Jacksonville Chapter, NSDAR

*Linda Brenner*, Regent, Jean Ribault Chapter, NSDAR

*Beth Briand*, Regent, Kan Yuk sa Chapter, NSDAR

*Deborah Brannon*, Regent, Maria Jefferson Chapter, NSDAR

*Judith Delmar*, Regent, Ponte Vedra Chapter, NSDAR

*Terreca Hurley*, Regent, Sophia Fleming Chapter, NSDAR

## Instead of renaming public schools, give them more resources

I read with interest Marcia Hodgson’s “Alumni Forms Committee to Save Name of Robert E. Lee High” in the September 2020 issue. Regarding the proposed school renaming, and potential effects, a few points came to mind that I wish to share.

Last year, I chose to take a hiatus from my career as an architect and be a substitute teacher. I began in September 2019 and ended in March with the onset of COVID-19. I had several motivations as a sub, one of which was getting as diverse a cross-section of experiences as possible. I ended up subbing at 50 different schools across Duval County: elementary/ middle/ high; all ages and resources; all cohorts, including PLA, SLA, EBD and ASD students; and geographically diverse, though many were in the urban core.

I subbed at five of the six schools targeted for renaming---Stonewall Jackson Elementary, Jefferson Davis Middle, Kirby-Smith Middle School and Jeb Stuart Middle School, and Robert E. Lee High School – a total of 10 assignments between those locations. I can say without a doubt that, more than any potential benefit that may come from renaming the schools, what all Duval County schools need, including those six, are resources: more teachers, more computers, and improved facilities.

The article mentions the cost of renaming the schools, estimated at \$2,000,000 for the six (~\$333,333 each), and the \$350,000 expense for the recent Forrest High School renaming confirms the math. \$350,000 means seven new teachers (or \$5,000 raises for 70 teachers), over 125 computers, or a new roof with a 20-year warranty for the school building itself – all of this possibly at each of the six schools in question.

I challenge School Board Chairman Jones and the entire School Board to spend one day in each of the six schools walking around the halls, observing students, sitting in the teachers’ lounge. Then, in good conscience, can they say the best way to have the greatest impact with \$350,000 – per school – is to rename it? If so, then as Superintendent Greene suggests: hold community town hall meetings and allow the public to have its say.

As for Board Member Ashley Smith Juarez’s suggestion to expand the renaming focus to more schools, including Andrew Jackson High School, it would be hypocritical find the name unfit for one of our schools, yet acceptable for our entire city, Jacksonville. Andrew Jackson was a President of the United States. If he is tolerable for our city’s name, then he’s tolerable for a school’s name within our city.

Finally, I am taken with how we work so hard to create ‘community’, especially utilizing somewhat superficial online platforms; yet it remains generally elusive to create something authentic and long-lasting. Then, when we have a legitimate, sustained community such as the Robert E. Lee High School alumni, which supports a school and builds more community, we threaten to disenfranchise it by destroying its very reason for being.

We, as citizens, parents, and voters, must be better stewards of our limited capital resources, human and financial. Kory Von Leue, a DCPS teacher, former administrator, and recent District 1 School Board candidate, notes Duval County is a state-wide laggard in capital spending on K-12 education. Although racial injustice is a very important and timely focus for us as a community and nation, it should not come at the steep cost of our community’s and children’s educational quality.

*Lee Pochmann, San Marco*

## Let’s do better by changing the name of Robert E. Lee High

I write this on September 11 to voice my approval of changing the name Robert E. Lee from the high school in Riverside. We can do better in naming an auspicious building meant to welcome and educate our young Americans of all ethnicities.

Growing up, I ran in many track meets at Robert E. Lee High School. My mom and both my sisters when to school at Lee High and many of my friends went there. Every year I cheer for Lee High football and hope they make it to the state championship. I love Lynyrd Skynyrd and the fact that LeRoy Butler and Edgar Bennet went there.

However, growing up I was always offended by the subtle background message sent out to the minority class suggesting that deep down we don’t really agree with equal rights. It offends me that a general who chose to fight to destroy the continuity of the United States has his name on our house of education. You know what happened to Mr. Lee? He got his butt kicked. Don’t mess with the USA.

Everyone opposed to the renaming of the school simply needs to be creative. Think, “what is a better solution?” I love this high school and its football team. I love this neighborhood. I love my country. But I do not want this man’s name on the school. I imagine the horrors of slavery, and I don’t want this to be any part of the message or foundation of my community or city. Robert E. Lee was from Virginia, let the Virginians deal with it.

The problem with changing the name shouldn’t be to stop the change, the problem should be to get it right. The group against the change should be making sure that we actually make a good change. How about Liberty High School? Say the word Liberty slowly then say Robert E. Lee...pretty close sounding. If improved to Liberty High, for example, the “L” on the letterman’s jacket would be the same. The team could still be the Generals and have the same color scheme.

Or it could be Arthur Chester Skinner High. Read his obituary in *The Resident*. Wow, he was a great man, and local, loved this country, played football, military, helped develop part of Jax, etc. Others to consider would be Lynyrd Skynyrd High, Ronnie Van Zant High, Ed Austin High, Hans Tanzler High, or Lewis Brantley High.

I’ve read the articles from those who want to change the name and have an answer for their main arguments:

1. **It’s been that name for 90 years so leave it.** A bad decision is a bad decision for one minute, 90 years or 1,000 years. We would never name houses of education after terrorists to this great country. Mr. Lee’s decision was treasonous.
2. **It will diminish our memories as former students.** No, those who care about our community and our image and what we passively imply to our youth, should embrace a healing name to be proud of as an alumnus or alumna. High school is for the youth. The alumni had their time and those high school days are over. The high school of today and is for legions of youth to come, it is for them now.
3. **The name doesn’t affect scholastic performance.** Scholastic performance is a wholistic metric. The name of the school as part of that. First, we need to change the name, then we need to do a major road diet, narrowing McDuff to slow traffic, adding cycling lanes, cross walks, more shady trees on both sides of the road. and getting the shops along McDuff up to speed including maybe a nice café for students who are seniors to spend time in. Make it a truly awesome school!
4. **It will be too expensive.** No! The name Robert E. Lee presents the wrong type of image to people outside of our city. This type of image and good ol’ boying holds our city’s growth back. This is an investment opportunity. I know so many of my friends who intentionally move to St. Johns County only for the school system. Change the names of these schools to Liberty or USA High School, or name it after a local star. Then let’s work on improving downtown Jacksonville, the most embarrassing downtown in the USA. The South could rise again, but not in that divisively Confederate way, but in a way that we are just an amazing place of acceptance and welcome with a good economy, robust social capital, and pace of life.

*Clifford Miller, Riverside*

## Reader tips her ‘hat’ to *The Resident*

It is long past time that I write to you and express my appreciation for the *Resident Community News*. I live in the Lakewood area and receive the San Jose-San Marco-St. Nicholas edition. It is wonderful to be able to keep informed of what is happening and of upcoming events.

I have lived in Jacksonville since 1963 and am so proud of our city. Since I no longer subscribe to our local newspaper, the *Resident* is often my sole source of community information. So much of our news today is politically motivated and is, sadly, “slanted.” *The Resident* seems to have found ways of reporting events focusing on residents sharing opportunities to be involved in projects – all without any bias. How refreshing!

I have a friend who now lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana but was born and reared in Jacksonville and lived here for part of her adult life. I often send *The Resident* to her as she still takes great pride in the schools she attended and in San Marco. Another friend is a former principal of Hendricks Avenue Elementary School. She lives near the inter-coastal waterway. Whenever there is news of the school and its students, I copy and give those articles to her. Your news is reaching far beyond this area.

I am president of The Lakewood Community (TLC), and we deliver baskets to welcome new neighbors. Always included in the basket are the latest issues of *The Resident* and *Historic Life*.

Let me note that I like seeing the articles in “our” issue about other Jacksonville communities – Avondale, Riverside, etc.

A “tip of the hat,” a toast, all the accolades possible to you and your staff for the wonderful work you are doing!!!

*Montelle Trammell, Lakewood*

**QUESTION:** Do you have faith in the United States Post Office to deliver and execute mail-in ballots for the upcoming presidential election? Regardless of your political position, do you think they can handle the task? Do you have trouble with your mail? Have you noticed that packages or mail are not delivered in the proper timeframe?

By Marcia Hodgson, Resident Community News



I do not have faith in the Post Office. I don't think they can handle the task. I would rather vote in person. I'm not having trouble with my own mail.

— ANDER BEAM, MURRAY HILL



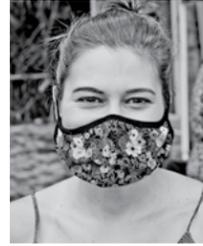
I don't know. I'm never worried that I'm not getting my mail. My mail always arrives. I have faith that the Post Office can do it.

— CAITLIN RYBA, AVONDALE



I do as long as they don't have any new executive orders from the president. I would trust the mail-in process. I think it will be okay, but I've seen a lot of mailboxes on the back of trucks. They are shown on the nightly news, so I don't know what the president's executive order is going to the post office right now. There might be some shenanigans going on. Who knows? I think it is a better process to use the mail to vote because Russia was sending misinformation last time and there were a lot of problems with the places where you vote in the last election. It may be safer to have a mail-in vote because the Russians can tap into voting machines. My mail is coming slow these days. I just moved to Murray Hill and it is trickling in.

— ALTARICK ABERCROMBIE AND WOODRINA ALLEN, MURRAY HILL



I absolutely have faith in the post office. They can definitely handle the task, and they definitely will handle it. They will work through hail, sleet, and snow to get it done. I have no trouble with my mail. It may be a little slower now because of all the suppression, but I still get my mail.

— BRANDI MATHEWS, AVONDALE



Yes. The Post Office has been doing great since Benjamin Franklin set it up. Getting the ballots to and from, yes, but it's when the ballots are handled at the end, wherever they are taken to and to whoever is doing the counting, that's when my trepidation begins. My mail service is fantastic. I've not seen a delay, even though the sorting machines have been removed. I've not seen any delays or stoppage at all. I have full faith in my postal delivery worker and my local post office.

— SHAUN RAE, MURRAY HILL



My father works for the U.S.P.S., and I know firsthand how important that service is and how vital it is. We don't have any issues with our mail. I absolutely have confidence in the U.S. Mail service. I'm very confident in its ability to deliver the mail and protect those mail-in ballots.

— WILL MATHEWS, AVONDALE



I'm not quite sure. You know what happened with the miscout with the ballots during Bush and Gore. You know something like that is going to happen in Florida. Florida is the watch list. We have to have faith once they [the ballots] leave and go wherever. When it comes to the Postal Service, I've had a mailman who just wouldn't give me my mail. I've had trouble with my mail, personally. There is always going to be human error, that is what we're worried about. We've had the postal service for a long time, and we're still going to need them in the future in case they decide to censor the internet or whatever they are going to do.

— ROBERT MORRIS IV, MURRAY HILL



I do. I think a lot of reporting has shown that the United States Postal Service handles that volume of mail, at least around the holiday seasons. Certainly, I would like more protections and less dismantling of what seems to be going on, but overall, I think it is something they can do, and it's what they were designed to do. I don't believe we're experiencing any delays with our mail, personally.

— JEFF RYBA, AVONDALE



Absolutely. Statistics show that the Post Office moves more than that during a holiday season. It's like 30 million pieces or something like that. So, if anyone does a fact check they will see that our postal men and women do a great job. I have every faith that they will get our ballots in on time and execute them just fine. No. I have had no problem with my mail. Actually, my parents live with me, and they get their prescriptions in the mail. There has been no delay.

— DEIDRE SMITH, ORTEGA

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# Obi Plastic Surgery welcomes new surgeon, new patient consults

A new surgeon has arrived in town, one that was hand-picked by Jacksonville's most sought-after and highly qualified surgeon, Dr. Lewis J. Obi. Dr. Hanı Rayess, a California native, has made his way to Jacksonville and he is quickly building a roster of satisfied patients. His kind, gentle bedside manner is further complemented by his skills as a talented reconstructive and aesthetic facial plastic surgeon, to include an aptitude for non-invasive procedures.

Rayess joins the Obi Plastic Surgery practice after spending years in medical school at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and residency at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. His last stop was training at the University of Tennessee in Memphis, where he spent a year honing his skills in facial plastic and reconstructive surgery with one of America's top facial aesthetic surgeons. While in Memphis, he learned state-of-the-art procedures in both

aesthetic and reconstructive surgery of the face and neck and worked at one of the nation's busiest trauma centers.

Dr. Rayess is excited to have the opportunity to work with Dr. Obi and has already begun booking patients and putting his skills to work. He is also making friends due to his outstanding bedside manner and approachable nature.

"I'm really enjoying this city and what it has to offer; not just for my career, but for the recreation and sunshine that Florida has to offer. I'm also poised and ready to help patients discover their best looks."

For the past decade Rayess has been training and earning qualifications to take his career to the next level. Working under the tutelage of veteran surgeon and innovator, Lewis Obi, will help to propel his capabilities to a new level, all while enhancing services at the Obi Plastic Surgery practice. With the introduction and affiliation of Dr. Rayess, practice expansion is now possible for the duo as they offer patients, both new and established, an opportunity to better their image or increase their youthful appearance.

"We are so fortunate to have Hanı in our practice. His skill set perfectly complements our practice," said Obi. "He's an excellent surgeon, a great guy, and he has the skills to change lives and satisfy patients with his state-of-the-art surgical techniques and skilled hands in the operating room."

Over the last several years, Dr. Obi has been breaking the mold, with the use of fat-derived stem cells. They increase healing time, lessen scarring and offer age-defying treatments by applying innovations in stem cell use to plastic surgery processes. Not only has Dr. Obi been increasing access to these technologies, but he's been consistently outperforming other surgeons in town with his methods in breast augmentations, the signature LJO (Lewis J. Obi - Opera Lift) brow lift and upper eyelid procedures, as well as his body contouring by way of the SlimLipo, (LifeSculpt) laser liposuction procedure, which he helped develop. Fat derived from this procedure led to his pioneering work with adult stem cells, which he is now using to enhance the results of many plastic surgery procedures.

Many patients ultimately choose Dr. Obi for the most advanced abdominoplasty, breast surgery and "Mommy Make Over" procedures because of his innovative work with 3D imaging, lasers, Velashape and fat derived stem cells.



Dr. Lewis J. Obi with Dr. Hanı Rayess



*"We are so fortunate to have Hanı in our practice. His skill set perfectly complements our practice."*

— Dr. Lewis J. Obi

The best procedures and results are achieved by only the most qualified surgeons. The team of Drs. Lewis J. Obi and Hanı Rayess offer these skills and years of shared expertise.

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# Ortega Park subcontractors fined for stormwater violations

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

After six repeated violations of best management practices that would prevent sediment from flowing into the Ortega River, two subcontractors for Dewberry Group, the owner and developer of Ortega Park Mall on Roosevelt Boulevard, entered into a "Consent Order" with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Aug. 3.

Marietta Sand Corporation and RLH Construction LLC, subcontractors who are installing new infrastructure in what was formerly Roosevelt Mall shopping center, were fined \$26,500 and have signed an agreement – OGC File No. 20-1107 – to take corrective and preventative measures that will prevent turbid stormwater on the construction site from traveling into the Ortega River, said Florida State Senator Wyman Duggan.

The fine included \$26,000 for civil penalties and \$500 for costs and expenses incurred by the DEP during the investigation of the matter. The civil penalty included six violations that warranted a penalty of \$2,000 or more, and also included a penalty of \$5,000 each for two documented water-quality violations, according to the Consent Order.

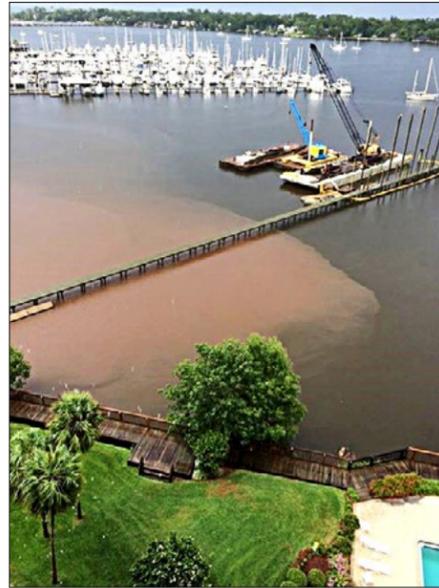
On several occasions over six months, between January and July, longtime Ortega Yacht Club Condominium residents Sharon and Don Light said they have gazed down from their 11th floor balcony only to see a muddy plume of turbid water gradually spreading into the waters of the Ortega River. The sediment-filled water, which emanated from the Ortega Park construction site, flowed under the Lakeshore Drive bridge into the small creek that runs alongside their high-rise condominium development and into the Ortega River. The couple expressed concern that increased sediment in the creek would raise the water level, kill nearby trees and wildlife, and cause flooding that might again damage their ground-floor garage, as had happened during Hurricane Irma.

"This has changed the complexion of how high the water is, even on a normal high tide. If we have a hurricane or one of those king tides, we might have garages that will get flooded out. The status of the canal should be kept as it was pre-construction. It needs to be restored. We don't want to stop the mall, but we want to be good stewards of the environment and the river. We've lived here 30 years, and this is the second time this has happened and done ecological damage," said Sharon Light, referring to renovations made by Dewberry Group to the Roosevelt Mall two decades ago. "The first time, they got away with it. This time it's even worse," she said.

On Aug. 6, Duggan met with the Lights at their Ortega home to discuss the drainage situation. During the meeting, Duggan said he "definitely" intended to contact the DEP and the St. Johns Water Management District about the violations. "The regulatory enforcement agencies need to do their job," he said, adding he did not think that the Coronavirus pandemic had been the cause of any delay. "I will make sure the regulatory agencies that have jurisdiction over this will enforce the laws," he said.

Since the meeting in early August, another plume occurred said Duggan. On Aug. 27, he joined City Councilman Al Ferraro, Dawn Motes, president of Marietta Sand, and the Lights in another private meeting at their Ortega home. Although Ortega is represented on the City Council by Randall DeFoor, Ferraro told Duggan he had convened the meeting because he had some investment in the problem due to his role as chairman of the city's Waterways Commission.

"During the meeting, Dawn said her company had expended approximately



During a six-month period between January and July sediment spills have created muddy turbidity in the waters of the Ortega River creating the color of chocolate milk.

*"The problem is each one of these violations has not only a significant impact on the ecology of the Ortega River and our waterways, but also an economic impact."*

— Jimmy Orth, executive director of the St. Johns Riverkeeper

\$50,000 to put down temporary asphalt to help reduce the runoff of lime rock dust and residue that was being created by the renovation of the mall," Duggan said, adding that the asphalt had been taken up and the lime rock base had been left to be repaved later when the mall was finished. "Dawn said she had put in the temporary asphalt in an effort to resolve the problem, even though she was not required to do it and would not be paid back," he said.

Motes also outlined several struggles her company has had in dealing with Dewberry Group, the property owner, Duggan said. "She said there are many instances where some conflict would arise as it relates to the plans, and she has to stop work and seek guidance from the owner and cannot get them to respond," he said. "For example, she said there was an easement for the benefit of AT&T underground in the parking lot and her company pulled the asphalt up before learning about the easement, which they didn't know about. The engineers who designed the project didn't know the lines were in place, so the work had to stop while AT&T and Comcast were contacted to give a temporary construction easement to do the work. The result was everything coming to a standstill causing lime rock and dirt to be exposed when it rained. Dawn was saying that she couldn't force AT&T and Comcast to pay attention to the problem and give them the construction easement. She said, 'My hands are tied until they act.'" Duggan said.

During the meeting, Motes also mentioned the city has a 54-inch stormwater drain line in back of the mall between Weise's Pharmacy and Publix. The line handles stormwater from several neighborhoods to the north and west, and that drain line feeds into the exact same canal, Duggan said. Marietta Sands plans to install several baffle boxes on the mall property where the stormwater goes into filtering before the water travels into the canal, he explained.

"Her point was that once the mall project is done, runoff from the mall will be treated

through those baffle boxes, while the 54-inch drain line has no treatment and is quite old. She said the drain line is 40 to 50 years old and is fed by stormwater inlets that are no longer operating at peak efficiency," Duggan said, noting that Motes recommended that since the mall was already a construction site, it might be a good idea for the city to put in some baffle boxes of its own on that line while construction is underway.

The City of Jacksonville Public Works Department is aware of the pipe, said Marjorie Dennis, public communications officer for the city. "Prior to the Roosevelt Mall construction, no sediment or other issues were occurring with this pipe," Dennis said in an email. "There are no plans to replace or alter the pipe. No baffle boxes are planned, and the current construction is for the mall and not for the City of Jacksonville."

Jimmy Orth, executive director of the St. Johns Riverkeeper, said his organization is often frustrated by ongoing violations at construction projects like Ortega Park. "We just don't have the enforcement mechanism in place that can serve as a deterrent, and we don't always have the commitment from the contractors to have the BMPs – best management practices – implemented and working effectively," he said.

"The problem is each one of these violations has not only a significant impact on the ecology of the Ortega River and our waterways, but also an economic impact. Every time one of these incidents happens, we're not only silting in the creeks, but we are also smothering creatures on the river bottom and adding turbidity to the river, which can be harmful to wildlife. It's expensive to dredge when it becomes necessary. I've seen it on numerous occasions. People lose access at low tide to their docks and that is a huge economic penalty. It can mean a loss of property values. The cost to prevent this is not exorbitant. There are means that developers can employ. It's not a cost-prohibitive issue for developers to resolve before it happens. The problem is that it is cost prohibitive to fix the problem after it occurs," he said.

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## Community Foundation grants support to vulnerable elders

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida made six grants totaling \$100,000 to support Aging Adults in the North Florida community in September. It also made a \$7,800 grant to JASMYN from the Esther Pope Memorial Endowment for persons diagnosed with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

The funds to support the seniors come from the Foundation's Aging Adults Field of Interest, which is provided by the I.R. Bowen Fund, the Grace H. Osbourne Endowment, the Grady C. and Rebecca T. Parker Endowment as well as the Giving Forward Community Fund.

"The Aging Adults grants we made this year span the breadth of services seniors need, with a special focus on improving the quality of life for under-served and under-resourced seniors in Duval, Clay, Baker, St. John's and Nassau Counties," said Emmanuel Fortune, program director for The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "This population is particularly vulnerable right now, and we are delighted to be able to provide resources to make a difference in their lives."

Receiving a \$20,000 grant to implement its As We Gather program was 2nd Mile Ministries. The funds will help address social isolation for senior residents in the Brentwood neighborhood, and activities include half-day socialization gatherings for seniors in a socially distanced manner as well as inter-generational service projects with youth and monthly virtual storytelling sessions to capture community history and wisdom.



Emmanuel Fortune

The Alzheimer's Association of Central and Northeast Florida received a \$7,151 grant to improve the knowledge and skills of caregivers supporting clients with Alzheimer's in rural Putnam County.

Beaches Habitat received \$20,000 to reduce unsafe living conditions for low-income seniors at the beach. Beaches Habitat, in partnership with BEAM, will identify minor repairs and home modifications and use the expertise of its construction manager and building staff as well as community expertise to make improvements.

Also receiving a \$20,000 grant with a focus on Alzheimer's disease was the Mayo Clinic, which is working to increase awareness

and knowledge of pre-screening, diagnosis, and treatment services for Alzheimer's and related dementias within the African American community. Based on best practice research, Mayo plans to train members of the clergy within the AME church, and in partnership with AARP will conduct educational workshops so clergy can sustainably continue workshops going forward.

The Way Free Medical Clinic, Inc., also received a \$20,000 grant to educate seniors who are aging out of The Way Clinic's free services and to assist in enrolling them into Medicare. In addition, The Way plans to expand case management services beyond benefits enrollment to provide supplemental payments for seniors who cannot afford prescriptions and other needs that their Medicare does not cover.

Jewish Family Community Services received a \$10,000 to provide reliable and affordable transportation to seniors via the GoGo Grandparent ride-share service. This new ride-share program will provide age appropriate and culturally friendly rides.

The grant to JASMYN was to develop a referral network with mental health clinics to provide mental health screening and short-term therapy to marginalized youth who are LGBTQ+ and HIV+. Based on survey data from JASMYN over the past five years, 100% of clients surveyed had experienced poverty and 76% experienced sexual assault with few resources available to help young people with HIV manage or heal from trauma.

## Feeding Northeast Florida receives support from Publix



Chris Norberg, community relations manager, Publix, with Chimerre Nieves, senior manager of retail partnerships, Feeding Northeast Florida

Feeding Northeast Florida, Northeast Florida's largest nonprofit food bank, received a \$125,000 donation from Publix Super Markets Charities to support its ongoing work to meet the increased need for food assistance in the region due to the effects of the pandemic.

Feeding Northeast Florida serves the more than 257,000 people facing food insecurity in their eight-county operating area. With the rising numbers of newly unemployed neighbors, Feeding Northeast Florida has seen a greatly increased demand for food. The \$125,000 donation from Publix Charities to Feeding Northeast Florida is one of several donations made this year to help provide food and other essential support to residents hit hard by the pandemic.

## Bean proclaims Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month

To raise awareness about undiagnosed brain aneurysms in the United States, which place up to 13 million people in the United States at risk of serious health problems such as stroke, brain damage or even death, Aaron Bean, Florida District 4 senator, declared September 2020 to be Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month during a news conference at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital Sept. 18. The initiative aims to encourage patients and physicians to seek treatment for the cerebrovascular condition before it can progress to a medical emergency.

Wolfson Children's Hospital and Baptist Neurological Institute also received a \$10,000 award from Trinity Love Hoblit Foundation, which recognized a continued commitment to excellence in clinical care for cerebrovascular conditions such as brain aneurysms from the two Baptist Health entities. The Trinity Love Hoblit Foundation is a non-profit organization supporting research, training, and treatment for neurological disorders and the award is a portion of the foundation's yearly donation.

Aneurysms impact roughly 2% to 4% of the U.S. population, around 6.5-13 million individuals in total. Most aneurysm deaths occur due to large amounts of internal bleeding after weakened blood vessels swell, fill with blood and eventually burst. Discovery before rupture is essential to prevent serious health problems and manage symptoms.

"Raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of brain aneurysms will improve our ability to help patients before aneurysms can cause a problem," said Ricardo Hanel, MD, PhD, neurosurgeon and co-medical director of the Baptist Stroke & Cerebrovascular Center. "An understanding of risks and warning signs leads to earlier treatment and better clinical outcomes."

"While rare, cerebral aneurysms do occur in children and they can be devastating," said pediatric neurosurgeon Philipp Aldana, MD, co-medical director of the Stys Neuroscience Institute at Wolfson Children's Hospital of Jacksonville and professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics with the UF College of Medicine - Jacksonville. "That's why it is so important for parents to be aware of the signs



From left: Dr. Ricardo Hanel, Sen. Aaron Bean, (Top) Michael A. Mayo, president of Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville; Michael Aubin, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital; Nicole Cremer, administrative assistant to Olivia Hoblit; Dr. Philipp Aldana, co director of the Stys Neuroscience Institute; Marianne Crowley, board member of Trinity Love Hoblit Foundation; Philip Hoblit and Olivia Hoblit

and symptoms of pediatric aneurysms, and risk factors that put children at higher risk. Getting immediate care that can only be provided at a comprehensive, full-service children's hospital like Wolfson Children's makes all the difference. Thank you to Senator Bean, and the Trinity Love Hoblit Foundation, for helping to raise awareness about brain aneurysms in children and adults."

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## Meyer contributes to UNF diversity award

Thanks in part to the efforts of Vice President/Chief Diversity Officer Whitney Meyer of Avondale, the University of North Florida (UNF) was honored with the 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.

It was the sixth year that UNF has been recognized with the diversity award.

The annual HEED award is a national honor that recognizes U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

“The university is very honored to receive this important recognition that highlights our ongoing commitment to having a diverse, welcoming and inclusive campus environment for our students, faculty, and staff,” said UNF President David Szymanski. “We will continue to develop and implement diversity and inclusion initiatives throughout all of our campus community.”

Meyer, an UNF alumna, was recently appointed as the university’s vice president and chief diversity officer to identify opportunities for greater alignment and more unified diversity efforts across campus. She advises university leadership on diversity,



Whitney Meyer

inclusion, and racial equality pertaining to strategies and policies, learning and research, community relations and the recruitment, retention, and admission of faculty, staff, and students of color. She also manages key programs aimed at promoting diversity, which include the Community Alliance for Student Success (CASS) program and the Fearless Woman initiative.

In addition, the university’s Commission on Diversity and Inclusion, Department of Diversity Initiatives, LGBT Resource Center, and OneJax, all work together with diversity and inclusion liaisons to support inclusive excellence on campus.

## Holley named president elect of state conference of Judges of Compensation Claims.

Judge William “Ray” Holley, an Avondale resident, was recently elected by his fellow jurists to serve as President Elect of the Florida Conference of the Judges of Compensation Claims (Workers Compensation Judiciary).

The Florida Conference was established in 2007 to foster and promote collegiality, address and discuss common concerns by and between the judges with the Department of Administrative Hearings and the workers compensation bar, develop educational opportunities, and recognize achievements of Conference members throughout the State of Florida.

Holley was originally appointed to the bench in 2010 and was re-appointed most recently in 2019 by Governor Rick Scott. He is a native of Jacksonville and after his graduation from Stetson University, he served as a legislative assistant in the Florida State Senate and the manager of two political campaigns. Holley has both a Master of Public Administration and a Juris Doctor, which he earned in 1997.



Judge William “Ray” Holley

Admitted to the Florida Bar in 1997 and the Georgia Bar in 2006, Holley has served as an assistant state attorney and house counsel for an international logistics corporation before joining the Law Office of Amy Warpinski, a field legal office of Liberty Mutual Group in 2002. In 2010, Florida Governor Charlie Christ appointed Holley as one of the two Judges of Compensation Claims for the Jacksonville district. He was reappointed by Gov. Rick Scott for a second term that commenced in 2015.

## Three from historic districts win Cultural Council Arts Awards



Basma Alawee



Mark Krancer



Mr. Al Pete



Shawanna Brooks and Roosevelt Watson III



Rebecca Levy



Ulysses Owens Jr.



VyStarCreditUnion



Word Revolt Gallery

Three with ties to the city’s historic districts were among the nine winners of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville’s 44th Annual Arts Awards, which was held virtually on Sept. 2. The live-streamed event brought together more than 150 viewers on Facebook Live and other platforms.

Mark Krancer, a familiar face in the Riverside area, won the Art of Giving Award, while Avondale resident Ulysses Owens, Jr., was awarded Robert Arleigh White Advocacy honors and Rebecca Levy of Avondale received the Art Educator award.

Other winners included Shawana Brooks & Roosevelt Watson III, Helen Lane Founders Award; Basma Alawee, Community

Impact Award; Word Revolt Gallery, Peoples’ Choice Award; Mr. Al Pete, Art Innovator Award; and VyStar Credit Union, Corporate Business Award.

The virtual event was hosted by Tenikka Hughes, anchor of Action News Jax, and Al Emerick, founder of ValueMapping, and provided a combination of awards, presentations, and performances by violinist Phillip Pan and spoken words by Don’t Miss a Beat student Christian Scott.

Despite technical difficulties the night of the event, the Cultural Council has since released a complete version of the evening on-line without issues at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYV3kWzLfwM>.

## Greenscape receives \$10,000 donation from TD Bank

TD Bank has awarded Greenscape of Jacksonville one of five \$10,000 donations to environmental organizations within their national footprint. TD Bank employees all across Florida voted on the nominees and Greenscape was the winner. The grant is in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day this past April.

As a longtime advocate for tree planting and as an example of corporate stewardship, TD Bank has sponsored numerous local tree plantings in partnership with Greenscape. These plantings typically take place in public parks located in underserved areas of the community and are executed by their employees.

“We look forward each year to join the enthusiastic TD Bank volunteers for their day of service in Jacksonville. They don’t mind getting their hands dirty and enjoy the camaraderie, while improving outdoor spaces for many citizens” said Anna Dooley, executive director Greenscape. “We are



Greenscape Executive Director Anna Dooley receives a check for \$10,000 from Cindy Stover of TD Bank.

very thankful that TD Bank employees voted for us to receive the donation so we can continue to green our city.”

Greenscape is celebrating 45 years as the not-for-profit tree organization in Jacksonville. The organization continues to fulfill its mission to plant, protect and promote trees and is credited with over 350,000 trees added to the local tree canopy.

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## Jewish Federation awards grants

The Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida awarded grants through a grant-making fund of the Jewish Community Foundation to seven Northeast Florida Jewish nonprofits on Sept. 4.

The grants will provide funding for the following initiatives: Elementary Jewish afterschool programming in St. Johns County public schools through the GROW program in partnership with Chabad of St. Johns; Tradition boxes and Shabbat kits to Jewish people in need through Jewish Family and Community Services; innovating the Mitzvah Program at Martin J. Gottlieb Day School to be pandemic friendly and able to do more for those in need throughout Northeast Florida; new technology for River Garden Senior Services that will help residents engage and feel more connected to the community; post Bar/Bat Mitzvah teen programming geared towards Social Justice and current events through the Temple, Congregation Ahavath Chesed; supporting professional development and education through the Jewish Community Alliance's Educator Support Network for early education teachers to continue their training and better themselves for the entire community; and increasing teen programming and combatting antisemitism in public



Charlie DuBow, marketing & communications intern; Kellie Ann Kelleher Smith, director of the Jewish Foundation; Sanford Zimmerman, facilitator, Grant Review Committee; Steve Neihaus, Rebecca Cooper, Rachel Davis, Brandon Sugg, Sarah Jacobs, Emma Pulley, Rachel Mizrahi Morgenthal and Gigi Ackerman

schools throughout Northeast Florida with the Jewish Student Union/JSU.

The RFP was open to all Jewish nonprofit organizations in Northeast Florida. A grant review committee comprised of nine individuals discussed via Zoom calls the intent and purpose of the Jewish Grant Fund and engaged in thoughtful dialogue around maximizing dollars to create impact and drive change.

"We are honored to be working in a community with so many incredible Jewish nonprofit organizations and to be a part of awarding grants to engage and strengthen our Jewish Community," said Sanford Zimmerman, past president of the Jewish Federation and grant review committee facilitator.

## Cathedral dean celebrates birthday with grocery parade

The Very Rev. Kate Moorehead, dean of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, had a birthday and folks who are food insecure in Jacksonville reaped the benefit.

To celebrate their priest's special day, parishioners from the Cathedral organized a "grocery drop-off birthday parade" around the church campus.

"Who knew it would be so fun to turn 50," said Moorehead, who couldn't think of a better way to celebrate than to help her community.

More than 100 bags of groceries were dropped off that evening, and the bags were taken to the food pantry at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Springfield the next day. In addition, parishioners contributed gifts of cash and grocery cards. St. Mary's rector, Rev. Beth Tjoflat, joined in the fun at the Cathedral to celebrate Moorehead's special day and thank the donors.



The Very Rev. Kate Moorehead with Scott Hill

Throughout the pandemic, the number of people visiting St. Mary's food pantry has doubled with many coming for help for the first time ever. Help from the pantry is so necessary to the community that it has been designated by the United Way as a resource for the area.

## Republican women honor 9/11 heroes

The Republican Women's Club of Duval Federated hosted a special tribute to the heroes of 9/11 during its monthly luncheon at the Southbank Hotel Sept. 11. Honored guests at the festivities were several members of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department including Division Fire Chief Keith Powers, Lt. Alex Kimmel, Engineer Seth Blackstone Firefighter Samuel Meek and Steve Riska, division chief of operations. During the luncheon, a special "missing man" table was set aside to honor the firefighters and first responders who lost their lives during the tragedy at the Twin Towers in New York City. From left: Keith Powers, Lt. Alex Kimmel, Sharon Light,



president of the Republican Women's Club of Duval Federated, Samuel Meek and Steve Riska. Also pictured is the "missing man" table and an explanation of its significance. Photos courtesy of Sandy McCorvey

## Five from Riverside area selected for Leadership Jax



AG Gancarski Valerie H. Jenkins Tyler Morris Kaci Honeycutt David Garfunkel

Five from the Riverside area were selected from among 54 community leaders to participate in Leadership Jacksonville's flagship program in the class of 2021.

Leadership Jacksonville educates, connects, and inspires diverse leaders to build and strengthen their communities. Since the first class in 1976-77, over 2200 alumni have completed the yearlong program exploring dynamics of urban society, analyzing major areas of community concern, facilitating development of leadership capacity and promoting a network of community trustees.

"Outstanding community leaders are always needed, and this new class will build

on the knowledge and talents that they bring to make a positive difference in our community" said Leadership Jacksonville Chief Executive Officer Jill Langford Dame.

Representing the class from the Riverside Area are AG Gancarski, journalist, Florida Politics; David Garfunkel, president, Lift Jax; Kaci Honeycutt, community liaison, VyStar Credit Union; Tyler Morris, executive director, CIL Jacksonville; Valerie H. Jenkins, vice president, Wells Fargo.

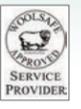
To learn more about Leadership Jacksonville and becoming a program sponsor, visit [www.leadershipjax.org](http://www.leadershipjax.org) or contact Jill Langford Dame at [jill@leadershipjax.org](mailto:jill@leadershipjax.org).



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## Restaurant owner donates eggs to Feeding Northeast Florida



Jacques Klemps with the driver from Cal-Maine Foods

In honor of Hunger Action Month, Jacques Klemps, owner of Cowford Chophouse, joined with Cal-Maine Foods to donate 350,000 eggs to Feeding Northeast Florida Sept. 18. The donation took place at Feeding Northeast Florida's warehouse at 1814 Industrial Blvd.

The donation assisted the nonprofit in providing vital protein to Jacksonville residents who are suffering from food insecurity. The donation was the fifth that the Cowford restaurant owner and Cal-Maine Foods have given and brought the total number of eggs donated by Klemps and Cal-Maine to 1.5 million. According to Feeding Northeast Florida, meals distributed in our community have jumped from 5.9 million to 10.8 million from 2019 to 2020. The nonprofit estimates that in 2020, 54 million people may be food insecure, including 18 million children.

## DAR celebrates Constitution Week

The Northeast Florida Regents Council of the Daughters of the American Revolution celebrated Constitution Week, Sept. 17-23, as a chance to observe the annual commemoration of the United States Constitution.

"Constitution Week 2020 is the 65th anniversary," said Toni Weatherford, Regents Council president. "The DAR initiated the observance in 1955, when the service organization petitioned the U.S. Congress to dedicate September 17-23 of each year as Constitution Week. On August 2, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed it into law."

The Regents Council advocated three goals for the week: educating to encourage the study of historical events that led to framing the Constitution in September 1787; honoring the Constitution by reminding the public that the Constitution is the basis of America's great heritage and the foundation for its way of life; and celebrating U.S. citizens' responsibility to protect, defend and preserve the U.S. Constitution.

"In the past, members of the DAR have observed Constitution Week by ringing bells at 4 p.m. EST on September 17, obtaining proclamations, creating displays in schools, libraries and other public areas, distributing copies of the Constitution, hosting keynote speakers at lunches and other efforts to educate our communities about the Constitution and its immense impact on our nation," Weatherford said. "Sadly, the pandemic has disrupted many of our plans. As a council, the eight Northeast Florida regents recommend that all commit to personal goals to educate, honor and celebrate. By reading, listening, viewing or going to one of the many websites to seek Constitution facts, stories, quizzes and other amazing information, each citizen can renew one's knowledge and appreciation for our living document that upholds and protects our freedoms."

The eight Northeast Florida chapters are part of one of the largest patriotic women's organizations in the world. DAR has more than one million members in 3,000 chapters across the United States and in countries abroad. DAR members promote historic preservation, education and patriotism through a variety of commemorative events, scholarships, education and service.

**WHEREAS:** Without the Constitution, the supreme law of the United States, "We the People" would not be granted our many freedoms or the benefits of a "government of the people"; and

**WHEREAS:** Each year, on the anniversary of the enacting of the Constitution, we honor the framers of the Constitution and the glorious nation built upon the foundation they provided; and

**WHEREAS:** This annual observance also serves as a time for all citizens to celebrate and hold dear the rights, privileges, and responsibilities this document affords to us as Americans; and

**WHEREAS:** To commemorate America's most important document, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) aim to emphasize citizens' responsibilities for protecting and defending the constitution; and

**WHEREAS:** The DAR encourage the study of historical events leading to the framing of the Constitution and its impact on America's way of life; and

**WHEREAS:** This September, the Regents Council of Northeast Florida, Daughters of the American Revolution, will join in the national celebration of the 233rd anniversary of our United States Constitution.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, LENNY CURRY,** by virtue of the authority vested in me as mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, do hereby proclaim September 17-23, 2020 as

**CONSTITUTION WEEK**

in Jacksonville and encourage all citizens to join in celebrating the signing of this pivotal American document.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of August in the year Two Thousand Twenty

*Lenny Curry* MAYOR

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

## Baptist hospitals receive 'LGBTQ Health Care Equality Leader' designation

All Baptist Health hospitals, including Wolfson Children's Hospital, received the "LGBTQ Health Care Equality Leader" status for the first time, demonstrating the health system's continued commitment to fostering an environment that prioritizes inclusion for team members, patients and families.

The designation was awarded by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC) in its annual Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) survey. The HRC is the education arm of America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people.

The HEI is the national LGBTQ benchmarking tool that evaluates hospitals and health care facilities on policies and best practices in LGBTQ patient-centered care in four

key areas: non-discrimination and staff training; patient services and support; employee benefits and practices; and patient and community engagement.

HRC's "LGBTQ Health Care Equality Leader" is designated to hospitals that receive the maximum score in all four categories, earning an overall score of 100.

"LGBT+ patients continue to face significant challenges in health care. While we have achieved top scores from HRC, we know there is always room to improve in health care equity," said Brett McClung, FACHE, president and CEO of Baptist Health. "At the same time, we are incredibly proud of the progress made possible by our team members who are leading this important work in our organization."

For the past three years, Baptist Health hospitals were designated "Top Performers." In just the past year, Baptist Health has implemented new policies and practices to lead the way in the Jacksonville community for inclusion. These changes include ongoing training in LGBT+ competency implemented for team members in annual education and all incoming nurse residents; internal task force created to address collection of sexual orientation and gender identity in the medical record; commitment to inclusive language used in patient materials; behavioral health providers with an expertise in LGBT+ care identified and available by request; peer-to-peer LGBT+ support groups provided to Baptist Health team members, physicians and the community.



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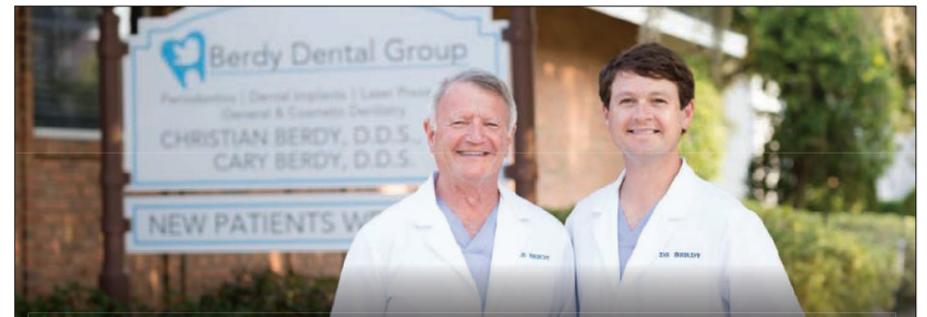
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# WJCT names new trustees

WJCT, a community-owned and operated public media organization, named three new members to its Board of Trustees during its annual meeting Sept. 25.

Dr. A Zachary Faison, Jr., Hugh Greene of San Jose, and James L. Liang to their first three-year terms at its September 24 annual meeting.

Faison, president and CEO of Edwards Waters College, is the youngest president of a historically black college or university ever in the United States. At Edward Waters College, he led the conceptualization, development, and implementation of an ambitious institutional strategic plan: Eminence 2025. He has also raised the admission standard, stabilized the institution's enrollment, secured funding for new academic programs and campus improvements. He currently serves on the board of JEA, is a trustee member of the JAX Chamber, and is a member of the Jacksonville Civic Council,



Dr. A. Zachary Faison Jr.



Matt Rapp



Hugh Greene



James L. Liang

Leadership Jacksonville, and the Rotary Club of Jacksonville. He also serves as an institutional director of the UNCF board.

Greene joins WJCT's Board of Trustees following a long and successful career with Baptist Health, where he served as president and chief executive officer. Greene also held the role of CEO of Coastal Community Health. He currently serves on two private equity boards in the healthcare industry, as well as the board for Ameris Bank. Previously, he has held board service roles for Jacksonville Bancorp, Inc., The Jacksonville Bank, the corporate Board of PSS World Medical (NASDAQ), the JAX Chamber, Sulzbacher, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, United Way of Northeast Florida, and the Florida Hospital Association.

Liang is an operating partner for Udata Partners. He has more than 30 years of experience in both investment banking and corporate executive banking, including over 12 years at Morgan Stanley, where he advised and worked with technology companies while running the Technology Investment banking group. Liang also served as the head of strategy of IBM's global services business, and as Amdocs' Senior Vice President for Strategy and Corporate Development.

During the same meeting, Matthew Rapp was confirmed as the chairman of board for the 2021-2023 fiscal years. Rapp is the senior vice president of championship management for the PGA Tour.

# Skinner buries hole-in-one in City Rescue Mission golf tourney



Wade Skinner at Sawgrass

It may have taken 12 years, but a hole-in-one was finally accomplished during the City Rescue Missions Annual Champions Challenge Golf Tournament, and it came on the signature 17th hole at Sawgrass TPC course no less.

During the City Rescue Mission's 12th Annual Champion's Challenge Golf Tournament Aug. 31, golfer Wade Skinner of Skinner Moving & Storage made a hole-in-one on the iconic Hole 17 sponsored by the Nimnicht Family of Dealerships at TPC Sawgrass. This is Skinner's first year participating in the annual golf tournament. As a result of his hole-in-one, Skinner has won a 2020 Chevrolet Blazer provided by the Nimnicht Family of Dealerships.

"I am thrilled that for the first time in 12 years, we have a hole-in-one winner," says Penny Kievet, executive director of City Rescue Mission. "Congratulations Wade and thank you so much to Nimnicht Family of Dealerships for supporting City Rescue Mission in transforming the lives of the homeless, needy and addicted in Jacksonville."

This year's CRM golf tournament chair Nelson Bruton echoed Kievet's excitement, "What a great year to have a hole-in-one winner. The committee and golfers are all so excited!"

# Medical, legal, and business leaders to co-chair Freed to Run 4.0

Having raised more than \$1 million in its first three years, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid's largest fundraiser, Freed to Run, is going the distance toward its \$2.25 million goal under the leadership of four newly appointed event co-chairs: Dr. Nayla Osman-Chahlavi, pediatrician at Village Pediatrics; Dr. Ali Chahlavi, neurosurgeon at St. Vincent's Medical Center; Richard Fannin, financial advisor with Wells Fargo advisors; and retired Fourth Judicial Circuit Judge Hugh Carithers.

The group will work to attract more sponsors and relay teams, with the Chahlavis focusing on the health-care community, Fannin on the business community, and Carithers on the legal community and related industries.

Nemours has already kicked off the 2020 fundraising with a \$10,000 lead gift.

The Freed to Run 4.0 road event will be held November 16-21. All proceeds from the Capitol-to-Coast six-marathon relay series will go toward an endowment for the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership (NFMLP) and will be matched at 125% by Baptist Health.

The NFMLP provides civil legal aid to pediatric patients and their families to ensure they have access to safe housing, health care, educational accommodations, and other services critical to the children's health. Nemours and Baptist Health/Wolfson Children's Hospital are among the NFMLP partner institutions.



Judge Hugh Carithers



Dr. Ali Chahlavi and Dr. Nayla Osman-Chahlavi



Richard Fannin

The Freed to Run 4.0 co-chairs explained their reasons for joining the cause:

"During our 12 years in Jacksonville, we have been active members of our community, having co-chaired St. Vincent's Red Rose Ball in 2013 and St. Vincent's Mary Award in 2017. We watched our friend Mike Freed, along with multiple local teams, run and collect money for JALA, helping families obtain free legal aid in our city. As physicians and concerned citizens, we strongly support organizations that provide any type of aid to underserved families. We are honored to be serving as health care chairs this year."

For information about sponsoring Freed to Run, registering a team or donating, visit <https://www.jaxlegalaid.org/freedtorun/>.

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## West Riverside teacher named Wolfburg fellow

Gabriella Solano, a teacher at West Riverside Elementary, was named the inaugural Wolfburg Fellow for Social Justice in Education Sept. 15 during a surprise virtual announcement at her school.

Solano teaches Spanish language arts and science for fourth and fifth grade students in the dual language program at West Riverside Elementary. As the first Wolfburg Fellow, Ms. Solano will receive a total value of at least \$7,000 for professional learning, including participation in the Jacksonville Public Education Fund's (JPEF) Teacher Leadership Initiative, and a classroom research project to explore issues of identity and representation with her students.

"Diversity and inclusion are two of the main reasons I became a teacher," Solano wrote in her application. "As a Latina who was underrepresented in school, I experienced firsthand what it was like to not feel included and validated in school. As I learned more in my undergraduate course work, I knew I wanted to choose a career that could affect change. Education has the power to create an enormous impact on these issues."

Brian Wolfburg, CEO of VyStar Credit Union, and his husband, Jake, created the fellowship, which is administered by the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and awarded to one teacher annually, in recognition of the diverse fabric of the their family and to create an inclusive, supportive and loving community for all individuals and families within our community.

On Sept. 15, the Wolfburgs joined a virtual all-staff meeting at West Riverside to make the announcement. JPEF arranged for a bouquet of flowers to be delivered to the door of Solano's home, where she is teaching virtually, just as she learned the news of her selection.

"In this moment, it is clear we must celebrate and acknowledge both the progress that has been made and the work yet to do in advancing justice and equality for all people," said Jake and Brian Wolfburg. "Ms. Solano stands out as a leader who embodies the kind of compassion and duty to one another we need. The impact teachers have on our children and our community cannot be overstated. We are excited to celebrate,



Gabriella Solano

honor, and invest in Ms. Solano's passion for inspiring her students to listen and think critically about diversity, equity, and inclusion so they may inspire others to do the same. We are beyond excited to work with Ms. Solano, our inaugural fellow, over the coming year."

In a program of Solano's own design, the fellowship will allow her to travel to a teaching conference next summer, attend webinars by Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, and lead a photography project with her class. The students will take photographs that explore their lives and identities, and then compare how people of their backgrounds are portrayed in the media. As part of the project, Solano will survey students to assess what they've learned about diversity and inclusion through the artwork. She will also participate in JPEF's Teacher Leadership Initiative, which provides teachers of the year with professional learning and coaching on action research projects designed to impact education equity in schools across the district.

"I couldn't be prouder to support Ms. Solano and the Wolfburgs in bringing the vision of the Wolfburg Fellowship to life," said JPEF President Rachael Tutwiler Fortune. "At JPEF, we believe public education is inherently social justice work, and this unique fellowship is exactly the investment in teacher leaders we need to help all students achieve their potential, no matter their background or identity."

## Five residents honored with NAMI Lifetime Achievement awards



Five residents of Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods were honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) recently.

Norma and Hayes Basford, Peggy Harrell and her husband, Jonathan Jennings, Sr., of Ortega joined Marie Smith of Avondale in being recognized by NAMI for the countless hours they have contributed in various capacities over the past years of volunteer work with the nonprofit organization. They were also installed in the NAMI Jacksonville Hall of Fame.

NAMI Jacksonville offers help and home to those with mental illness and their families through education and outreach programs, support groups, and a helpline. The organization and its executive director, Suzanne Mailloux, received the Affiliate of the Year award by the state organization in the staff category.



Suzanne Mailloux

National Mental Health Day will be held Saturday, Oct. 10 and will include the NAMI Walks our Way event where people can walk, jog, or hula hoop during the fundraising event. Visit [namijacksonvillefl.org](http://namijacksonvillefl.org) for more details or contact [jacksonville@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonville@gmail.com).

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*Cathedral to hold organ concerts to celebrate composer's birth*



Timothy Tuller

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of French organist and composer Louis Vierne (October 8, 1870 – June 2, 1937), St. John's Cathedral and the Jacksonville Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will present a truly historic concert series beginning Sunday, Oct. 11.

Among his many works, Louis Vierne composed six symphonies for solo organ. They were written between 1899 and 1930. For the first time in Jacksonville, all six of these symphonies will be performed over the course of three Sunday afternoon recitals by Timothy Tuller, Canon for Music at St. John's Cathedral. Tuller will play all six symphonies in sequential order. The first recital will be Sunday, October 11 at 5 p.m. and will feature Symphonies 1 and 2. The second recital will follow two weeks later, on Sunday, Oct. 25 at 5 p.m. with Symphonies 3 and 4. The final concert will be held on Sunday, Nov. 8 at 5 p.m. presenting Symphonies 5 and 6. All concerts will take place at St. John's Cathedral, 256 E. Church Street.

Seating will be limited due to the social distancing protocols and masks must be worn. These concerts will also be live streamed on the Cathedral's website: [jaxcathedral.org](http://jaxcathedral.org).

## Kievet to hand over reins to Stasi at City Rescue Mission

City Rescue Mission Executive Director Penny Kievet is retiring. Kievet, who has served the mission since 2013, will hand over the reins to her successor, Paul Stasi, who is currently serving as director of social enterprise. The transition will take place on December 31, 2020.



Penny Kievet

Kievet has a long history of service having spent her entire professional career as a teacher, principal, college professor, and senior executive prior to her role as executive director of the City Rescue Mission (CRM).

She has served on 36 for-profit and nonprofit boards as director and board chair and has also held local, state, and national offices in numerous professional organizations. She currently serves on the boards of Feeding Northeast Florida, Safe to Hope, Inc., and the Citygate Network national board. Some of her recent awards include: The Marilyn Farmer Outstanding Women in Leadership Award, The Top Women Igniting Success, Girls, Inc., Women of Vision, The Jacksonville Business Journal Women of Influence Award, 2000 Most Notable Women in the United

States, Who's Who VIP Professional, National President of Pi Kappa Delta, 100 Top Female Executives in the Southeast, National President Cross Examination Debate Association, Outstanding Women in the Mid-west, Who's Who in Executives and Professionals, and numerous sales achievement awards.

During her tenure as both executive director and director of resource development at CRM, she has focused on the transformation of those who are served by the nonprofit to bring them from a state of human suffering to human flourishing.

"I often tell people that I have loved every job I have ever had, and God saved the best for last," she said. "Being at City Rescue Mission these past 11 years has been an amazing journey. I have loved this community, staff, and those we get to serve every day. I am so excited for Paul as he leads this great ship into new waters. There is no doubt that he will lead well, and I am so excited to watch that happen."

Stasi has been with CRM for more than five years and previously served as director of resource development. During his time with the nonprofit, he has worked closely with Kievet in securing the mission and evolving its services. Prior to his time at the mission, Stasi served as director of social services for the Northeast Florida Area Command with the Salvation Army.

"I am honored and energized by the opportunity to assume leadership of this great organization that plays such a vital role in our community by helping people in desperate situations go through a life transformation," said Stasi. "I am so thankful to Penny Kievet for the leadership and accomplishments she has contributed to the mission. This will leave us strong and prepared for whatever lies ahead. And I look forward to working with her during this transition. City Rescue Mission has a robust future continuing to reach out to some of Jacksonville's most needy citizens, and I am excited to see how God will work through us."

CRM Chairman Kendall Spencer shared their sentiments. "The City Rescue Mission has experienced seven wonderful years of growth in all of its core programs and has expanded into multiple new services and programs through the insightful and visionary leadership of Penny. Her energetic personality and extensive network have helped broaden the reach of the Mission in our community and have further raised the awareness of the critical work the Mission provides to our students and guests," he said. "With Penny's planned and impending retirement, City Rescue Mission is fortunate to have an internal, qualified and deeply experienced person like Paul Stasi to become our next executive director."

## Cultural Council appoints Diana Donovan interim executive director

Executive Director Joy Young is leaving the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville and Diana Donovan has been appointed as interim executive director while a nationwide search is underway.

The Council's board of directors made the announcement of Young's departure Sept. 11 saying she is leaving to "pursue other opportunities." In the meantime, the board unanimously appointed Donovan to fill in until permanent replacement is hired.

"We thank Joy for her service to the Cultural Council and wish her the best as she embarks on a new chapter," said Jannet Walker-Ford, board chair. "The Cultural Council is in good shape financially and operationally."

Young joined the Cultural Council in December 2018 after serving 14 years as director of administration, human resources and operations for the South Carolina Arts Commission in Columbia, S.C. Under her leadership, the Cultural Council most recently scored well in its grant application to the Florida Department of State Division of Cultural Affairs. The organization's Cultural



Diana Donovan

Service Grant program and Art in Public Places program are both in strong positions.

Donovan is very familiar with the Cultural Council through her service as a past board member who was appointed by Mayor Lenny Curry. For the past six years, she has served in successive leadership roles at Jacksonville University, most recently as executive director of the Office of the President and Community Relations. She is a member of Leadership Jacksonville and JAXChamber's inaugural Hightower Fellowship. She is also a past member of the citizen editorial board at the Florida Times-Union. Donovan currently serves on the board of the Women's Center of Jacksonville and is a Delores Barr Weaver Fellow at the Women's Giving Alliance.

To select the Cultural Council's next executive director, the directors established a board search committee that includes Lisa V. Johnson as chair, Kirsten Doolittle, Ari Jolly, Kemel Jasper, and City Council liaison Michael Boylan.

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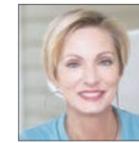


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# Celebrating Social Season

Nonprofits regained some semblance of normalcy by successfully holding their annual fundraising events virtually in September.



David Barksdale, president of Sanctuary on 8th joins Rick Cartlidge, executive director during the virtual Swingin' Shindig Sept. 17.



Rick Cartlidge, executive director of Sanctuary on 8th, greeted viewers, thanked supporters and encouraged donations through the Swingin' Shindig.

## Concert broadcast pays off for Sanctuary on 8th

Broadcasting a free live concert by the House Cats, a jazz quartet, as part of its first virtual Swingin' Shindig proved to be quite lucrative for the Sanctuary on 8th. Forced to cancel its live gala for a Sept. 17 virtual event this year, the nonprofit outdid itself by raising more than \$60,000 to help children in Springfield rise out of poverty and reach their full potential through afterschool programs.

Held on a weekday this year, the event comprised a live broadcast of the free jazz concert and an online raffle for a four-hour, catered river cruise for six in place of the traditional silent auction. Virtual participants got in the spirit of New Orleans by heading to the Sanctuary's website for some Cajun recipes to whip up in their homes during the virtual event.

"We are grateful to the Delores Barr Weaver Forever Event Fund for awarding the annual grant in spite of our inability to host a live party," said Rick Cartlidge, executive director for The Sanctuary on 8th. Sponsorships were also available to help pay for various aspects of the evening and support programs into the future. Major sponsors included Marina at Ortega Landing, Curtis Stokes & Associates, and J. David Tax Law.



Tenikka Hughes and Dr. Gary Josephson, chief medical officer for Nemours Children's Specialty Care

## Virtual Evening of Promise raises more than \$100,000 for Nemours

Tenikka Hughes, anchor of Action News Jax, joined Dr. Gary Josephson, chief medical officer for Nemours Children's Specialty Care in greeting donors during the clinic's first virtual Evening of Promise fundraiser Sept. 17. At least 350 people tuned for the hour-long presentation enabling Nemours to raise \$105,000 from the virtual event, which is normally its annual gala. Hughes served as emcee, and the event was streamed through the television station's Facebook Live page. During the event, entertainment was provided by The Royals band. Viewers also heard impactful patient stories, shout outs from grateful patients expressing thanks to their healthcare heroes, messages from Nemours leadership as well as special celebrity guest Phil Mickelson, a professional golfer, and more. Funds raised through the event will support both Nemours healthcare workers, patients and their families who have been directly impacted by COVID-19.

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Cocktail Party hosts Al Emerick, founder of Value Mapping, with Ellen Cottrill, coordinator of communications and public engagement for the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville.

**Signature cocktails and violin concert**

More than 50 party goers tuned in to the Cultural Council's virtual Pre-Awards Cocktail Party Sept. 2. The event included a fun cocktail class presented by Chef's Garden Catering and Events, which was streamed live from Manifest Distilling. Guests were able to order their own complete cocktail kit online for the 44th Annual Arts Awards signature cocktail and mix along. Included in the event was online "mingle" time, and a chance to watch highlights from Jacksonville Dance Theater, as well as recent public art installations. The party ended with a video of Philip Pan on violin playing in his Mariachi band with Goliath Flores. Pan was the main entertainment for the arts award event with his compilation of "Bohemian Rhapsody" on violin.

**Rethreaded celebrates 9 years with virtual birthday party**

Rethreaded celebrated nine years with a first-ever virtual birthday party Aug. 6, which exceeded its fundraising goal of \$30,000. The proceeds went towards the nonprofit's newest group of seven sex trafficking survivor employees. Community First Credit Union sponsored the birthday event, and Riverside Homes graciously provided a \$30,000 matching donation that helped the Rethreaded birthday celebration surpass its fundraising goal. During Rethreaded's birthday week celebration, the nonprofit released a new line of leather products including a men's wallet, business card holder, and padfolio.



Rethreaded celebrated its 9th birthday Aug. 6.

A leather padfolio and leather business card holder (top) are some of the new items Rethreaded is offering in honor of its birthday celebration



The 2020 OneJax Humanitarian honorees included: back row, MaliVai Washington and Terri Florio of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation, Dr. Jeffrey Levenson of Gift of Sight and Vision is Priceless, Michael Ward of the Michael Ward and Jennifer Glock Foundation. Front row: Lynn Sherman and Melanie Patz of the Jacksonville Community Remembrance Project.

**OneJax marks 50th anniversary with virtual awards ceremony**

Four honorees who have demonstrated the highest level of personal and professional integrity and have given generously to the community were honored by OneJax, an institute of the University of North Florida, during its virtual 2020 Humanitarian Awards Sept. 10. The event also celebrates the 50th anniversary of the OneJax organization.

Honored at the event were Dr. Jeffrey Levenson, co-developer and coordinator of Jacksonville's Gift of Sight, president of Vision is Priceless and chief medical officer of SEE International; MaliVai Washington and Terri Florio of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation; Melanie

Patz and Lynn Sherman, co-chairs of the Jacksonville Community Remembrance Project and leaders of 904Ward; and Michael Ward, retired CEO of CSX and co-founder of the Michael Ward and Jennifer Glock Foundation.

All of the honorees have been dedicated to the improvement of human relations among diverse groups and were awarded the organization's Silver Medallion. "This year's honorees reflect the longstanding efforts of OneJax to achieve civility, understanding, and respect for all through education, dialogue, and community building," said Connie Hodges, chairman of the OneJax board.



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## Sulzbacher holds virtual 'feel good event of the year'

Sulzbacher celebrated its 25th anniversary Sept. 30 with Transformations, its annual "feel good event of the year," which was livestreamed on the nonprofit's website. The virtual show, which brought needed attention to Sulzbacher's mission, raised funds to assist in ending homelessness in Jacksonville.

Hosted by Darnell Smith, market president of the North Florida region of Florida Blue and Ginny Myrick, president and CEO of Cathedral District-Jax, Inc., the program celebrated Sulzbacher's services of housing, healthcare, and hope for the homeless. One highlight was the story of a homeless man who, with the help of Sulzbacher, went from living under a bridge to working on top of one as an operator of Jacksonville's Main Street Bridge.

Other highlights included an update on how Sulzbacher has managed to remain open

throughout the COVID-10 pandemic; messages from Sulzbacher's former CEOs and founders; and a celebration and thank you to the dedicated volunteer groups who have served in Sulzbacher's kitchen, with some of them working for 25 years! A walk-through of some of Sulzbacher's new programs including the Pediatric Health Center at Sulzbacher Village and the Sulzbacher Healthmobile were hosted by Keitha Nelson from First Coast News. There was also special musical performance by the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra.

Finally, a video history was shown charting the agency's history and its impact on the Jacksonville community. An online silent auction was held, and Sulzbacher's goal of raising \$425,000 was surpassed when \$20,597 was donated during the 45 minute event and more was pouring in as the emcees signed off.



Sulzbacher President and CEO Cindy Funkhouser addresses the audience while photos of donors flash across the screen during the nonprofit's 25th annual celebration.



Ginny Myrick and Darnell Smith served as emcees during Sulzbacher's annual Traditions fundraiser Sept. 30

## Pitel honored at JALA Bridges for Justice virtual event

Dr. Paul Pitel, who is retiring as longtime chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Nemours Children's Specialty Care, was honored by the Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA) during its Bridges to Justice for Children's Health virtual event Sept. 15. The event was shown on JALA's Facebook page.

Pitel was given the award by Megan Denk, executive director of THE PLAYERS Center for Child Health at Wolfson Children's Hospital and his son, Stephen Pitel, a staff attorney at JALA who serves as director of the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership (NFMLP).

The event also served as a kickoff event for Freed to Run, which is JALA's largest fundraiser and is

dedicated to creating a \$2.25 million endowment for NFMLP.

The Facebook Live video had more than 230 views raising about \$3,000 through Facebook or through [www.jaxlegalaid.org/bridgestojustice](http://www.jaxlegalaid.org/bridgestojustice). JALA's Chief Development Officer Dennis Harrison expected some last-minute donations to raise the total to \$5,000. Because the Baptist Health Foundation matches all donations to the endowment at 125% up to \$1.25 million, including donations made via Bridges to Justice for Children's Health, the total from the Facebook Live event could surpass \$10,000.



Stephen Pitel awards his father, Dr. Paul Pitel, longtime chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Nemours Children's Specialty Care, with an award from Jacksonville Area Legal Aid.



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## Elections, Markets, and Uncertainty

By Caleb Cronic  
Raymond James & Associates, Inc.

Famed Prussian General, Carl von Clausewitz said, "Although our intellect always longs for clarity and certainty, our nature often finds uncertainty fascinating." Election fascination often causes distress among investors but research shows that your holiday ham can calmly remain in your tummy. The market likes certainty and election days provide just that.

There is always fervent fascination during presidential election years among investors. For markets however, midterm elections typically make more of an impact as Congressional responsibilities affect the

economy to a greater degree. While president incumbents and nominees have a larger, national mouth piece, the majority of their proposals must get Congressional approval, hence the reason markets focus more on midterm elections.

This focus on midterms would lead you to believe there are large market swings based on who wins but this is a false notion. Certainty, above all else, provides the environment for stock market gains and election outcomes provide certainty. Steven McBride's research published on MarketWatch.com found that stocks were higher 12 months after every single midterm election since 1946. 18 of 18. On the flip side, markets averaged around a 1% decline during the



10 months leading up to midterm elections. Prior to an election, there is increased uncertainty of the future and the market discounts nearly every possible scenario leading up to voting day causing pre-election choppiness. Once the election occurs, the future becomes clearer and markets quickly adjust accordingly.

This is echoed by Anne Smith, Executive Editor of Kiplingesque, whose 2016 research found very little correlation between market

performance and election results since 1900. While the fascination may be on who wins on Election Day, the market seems to find solace in knowing that there is a winner more than who it is. While there are plenty of reasons to be proudly preoccupied with our democratic process, the affect it has on your investments shouldn't be one of them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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### Caleb Cronin

Caleb joined the Otterson-Allison Wealth Management Group of Raymond James in 2017, bringing with him the lessons he learned from serving as a lieutenant in the United States Navy. Caleb served as a commissioned officer in the Navy for six years, completing multiple deployments to the Middle East. He first served onboard USS JAMES E WILLIAMS, a destroyer out of Norfolk, VA and later served as the Anti-Terrorism Officer onboard USS NEW YORK in Mayport, FL before finishing his service as an Operations Officer and Intelligence Oversight Officer at COMLCSRON TWO.

Caleb holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from the United States Naval Academy. In

addition, he has a Master's degree in Public Policy from Liberty University as well as the Accredited Asset Management Specialist accreditation.

Caleb's wife, Kristin, also a Naval Academy graduate, is a local artist. Caleb is currently the United States Naval Academy Alumni Association Jacksonville Chapter President, USNA National Trustee and a trustee at his local church. Outside of work, Caleb enjoys baking, travel, and spending time with his creative wife, Kristin, and their two children, Eleanor and Bode. What energy is left over is devoted to reading and an inconsistent game of fetch with the family dog, Herschel.

### Patricia Otterson

In 1982, Patty left her career as a CPA to pursue her fascination with the equity markets. And for more than 31 years since, she has had the pleasure of working in a truly dynamic industry and the privilege of serving truly wonderful people.

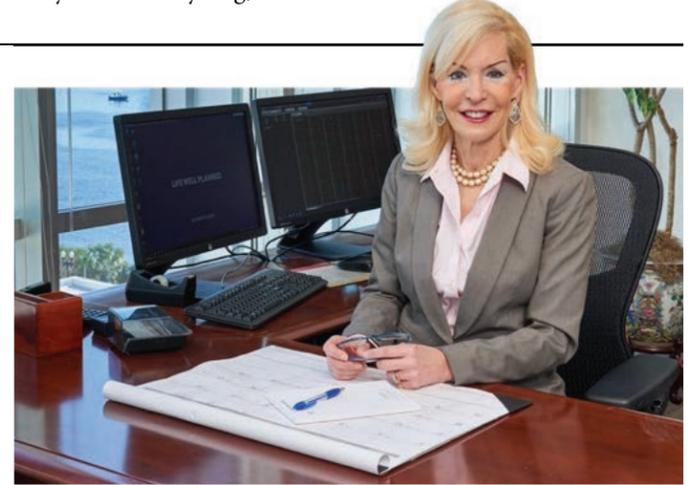
Patty got her start with the accounting firm of Ernst and Whinney (the precursor to Ernst & Young). After spending several years as a CPA and tax accountant, she left to begin her investment services career at Dean Witter Reynolds (now Morgan Stanley Smith Barney). She also held positions with Prudential Securities, where she began her partnership with Norm Allison in 1994, and Alexander Key (a division of SunTrust Investment Services) before joining Raymond James in 2009.

A graduate of Grove City College, Patty holds a Bachelor of Arts in accounting. In addition, she has earned the Certified Investment Management

AnalystSM designation and her Investment Strategist Certificate from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Patty's commitment to community is evident in her involvement with several local organizations. She is currently serving as co-chair of the DePaul Society council of Ascension St. Vincents Foundation. She is also actively involved with St. Johns Presbyterian Church, where she previously served on the board of deacons and also as an elder. Previously she served on other boards in the community that serve the needs of children in underprivileged areas.

Patty Otterson was among the Raymond James-affiliated advisors named to the *Forbes* list of America's Top Women Advisors. The list, which recognizes advisors from national, regional and independent firms, was released online April 21, 2020.



Check out the Forbes 2020 Top Women Wealth Advisors <https://www.forbes.com/top-woment-advisors/#28abc5bd51f4>

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# New downtown murals to reflect city's identity

Feeling that the City of Jacksonville has been struggling to define its identity for decades, ArtRepublic, a nonprofit run by Jessica Santiago and George Georgallis, sponsored 13 new public art installations, performances, and films in August, to help the community thrive by reflecting the identity of the people within it.

With the theme "Lift Every Voice," and under the creative direction of Malc Jax, Christopher Parsons, and Ennis Davis, ArtRepublic produced the city's first large-scale project comprised of 15 new murals, curated specifically to reflect the city's authentic multicultural identity and history.

Artists from throughout the world began to arrive Aug. 9. During their first two days in Jacksonville, they sought to experience the community and worked to get to know the people and the city's history. From Aug. 11 to Aug. 22, they decorated city buildings with murals, while the community was encouraged to watch the streetscapes go up and engage with the artists.

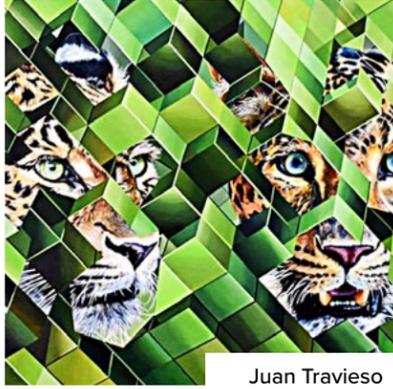
Street performances that were directed by Parsons took place at the mural sites between Aug. 19 and 22, while footage was captured to create short films that will tell the stories of the figures who inspired each mural.

"Jacksonville's long history of achievement through African Americans and people of color has been kept underground for years and now it's time to teach our communities. This project is just a snapshot of this reawakening going on in the United States right now," said Jax.

Santiago agreed. "There has never been a more important time to bring empowerment, compassion and empathy to the people of our community," she said. "We are calling upon our artists to be conduits for social change, to make the community identity more visible and to develop positive social networks to unify in a time of polarization."

Artists that were included in ArtRepublic's line-up were Momo, Louisiana, Toni Smallmagic, Juan Travieso, Urban Ruben, Chris Clark, Steven Teller, Spencer Guilburt, Hiero Veiga, and Anthony Rooney.

Helping sponsor the installations were the Jacksonville Transit Authority, VyStar Credit Union, Breeze Homes Simpler, Corner Lot Development Group, Haskell, JWB, and the Jacksonville Jaguars.



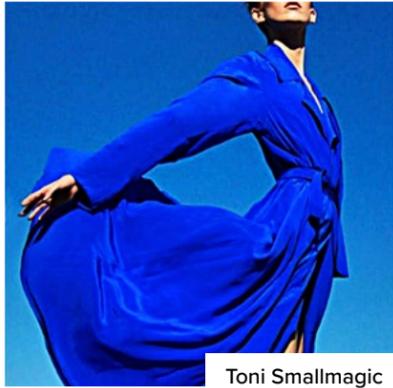
Juan Travieso



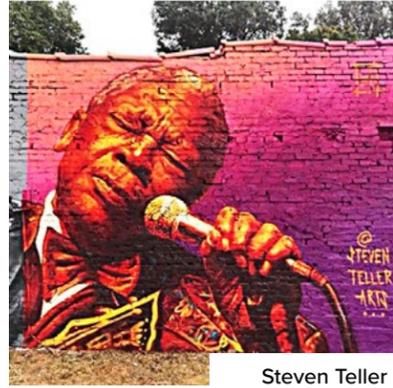
Chris Clark



Urban Ruben



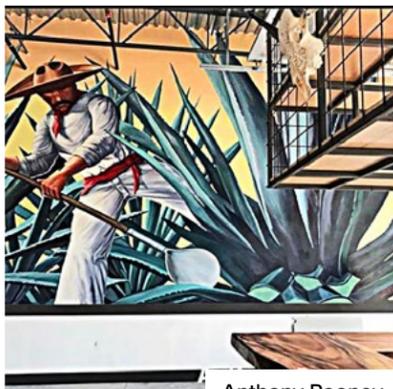
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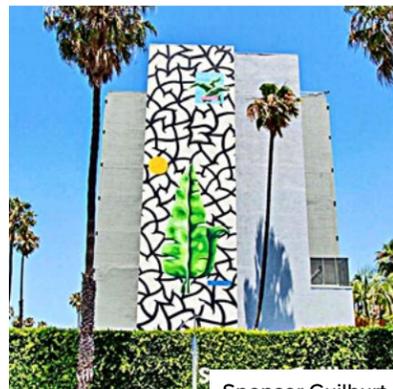
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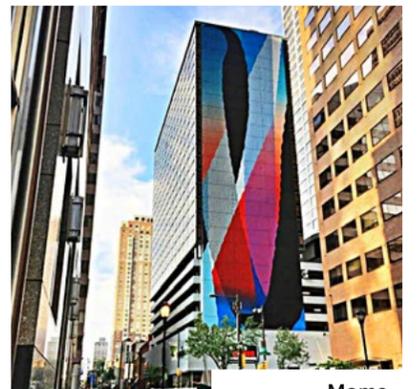
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## Weaver Park offers place to play, rest

Weaver Park, a small green enclave along the river behind the First Coast YMCA, has reopened.

Donated by longtime YMCA supporters J. Wayne Weaver and his wife, Delores Barr Weaver, the park recently received new picnic tables and landscaping to complement its KaBOOM! Playground and sunrise lawn.

“Taking advantage of our beautiful outdoor spaces is especially important right now, and the Weaver Park offers a



Weaver Park

place for rest and reflection for the many runners and walkers who enjoy the Riverwalk,” said Delores Barr Weaver. “Wayne and I are pleased, along with the Winston YMCA, to welcome everyone – individuals, kids, families and visitors to our community – to access the greenspace and extend their enjoyment of the park on the banks of the St. Johns, Jacksonville’s very own heritage river.”

Weaver Park connects the YMCA to the Northbank Riverwalk and will offer extended play space for children participating in the Y’s KidZone. It will also bring socially distant family programming such as movie nights and outdoor fitness classes to the community.



Weaver Park

## Volunteers battle raindrops during Hogan Creek clean-up



A soggy day did not dampen the spirits of 15 Groundwork Jax volunteers who took to the banks of Hogan’s Creek Sept. 19 in a valiant clean-up effort. Using the headquarters of the Jacksonville Historical Society, the group focused on the area along the creek and under the Hart Bridge ramp over the historical society’s Palmetto Street property. In mid-September, heavy rain caused the creek to flood forcing a huge pile of debris to collect and be deposited on the creek bank. The volunteers from Groundwork Jax estimated it took 30 to 40 large garbage bags to remove the debris.



## Murray Hill Arts Center reopens

Art teacher William McMahan stands on the porch of the Murray Hill Arts Center, which reopened in mid-September after a long hiatus due to COVID-19. The center will again offer drawing, painting, ceramics and sculpture classes at reasonable prices.

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#### Seniors 60 and Above and/or their Caregivers or Family Members who:

- Are experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, or grief
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- Are considering ALF or nursing home placement
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Participants need to have Internet accessible technology and an Internet connection. Those who need assistance acquiring the necessary technology should contact us at (904) 807-1243.

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Aging True’s virtual counseling program meets the requirements as specified and outlined in the Florida law HB 23 (April, 29 2019). <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/23/BillText/er/PDF>  
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# Community born of tragedy

## OCTOBER IS NATIONAL PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS MONTH

By Mary Wanser  
Resident Community News

Ten years ago, Laura Kelly experienced a tragedy that still affects her greatly. She joined the club that nobody ever wants to join. She lost her twin baby girls.

October is National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. Every year, in cities nationwide, folks gather to recognize the many pregnancies that end in miscarriage, stillbirth, or the newborn's death. This year, Kelly will have her own private Remembrance Day gathering in honor of what would have

been her daughters' tenth birthday. She will surround herself with a small group of family and close friends at her parents' house in Venetia, and they will remember what happened.

In mid-2010, Kelly, a Jacksonville native, was 30 years old, single, and teaching high school in Central Florida. She would regularly return home to Jacksonville for family visits, and always came back for several weeks in summer when she would schedule all annual medical check-ups. In July, her doctor confirmed that she was pregnant, already in her second trimester. The news was unexpected because the previous month, during a routine annual exam, she had tested negative, though she hadn't been feeling her usual self since March.

Friday, August 13, 2010 was a significant day for Kelly. Not only was it her 31st birthday and she was 18 weeks pregnant, but also it was the day she found out that she was carrying identical twins. Kelly was assigned to a high-risk specialist due to her asthma and because baby B, cramped for space in the uterus, hadn't been growing at the same rate as baby A. That doctor confirmed that both were girls.

Into her sixth month of pregnancy, Kelly had been showing signs of early labor. Her cervix had begun to dilate, though she didn't feel any contractions. She underwent a cerclage procedure to prevent premature labor. Daily bed rest, frequent obstetric visits, and weekly counting became the norm—the goal was to stave off the girls' birth to 30 weeks, 32, as close to 40 as possible.

By week 33, both babies had grown, and Kelly had a hard time breathing. At her next ultrasound appointment, the doctor did not



Celebrating the girls' 5th birthday



Day of Remembrance



9th birthday celebration

have to say a word; Kelly read it on his face. "There are no heartbeats." A moment froze in time. She remembers the lab coat he had on. She can tell you what she was wearing. Her mom walked in the room alongside a technician, Kelly caught her eye, shook her head from side to side and said, "They're gone."

Kelly chose the latter of two options. She wanted a day to take care of her two long-time companions, her dogs, the only children she knew she'd ever have. So, she spent a day at home before being admitted to the hospital to proceed with the induction of labor on November 18. Three weeks later, Britton and Rylan were buried in a family plot at Riverside Memorial Park.

"Nearly a year later, I was still in complete and total shock," Kelly said. "I read all of the what-to-expect-when-you're-expecting books. There wasn't a section in there that talks about stillbirth," she said.

Kelly learned from a family friend about Tear Catchers, the support group run through Baptist Hospital for parents suffering the effects of perinatal mortality. She attended the weekly meetings for years and today is considered a veteran member. She has spoken in front of hundreds of doctors,

nurses, and chaplains. She is called upon to speak on parents' panels about the loss of multiples, which adds a different dynamic to the grief of losing a singleton. She tells her story because she wants women to know, "You are not alone. You did nothing wrong. Babies die. It's not a stigma," Kelly said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the United States, a miscarriage is the loss of a baby before the 20th week of pregnancy, and a stillbirth is the loss after 20 weeks. According to the CDC website, stillbirth affects nearly 1 in 160 births, approximately 24,000 babies per year nationally.

"Most women feel very alone and think they're the only person who has ever lost a baby. They just don't know of the resources available," said Linda Rosengren, lead chaplain for Bereavement Services at Baptist Health.

Kelly pointed out some insensitive comments that people make to these families who are grieving in silence. Most loved ones cannot relate to this type of loss. They don't know what to say, what not to say, what to do, what not to do to show support for bereaved parents.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

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A sibling releases a butterfly

It's a unique kind of grief. "People will say things to you, and you want to just scream and yell at them," she acknowledged.

"You don't have to be afraid to talk about it," Kelly said. She urges parents to allow the grief, and she said that Tear Catchers meetings with Chaplain Rosengren are a great place to start.

Rosengren is the current coordinator of Tear Catchers. She leads the perinatal support group twice monthly on the first and third Monday evenings. For now, they meet virtually on Zoom while COVID-19 remains an issue. The group is open to bereaved parents, both women and men, whether their loss was recent or years ago. "We do offer other support for people who have experienced the loss of an older child or an adult loved one. We hope to provide community for those who long for and need it," Rosengren said.

In addition to Tear Catchers, our local community's support includes an annual Walk to Remember, a tradition since 1990.

The first of these perinatal awareness month walks began at Friendship Fountain and ended at the School Board where a balloon release took place. Over the ensuing years, the crowd grew, the number of walkers increased, so the starting point was moved to underneath the Fuller Warren Bridge where the Riverside Arts Market meets. The ending point was at the YMCA down by the river, which culminated with a butterfly release.

The event grew even bigger and was changed from a walk to a ceremonial gathering on the lawn behind the One Call building at 841 Prudential Drive. Last year drew the largest crowd yet; nearly 350 attended. Every year has brought a variety of commemorative activities, from a daisy garden to a memory book, all to honor the babies. Each year, families make keepsakes that always include their babies' names. Grandparents and siblings take part. This year will mark the event's 30th year, and due to the coronavirus pandemic, it will be held virtually via Zoom on Sunday, Oct. 25.

*"Most women feel very alone and think they're the only person who has ever lost a baby. They just don't know of the resources available."*

— Linda Rosengren, lead chaplain for Bereavement Services at Baptist Health

October was set aside for such ceremonies by President Ronald Reagan when he signed Proclamation 5890 on Oct. 25, 1988. This type of tragedy was not foreign to him. He and his wife Jane Wyman had lost their third child, Christine Reagan, in 1947. She died hours after her birth. Some believe it was the grief over this loss that contributed to the couple's divorce two years later. Their family's calamity, unfortunately, is not unique.

People still ask Kelly how she gets out of bed every day. She tells them, "Because of two little girls named Britton and Rylan."

If you are a parent grieving over a perinatal loss, know that you are not alone. There is help available. For an understanding and compassionate connection, feel free to contact Laura Kelly directly at [LauraKelly813@gmail.com](mailto:LauraKelly813@gmail.com). For information about the Tear Catchers support group or October's Walk to Remember, including registration details and login credentials, call (904) 202 - 2240 or email [Linda.Rosengren@BMCJAX.com](mailto:Linda.Rosengren@BMCJAX.com).



A grandfather plays bagpipes in memory of his granddaughter, Isla



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# Sock give-away is ‘step in the right direction’

Family Promise of Jacksonville received 2,750 pairs of Bombas socks valued at \$33,000, sharing 1,750 pairs with four partner agencies. Bombas Socks had donated 50,000 pairs of socks to 25 Family Promise affiliates across the nation as part of its policy to donate a pair for every sock purchased by the public.

“We want the socks to be out in the community, on people’s feet and not sitting in a storeroom,” said Beth Mixson, development director for Family Promise of

Jacksonville and an Ortega resident. “When your feet are warm and dry, you feel better.”

Family Promise of Jacksonville collaborates with 17 local congregations, multiple social service organizations, and 900 volunteers to help families experiencing homelessness return to stability. It provides intensive case management focusing on affordable housing, gainful employment, financial literacy, medical needs, childcare, and education. It offers three programs focusing on diversion, prevention, and shelter.

Taking part in the giveaway were the nonprofits Catholic Charities, Changing Homelessness, The Giving Closet Project, and the United Community Outreach Ministry (UCOM) Jacksonville. At the giveaway, the agencies, which serve a cross section of the community – homeless, elderly, students, job seekers and families – shared their plans for the socks.

Catholic Charities provided socks to participants in its workforce development program as well as others it serves. The workforce development program is a free program to help low-income, unemployed, or underemployed adults find work. The

help it provides comes through its job readiness training program, interview coaching, and job referrals.

Changing Homelessness, a Riverside-based nonprofit with the mission to prevent and end homelessness, included one pair of socks in each of the 500 hygiene packets it distributed during the annual Point In Time Count. Formed in 1974 by a group of concerned social service agencies and religious leaders, Changing Homelessness manages \$7 million in local, state, and federal funds. The nonprofit works by advocating, convening, and educating the community through the Northeast Florida Continuum of Care and initiatives like Built for Zero.

The Giving Closet Project, a Southside-based organization which provides clothing, hygiene products, and school supplies to K-12 students facing situational poverty, provided socks to Duval County Public School students. Through its unique referral process, it allows educators, counselors, and social workers to utilize its services throughout the school year.

Located in San Marco, UCOM Jacksonville provided the socks to elderly clients in its



Monique Elton from Changing Homelessness



Tamilla Drew of Catholic Charities, Jennifer Smith of Giving Closet and Monique Elton of Changing Homelessness at the sock giveaway sponsored by Family Promise

Meals on Wheels program as well as to individuals experiencing homelessness. The nonprofit works to stabilize families in crisis by providing food to the hungry through its food pantry, emergency services to prevent homelessness, scholarship programs and job referrals to raise the earning potential of its clients.

## Episcopal conducts training so that all are welcome on campus

Faculty and staff on the Episcopal School of Jacksonville’s Munnerlyn Campus participated in Cultural Competency and Civil Discourse training during professional development days just before the start of school. Presenters from the University of North Florida’s Department of Diversity Initiatives hosted small group discussions on cultural competency for faculty and staff, covering such topics as the difference between diversity and inclusion, equality, and equity.

The discussion groups had a chance to reflect on and share the extent to which the Episcopal community has embraced both diversity and inclusion in its effort to “respect the dignity of every human being.” Similarly, participants explored affirming language and completed a “What Next?” activity.

Facilitators for the discussion were Sheila Spivey, senior director of the Department of Diversity Initiatives (DDI) at the UNF, and Brandi Winfrey, associate director of the DDI at UNF, who leads the Intercultural Center for Peace and the Student Alliance for Inclusion and Diversity.

Also last week, faculty and staff participated in civil discourse training provided by Kyle Reese and Nancy Broner from OneJax, an interfaith organization on the UNF campus. A small group of ESJ teachers were trained in advance to act as facilitators of discussion small groups for all faculty and staff. As part of this community-wide education, participants learned how to best engage in a conversation or dialogue to better understand another person, as well as how to actively listen to someone with different opinions. The Civil Discourse Team put together some community norms to serve as a toolbox for healthy, productive, civil conversations in and out of the classroom.

“In order to better facilitate healthy and productive conversations, we must practice these conversations ourselves so that conversations don’t evolve into personal attacks or commonly used tropes,” said Emily Farmer, AIR Steering Committee member and ESJ history teacher. “Every classroom, as well as some common areas, will receive a poster to serve as a reminder to all about the best ways to engage with each other.”



Emily Farmer and the Civil Discourse team as they prepare for the training.

“We look forward to continuing our partnership with UNF’s Department of Diversity Initiatives as well as OneJax,” said Amy Burrows Perkins, director of Student Services and chair of the AIR Steering Committee. “I felt the training provided us with concrete examples of ways to understand these very emotional and extremely important topics and helped us to find a common language to communicate with so that all can feel welcome on campus.”

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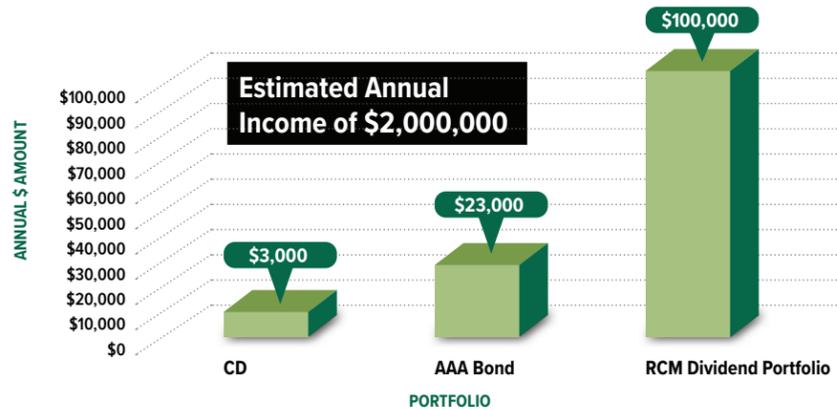
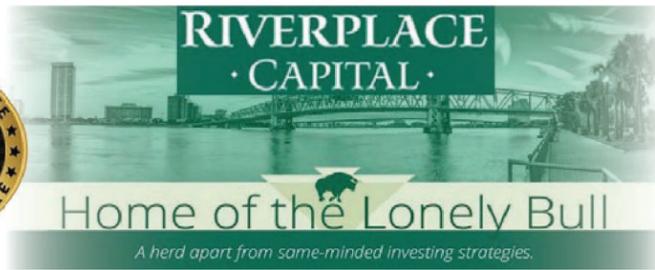
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# How to Earn More in Retirement

By Scott Wohlers, Vice President  
Riverplace Capital

There has been an enormous problem facing retirees since the Great Recession of 2008, and that is how to generate income while retired. This problem just got exacerbated by the recent global pandemic caused by Covid-19. The Federal Reserve cut rates to zero percent and will hold rates at zero until the end of 2023. This caused the 10-year US Treasury to sink to around 0.70%. This has thrown a curve ball to those who were retired or have been contemplating retirement. At present, one year bank offered Certificates of Deposit (CDs) are paying around 0.15%. For example, if you had \$2,000,000 and invested that in a one-year CD you would earn just \$3,000 a year! So, what are retirees to do and how do they overcome this predicament to make sure they do not outlive their money?

Some retirees have looked to alternative investments such as fixed annuities offered by insurance companies that pay a little higher rate than CDs, still their return is well short of what is required to live on. These contracts are typically either five or seven-year contracts that often have huge



Take advantage of stock appreciation while earning dividend income.

surrender charges if you try to take your money out early. Corporate AAA rated bonds, deemed riskier than Treasuries and CDs, have also been a vehicle used in the past to provide investors with a good return. However, the corporate bond rates for AAA corporate ten-year bonds are around 1.15%. If interest rates rise over the next ten years, you may face challenges re-selling the bond to liquidate your position.

With all these low yield investments that seem to have different levels of risk and fees,

what are retirees to do? **One strategy that stands out is investing in dividend paying stocks.** Corporations declare a fixed dollar amount per share they will offer as a dividend. The dividend yield is then calculated by dividing the fixed dividend amount by the share price. For example, if ABC Corp pays a \$5.00 dividend per share and the stock price is \$100, the dividend yield is 5%, the dividend yield moves up or down as the stock moves. If the stock goes up to \$110 or drops to \$90, you still receive \$5.00 per

individual stock share that you own. One thing to keep in mind when putting together this strategy is to not just search for the highest yielding stocks. They may offer a high yield; however, they may have no growth and may move downward in share price more than the market itself, or the company may reduce its dividend.

**At Riverplace Capital, we research and identify stocks that pay a good dividend and have growth or appreciation potential.** We target stocks where the average yield will be around 5 percent. For example, referring to our initial example of a \$2,000,000 portfolio, if you invested in a dividend portfolio that yielded 5%, that would provide an annual income of \$100,000 regardless of appreciation or depreciation of the stock itself! This gives you the opportunity to take advantage of appreciation of the stocks in your portfolio while also getting the returns from the dividends. Just like with any investment, there is risk involved, dividends are not guaranteed. That is why we believe it is important to work with a team that is actively monitoring and updating your dividend portfolio to help you navigate through your retirement. Our team of seasoned professionals has proven experience helping retirees maximize their retirement. We welcome the opportunity to work with you! To learn more, contact us at (904)346-3460 or info@riverplacecapital.com. **Sign up for our weekly blog and market updates by visiting [www.riverplacecapital.com](http://www.riverplacecapital.com), or check us out on Facebook Live every Thursday at 12:45 pm.**

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# THE WAY WE WERE: JOE AND JONI BIFANO

BY MARY WANSER  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

When it comes to true love, the third time is the charm, the saying goes. And that's how it was for Joseph James Bifano. As a young man working in his hometown of Sheboygan, Wis., on the second floor of J. C. Penney in the boys' department, there were at least two occasions when his attention was distracted by the young girl who would eventually become his wife.

"I saw this beautiful girl walking hand-in-hand with her mother. It was love at first sight," he said. But Joni was too young at that time, so nothing ever came of those encounters. Joe simply admired the girl from afar. She never noticed him.

As a drummer and the leader of a band that played nightly performances at The Scoreboard, one particular Friday night in May 1950, just before playing the last number of the evening, Joe noticed two female faces glancing through the club's window. One he knew as Donna Lugg. The second, much

to Joe's pleasant surprise, was a face he recognized as the little girl who shopped at Penney's with her mother. But now, she was all grown up. He learned for the first time her name, Joan Rose Schnorr, who was known as Joni. She lived only three miles away from Sheboygan, in Kohler, home to one of the world's largest foundries that makes bathtubs and toilets. Her father owned a hardware store across from that plant.

The girls had somehow missed their ride home and needed a lift. Joe immediately offered to rescue them. He just needed five minutes to play his last song; so, they waited for him. Of course, he dropped off Donna at her home first so that he could spend some alone time with Joni. "I poured my heart out to her that night," Joe said.

Joni told Joe how her mother had passed away just months before and that her last wish was that Joni marry a Catholic boy. Joe admitted to being "on the loose" but still a Catholic. However, his hopes were almost dashed when Joni told him that she was heading to Milwaukee the following morning and committing to take vows to become a nun.

Joni did go to Milwaukee, but she came back again, confused. The two spoke first to Joni's hometown priest who expressed disappointment at the possibility that Joni's might change her mind. Then, Joni and Joe spoke with Joe's hometown priest who told Joni, "This boy needs you." That became Joni's deciding factor.

In June, less than a month later, Joe proposed to Joni on a walk home to her house after attending a local high school graduation ceremony. "When do you want to get married?" Joni asked him. "What's tomorrow?" Joe replied. Joni said that was too soon, and she



The Bifano Family 1990



Joe and Joni Bifano in 2018



Joseph James Bifano and Joan Rose Schnorr 10-14-50

chose the month of October. Joe agreed. Joni had another request, a big family.

They were married on October 14, 1950, just five months after their first official meeting. "A love affair became a love affair," Joe said. Over the course of 21 years, they had six children—four girls and two boys. According to Joe, Joni had wanted 12. "Okay, if I last that long," Joe told her. He said he would have done anything for her just so that she would be his.

Joe continued with his band, and after their fourth child was born, Joni joined his group as the lead vocalist. "I loved to be home with my children, but I also loved to sing," Joni said. So, she got used to babysitters. Joni had been a singer since she was four years old. Her mother would tell of a performance in a big hall before a large crowd, but Joni had no recollection of that as her start. "My momma was always encouraging me," she said.

The Bifano's band became known as Joe and Joni Live. They usually had two other members with them on bass and piano. They entertained nightly. For 17 years, they were the Saturday night feature at Riverdale Country Club in Sheboygan, which was similar to Timuquana Country Club, playing mainly big band music—Glenn Miller, Harry James, Artie Shaw. During times when Joni was too pregnant with their younger children to sing, one of their two eldest daughters would fill in.

They made a TV commercial for Hubert Humphrey's presidential campaign and for Richard Nixon's. "I guess we were famous at one time because we were in such demand," Joe said with a chuckle.

"We moved a lot," Joni said. They lived, along with their three youngest children, in Hawaii for two years from 1978 to 1980. "We took Hawaii by storm and became one of the island's best bands," Joe said. They played for Jim Nabors for 13 weeks on his show The Jim Nabors Polynesian Extravaganza. They were on Hawaii Five-0. They knew Sally Field and many other Hollywood stars. They had made a name for themselves. "Boy, what a whirlwind life we had!" Joe said.

While still on top, they decided to retire from big band entertainment. They moved from Hawaii to Fort Myers and focused their musical talents on the church circuit. "It didn't matter what kind of church it was, as long as they loved Jesus," Joni said. They played for Baptist congregations, Assemblies of God, and others—Joni in choirs, sometimes Joe on drums.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37



Joe Bifano, Ray Kaniama, Joni Bifano, Eddie Lawrence 1978



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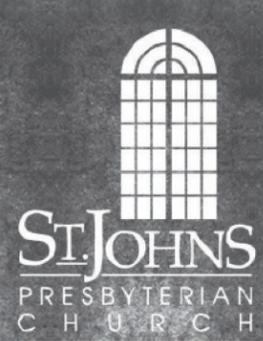
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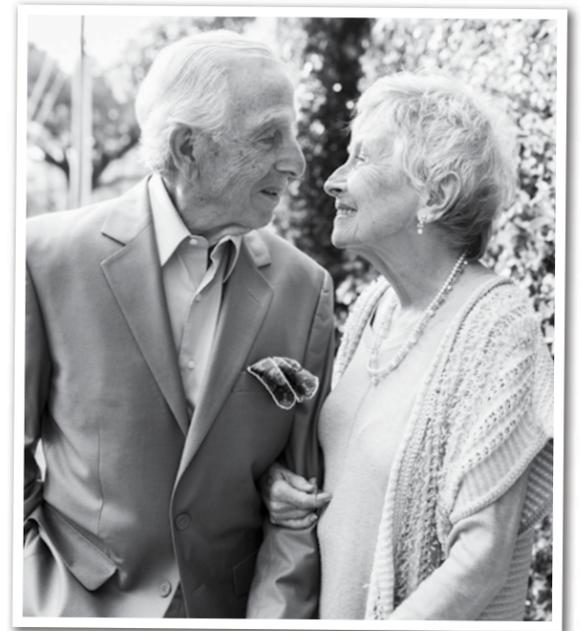
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Joe and Joni Bifano 1966



Joni and Joe in Hawaii



Joe and Joni Bifano in 2018

In the early 90s, once their youngest was out of the house, Joe and Joni moved north to Jacksonville to be closer to family members. They desired to travel by RV and thought Jacksonville a more appropriate home base than farther south. They traveled to many interesting places in their motor home. “We wanted peace. It was a joy to go to a park, meet people, and help them,” Joe said. They’d host outdoor bible studies for other campers. They drove to various states—Colorado and Wisconsin, for example—to visit children and grandchildren living there.

Aside from a couple of years on the road, they’ve resided in their home in Ortega

Farms. “We’ve both got wrinkles now, but we’re still alive!” Joe said.

Looking back on 70 years of happy marriage, Joni had some words of advice for young couples. “Remember that your vows are forever. And remember constant forgiveness. You are going to have many differences,” she said.

“I would agree to that 100%,” Joe said.

Most challenging in their 70 years for Joni were the times when the children left home. “One by one they slipped away,” she said with tears in her eyes. And she recalled 10 years ago, at her request, all six of her children returned home, without their spouses, without their children because she wanted her family of eight around the table again just like it

used to be. “Not that I don’t love everybody, all my in-laws, but it was just something special I wanted. It reminded me of the times when we lived in Sheboygan where we had the prettiest house,” Joni reminisced.

Of their six children have come 17 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. “What we tried to do in all those years was bring up the children as best we could, and we must have done something right,” Joe said, noting that now their six children outdo each other in expressing their love and duty to their parents in their advanced age. “When it’s all said and done, they did everything they could to make us happy, until the day that we pass, they’ve done it,” Joe said.

When asked what has kept the couple together for 70 years, Joni said, “We wanted to be forever together, no matter the fights and the things that happen, the annoyances. We made a vow to God, and so we had to do it, and we wanted to do it.”

Joe agreed. “She is the love of my life, and I’m able to take care of her. I’m helping her to feel good at this age.” He turned 97 on Sept. 21, and she will be 90 on Oct. 27, days after they celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary. After all this time together, they’ve found they can complete each other’s sentences, but they’ve learned that it’s best not to.

“It was a beautiful life,” Joe and Joni said simultaneously.

## Playing bridge with finesse in the time of COVID-19

By Peggy Harrell Jennings  
Resident Community News

The lighter side of the Coronavirus era of social distancing brings to mind the words of Robert Benchley who said, “If you think you’ve caught a cold, call a doctor. Or call in three doctors and play bridge.”

Brenda Trender, Virginia Kirby, Jim Loblely all of Ortega Yacht Club Condos and Kathy Sharp of Ortega Forrest are handling the restrictions of the pandemic with finesse as they deal, bid, and call while playing bridge every Monday and Thursday. The long-time friends are dedicated to maintaining healthy protocol during their games as well as in their daily lives, said Trender.

“We play with the same people at only one table and wash our hands religiously. If we have snacks, they are prepackaged individually- no digging into the peanut bowl,” she said noting there are no dummies in their games, but plenty of hand sanitizer and, sadly, no hugging, which is difficult for long-time friends. With only 14 years in Jacksonville, Tinder is the newbie of the group.

“The camaraderie and challenge of playing games is important; we are all retired so the interaction is important,” she continued. Despite the adage that there is no such thing as a friendly game of bridge, she said, “We are more of a social bridge group. We laugh a lot and have fun. And you can forget giving clues with facial expressions. Wearing a mask keeps us from any of that – it is the great equalizer!”

When it comes to selecting a face mask to wear while playing, the group utilizes a wide variety. “Some members wear typical medical type masks - Kathy Stark makes cute ones,” Trender said, noting as far as her own collection goes, she owns more than 16 very fashionable



Jim Loblely with Brenda Trender, Carter Powell and Kathy Stark during a bridge game in Ortega.

coverings. “Being a Southern girl, I go by the, if it doesn’t move, monogram it motto, so, of course, mine are monogrammed, and I did order some to match my Burberry tote.”

On Fridays Trender follows suit with another group of players – all named Pat. Pat Bramlett, Pat McCLOW, Pat Lee, and Patty Palmer. Rachel Cook sometimes joins in. They, too, are dedicated to safety and consideration for the well-being of the group and are very strict about what they feel is the safest protocol, especially since they are all older and some members have underlying medical conditions.

Also, for recreation, Trender and her golfing partner, Pat Bramlett, walk the course at Timuquana Country Club where they can maintain a comfortable distance while exercising, being together and having fun.

Thomas Maccauley said, “Finesse is the adaptation of means to circumstances.” These socially conscious friends have bridged the gap between fun and intellectual stimulation to meet the challenges of present time circumstances. While being alert to the tricks of the pandemic, they have maintained their cherished friendships and important social interactions, which they handle with finesse, style, and a sense of humor.

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Surgery

**Bharti Jasra, MD**  
Assistant Professor  
Surgery

**Nancy P. Mendenhall, MD**  
Professor and Associate Chair  
Radiation Oncology

**Smita Sharma, MD**  
Assistant Professor  
Radiology

**Sarah Khan, MS, CGC**  
Certified Genetic Counselor  
Hematology/Oncology

**John D. Murray, MD**  
Associate Professor  
Plastic Surgery

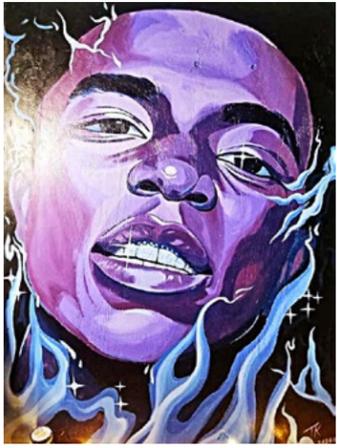
**Lara Zuberi, MD**  
Assistant Professor  
Hematology and Oncology



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# Art exhibition celebrates African American musicians from Jacksonville



Yungeen Ace by Tatiana K



Von Barlow by Jennifer Veal



Rosamond Johnson by Krishna Achath



Blind Blake by Jarrett Walker

A new public art exhibition celebrating African American musicians from Jacksonville opened in LaVilla with an artist reception and unveiling of portraits painted on plywood panels in the window openings of the old Lee & Cates Building at 905 W. Forsyth St., in the heart of LaVilla Sept. 10.

LaVilla birthed the music heritage of Jacksonville's African Americans, and the outdoor exhibition, "Artists Pick Artists in LaVilla," celebrates 120 years of musicians through portraits by contemporary Jacksonville artists.

The nine portraits span the years starting with Krishna Achath's depiction of J. Rosamond Johnson (1872-1954), an operetta composer/singer, through to Tatiana K's rendering of Yungeen Ace (1988-), a Hip Hop singer/poet.

Each painter picked a musician to honor. Jacksonville needed to be a significant part of a musician's life. All the musicians were born and/or raised in Jacksonville except for Ray Charles who got his professional start at the Ritz Theater.

In addition to Johnson and Ace, other notable Jacksonville musicians and their painters included in the exhibition are: Jarrett Walker's portrait of Blind Blake (1896-1934), ragtime & blues singer; Sam Jones (1924-1981), a jazz bassist painted by Rio David; Ray Charles (1930-2004) R & B composer and singer, painted by Marsha Hatcher; MaVynnee Betsch (1935-2005), opera singer painted by Kevin Arthur; Von

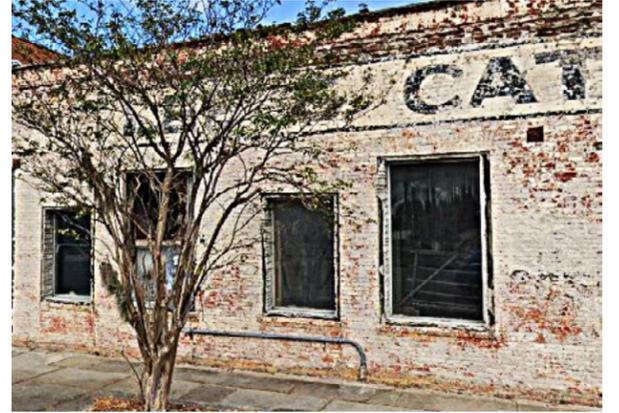
Barlow (1943-2020), a jazz drummer painted by Jennifer Veal; Jackie Moore (1946-2019), a R & B composer/singer painted by Annelies Dykgraaf; and Paten Locke (1979-2019), a Hip Hop singer/poet painted by Grace Bio.

The painters come from Jacksonville's explosion of talented painters expanding into public art. Tatiana K., Hatcher and Walker are part of ColorJaxBlue. Achath, David and Arthur come from the overlooked Art League.

Other associations include Bio from 8x10 Collective and Dykgraaf from the Artists Collective. Several received their arts training locally such as Veal, who attended the Florida School of the Arts, and Tatiana K and Walker who both graduated from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. The celebration of the musicians and painters was initiated by Paul Sifton of 927 Events and Catering, which resides at the other end of the block on Forsyth Street.

After boarding up the windows for the renovation of 905 Forsyth, Sifton wanted to do something colorful related to the neighborhood. The Public Art Program of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville and ArtRepublic curated the exhibition. Vystar and Bee Friends Farm contributed the funds for the artist fees.

The Downtown Investment Authority owns the property and welcomes the conversion of the building into



The windows in the old Lee & Cates Building on Forsyth Street will be filled with colorful portraits of Jacksonville musicians

downtown's first independent grocery. The future operators promise a grocery store with a purpose – to improve people's lives and health. After the renovation, the portraits will grace the interior of the grocery. The exhibition foretells the recognition of African American history in LaVilla through future developments such as Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing park and historic markers on the Emerald Trail.

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# Cultural Council installs fifth sculpture in urban core

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

It was with great excitement that downtown arts benefactor Preston Haskell of Ortega joined sculptor David Engdahl of San Marco, artist Cecilia Lueza, and Glenn Weiss, director of public art for the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville to watch the fifth sculptural masterpiece within the city's Art in Public Places program take its place on Sept. 12.

The Cultural Council, in collaboration with VyStar Credit Union, installed the sculpture "NOVA" in the plaza on Hogan Street near the VyStar parking garage. Fifth

in a series of six works of art, the metal creation was made by Lueza and is part of a more than \$400,000 Downtown Sculpture Initiative that partners with private companies to enhance the city.

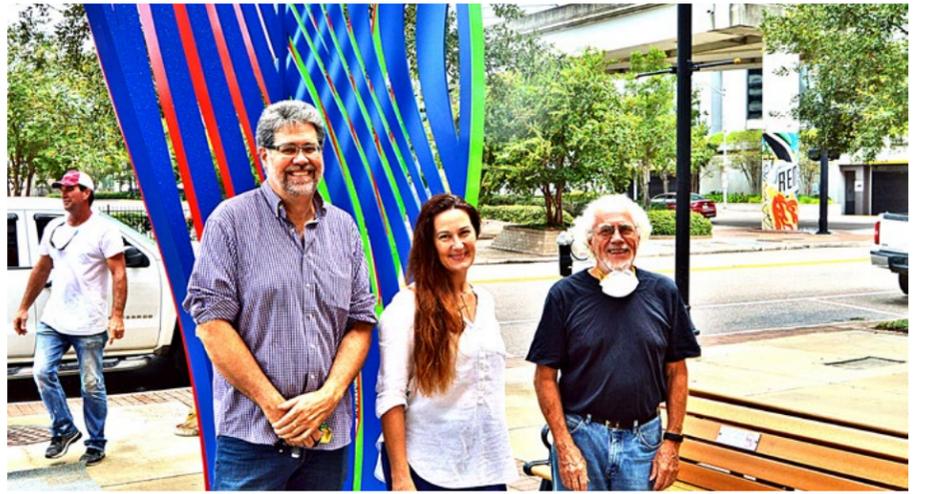
A sixth and final sculpture will be placed at the corner of Laura Street and Forsyth Street on Saturday, Oct. 31. The title of the sixth sculpture is "Laura's Flower" and it was created by Gus and Lina Ocamposilva of Oldsmar, Florida. Although the sixth sculpture will be placed on public land, its installation is in partnership with Farah and Farah Law Firm.

"NOVA," is the second artwork to be on display downtown by Lueza. In 2017, she painted colorful shapes on the JTA Skyway columns on Hogan Street that are in view of her latest work. Her sculpture transforms those same shapes into a 3D painted steel sculpture. The sculpture continues Lueza's pattern along Hogan Street and complements the murals on the VyStar parking garage, which were painted by internationally renowned streetscape artist Remi Rough of London, England in 2019.

Lueza, an Argentine American artist and sculptor, is well known for creating vibrant public art pieces in a range of mixed media. From painting and sculpture to monumental installations and street murals, she explores the visual effects of color and incorporates elements of nature and geometry. In addition to Jacksonville, her sculptures and murals can be seen at the Facebook Data Center in Alabama, as well as in public spaces in Missouri, Arizona, Washington D.C. and many Florida cities such as Tampa, Orlando and Fort Lauderdale.



"NOVA" a sculpture created by Cecilia Lueza of south Florida is placed on its pedestal near the VyStar parking garage on Hogan Street.



Glenn Weiss, director of public art, Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville with artist Cecilia Lueza and San Marco sculptor David Engdahl.

VyStar Credit Union was recently recognized as Corporate Business of the Year by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville for its commitment to promoting art and culture in the community through various initiatives such as supporting the Jacksonville Arts & Music School, ArtRepublic, the Cathedral Arts Project and more.

"At VyStar Credit Union, we believe that art and culture are important in building a vibrant community, and this sculpture installation is one more way we are working to provide the necessary resources to do just that," said Brian Wolfburg, VyStar's President/CEO. "We are proud to support talented local artists such as Cecilia Lueza and remain committed to supporting organizations and programs that bring creative ideas like this to life."

The Downtown Sculpture Initiative was spearheaded by Haskell nearly five years ago, and the first sculpture to be placed was "Harmonious Ascent," by Jacksonville artist Aisling Millar. It is located in a plaza on the east side of the JAXChamber building.

The second sculpture, "Opposing Forces," by Hanna Jubran, a sculptor from North

Carolina, adorns the corner of newly named James Weldon Johnson Park (formerly Hemming Park) near City Hall at the corner of Monroe and Laura Streets.

David Engdahl, a sculptor from San Marco, has facilitated, coordinated, and managed the balance of the sculpture projects in the Cultural Council's initiative as a volunteer. He has overseen the installation of the remaining four works of art. The third sculpture, located at One Enterprise Center is entitled, "Entwined Line," and was created by C.J. Rench, an artist from Oregon. The fourth in the series, Jubran's "Baladee," stands at the corner of Adams and Main Streets and was a collaboration with Farah and Farah.

"We targeted locations where we might find landowners who are willing to participate and collaborate," Engdahl said. "For this fifth work of art, we contacted Brian Wolfburg of VyStar, who was all for it."

Engdahl said the Downtown Sculpture Initiative initially planned to install 10 works of art throughout Jacksonville's urban core. "The original concept is to have 10, but we don't have any more in the pipeline at this point," he said.




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# Animal House

## Caring for world wildlife one exotic animal at a time

By Julie Kerns Garmendia Resident Community News

### ZOO VETS DEDICATE THEIR LIVES TO SERVING ENDANGERED SPECIES AND GLOBAL CONSERVATION

Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens veterinarians, Dr. Meredith Persky of San Marco, and Dr. Youssef Jafarey of Riverside, may live 10 miles from their place of employment, but through their job they experience a little piece of nearly every corner of the world. Inside the 115-acre botanical gardens located on the Trout River, they care for rare and exotic animals from every continent except Antarctica, and both are committed to their additional roles as veterinarian representatives for the zoo's global conservation missions to save endangered species and threatened ecosystems.

"With 2,000 animals to care for at the zoo, we know each by name and build a relationship just like a parent and child. It's important for us to create trust and rapport," said Persky. "The medical clinic's daily schedule includes surgeries, preventive health care, medications, nutrition or treatment of chronic conditions, illness, injuries and emergencies. Favorite toys, foods, or treats create a positive experience during exams. While some animals require sedation, others learn to participate in or at least tolerate treatment without sedation."

Each animal has a distinctive personality from the largest rhino to the smallest lizard. Both veterinarians enjoy getting to know and care for all of them throughout the year. Most fond of the mischievous Bonobo monkeys, Persky said that when Lorelle, an elderly Bonobo needed a procedure, there was concern.

"At age 48, Lorelle needed a procedure which is extremely risky and difficult at that advanced age. She is a testy one anyway, so for her to come through surgery and recover, it was only possible through the trust relationship we had with her," Persky said.

Then there are the zoo residents who are all-too-frequent visitors to the veterinarian



Dr. Youssef Jafarey performs a neonatal exam on a baby gorilla

clinic, some as often as three times weekly. One particularly feisty and unfortunately fearless, little black bear named Billy, regularly lands himself into trouble.

"We see Billy all the time because he is constantly getting into something he shouldn't. As soon as we see him, it's 'here we go again, what have you done now Billy!'" Persky said. "With so many active animals on such a large property, we get a lot of limping, cuts, wounds, and swollen faces. It's always a detective case to figure out what happened."

Persky said she "was born to do this, because I light up just talking about it." She moved to Jacksonville for the zoo veterinarian position in 2016. Although zoological veterinarians typically relocate often during their careers, nationally or internationally, she said she looks forward to continuing her work here.

"There are frequent after-hours emergencies. We work straight through holidays and hurricanes. Regardless of what is going on, the animals still need us," she said. "Additional



Dr. Meredith Persky examines a manatee  
Photo courtesy of Jeannie Gordon



Dr. Youssef Jafarey examines a baby tiger

time goes to record-keeping, meetings and teaching, but I don't even mind. Only at the zoo can the public probably ever see and closely interact with these animals, hear the lions roar, or watch the gorillas. Every ticket sold helps pay for animal care and critical zoo outreach to save endangered wildlife in Florida and elsewhere."

Persky is married to local attorney Jay Silver who cares as much about animals as she does and understands emergency trips to the zoo at all hours. Their ACPS rescue dog, Patch, and rescue cat, Siporra, complete their family.

Meanwhile, Jafarey came to Jacksonville through Persky's recommendation. The two animal physicians met during training and worked together while both were employed at Zoo Miami. Jafarey, who especially enjoys the reptiles, cited several difficult challenges faced by zoological veterinarians.

"It is as tough to be accepted to veterinarian school as it is to medical school. Both educational paths are expensive and require



Dr. Meredith Persky holds two infant Eastern Pygmy Possums during a trip to Australia

extensive post-doctoral training. Then, several years of related work experience are required to become a zoological veterinarian. Unfortunately, there are few of the necessary postgraduate positions available for zoological veterinarians each year. Usually there are only about 12 openings worldwide," he said. "We are the ultimate veterinary generalists, who must be prepared to handle every kind of emergency medicine, including anesthesia. It is a critical responsibility to safely anesthetize anything from a tiny frog that weighs two grams, to a 10,000-pound elephant."

Jafarey also tends to his own wildlife at home; his two pets were both hit by cars. He saved the life of his red-eared slider turtle, Ms. Pacman, and performed successful hip surgery on his rescue pitbull, Thea.

Jafarey and Persky are committed to informing and educating the public about local, regional, national, and international

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41

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wildlife conservation. They are equally concerned about the closely related issues of deforestation and destruction of habitat, critical ecosystems, and plant species.

“Diverse factors impact wildlife survival, habitat and plant conservation. To protect and aid survival of threatened species, including the habitats and food sources they require, zoologists must support and coordinate efforts with local communities. They provide education, information, and ongoing support regarding conservation issues. They work to identify and develop sustainable livelihoods and food production methods to improve the standard of living for local residents. These efforts discourage poaching, illegal animal trade, deforestation, mining, wildlife and habitat destruction,” Jafarey said. “Another way we help is to support park rangers, like those in Sumatra, Indonesia, who actively patrol to prevent poaching of the critically endangered Sumatran Tigers.”

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums member organizations work cooperatively to help insure the survival of threatened and endangered wildlife species. They create and manage Species Survival Plans (SSP) of which the Jacksonville Zoo participates in 93. These comprehensive plans maintain captive populations of specific animals for genetic diversity and demographic stability in the U.S. and throughout the world – wherever wildlife faces extinction.

“We travel to a specific animal’s location to investigate why that animal population is in decline. It could be threatened by invasive species, loss of habitat, food sources or other threats. We identify the threats and find solutions to save that animal, improve its breeding, overall health and ultimate survival however possible,” Jafarey said. “An example would be local amphibian conservation efforts. There are only a few surviving populations of the aquatic striped newt salamander,

once found throughout the southeastern U.S. Loss of habitat has decimated the population, but breeding, release, and monitor programs are underway.”

The Jacksonville Zoo’s extensive local, regional, and worldwide conservation programs support more than 45 global initiatives. A few include: Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Center at the zoo; Jacksonville Wood Stork Rookery Project at the zoo; Striped Newt Project-Apalachicola National Forest; Central American River Turtle Project - Belize; Gorilla Rehabilitation & Conservation Education Center (GRACE), near Tayna Nature Reserve, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); Lola ya Bonobo – Kinshasha, DRC; International Rhino Foundation Project – Sumatra, Indonesia; Okapi Conservation Project – DRC; Rupununi Wildlife Research Unit – Guyana, South America; wild orchids – Jacksonville Zoo in coordination with Atlanta Botanical Garden’s Southeastern Center for Conservation.

Persky and Jafarey both said that a portion of every zoo entrance ticket goes to fund local and global conservation. They encourage awareness of human impact on wildlife

and the environment and suggest ways to conserve both.

“We share the world with these incredible animals. Unfortunately, without successful conservation efforts now, there may be a time when we cannot see a polar bear or a tiger,” Persky said. “There are many small ways to take action in our daily lives. Recycle and purchase reusable items. Avoid plastic and discard it properly, not into waterways or the environment, where it can injure or kill wildlife. Choose sustainable fish and palm oil products. The expansion of non-sustainable palm oil plantations is among the leading causes of deforestation and loss of irreplaceable forest and jungle ecosystems.”

The 33rd Annual Jacksonville Zoo SPOOKTACULAR will be held every night at the zoo from October 23 – 31st, 2020. For tickets and details go to [www.jacksonvillezoo.org](http://www.jacksonvillezoo.org). Support the zoo and its conservation work through the purchase of tickets, become a member or patron, donate, volunteer and see events on their website. The zoo is located at 370 Zoo Parkway. Call (904) 757-4463 or email for more information: [info@jacksonvillezoo.org](mailto:info@jacksonvillezoo.org).

*“Only at the zoo can the public probably ever see and closely interact with these animals, hear the lions roar, or watch the gorillas. Every ticket sold helps pay for animal care and critical zoo outreach to save endangered wildlife in Florida and elsewhere.”*

– Dr. Meredith Persky



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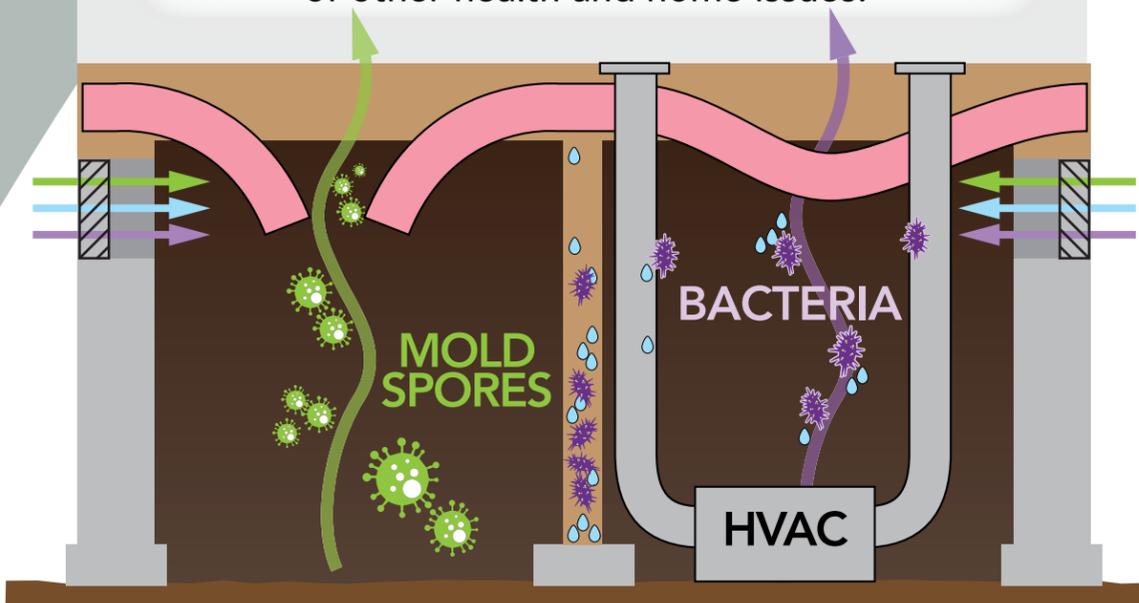
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## School sends birthday greetings to favorite priest



Fr. Jose Kulathinal with his very special birthday card

The student body of St. Matthews Catholic School sent a really big birthday wish to Fr. Jose Kulathinal on Sept. 10 as the priest of St. Matthews Catholic Church celebrated his special day. Every student signed the handmade “card” banner to wish him a very happy day.

## St. John’s Country Day students honor 9/11 survivors

Students at St. Johns Country Day School took a few minutes during their daily morning flag ceremony on Sept. 11 to remember the first responders and 2,977 Americans who lost their lives when the Twin Towers in New York were destroyed in a terrorist attack on 9/11.

J.D. Lewis and Callum Steiner, raised the flag and then lowered it to half mast as St. John’s lower school music teacher, Liz Brink, sang the “Star Spangled Banner.”

Students throughout the school of all ages also did various activities (such as making posters and read the book, “Fireboat” to help them understand the day and why it’s important for a nation to remember its history.



J.D. Lewis and Callum Steiner raise the flag at St. Johns Country Day.

## St. Johns honors volleyball seniors

Volleyball Senior Night at St. John’s Country Day School honored two senior athletes—Maddie Moody, of Avondale, and Chloe Davis of Green Cove Springs. Both athletes were escorted by their families into a Brown Gym that was full to its reduced COVID-19 capacity with cheering fans.

“Maddie and Chloe have been a huge part of the foundation of our volleyball program over the past few years,” said Head Volleyball Coach Traci Peacock Livingston, of Ortega Forest. “Each of these outstanding young ladies brings their own special talent to our program adding to the success we have been achieving, and we can’t wait to see what is in store for them.”

Davis serves as a defensive specialist who helps run the Spartans’ back row with some outstanding digs, while Moody dominates the middle hitter position and leads her team in kills and blocks.

“It has been and continues to be a pleasure to have these young ladies represent St. Johns and our volleyball program,” said Livingston.



Juliet Moody, Laura Grippa, Maddie Moody, Grayson Moody, and Sander Moody

Moody was escorted by her parents, Dr. Laura Grippa and Sander Moody, both of Avondale, and her siblings —Juliet, currently a sophomore at St. Johns, and Grayson, in Grade 8.

Moody, a three-sport varsity athlete, has already committed to play soccer for Davidson College next year.

Davis, of Green Cove Springs, was escorted by her parents, Fred Davis and Sherry Bunn.

## Flag-raising tradition continues at RPDS



Finn Wogoman runs the flag up the pole while Marco Pulido covers his heart with his hand during the first flag-raising ceremony at Riverside Presbyterian Day School in September.

In early September, Riverside Presbyterian Day School celebrated its first flag-raising ceremony of its new school year. Flag raisings are held once a month and are led by sixth-grade students. During the ceremony, the students take turns sharing school announcements, led the school in the Pledge of Allegiance as well as a closing prayer. The flag-raising ceremony is live streamed into classrooms to ensure that despite COVID-19 protocols, special RPDS traditions continue.



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## Assumption students raise money for Hurricane Laura victims

Students at Assumption Catholic School showed their excitement and caring spirit by raising funds for hurricane victims during the school's Spirit Shirt Day event Sept. 4.

To participate in the fundraiser, students wore a shirt representing their favorite sports team with bottom of their uniform. The money raised is meant to help those affected in Louisiana and Texas as part of the Hurricane Laura Relief effort.

Assisting with the fundraiser was eighth grader Claire Kelleter, who collected monetary donations from elementary students.

"Donations will be sent in the form of a check to our diocese, which will then send one larger check to those affected by Hurricane Laura," said Maryann Jimenez, principal of Assumption Catholic School.



Claire Kelleter collects donations from Millie Schwegel and her sister, Livy, during the Spirit Shirt Day fundraiser at Assumption Catholic School Sept. 4.

Spirit Shirt Day fundraisers are conducted throughout the school year at Assumption. The purpose of the events is to create excitement among the students while allowing the school to inspire compassionate values within the school community.

## Johnny Appleseed visits St. Johns Presbyterian kindergarten



Gai Gai Quarterman, alias "Johnny Appleseed" with some of the students at St. John's Presbyterian Kindergarten and preschool.

Johnny Appleseed, alias Gai Gai Quarterman, school director, made his annual September visit to the preschool and kindergarten at St. John's Presbyterian Church. During his visit he shares the story of his travels and why he planted apple seeds all along the way. During the visit, children at the school make Johnny Appleseed hats and enjoy eating fresh-cut apples.

## Episcopal students glean inspiration from masks worn at school

Students on all three Episcopal School campuses have made use of their artistic talents when they returned for in-person instruction.

At the St. Mark's campus in Ortega, sixth graders created accordion self-portraits – one with a mask on the outer layer and

one without underneath. Each student was then tasked to write descriptive words about who they are beneath the mask they wear each day.

On the Beaches campus, first grade students, who were inspired by the book, "Lucy's Mask" by Lisa Sirkis Thompson, created their own superhero mask and learned how they can be real life superheroes by wearing a safety mask.

On the Munneryn campus, fine arts students are benefitting from the newly renovated art houses on campus. Students in Becca Hoadley's draw, paint, and print classes are using the new wide-open spaces to create large works of art. "The new studio is a huge step forward in our arts programming," said Katie Lebharr Black-Bowling, director of Fine Arts. "We are grateful to all of those who have made these new studios possible."



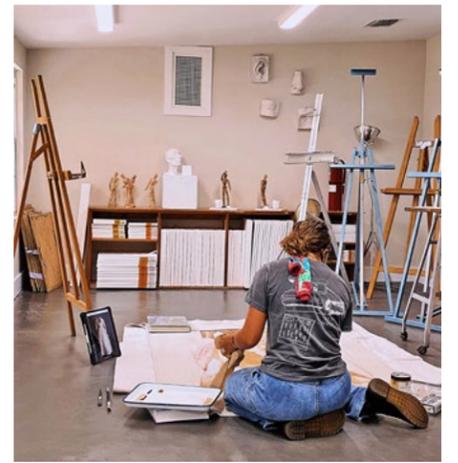
Accordion self-portraits made by Mary Carol Eyrick and Max Kovacov



Madison Linn paints a portrait with watercolors



First grader Elena Martinez dons her superhero mask



An Episcopal student created a large work of art in Becca Hoadley's class.

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# Troop 26 enjoys adventure at home and Florida Keys



Boy Scout Troop 26 enjoyed a week of adventure in the Florida Keys.



Scouts from Troop 26 pick up trash along San Juan and Herschel Streets in August.

Boy Scouts in Ortega's Troop 26, which has met at St. Mark's Episcopal Church since 1922, have been busy this summer. In August, the troop enjoyed a week of adventure at the Boy Scouts of America Sea Base in the Florida Keys. During the week they paddled to an island, set up camp, and explored several new activities such as snorkeling,

kayaking, swimming, camping, fishing, and just having fun in "scouting heaven."

When they returned the scouts got to work picking up litter along San Juan Avenue and Herschel Street, which is part of the troop's Adopt-A-Mile project. The troop has been involved with Adopt-A-Mile since 2008 and is proud to assist in keeping its neighborhood clean.

As the year progresses troop members expect to continue with several scouting activities such as canoeing, hiking, cycling and camaraderie with their friends. The scouts are also planning trips to Salt Springs, Camp Shand's in Melrose, and Black Creek Ravine, to name a few favorite spots.

## Students study outer space at Jacksonville Country Day

Fourth graders from Jacksonville Country Day have been studying a science unit that is out of this world.

The students have been examining outer space exploration and what it might be like to live aboard the International Space Station. They have discovered the benefits and disadvantages of the station's microgravity versus Earth's gravity on the human body. As part of their science curriculum during the past four weeks, the students have made up lists of problems faced by astronauts when spending long periods of time in space. They were also challenged to design an innovation that would help solve one of the problems identified by their team using design thinking to empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test their ideas.

Each classroom presented their project to their classmates on Sept. 24 during an event called Makerspace Expo.



JCDS students work both on campus and at home by using the same supplies to create their solution. From left: Eden Sussman, Izzy Conny and Kate Bowman



Courtney Laird

## Episcopal student to become first female Eagle Scout

Courtney Laird, a sophomore at Episcopal School of Jacksonville, will become one of the girls in the inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts.

Laird, who has been involved with the Girl Scouts since she was small, joined the Boy Scouts as soon as girls were allowed in the program. She will officially be honored as an Eagle Scout Feb. 8, 2021.

Laird chose Quigley House, a domestic violence and sexual assault center in Clay County, for her Eagle Scout project, putting more than 100 hours into her work at the center. She raised \$3,400 for her project, which included installing a library at Quigley House and stocking it with more than 200 books. She also built and donated furniture for the shelter.

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## St. Paul's heads back to school

St. Paul's Catholic Elementary School in Riverside saw its students return to school Aug. 19. While the majority of the families decided send their children back to school in person, a small percentage of pupils are participating virtually.

"We are all so excited to be back together! Science experiments are already underway. And we have found new ways to interact with our virtual friends!" said St. Paul's Principal Kim Repper.



A St. Paul's student plays rock, paper, scissors with a virtual friend.



Students at St. Paul's Elementary conducted a celery-stalk experiment with colored water to model how capillaries carry blood through the body.

## New teen center opens for leaders of tomorrow

### MALIVAI WASHINGTON YOUTH FOUNDATION UNVEILS CLUB 904

Despite setbacks to many projects during the COVID-19 pandemic, the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation persevered and made significant strides in building its new teen center, Club 904. The nonprofit unveiled the new center with a ribbon cutting and tour, Sept. 9, as Mayor Lenny Curry joined Founder MaliVai Washington and several Jacksonville City Council members, in addition to a handful of high school students who currently attend the program.

Just shy of three years ago, the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation announced its vision for the center. Since that time, over \$5.5 million was raised by the community as the MWYF partnered with the City of Jacksonville to construct the 14,000-square-foot facility. Club 904 features a high school lounge and study hall, teaching kitchen, game, theatre, and music rooms and general classrooms. The center will offer services including academic assistance, college preparation, job and leadership training, a variety of life skills and elective courses and social activities.



City leaders joined students and other dignitaries, to include Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry and founder MaliVai Washington, as they cut the ribbon on the new youth center.

At the ribbon cutting, Curry delivered remarks alongside other leaders and praised the efforts of the Foundation as well as those of students and leaders of tomorrow.

"I want every child in every zip code to have the tools and resources they need to be successful. This Foundation played a critical role – a VERY critical role in that mission," said Curry. "The work you're doing is important, it's important to the children, to the families, the neighborhood and the entire city of Jacksonville."

The Foundation will be able to triple the number of students served by utilizing this new space. The club will also provide a safe,

supportive space for teens to spend their afterschool hours and summer break, as they grow into future leaders and successful members of the community. By working to educate, enlighten and create a safe haven, the goal is to break the cycle of poverty in communities where these children and teens are growing up.

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation is an after-school and summer youth development program in Jacksonville's Urban Core that promotes academic achievement and positive life skills. To discover more information about MWYF, please visit <https://www.malwashington.com>.

## St. Matthew's students pray for peace on Sept. 11

The sacrifices made by first responders during the 9/11 tragedy in New York City so many years ago were not forgotten by the students at St. Matthew's Catholic School this year.

On Sept. 11, the school held a 9-11 Patriot's Day Remembrance Mass and Prayer Service at St. Matthews Catholic Church. Middle school students collected and composed intercessions for the lives lost, the first responders who perished and the families who lost their loved ones.

"The students prayed for peace throughout the world and petitioned for peace in our country, state, and community," said St. Matthew's Catholic School Principal Kathy Tuerk.



Garbriella Michael, Karoline Contreras-Vera, Max Gully, Faith Kennedy, Lawson Metz and Beatriz Toro-Lopez during the 9-11 Patriot's Day Remembrance Mass at St. Matthews

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# Wingert one of 16 Girl Scouts honored with Gold Award

Olivia Wingert of San Marco was among five young women from Duval County to earn the prestigious Gold Award, top award given to high school students within the Girl Scout organization.

The Gold Award recipients represent some of the most engaged and successful Girl Scouts – young women who are dedicated not only to empowering and bettering themselves, but also to helping their community and the world through creative, impactful, and sustainable “Take Action” projects. The award is earned by girls in grades 9-12 who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in developing sustainable solutions to local, national, and global challenges.

For their Gold Award projects, the Girl Scouts tackled numerous community issues including childhood obesity, mental health awareness, local and international poverty, childhood literacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) opportunities for girls, skin cancer prevention, nature

conservation, wildlife conservation, water safety, and more.

Joining Wingert as a Duval County Gold Award winner were Molly Paris, April Sanchez, Amelia Still, and Josephine Wondracek. Eleven other young women from Florida’s Gateway Council also achieved the Gold Award including: Katherine Ballard (Navarre); Lauren Collins (Tallahassee); Rachael Conomea (Orange Park); Abigail Floyd (Orange Park); Isabelle Jacobi (Ponte Vedra); Creed King (Tallahassee); Sara Kissane (Fleming Island); Daniela McCarty (St. Johns); Kaitlyn Sagul (Gainesville); and Jillian Thigpen (St. Johns).

Wingert’s project was entitled: Aidi for Haiti and assisted orphanages associated with the KORE Foundation in the Gressier Haiti Community. It provided basic first aid and medical care to children in need, gave the missionaries purpose when at the orphanages, and helped educate those at the orphanages on how to recognize and administer American medications properly



Girl Scout Gold Award ceremony attendees included: Debora McCarty, parent of Daniela McCarty; Lisa Still, parent of Amelia Still; Josephine Wondracek, Rachael Conomea, Sara Kissane, Jillian Thigpen, Seven-time Olympic Gold Medalist Shannon Miller; Kaitlyn Sagul; Mary Anne Jacobs, CEP Girl Scouts of Gateway Council; Traci Jenks, past president of Rotary Club of Jacksonville, and Molly Paris.

so that helpful medicines are not wasted and children can be better cared for and healed.

With her project, Tennis for Future Generations, Sanchez installed a bleacher at Mills Field Park and organized a tennis event entitled, “Promoting Tennis to New Generations,” where she trained 25 young tennis prospects – boys and girls ages 10 and under – so they can participate in a health-based program at Mills Fields Park/Creekside High School. As part of the project, she held a free five-day tennis event for two hours, and each day represented a different tennis grand slam.

Still spread awareness of skin and sun safety by creating informational pamphlets that were reviewed by a dermatologist. She also created a basket with skin protection

items for the Denim and Diamonds charity fundraiser at San Jose Episcopal Day School. She manned informational booths at the Jacksonville Farmer’s Markets and a market in St. Augustine, conducted a skin safety experiment and led a craft with 48 campers at the North Fork Girl Scout Camp. She also put skin safety information on social media.

Paris and Wondracek both did projects entitled “Splash In to Water Safety.” Paris conducted a workshop entitled “Empower Not Pity to empower people of different abilities to solve problems. Wondracek researched water safety, creating a website to spread the word also on social media and spread water safety information throughout the community.

## A four-legged friend visits RPDS

D is for DOG! The Pre-Kindergarten classes at Riverside Presbyterian Day School (RPDS) are working their way through the alphabet. Ben Ketchum, head of school for RPDS, brought his dog, Winston, to class to help the students celebrate the end of their week studying the letter “D.” There were lots of bright smiles and one big wagging tail.



Ben Ketchum, head of school at RPDS, looks on as Kelly O’Brien, pre-K assistant teacher assists Cruz Woodley in petting Winston.



Quinn Fowler, a student in RPDS pre-kindergarten, pets Winston as his classmates look on.

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# Merit Scholar semifinalists announced

Officials with the National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced the names of 16,000 semifinalists in the 66th Annual National Merit Scholarship Program and several students from Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods were on the list.

This year five students hailed from The Bolles School, five from Episcopal School of Jacksonville, two from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, one from Bishop Kenny High School and 19 from Stanton College Preparatory School including three for the San Marco area.

In all only 24 students from Duval County Public Schools were among the semifinalists.

This year's semifinalists from Bolles Class of 2021 are Yash Gupta, Lara Morello, Devi Priya Patcha, Edward Sun and Jessica Zeng.

The five Episcopal students on the semifinalist list were Braden Witkovich, Donald Kohla of Ortega, Jameson Gatewood, Paul Fouts, and Sally Barksdale of Avondale. Episcopal had six commended students as well including Jack Adams of Ortega, Grant Himes, Rohil Kanaparti, Ariel Largen, Reinhardt Peek, and Alston Rachels. Three Episcopal students – Ariel Largen, Ilana Simmons, and Garrison Washington – were invited to participate in the College Board National Recognition Programs for scoring in the top 2.5% of student who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color).

Hallie Knight was Bishop Kenny's only semifinalist although two of her classmates, Jose Gallo and Yousif Shakoury were named as commended students.

At Douglas Anderson Brianna Borberly and Caroline Guiler were named to the semifinalist list.

A long list of students from Stanton were honored with semifinalist status, however John Blake Caven, Audrey Plauche, and Artin Rezaei are students from the San Marco area. Also, on the list from Stanton were Kanna Isabel Agnila, Saipraneeth Alchuri, Vireli Anbarasu, Aneesh Chatrathi, Aaron Dantzler, Ryan Diaz, Hayden Higginbotham, Freeman Kellam, Catherine Menker, Vikas Patel, Aileen Rajaei, Anya Reddy, Panita Ruangkanit, Taylor Schnorbus, Abhi Vishwanath and Martin Wall.

Rounding out the semifinalists from Duval's public schools were Marissa A. Norton and Jacob H. Scarborough from Paxon School for Advanced Studies. Jaabir A. Syed of Mandarin High School also achieved semifinalist status.

The students will continue in the competition for 7,600 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$30 million, which will be offered in the spring. More than 1.5 million high school juniors from 21,000 high schools around the country entered the 2021 scholarship program by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, also known as the PSAT/NMSQT. That test served as an initial screen for program entrants. The semifinalists represent less than 1% of high school seniors in the United States.

To become a finalist, semifinalists must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about their academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, honors and awards received. They must have an outstanding academic record through high school., be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and write an essay. More than 90% of semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing.



Hallie Knight



Jose Gallo



Yousif Shakoury



Devi Priya Patcha



Edward Sun



Jessica Zeng



Lara Morello



Yash Gupta



Brianna Borberly



Caroline Guiler



Braden Witkovich



Donald Kohla



Jameson Gatewood



Paul Fouts



Sally Barksdale



Artin Rezaei



Audrey Plauche



John Blake Caven



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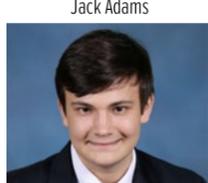
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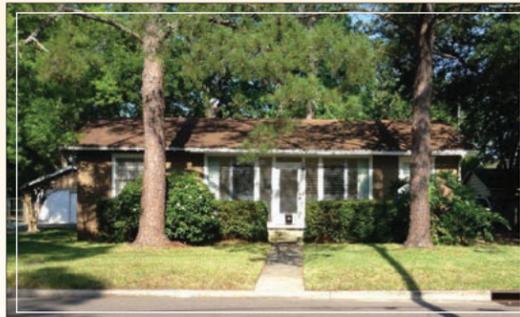
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**2840 COLLEGE ST - \$1,495 (Residential)**  
3 BR / 1 BA / 1,164 sqft. / \$1,495 security deposit

RIVERSIDE HOUSE FOR RENT. "in the Brewery District" 3 bedrooms, 1 bath, living Room, dining room, kitchen(R,R), central heat/air, refinished hardwood floors, open front porch, wood rear desk, off street parking, fireplace, ceiling fans, garage, fenced back yard, washer/dryer hookup, owner may consider pets with non refundable pet fee, 1 yr lease, outside smokers only(OVK BK)available now



**2751 POST ST - \$1,500 (Residential)**  
3 BR / 1 BA / 1,200 sqft. / \$1,500 security deposit

RIVERSIDE 1ST FLOOR DUPLEX FOR RENT. Take Post Street West from Historic 5 Points, to property--3 bedroom 1 bath, living room, dining room, kitchen (R/R) CHA, hardwood floors, built ins, non working fireplace, washer-dryer connect in unit and shared. open porch, owner may consider pets with NRPF, no smoking, \$1500 security deposit, (AVNefar lockbox)(shfm) 9/1/20



**1229 DANCY ST - \$2,300 (Residential)**  
3 BR / 2 BA / 1,700 sqft. / \$2,000 security deposit

AVONDALE SINGLE FAMILY HOME. Renovated, living room w/ fireplace, dining, kitchen w/ granite countertops & SS appliances (R/R/DW/MW/GD), office, master bath w/ double vanity & walk-in closet, 2nd bath w/ soaking clawfoot tub & walk-in shower, washer/dryer, laminate wood floors, back deck, CHA, electric, water/sewer, & lawn svc included, 1 yr lease, non-smoking, may consider pets (50lb max), (OV lr/rs) available now.