



NIGHT TO SHINE

Shine-Thru celebrates God's love for special needs locally & globally.
SEE PAGE 23



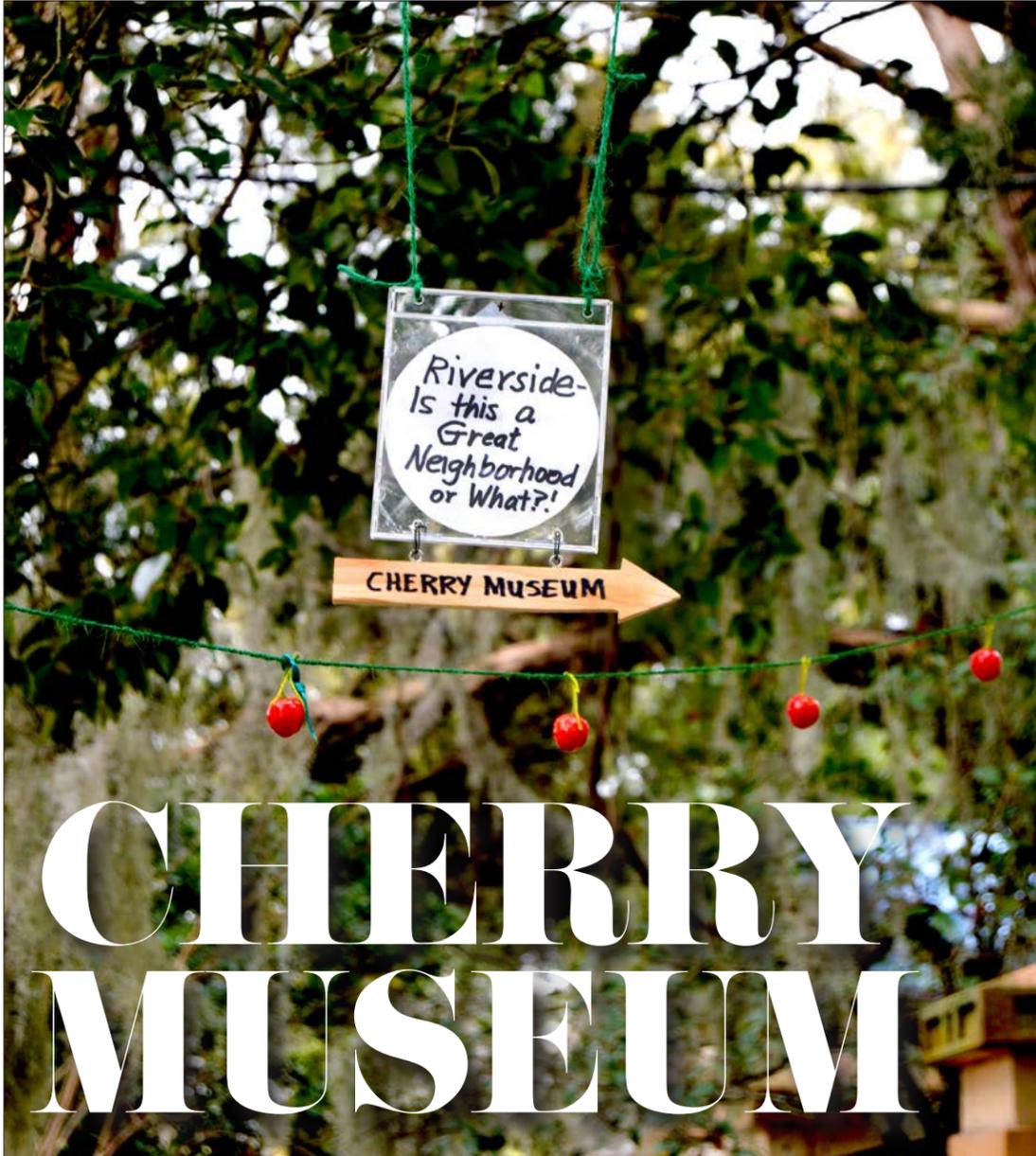
"TOPPING OFF"

A colorful collection of signatures mark a milestone, as the final beam was hoisted atop Baptist Hospital's new entry building and Wolfson Children's Critical Care Tower.
SEE PAGE 10



FOR THE LOVE OF TREES

As an early Valentine's Day gift, local families, including Sam, Charlie and Dyan Dickerson were on hand to plant trees and provide much needed love for one of the city's greatest parks. Friends of Boone Park South hosts the annual planting in coordination with Greenscape of Jacksonville, JEA (Jacksonville Electric Authority) and a strong showing of volunteers, this year they helped plant 23 new trees in early February.



CHERRY MUSEUM

Move over Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, there is a new "micro" art gallery in Riverside.

SEE PAGE 26



VICTORIA HALLOWAY, R.L. HILLIARD, MATT TUCCI AND THOMAS KNOX ENJOYED THE CONCERT SERIES' LATEST INSTALLMENT ON THE ORTEGA RIVER.

TINY DOCK CONCERTS GROW, ACTIVATE THE RIVER

Founded by husband and wife team, Bryan and Amber Osborne, who also host the bands on their 'tiny dock', the series highlights the intersection of support for musicians and local businesses. The efforts also helps activate the utilization and advocacy of the river, broadens awareness of the St. Johns RIVERKEEPER's mission, and ultimately helps to raise spirits during the pandemic.

"In line with our personal and wellness business mission, we really just want people to smile and be lifted up, to connect with each other, and to be inspired to infuse goodness and wellness around them," shared Amber Osborne.

The last installment featured Ample Angst, Feb. 20, and the next show will be March 20, highlighting Grammy nominee Dave Eggar and Company.

For more on the series, upcoming river cleanups and more show lineups, visit the Facebook page by searching TinyDockConcerts.

CITY, RESIDENTS TAKE ACTION AND FILE LAWSUIT TO COMBAT NOXIOUS SMELL IN MURRAY HILL

PAGE 9

NEIGHBORHOOD VOLUNTEERS PUT SPARKLE IN VENETIA GATES

PAGE 12

RAP CELEBRATES NEIGHBORHOOD'S BEST WITH ANNUAL AWARDS

PAGE 14

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

READING THE RESIDENT FROM COVER TO COVER

I always enjoy reading the Resident News ... and have found that during 2020 it was especially helpful staying informed on the community.

Many people have contacted me about the articles published in the February edition. I think everyone in town reads the Resident Community News – from cover to cover. I do and apparently so does everyone else!

I appreciate you more than you know. Your article has helped to remind about missing children. Thank you for your kindness and awesome writing skills!

Thank you,
Ellen Sullivan

CONCERN WITH 5G POLES IN RIVERSIDE

Your article, 5G Poles Crop Up in Riverside, cites only aesthetics, historic preservation, and property values as problems with wireless transmission facilities (WTFs). Of primary importance, however, are safety and health, environmental health, and cybersurveillance, with loss of privacy.

Presently, Jacksonville has 140 WTF applications or permits pending. Residents have analyzed 40 of these locations, finding the applications incomplete. None cite their remote radio units (RRUS), which reveal facilities' wattage – or effective radiated power (ERP) – which bears on the amount of microwave radiation penetrating homes, offices, schools, and bodies. None provide a calculated power density in any nearby occupied structure. Yet several sites are only 100-200 feet from homes.

Per the 1934 Communications Act, ERP – or energy – must be minimized to that needed to perform a task – here, telephone (voice) calls and text messages: "In all circumstances ... all radio stations ... shall use the minimum amount of power necessary to carry out the communication desired." Yet these misnamed "small cell" facilities use macro cell power: up to 25 million times higher wattage than needed. Lack of safety, meaning health and environmental damages from WTFs' radiation, is well established in the voluminous scientific radiofrequency/microwave radiation literature, with ~25,000 Supreme Court-admissible studies.

WTFs' operations do not fall under Florida Public Service Commission or Federal Communications Commission (FCC) exclusive jurisdiction. A municipality or county can regulate ERP to provide public safety, protect environmental health, preserve the quiet enjoyment of streets, and fulfill the purpose of the 1996 Telecommunications Act: "to promote the safety of life and property."

None of the pending applications include a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, which is required by federal law, but which FCC failed to obtain for this WTF deployment before it began, per the federal case Keetoowah v. FCC. Safety, health, property, privacy, and freedom from warrantless surveillance are everyone's rights under U.S. and Florida constitutions and laws. As demonstrated profoundly in recent months, local governments are responsible for the health and safety of their residents.

As to security, "A lot of folks hear about 5G and think that's fantastic," says Howard Marshall, director of Cyber Threat Intelligence at Accenture, but as 5G allows machines to communicate efficiently with other machines, the potential is raised for hacking phones and iPads. 5G's dramatic expansion creates vulnerability due to short range, small antennas that become new hard targets with spectrum-sharing capability, "slices" of spectrum vulnerable to hackers. Most importantly, 5G technology is susceptible to mobile network mapping weaknesses where criminals can gain access to information about the chip-maker, model, operating system and the baseband software version of smartphones, car modems or watches (www.scientistsforwiredtech.com).

Jacksonville has the authority to regulate the operations of its WTFs. While capping the maximum power, the city can provide fiber-optic cable to the premises (FTTP), as Chattanooga, Tennessee, has done. FTTP is the fastest, safest, most reliable, and secure, least energy-consumptive and wasteful communications technology. Together, we can create a safe city that is wiser than "smart."

For references and resources, please email 5Gjaxinfo@protonmail.com.

Sincerely,
Lisa Lovelady

SAFETY AND HEALTH ALSO A WAY WE WERE ARTICLE CAPTURES 'LOVE AFFAIR' PERFECTLY

Once again Mary Dudley and I wish to thank Mary Wanser for crafting such a fine article on us and our "Love Affair" in the February issue of the Resident. Her story line and writing style perfectly captured our relationship and life together since our providential first date! It was a pleasure talking with her as she was preparing the article, and we wish to thank her again.

Warm regards,
Bill Schmidt

ACTION NEEDED TO CHANGE 5G ORDINANCE IN JACKSONVILLE

Thanks are due to The Resident for the article 5G Poles Crop Up in Riverside in the February Edition.

Operating less than 100' from homes, this facility appeared without notice in Riverside-Avondale. No sign, no certificate of appropriateness (COA), no National Historic Preservation Act review, no hearing at which neighbors could express their position or inquire of the wattage, the directionality of the radiation, or the calculated power density inside nearby homes and in the ambient environment.

Tens of thousands of studies show that 4G-5G microwave radiation is harmful. 4G-5G is hackable, insecure, energy consumptive and wasteful, while in violation of the Florida Constitution's right to privacy and many federal laws.

On President's Day, our extended group alerted Gov. DeSantis to ways in which the Florida statute, as passed under S.1000 in 2017, is contrary to federal laws:

The U.S. Congress tried to avert residential deployments of electromagnetic hazards such as that from 4G-5G by means of:

- its Communications Act of 1934 ("CA") provision in 47 U.S.C. §324 that minimum energy only must be used, and that Titles I and II thereunder must remain distinguished;
- its Amendment to the Public Health Service Act of October 1968, stating in §354, "The Congress hereby declares that the public health and safety must be protected from the dangers of electronic product radiation";
- its removal of the telecom industry's 1995 wished-for and drafted-in preemption of state and local control over the "operations" of telecom electronic equipment in what became in 1996 the Telecommunications Act ("TCA");
- its very purpose for CA and TCA in 47 U.S.C. §332: "to promote the safety of life and property"; and by
- its Conference Report on the TCA, preserving local authority over telecom equipment placement, construction, and modification; with
- "safety" as one of local governments' due considerations; with
 - safety" as one of local governments' due considerations;
 - clear distinction between commercial and residential zoning; and
 - assurance of local control to avert inappropriate residential placement and operations of telecom equipment.

Since the Florida wireless statute is contrary to these federal laws, their purposes and provisions, Jacksonville is within its authorities to override this statute – written by the industry group ALEC* – in favor of federal law. (ALEC: American Legislative Exchange Council.) That industry statute put operations under Telecom control, with equipment now consuming up to 25 million times higher wattage than necessary. Through 5G beam-forming, this radiation can target individuals and homes, contrary to the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Act Amendment. That statute also blurred the distinctions between Titles I and II to extend – fraudulently – TCA preemptions; and even removed the review of applications in local permitting, rendering cities that fail to inquire of their federal obligations with zero control. All this must immediately change with a moratorium and a new ordinance in Jacksonville.

All the Best,

K. Searcy Dannheim MPH - Stop 5G Max - 5Gjaxinfo@protonmail.com

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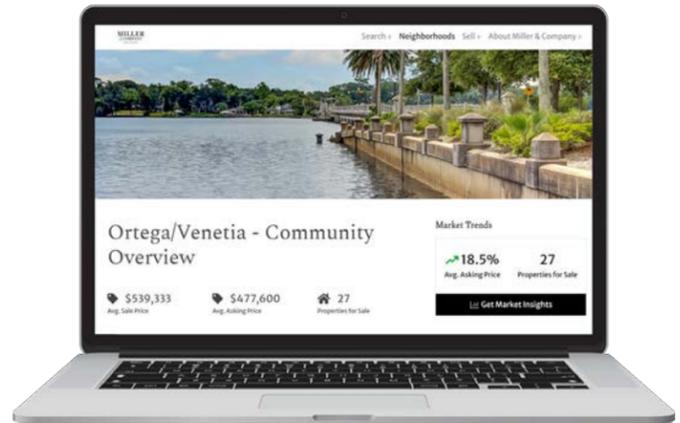
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GUEST COMMENTARY

Successful development of the Northbank requires vision, political will, transparency, and urgency

By Michael Balanky

Southbank

Michael Balanky is a third generation Jacksonville native and is President/CEO of Chase Properties, Inc.

Jacksonville has a rare opportunity to develop a world-class riverfront with amenities very few cities can compete with. The latest developments regarding Lot J may be a blessing in disguise. By creating a competitive environment and reallocating the proposed developer subsidies, we may be able to take advantage of the current situation and use it to the benefit of the North Bank as a whole. If properly executed we can achieve Critical Mass by developing Lot J, the Shipyards, the old Courthouse/City Hall all and other proposed Northbank developments within a concentrated timeframe.

World Class Riverfront

Imagine coming to Jacksonville and staying in a beautiful riverfront hotel with amazing recreational options like our TIAA Stadium, Lot J, Jumbo Shrimp Baseball Grounds, Vystar Arena, Daily's Place, MOSH, Navy Ship/Museum, offshore and river fishing, sunset riverboat dining cruises, boat and jet ski rentals etc. This Northbank development would complement the exciting developments that are, or soon to be, under construction on the Southbank from Baptist Hospital to The District. The possibilities are endless. But, to accomplish these goals will take vision, urgency, and political will.

Development Goals

- Keeping the Jaguars in Jacksonville
- Raising Jacksonville's profile nationally
- Increasing the acreage and access of Riverfront Parks
- Incorporating resiliency in all new Riverfront Projects
- Attracting the maximum number of visitors to Jacksonville on a consistent basis
- Developing a self-sustaining Northbank that spurs economic development Downtown
- Increasing the Ad Valorem Tax Base and ensuring the maximum Return on Investment

Definition of Critical Mass

"Critical mass is the point at which a growing entity becomes self-sustaining and no longer needs additional investment to remain economically viable. ... It is the point at which the business becomes profitable enough to continue growing by itself and no longer requires investment from outsiders."

This concept is particularly relevant to real estate development.

Jacksonville Jaguars

Professional football is a highly competitive business with incredible stakes. Accordingly, there has been, and will continue to be, much discussion regarding the potential relocation of NFL teams, including the Jaguars. Most of us hope that never happens, but we must be prepared in case it does. To control our destiny and ensure a bright future for our Downtown, we must design developments that work, with or without the Jaguars. Ironically, developments that produce Critical Mass for our city, will also help ensure the financial success of the Jaguars, and increase the likelihood that they stay in Jacksonville.

One major consideration is whether to build Lot J and other proposed developments, simultaneously or in phases. It is doubtful that a stand-alone Lot J development without the Jaguars would be successful. However, a synergistic development incorporating a Convention Center and other attractions, could be extremely successful, with or without Lot J and/or the Jaguars. Combining all of these concepts together would raise Jacksonville's profile on an international level.

Convention Center

In a Times Union article from August of 2018: Mark Lamping said they believe **"Phase One of the Shipyards plan should be a Convention Center and hotel. The City participation should be just enough to make sure the project is economically viable, and it should be no more than a contribution that the City can generally return to the taxpayers."**

Mark Lamping was correct. To that end, the City did an RFP for a Convention Center on the Old Courthouse site in 2018. Jacobs Engineering, an internationally recognized firm, was selected as the winner. The design was spectacular and would put Jacksonville in an elite class of cities with the ability to compete for more than its fair share of conventions.

Unfortunately, shortly after the project was awarded to Jacobs, a decision was made that a Convention Center would not be successful without additional entertainment venues, and the commitment to Jacobs was rescinded. The Courthouse/City Hall site was then awarded to Spandrel Development Partners for a mixed-use project (Ford on Bay). However, the contiguous property owner (Hyatt Hotel), has revealed that they hold a "Right of First Refusal" contract on the City Hall portion of the site. Due to the obvious benefit a Convention Center would be to the Hyatt, they are reluctant to release their option for anything other than a Convention Center. Eliminating the City Hall parcel from Spandrel's development has resulted in a redesigned project that does not achieve its highest and best use. But there is a solution.

In the last few months, the City proposed a development on Lot J which included an

entertainment venue. This new venue would eliminate the argument regarding a Convention Center needing more entertainment options. This would also allow the City to honor its original commitment to the Convention Center on the Old Courthouse/City Hall site. Ideally, the Spandrel Development could be relocated to an alternative site at the Shipyards where they could now develop a project to its highest and best use.

To date the principals at Jacobs Engineers have invested more than \$1 million in the design, development, and pursuit of the Old Courthouse/City Hall site. While Jacobs and their consultants are convinced that this would be the ideal site, they have stated they would consider alternative sites at the Shipyards versus not building a Convention Center at all.

Advantages of a Convention Center

Building a Convention Center has several advantages:

- Will attract hundreds of thousands of visitors 350-plus days a year
- Increase patronage to the Lot J development substantially more than relying on locals, thereby ensuring a better chance for success
- Will allow the City to create critical mass and ensure the entire Northbank is successful, with or without the Jaguars
- Increase attendance to Jags games ensuring more revenue for the team
- Increase visitation to the proposed Museum of Science and History (MOSH), the proposed Navy Ship/Museum, the proposed Four Seasons Hotel and the existing area hotels, thereby ensuring a better chance for success for each of them

While Convention Centers have suffered due to COVID-19, industry experts predict that they will return in full force post-widespread vaccination. Particularly in new healthy designed facilities in areas of the country that fared well through the pandemic, like Florida.

Riverfront Parks

Jacksonville has the opportunity to nearly double the acreage of the Shipyards by filling in the submerged land that the city already owns. This would not only increase the number of parkland acres that are so important to the overall community, but also add additional developable acres to the Critical Mass and additional ad valorem to the tax rolls. The Convention Center proposed by Jacobs Engineering includes a four-acre park.

One creative solution to save millions of dollars to fill-in the submerged land is to use the clean fill being dredged by the Port Authority for the deepening of the St. Johns River. This will provide the city with free fill with which to create new park land and save the Port Authority money by having a closer place to off-load the fill, versus taking it offshore.

Grocery Store

While we are on the subject of Critical Mass, we would be remiss not to discuss a grocery store Downtown. Jacksonville has been trying to get to 10,000 residential units for far too long. The same old argument that retail will not survive without rooftops, can be eliminated with the same type of incentives/subsidies the city has offered the other Northbank developments, but at a fraction of the cost. A grocery store will help bring the rooftops and additional retail to the market that much faster and will be a major amenity to out-of-town visitors.

Environmental Remediation

As the owner of the Shipyards and Lot J, the City needs to begin the environmental cleanup of the properties, which has been delayed for decades. Waiting for a developer who will take the risk and upfront the cost of remediation will dramatically limit the interest on the site. To the contrary, a professionally structured RFP will generate strong competition from environmental remediation companies, which will help ensure it is completed much faster and for much less than the current projections.

Incentives

To their credit, the DIA and the City have already established specific financial parameters (incentives) for the various proposed developments, and the City Council has shown its willingness to invest the necessary resources to spur intelligent development on the Northbank. With a little creativity, these pre-defined and generally agreed upon incentives should adequately provide the necessary funding to create the level of Critical Mass that will ensure the success of the Northbank and Downtown. It may also help ensure the Jaguars stay in Jacksonville.

Urgency and Transparency

With historically low interest rates there will never be a better time to secure financing for the proposed developments. But we need to move now.

To achieve success, the City/DIA should establish a committee of qualified players to assist them in managing the process. This format was extremely effective in passing the half-penny sales tax for our schools and could be just as effective for this important cause. Likewise, the process should also include oversight by the media and include monitoring/polling by the University of North Florida to ensure the public sentiment is measured and incorporated.

For the sake of our city, we cannot let this opportunity get politicized. If we all come together for this important cause, this development can become a legacy for everyone involved, including this administration, this City Council, and the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The views and opinions in Guest Commentary are solely those of the author. These views and opinions do not reflect those of The Resident News or any contributors to this publication.

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5 Points beacon to be reinstalled in May

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Much progress has been made on the 5 Points Construction Project with City officials planning to finish road construction on Lomax Street and reinstall the iconic traffic beacon in May.

Improvements to Lomax Street in 5 Points are expected to increase traffic and pedestrian safety by making the road one-way through the 5 Points commercial zone and beautifying the area with much wider sidewalks that will allow for outdoor seating at local restaurants. Also added to the area will be benches, trash cans, and bike racks. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$820,000, according to District 14 City Councilwoman Randy DeFoor.

Already a sought-after location for residents and visitors alike, the finished project should make the 5 Points area even more attractive to those who live both within and outside historic Riverside, said DeFoor. "5 Points is an area where we see continued growth with millennials in particular, and this should entice people to come to the area both to live and to visit," she said.

Lomax Street is only one of the intersecting roads managed by the beacon in what is arguably Jacksonville's most famous intersection. Also converging in the center are Park Street, and Margaret Street, which hold traffic going in two directions. Although to the uninitiated, the intersection can be intimidating and confusing, throughout its long history it has been relatively accident free.



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3 BR | 4 BA | 3,791 SQFT.
Listed By Robert Van Cleve



1157 NORWICH RD - \$1,195,000
102' x 313' Lot | 0.71 Acres | Waterfront
Listed By Wade Griffin



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



1828 POWELL PL - \$825,000
5 BR | 4 BA | 3,816 SQFT.
Listed By Wade Griffin



3406 PINE ST - \$620,000
3 BR | 2 BA | 2,374 SQFT.
Listed By Tony Caribaltes



1275 GORHAM ST - \$415,000
4 BR | 3 BA | 2,744 SQFT.
Listed By Edmund Akers



1444 TALBOT AVE - \$405,000
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,596 SQFT.
Listed By Alan Aptheker



1636 KING ST 1 - \$395,000
2 BR | 2 BA | 1 HB | 2,454 SQFT.
Listed By Wade Griffin



4530 IROQUOIS AVE - \$385,000
4 BR | 2 BA | 1,785 SQFT.
Listed By Nancy Pedrick Cusimano



4653 RAMONA BLVD - \$309,000
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,614 SQFT.
Listed By Alan Aptheker



1823 MEMORY LN - \$279,900
3 BR | 2 BA | 1 HB | 2,972 SQFT.
Listed By Erin King



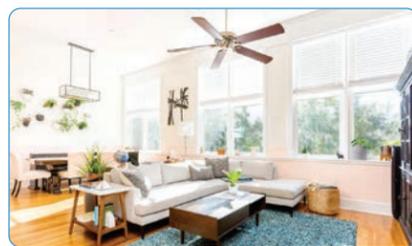
2614 DELLWOOD AVE - \$259,000
3 BR | 1 BA | 1,122 SQFT.
Listed By Wade Griffin



1268 WOLFE ST - \$229,400
2 BR | 1 BA | 928 SQFT.
Listed By Erin King



400 E BAY ST 1401 - \$220,000
1 BR | 1 BA | 959 SQFT.
Listed By Tony Caribaltes



2525 COLLEGE ST 1301 - \$219,000
1 BR | 1 BA | 860 SQFT.
Listed By Leslie Rios Wilkins



423 NEPTUNE RD - \$207,000
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,460 SQFT.
Listed By Sherry Faircloth



2043 REDWING ST - \$200,000
2 BR | 2 BA | 1,160 SQFT.
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Community meetings held on Robert E. Lee High School name change

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

“SAC will be the ones who will recommend what the new name will be or whether to keep the old name.”

- Norman Abraham

Alumni, residents, current Lee High School students, and Parent-Teacher-Student Association members will have an opportunity to weigh in on whether they think the name of Robert E. Lee High School should be changed.

The School Advisory Council of Robert E. Lee High School (SAC) held the first of five community meetings on the issue Feb. 24 at the school. Other similar meetings are scheduled for Thursday, March 4;

Monday, March 15; Tuesday, March 23; and Thursday, March 25. All meetings will be held at 6 p.m. in the school auditorium located at 1200 McDuff Avenue South.

The purpose of the meetings will be for SAC to receive community input on renaming the school as well as allowing committee members to gain historical context relating to Robert E. Lee and the initial naming of the high school after the famed Civil War general. Also SAC will discuss possible suggested names for the school in the event it is decided to rename the educational institution. The public will be allowed to speak during the community meetings. Each individual will be given 1.5 minutes to express their opinion.

After the meetings, some members of the public will be allowed to vote on the matter, said Norman Abraham, head of a grassroots alumni group called SaveTheSchoolNames.org. Joining Abraham, who graduated from Lee in 1956, on the committee are five other Lee alums – Melanie Amos Love, class of 1979; Robert Lawrence, class of 1980; Joey Stevens, class of 1984; Patti Fraser Price, class of 1980; and William “Pat” Geer, class of 1967. The group feels strongly that changing the name will harm the school by affecting the identity of the graduates as alumni, said Love.

Abraham attended the SAC meeting in February when the parameters for the community meetings and subsequent vote were discussed. He said the only people who will be allowed to vote are dues-paying PTSA members, current Lee High School students, residents who live in the school district covered by Lee High School, and alumni. Alumni will need to provide proof of graduation be it a diploma or, perhaps a photo in the school yearbook, he said, adding that, according to the way the process is set up, some individuals might be able to cast as many as four votes. “If you live in the district, that’s a vote; if you have a child in the school, that child can vote; if you are a PTA member, there is another vote; and if you are an alum, that is another vote. It is possible for one family to have as many as four votes,” he said.

Those who wish to vote on the matter must physically cast a ballot at Robert E. Lee High School, he said. Ballots will be placed in a box in the school’s office for 10 days, from Tuesday, April 20, to Friday, April 30. The voting will be overseen by Robert E. Lee Principal Timothy Feagins and SAC. “SAC will be the ones who will recommend what the new name will be or whether to keep the old name,” Abraham said. “It’s their job to tabulate the ballots along with the principal,” he said.

Abraham said his committee does not believe the process is fair to alumni living out of state or outside of the Riverside area, who may feel strongly about keeping the name but are unable to return to Jacksonville to vote on the matter. He also hopes to change the requirement that alumni present their diplomas since many are older, and it may be difficult for them to present the physical document. Abraham’s committee is also requesting that some of the meetings be held over Zoom so out-of-town alumni can tune in and make themselves heard. “It’s not good for older people. We’re fighting for it and hopefully we’ll win, especially about the diplomas, because we feel it is an unfair request,” he said.

Built in 1927, Robert E. Lee High School is one of the three oldest high schools in Jacksonville. It was dedicated to the Confederate general on his birthday, Jan. 19, in 1928. The school has a proud tradition of academic and athletic excellence, particularly in the sport of football, over its 93-year history. As a historic school, it still operates in its original location. During its long history, Lee High has graduated 92 senior classes and more than 35,000 students from its hallowed halls on McDuff Avenue.



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Residents file lawsuit against a local factory to combat noxious smell

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

For the past three years Murray Hill residents have sporadically complained about noxious odors akin to the scent of turpentine wafting through their community late at night, early in the morning, and on weekends. And in the past three months, the problem has spread beyond Murray Hill's borders and has become decidedly worse.

"We could not walk the dog again. That sickly sweet burn-your-nose smell is happening again. I went online and made a complaint again, and you can, too. That would be great. The more of us the merrier. I'm really worried this is cancer causing. It's so heavy that it just sits at ground level. It's also really aggravating to not be able to go outside without your nose burning," reported an Ortega resident on the website NextDoor.

"The smell," which periodically stinks up the historic communities of Riverside, Avondale, Ortega, in addition to Murray Hill, now has residents registering complaints to city officials from as far away as Sadler Point and Mandarin. "Everybody knows who it is," said Jacksonville Historian Wayne Wood, who has smelled it so often at his Riverside home that he keeps a tab open on his computer so he can quickly fill out a form to protest it.

The alleged culprit "everybody knows" is International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), a New York-based manufacturer of flavors and fragrances used in the foods, beverages, personal care and household products that is located at 2051 Lane Avenue North in Jacksonville. IFF is also known as IFF Chemical Holdings, Inc., a Delaware corporation. Locally, IFF was served with a cease-and-desist citation from the city's Environmental Quality Division Dec. 11, 2020 and was hit with a civil lawsuit by three residents of Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods on Jan. 12.

District 14 City Councilwoman Randy DeFoor said she is serious in her intent to remedy the situation. During a virtual meeting in November with the Murray Hill Preservation Association, DeFoor called for a meeting with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and she is working to make good on her promise.

"We are currently coordinating with the Florida Department of Environmental

Protection, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the City's Environmental Quality Division (EQD), Representative Angie Nixon, and a representative from the Murray Hill Community on the agenda. The date is pending approval between two state agencies as they are now looping in their public relations folks. There will be a public comment section for the community to express their thoughts, and I expect International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF) will have representation in attendance. I will send you the final agenda, we have an internal meeting scheduled next Wednesday, Feb. 24, to confirm," wrote DeFoor's Executive Assistant Brooks Dame in an email to the Resident. The current date, pending approval will be Thursday, March 11, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Webex, she said.

Josh Gellers, a Murray Hill resident who is also an associate professor of Political Science, has been closely following the smell problem for the Murray Hill Preservation Society. He has accessed hundreds of complaints from residents, not all of which have been able to be followed up by the city. "Part of the problem is that people are not able to have their claims assessed by the city inspectors because of the time limit that occurs," he said.

"Councilwoman DeFoor remarked at a Murray Hill Preservation Association meeting that she felt that was probably pretty deliberate. She said she thought the company wanted to evade the scrutiny of the inspectors. We know there are hundreds of complaints, and we know a very small fraction of them have been verified. But of those that have been verified, which we know from the city's reporting, they are traced to IFF," he continued, noting the irony of it all is that something used to make nice smelling products actually comes from a noxious-smelling chemical.

In complaints filed with the city, nearly all residents lamented about experiencing a burning sensation, shortness of breath, dizziness, and nausea. People who have asthma also describe a resurgence of asthma-like conditions, and the smell affects a wide assortment of living beings including adults, children, and domesticated animals, Gellers said.

CITY, RESIDENTS TAKE ACTION

In imposing the cease-and-desist citation, the city began its enforcement process and will work with IFF to figure out what kind of remedy will be appropriate, said Gellers. In a recent meeting of the Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board Jan. 19, the issue with IFF was not on the agenda, he said.

Riverside resident Jenny Wright joined Murray Hill residents Natalie Soud and James Cobb in filing an amended class-action complaint and demand for a jury trial against IFF in January. The lawsuit has been filed as Civil Action No. 3:21-cv-0012-J-39MCR with the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida Jacksonville Division.

The lawsuit is not restricted to the three plaintiffs but instead is setting the stage for a larger class-action suit that members of the community can join, said Gellers. The plaintiffs, who are working with a lawyer from Michigan. The residents first filed a lawsuit that was struck down by the judge who, after reviewing the complaint, dismissed it saying that some of the allegations raised against IFF were redundant, Gellers explained. "In the actual suit, they had to enumerate a number of causes of action and the judge basically said all of them were the same – none of them together arose to the kind of legal cause for action that was greater than the individual claims they were making."

After the dismissal, the plaintiffs had until January 22 to pare down their arguments in an amended complaint. In the new complaint, the plaintiffs have drawn boundaries for class-action suit membership to include a five-mile radius south of the IFF facility. This could possibly include thousands of residents living in Riverside, Avondale, Ortega, Murray Hill, Downtown Jacksonville, the Southbank, San Marco, and St. Nicholas.

In the November public meeting, Chief Melissa Long of the Jacksonville Environmental Quality Division, said IFF has denied that it is the source of the odor.

On its website, IFF has stated that sustainability is important to the company. "Given the size and footprint of our company, we understand the impact our choices can have on the world and its natural resources. This is why we continue to work to embed

sustainability into everything we do, why we engage our employees to make a difference where they can, and why we tap our technical expertise to engineer products that leverage the amazing opportunities of circular design. We are committed to managing our impacts as they relate to climate change, energy use, water, and waste."

Also noted on the IFF website was this statement: "Our vision is to achieve positive transformational change, and we are making great progress. After meeting all of our 2020 environmental targets early, in 2018 we launched new environmental goals to carry us to 2025 and beyond. These initiatives, which focus on emission reductions, zero waste to landfill, and water stewardship, are known collectively as 'EcoEffective+'."

JACKSONVILLE'S ODOROUS HISTORY

The present-day smell is not the first time Jacksonville has battled noxious odors, said Wood.

"Years ago, our city stunk, and everybody knew it. It took a long time for anyone to do anything about it," he recalled, adding that nearly 50 years ago there was a pervasive smell that emanated from a perfume factory in North Jacksonville. "People would pass through Jacksonville on the interstate, smell it and say 'That's a horrible smell. This is a horrible town,' and they would keep going." Wood said the solution to the problem occurred in the 1980s when Tommy Hazouri was the mayor. "He got them to quit," Wood said. "If it wasn't for that time, Jacksonville would never have the Jaguars, the Sugar Bowl, or anything of the things we have today. Every citizen got in the habit of complaining every time they smelled it, and eventually the City Department of Environmental Regulation did something about it. So far, I'm aghast that they have not shut it down now because obviously it is regular and it has diminished our quality of life," he said.

"If they don't take care of this, the same thing will happen," Wood continued. "People will start moving away if this is not a pleasant place to live 24 hours a day."

In the meantime, Wood and his wife, Lana Shuttleworth, said they will continue to report the vile odor every time they smell it. They encourage their friends and neighbors to do the same.



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Longtime plans come together as final beam rises to rest atop new critical care



Leaders with Baptist Health, Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital celebrated a major construction milestone for the new Baptist Jacksonville Entry Building/Wolfson Children's Critical Care Tower with a "Topping Out" Ceremony Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021.

During the Topping Out Ceremony, construction crew members ceremoniously raised the final structural beam to the top of the Tower. Baptist Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's team members were able to leave their mark by signing banners that were attached to the beam.

Topping out ceremonies, which have long been a tradition for new Baptist Health buildings, originated in Europe and are one of the oldest customs in construction. Today, topping out symbolizes a celebration of the skills of the ironworkers who have brought us to this point in construction. A flag bearing the Wolfson Children's Hospital and Baptist Jacksonville logos was attached to the beam raised Wednesday as a symbol of what's to come.

City to install valve to relieve flooding on Palmer Avenue

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

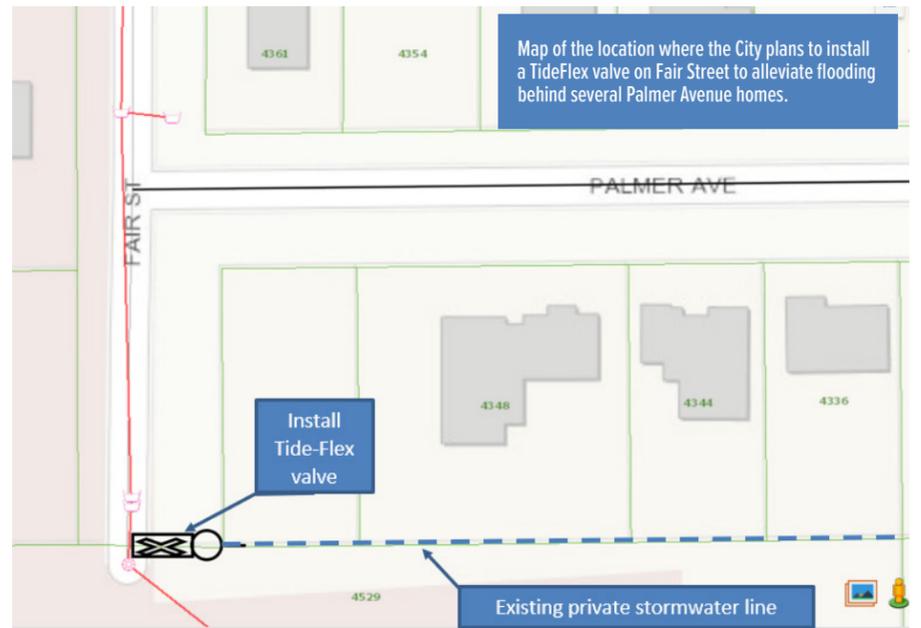
Palmer Avenue residents who have been plagued with sunny day flooding in their backyards received some good news in February.

According to a memo from Jacksonville Public Works Operations Director William Joyce obtained by the Resident, a TideFlex valve to prevent backflow from a creek running behind the Ortega Park mall should be installed sometime between August and October 2021.

"Engineering will be working with our Design/Builder (JBC) to have a Tide Flex valve installed on Fair Street. Palmer Avenue is a street that residents live on that intersects with Fair. The project should break ground in approximately 6-8 months," Joyce wrote in the memo that was dated Feb. 10.

The memo was written in response to a query from District 14 Councilwoman Randy DeFoor who was inquiring about the timeline for the project.

Residents living in homes lining the west side of Palmer Avenue encounter severe sunny day flooding from a drainage pipe or trench that runs through a city easement on the rear of their properties. Recorded legal documents from the 1960s show that nine homes along Palmer Avenue rendered a portion of their property to the City for a drainage easement, and that it is the City's



responsibility to maintain it. However, in a memo dated in 1984, Jacksonville Director of Public Works Albert Kinard "abandoned" the easement, relinquishing the City's responsibility and stating that because no City of Jacksonville stormwater flowed through the rear of the properties, the City was abandoning all future maintenance responsibility. This left the responsibility to the residents to clean out a drainage pipe buried behind some of their homes that connects to a drainage pipe that runs along Fair Street. Meanwhile, three of the homeowners have an open trench along their rear property line to provide drainage, which they were forced to maintain.

However, in a December 2020 meeting called by DeFoor, Jacksonville Public Works Director John Pappas observed the flooding situation in the backyard of Craig and Flo McColskey. He promised to assist Palmer Avenue residents in engineering an answer that would help dry up the severe sunny-day floodwater, which is often filled with oil and sediment, that they have been suffering from in their backyards.

To remedy the situation, the City plans to install a "TideFlex" valve to prevent backflow into the neighborhood from Fair Street. TideFlex systems are employed in low areas that are impacted by water intrusion

"Engineering will be working with our Design/Builder (JBC) to have a Tide Flex valve installed on Fair Street. Palmer Avenue is a street that residents live on that intersects with Fair. The project should break ground in approximately 6-8 months."

- William Joyce

from high tides, according to Pappas. As part of the deal, some of the residents promised to fill in the trench behind their homes and survey the area to create necessary drainage swales that will not block the flow from neighboring properties. This particularly applies to the McColskey's, who own property where the drainage pipe empties out into the trench.



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Hogans Creek restoration aided by grant funding

Groundwork Jacksonville has been awarded a \$294,000 grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) earmarked for the preliminary (30%) design of the Hogans Creek restoration. The goal of the resiliency project is to reduce flooding, improve water quality, restore habitat, and provide access to recreation in and around the creek.

According to Groundwork CEO Kay Ehas, the 30% design is projected to cost \$676,000 and take approximately one year to complete. “The NFWF grant, combined with \$100,000 from Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board approved last week, and generous private donations we’ve received, enables us to move forward with the project while we secure the \$175,500 needed to close the gap,” she added.

Following a similar approach that it took with the McCoy’s Creek restoration, which will begin this year, Groundwork will hire a creek expert to develop a master concept plan, 30% construction plans, and a cost-benefit analysis. This preliminary design plan and reference information will be used to support the City of Jacksonville’s procurement of professional design services for the final design and construction budget planning.

“Groundwork Jacksonville continues to be a valuable partner for the City of Jacksonville in leading the design of the Emerald Trail and McCoy’s Creek and Hogans Creek restoration,” said Mayor Lenny Curry. Groundwork has also been extremely effective at securing millions in state, federal and private funds to help bring our collective vision of a more connected, resilient community to life.”

As part of the process, Groundwork will convene a Hogans Creek Task force representing various stakeholders to provide input throughout the design. “Hogans Creek is a challenging design project because of land constraints, existing infrastructure and varied constituencies,” said Ehas. “Groundwork is committed to working collaboratively to develop the best approach for both stakeholders and the environment.”

Springfield Preservation and Revitalization Council (SPAR) Executive Director Kelly Rich is happy with the plan. “SPAR is thankful for Groundwork Jacksonville’s inclusive approach by welcoming the neighborhood’s input. SPAR and all of the Springfield residents look forward to working alongside the stakeholders to make Hogans Creek the beautiful amenity we know it can be,” she said.

Earlier this month Groundwork was awarded a \$718,809 grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity’s (DEO) Rebuild Florida General Planning Support Program for a separate, but complementary project. The grant will enable Groundwork to create an ecologically based watershed restoration and management plan for the McCoy’s Creek and Hogans Creek watersheds. DEO is the Governor-designated state authority responsible for administering all U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) long-term recovery funds awarded to the State. Groundwork was one of 37 recipients across Florida to share in \$20 million in resiliency planning funds.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Rendering of a proposed bridge connects the Shipyards property to an extension of the Northbank Riverwalk. (CURRENT a.) Hogans Creek basin near the Shipyards where it drains into the St. Johns River. Rendering of a proposed segment of the Emerald Trail as it winds underneath the Mathews Bridge near Hogans Creek. (CURRENT b.) Hogans Creek where it nears the Mathews Bridge.



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Neighborhood volunteers put sparkle in Venetia Gates

By Peggy Harrell Jennings
Resident Community News

Thanks to neighborhood volunteers, the 90-plus-year-old Venetia Gates at the intersection of Yacht Club Road and Ortega Boulevard have been repaired and sparkle once again. The gates had been the victim of a hit-and-run in the summer of 2019, which left huge concrete pieces in the road and on the sidewalk.

Without a neighborhood association in Ortega or Venetia to assume responsibility or encourage replacing or rebuilding the markers, the clean-up job has been left to neighborhood volunteers. At the time of the mishap, the area was in major reconstruction as the city was involved in addressing serious drainage problems along Ortega Boulevard.

Ortega residents Elizabeth and Hayes Howard have helped care for the iconic markers at the intersection near their home for many years by cleaning them and planting gardens around the bases. Elizabeth Howard said that damage from the crash was extensive and “bricks and a big block of concrete were in the middle of the walkway.” She said she was persistent in calling for help from the city to repair them. Finally, a group of determined citizens spearheaded by Shereth Coble of Yacht Club Road contributed \$100 each to have the historical structure repaired and repainted. George Eggan, Peggy Bryan, Margaret Foerster, Linda Alexander, Ann Gibbs, and Coble followed up with securing the repairs.

Foerster said this wasn’t the first time the gates had been damaged. A decade ago, she had “former city councilman Mike Corrigan on speed dial to get the repairs done.”

If the determined residents hadn’t stepped up, the gates might not have been repaired for a long time, Howard said.

The gates mark the entrance to Venetia, the development founded by Col. Raymond C. Turck, who acquired 500 acres of land (mostly swamp) in 1925 where he planned to build a resort hotel, railroad station, yacht basin, and have Venice-like canals with gondolas in the neighborhood. Designed by architect Mellon Greely, the development was planned to be a Mediterranean-style community modeled after Venice, Italy. Unfortunately, Turck’s plans never reached fruition due to the real estate and stock market crash in the late 1920s, the Great Depression, and other factors.

There were only 32 houses in the area, no street markers and the roads just dead ended into the swamp, said John Allen Sr., who moved to Venetia in the 1930s when he was a small child. He and local children enjoyed playing and climbing on the gates which had an electric light suspended from the center. Kids fished and played in the lake, which was where the Gulf Station is now on Roosevelt Boulevard. Ortega Boulevard was a brick road that went all the way to Green Cove Springs, he recalled.

Although the improbable and questionable canals and gondolas are not part of present-day Venetia, the interesting and aesthetically pleasing gates enhance the neighborhood and stand as a testimony to Turck’s vision as well as the determination of the neighbors who worked so diligently to preserve them.



TOP: Damage due to a hit-and-run was extensive on the Venetia Gate portal that faces Yacht Club Boulevard. BOTTOM: The Venetia Gates sparkle thanks to neighborhood volunteers who have repainted and repaired them.

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Baptist joins Blue Zones in planning Jacksonville's well-being transformation



Following a Blue Zones approach means creating a healthier community for Jacksonville. (Photos taken pre-COVID-19)

“Baptist Health’s vision is ‘A Lifetime of Health, Together.’ That vision extends beyond the walls of our hospitals and calls us to help all people in the community live longer and healthier lives.”

*- Brett McClung
President and CEO, Baptist Health*

In its quest to make Jacksonville a healthier and happier place to be, Baptist Health has invited Blue Zones to bring its expertise in well-being innovation to Jacksonville. The first phase is a Blue Zones Activate assessment and feasibility study that will help determine how to make Jacksonville a healthier and happier place to live, work and grow old.

Research shows that where people live can have a significant influence on their health – even more than their genetics. Blue Zones, a company based in Minneapolis, Minn., tackles this “ZIP-code effect” by using scientifically proven lessons of longevity, health and happiness gleaned from their 20 years of international research to boost the well-being of entire communities.

By focusing on making permanent and semi-permanent changes to the Life Radius – the area close to home where people spend 90% of their lives – Blue Zones has helped hundreds of communities achieve measurable improvements in its residents’ health.

“Baptist Health’s vision is ‘A Lifetime of Health, Together,’” said Brett McClung, president and CEO of Baptist Health. “That vision extends beyond the walls of our hospitals and calls us to help all people in the community live longer and healthier lives. We are excited to build on a long legacy of community partnership by inviting Blue Zones, a proven leader

in community-led health improvement, to help Jacksonville learn some new and innovative ways to achieve transformational results.”

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, this work begins at a time when public focus is now, more than ever, on the interconnectedness of our health to that of our friends and neighbors. As a proven and comprehensive solution influencing social determinants of health and improving health equity, the Blue Zones approach for strengthening community well-being will be critical as we navigate recovery, McClung said.

In the assessment phase, which begins in January and concludes with recommendations in May, Blue Zones representatives will collaborate with local leaders to assess readiness and build a plan for change. The Blue Zones team, which is made up of global experts in food systems, the built environment, tobacco and alcohol use, health equity, and happiness, will work with local experts and leaders to assess the highest priority needs and opportunities, as well as strengths and challenges.

“We are excited to learn from and share our knowledge with Jacksonville leaders, and we applaud Baptist Health for spearheading this movement. Improved well-being leads to healthier and happier residents, a better and more productive workforce, and a more vibrant economy. We are excited to create a transformation plan for Jacksonville that will improve the lives of current and future generations,” said Ben Leedle, CEO of Blue Zones.

For more information on Blue Zones Activate or to learn how to get involved, visit bluezones.com/activate-jacksonville.

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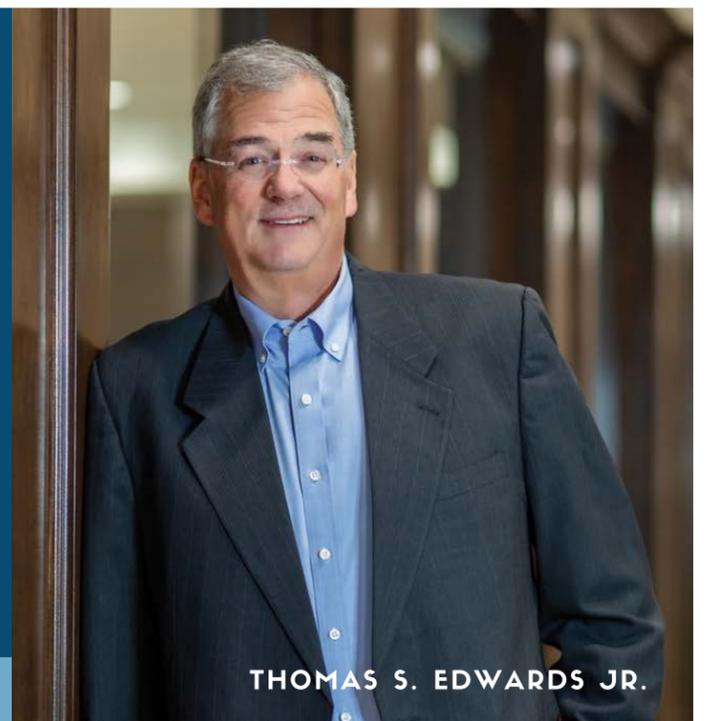
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RAP celebrates neighborhood's best with annual awards

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Two homes, an animal hospital, a new coffee shop, and park flower beds were among the honorees during the Riverside Avondale Preservation awards that were presented virtually during the nonprofit's annual meeting Feb. 18.

More than 70 residents tuned in on Zoom to attend RAP's first virtual annual meeting Feb. 18. Speaking at the event were RAP Board Chairman Brooks Andrews, RAP Executive Director Warren Jones, and District 14 City Councilwoman Randy DeFoor, who updated the community on projects of interest to its members treasure historic preservation.

The main event, the awards presentation, is held each year to celebrate individuals, organizations, and businesses who have greatly contributed to the historic ambience and welcoming, inclusive nature of the neighborhood. This year the awards were presented via a special video created by

Jones. Another main feature of the meeting was the election of new board members, who have been nominated to serve the nonprofit. Andrews also announced the retirement of Jones, who has served the organization in an invaluable way as executive director for the past three years. After the awards presentation and election, viewers were transferred to special committee "break-out" sessions to discuss points of interest in smaller groups.

The awards were divided into two categories, Design and Construction, and Service. The Design and Construction awards recognize the diligent work, careful design and craftsmanship of homeowners, do-it-yourselfers, and construction professionals.

Bold City Properties, owned by Glenn Chandler, won the "New Construction Residential Award" for a new home built at 3698 Eloise Street. Initially mistaken by the jury as a renovation, the home was found to be "the right size in the right place," with a lovely wooden entry door and simple



brick detailing to add scale and authenticity to the design.

Winning the "New Construction Commercial" category was Southern Grounds—Stellers Building by Skinner Jones Properties, Group 4 Design, and Angelo Group. The building is located in the Shoppes of Avondale. A large structure that is broken down into two unique storefronts of differing heights, the jury noted that the design helps transition from taller buildings at the center of the block to lower facades further out. Also, the large outdoor seating area in the main building adds "to the public space while respecting the line of the street façade," said the jury. Of particular note was the gray color chosen for the taller section, which was deemed "quiet and simple," and "delightfully focuses attention on the historic art deco façade" of Cady Realty to its right.

A modern home located at 2111 River Blvd. won the "Architectural Rehabilitation—Residential" category. Originally built for the Fisher Family by architects Fisher and Associates, it was restored by Zinn Architects & Interiors after the house was damaged on the first floor by Hurricane Irma.

Avondale Animal Hospital was recognized in the "Architectural Rehabilitation—Commercial" category. A combined effort by ShayCore Enterprises, Lane Architecture, and JAA Architecture, the project converted what was originally a residential structure and then a hair salon into a fully functioning veterinary clinic. "A large addition was seamlessly integrated with the massing of the original bungalow," said the jury. "A thoughtful update of the existing exterior used the porte-cochere to incorporate the required handicap entry. The team also preserved most of the original exterior elements including the historic windows," jurors added.

A restoration of the landscaping beds in Memorial Park by the City of Jacksonville received kudos in the "Landscape Design"

category. The goal of the restoration was to preserve the main components of the original 1922 plan by the Olmsted Brothers, which includes open space, key vistas, and a strong focus on the memorial sculpture. All plantings were diversified for seasonal interest and ease of maintenance.

Winning service awards were Cool Moose Café, Riverside Park United Methodist Church, Missy Kampmeyer, Margaret Dick Tocknell and the RAP Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the City of Jacksonville and Karissa Moffett, Go Tuk'n, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Sun-Ray Cinema, Noel Michael, and Nancy Powell.

Receiving "Good Neighbor Awards" were Cool Moose owners Tony and Laurie Jarvis, Riverside Park UMC, and Kampmeyer. The restaurateurs were recognized for the money they have raised for City Rescue Mission during the pandemic through their family meals program. The church was honored for its work providing free meals to front-line workers during the first weeks of the pandemic when restaurants were closed and workers were laid off. Meanwhile, Kampmeyer was celebrated for planning and hosting a free movie in Boone Park in December, where attendees enjoyed "Elf," while feasting on free popcorn and hot cocoa. Kampmeyer also has started the "Love the 904" brand as a tribute to Jacksonville's small business owners and locals. She is an advocate for community outreach and awareness in Avondale.

Honored with a "Community Support Award" were Tocknell, who chairs the RAP Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. After major flooding events last year, Tocknell's committee developed a mapping program to pinpoint the areas in Riverside and Avondale experiencing major flooding issues. The map is currently being used by the Northeast Florida Regional Council and has been presented to the City of Jacksonville's Committee on Resiliency that is chaired by District 14



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LEFT TO RIGHT:
Jeff Graf
Ben White
Debi Pyne
Perry Reynolds

Councilwoman Randy DeFoor. The committee also mapped all the alleyways in the historic district to determine their uses and maintenance status.

Heralded as “Project of the Year” was the Oak Street Bike Lanes, which were overseen by the City of Jacksonville and Moffett. When Oak Street was slated for repaving, city staff identified it as a bike lane candidate. Working with RAP and DeFoor, they endeavored to gain public support for the project, which was completed last year.



Stephanie Dale, owner of Go Tuk’n, a licensed touring company, was recognized as “Business Partner of the Year.” She has developed a historic Tuk Tuk tour through the Riverside Avondale area that explains the unique architectural styles and parks in the neighborhood. Her vehicles also provide a shuttle service to help support many local businesses.

JSO was bestowed with RAP’s “Public Partner of the Year Award,” for its ability to provide a safe environment throughout the neighborhood so residents and visitors and their families can enjoy the nonprofit’s Luminaria event.

The new “COVID-19 Innovation Award” went to Sun-Ray Cinema, a business that aptly reconsidered how to deliver its services when the pandemic hit. Cinema owners Shana David-Masset and Tim Massett decided to take their movies outside by showing drive-in movies around Jacksonville after the pandemic caused their 5 Points theater to temporarily close. Since then, they have found a more

permanent drive-in location in Riverside for movie lovers to enjoy while also providing in-house movies where patrons can safely socially distance.

Bello Boopie, owned by Noel Michael, was named “Riverside Arts Market Maker of the Year.” He provided support and assistance to fellow vendors and customers when the pandemic descended and has helped RAM to develop an online market.

“The Wayne Wood Award,” which recognizes outstanding service to the Riverside Avondale neighborhood, was bestowed upon Nancy Powell, who has served the nonprofit as its board member and past chairman of the board of directors. Powell served on the board six years and was chair of RAP’s Zoning Committee. She also served on the Home Tour, Parks Task Force, and Transportation and Infrastructure committees. Over the years she has led the City of Jacksonville pilot program called RAP ReLeaf, which worked to plant trees in city right of ways to help replenish the community’s aging tree canopy. Powell

developed a Parks Task Force to focus energy on the 75 acres of park land in the historic neighborhood. Her work on the Zoning Committee was instrumental in preserving appropriate land use, zoning, and historic regulations.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Jeff Graff, Debi Pyne, Perry Reynolds and Ben White were elected as new board members for the 2020-21 term that expires in January 2023. They join several existing board members whose terms are renewed. Serving a second term will be Brooks Andrews, Jim Busch, Michele Luthin, Tenley Detrich and Laurie Jarvis. Lawson Carr will serve a third term.

Returning to the board will be Bill Shelton, Thad Crowe and Angela Schifanella.

Andrews will continue to serve as chairman of the board in 2021. Also, serving as officers will be Elizabeth Loftin as secretary, Shelton as treasurer, David Chauncey as governance officer, and Schifanella and Luthin as At-Large officers.

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David Benfield
Buyers Agent



If the city allocated the \$200+ million from the failed Lot J deal to another project or idea for our city, what would you like to see that money go toward?



The lower income areas and their housing. I'd like it to help their roads be better and maybe put in a park. I'd like to see the money spent on places where it is really needed and not where it doesn't need to go. There is a lot of work that needs to be done in the Moncrief area. I'd like to see them spend the money on infrastructure in the lower income areas. They keep putting money into places where money is already, and I understand that because they are wanting to keep the economy going, but they need to put money in the places that aren't as successful, monetarily speaking.

— HANNAH CARR



I didn't realize the Lot J project had fallen through. They could use that money downtown to bring in restaurants and bars and housing, kind of like they did in Springfield where they grant to investors to go into the downtown area and make it more vibrant. They could spend money on the waterfront and make the waterfront more usable. Jacksonville could be a boating community. We have this beautiful river, and we have parking lots on the river and there is nothing going on near the river. We should make the downtown more vibrant and fortify the river access and that would draw people here from all over the place.

—ERIK FOUTZ



I would like to see more action taken with the football team because if he (Shad Khan) has the funds to make more facilities, I would like to see a better team. We need more talent in that area. We have a big city, and there is a lot about our city that I love, but for some reason the football team is not getting any energy. I'd also like to see better roads. It just seems like I-10 is never really done. Also, West Beaver Street needs attention. I think they should help the homeless, too.

— ERVIN ALSTON



Definitely improving the education system in general going towards more allocation of funds for educational projects for kids, whether it be more park opportunities or more access to park planning. We need newer structures within a lot of the parks. They've done a good job recently adding new creative ideas for kids, but we could always do better. \$200 million would go a very long way. Of course, it all wouldn't be allocated for that, but putting more focus on the youth should be a priority, I think.

— DONALD BLANCHARD



I would love to see more environmental action go on within the city. San Marco is a beautiful place, and the people of San Marco take amazing care of it, but definitely over in St. Johns – it is not trashed necessarily – but I would like to see more parks and more places that are kid friendly since it is COVID right now. We need more places that are nice for families and stuff like that. They need to invest in more park space.

— SABRINA ZILBERMAN



Schools and programs for kids because I believe that if kids are given the opportunity to better themselves at an early age that would prevent the over-crowdedness of prisons that we are faced with. A lot of kids that come from low-income neighborhoods don't have the ability to go to good schools, so I think if the city invested in programs for them it would be beneficial for everybody.

— AGGY DITULLIO



I'd rather put it in schools. Wouldn't you rather have textbooks than more sports stadiums? I know when I was in high school, we had half a set of textbooks for the entire class, and you couldn't take them home. You had to copy down an entire page just to do your homework. Also, we have an entire population of homeless that no one is helping. There is a homeless shelter downtown that feeds people, and yet they have to stay on the sidewalk.

— LEXI HARPER



They should put in an aquarium where The Landing used to be, but they should also try to help the homeless people downtown, especially with COVID. I know a lot of people are struggling financially.

— RACHEL COVART

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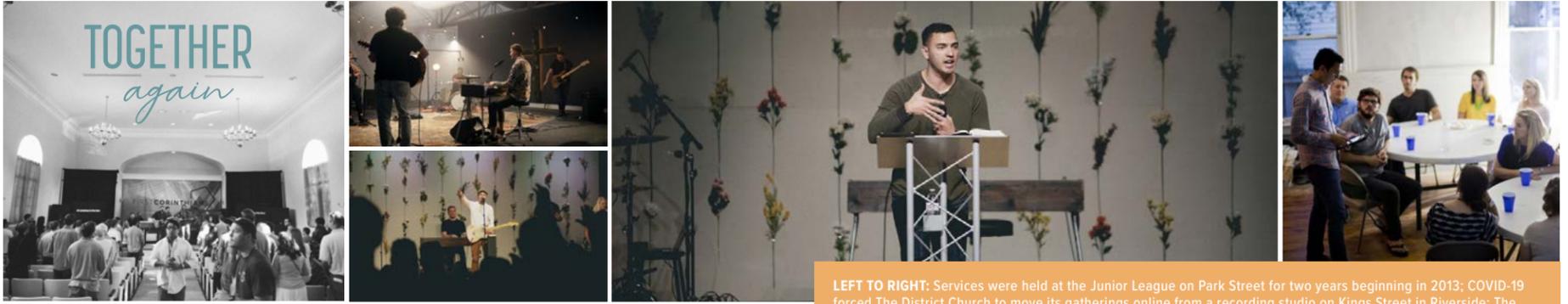
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New location allows The District Church to reach out to community



LEFT TO RIGHT: Services were held at the Junior League on Park Street for two years beginning in 2013; COVID-19 forced The District Church to move its gatherings online from a recording studio on Kings Street in Riverside; The auditorium at Robert E. Lee High School was converted into a worship sanctuary; Pastor Boyd Bettis; Pastor Boyd Bettis preaches in his Riverside home in 2012

Jesus may have been speaking of Heaven when he said, "I go to prepare a place for you," but His words might also point to the unusual prayer-directed path The District Church has taken since it started as a small church plant in a Riverside living room eight years ago.

The church, which began as an offshoot of Chets Creek Church in Southside, has grown exponentially from its humble beginnings as a small group of 12 gathering in Pastor Boyd Bettis's Riverside home. The vibrant congregation totals more than 300, including nearly 100 children, ages birth to 12. A "portable church" that has occupied four unconventional church homes during its short duration, The District Church recently settled into more traditional digs when it became a tenant-partner with the more senior congregation at Lake Shore Baptist Church, located at the intersection of Blanding Boulevard and Casset Avenue.

In sharing the same church home, The District Church congregants gather in Lake Shore Baptist's sanctuary from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Sunday mornings, while Lake Shore Baptist's members hold their service soon after at 11 a.m.

"They allow us to share and use their sanctuary for our gatherings as well as their educational building for our District Kids program," said Trey Kirwin, Director of Ministries. The District Church helped finish a remodel of the church's 1,000-seat sanctuary upgrading audio, video, and lighting and remodeled the two-story education building, making it more amenable to its program.

"It's a win-win for both of our churches," Kirwin said. "It's a win for us because we have access to a large property and facility, and it's a win for them as a more senior congregation to see young families on campus utilizing their facilities."

With a mission "to exist to make disciples by interrupting peoples' lives with love because the Gospel changes everything," The District Church has seen steady progress since it began praying, planning, and building the foundation of its church in Bettis's living room in September 2012. By Easter 2013, it held its first Sunday morning worship gathering in the Junior League building on Park Street in Riverside.

Two years later, the church moved to Robert E. Lee High School, where a dedicated group of volunteers spent four hours early each Sunday morning transforming the auditorium into a worship sanctuary, and an entire wing of classrooms

into children's ministry rooms. After more than an hour of worship, volunteers dismantled it all, converting the building back into its original state. "It was a pretty big undertaking and took tons of volunteers," recalled Kirwin.

Services at Lee High School continued like clockwork for five years until March 9, 2020, when COVID-19 descended on the community causing it to shut down. "Immediately we were unable to gather at Lee based not only on the safety of our church but also the school board directives of it being our host home," Kirwin said.

Recognizing it was again in uncharted territory, the church immediately pivoted to become an on-line presence, renting 2,500-square feet in a 10,000-square foot warehouse at 600 Kings Street in Riverside, converting it into a recording studio. After three months as a strictly online church, The District Church began to invite small gatherings into the studio as it recorded its online services. Desiring a closer sense of community, the church also held outdoor block parties once a month in its parking lot throughout the summer, complete with music and an ice cream truck.

The Kings Street location has blessed other ministries and churches as well, as The District Church staff were willing to share their recording facilities. Although church followers fully expected to return to Lee High once school began in fall 2020, it soon became apparent that the financial burden of paying for additional sanitation required by the school was not feasible. In praying for another option, the way soon opened for the church to move its operations to Lake Shore Baptist.

"We have been super fortunate that unlike many churches, we have not seen much of a drop in church attendance post-COVID," Kirwin said, noting the spacious Lake Shore sanctuary allows for social distancing for in-person gatherings while available technology enables The District Church to continue to offer online services.

And the new location will finally allow The District Church to develop an outreach ministry. On Saturday, March 27, the church will hold its first Easter outreach event, Egg-Spllosion, from 10 a.m. to noon, while this summer, weeklong Vacation Bible School will start June 18, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Dinner will be included for participating children.

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Art organizations team up to help local art teachers

By Peggy Harrell Jennings
Resident Community News

Over 200 students at 10 elementary schools have benefitted from the generous donations of members of The Art Center Cooperative. Artist and Murray Hill resident Lisa Loftin organized the project with TAC President Annelies Dykgraaf and JAG Senior Board member Cookie Davis with the support of sister organization The Jacksonville Artists Guild. The groups raised \$4,000 by reaching out to individuals and businesses to provide teachers with much needed supplies. Donors include members of both organizations as well as memorial donations and contributions by local businesses. The organizations hope to make this an annual event.

The arts community desires to facilitate creative expression and connection with the arts for the overall well-being of young students especially during this time when kids cannot congregate due to social distancing and safety issues. By supplying students with the means to create in their individual classrooms many teachers have provided outdoor art projects where kids can enjoy individual expression as well as group activities such as creating murals.

The Art Center Cooperative members said they strive to give their time and talents to better the community and both organizations follow the words of Maya Angelou, "When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed."

Coker Law celebrates 45th anniversary



Top Row: David Thompson, Fraz Ahmed, Chelsea Harris, Chase Sorenson, Janeen Kirch, Stefano Portigliatti, Dana Jacobs, Joel Harris, Lindsay Tygart, David Rottmann, Mary Guilfoil, Steve Watrel, Seth Roebuck. Bottom Row: W.C. Gentry, Rufus Pennington, Jake Schickel, Daniel Iracki, Howard Coker, Charles Sorenson, Matthew Posgay, Aaron Sprague.

Coker Law is celebrating of 45 years of successful litigation and community leadership on the First Coast.

Founded May 10, 1976, the law firm follows a philosophy of experience, commitment, and integrity in the pursuit of justice. During its tenure, the firm has grown from three founding attorneys to a diverse team of more than 70 experienced attorneys, paralegals, legal assistants, private investigators, and staff members.

Over the years, the firm's specialties have also expanded to include personal injury, trucking crashes, medical malpractice, and nursing home and long-term living facility abuse.

Over the course of its history, the firm's attorneys have tried more than 1,400 cases to verdict, and garnered more than \$500 million dollars in recoveries for its clients.

The firm's success is due to practiced and experienced trial litigation skills that have resulted in successful client results, said Howard Coker, founding partner. "I

am very proud of our firm in that it is quite diverse, but the common factor remains the superb ability to try lawsuits," said Coker. "Many of the verdicts we have attained throughout the years have been some of the highest in the state. It is my sincere hope that the future will see us continue to emphasize one thing – being the best at the trial of a lawsuit."

In one of Coker Law's most notable cases, the firm represented more than 600 residents in the Hipps Road Landfill class action lawsuit that resulted in a settlement of \$18.25 million. Topverdicts.com also recognized two Coker Law cases in its "Top 50 Personal Injury Jury Verdicts in Florida": A jury verdict of \$11,622,673 for a collision on Jacksonville's Mathews Bridge, and an \$11.3 million verdict against two major insurance companies that both denied coverage to their injured client.

The vision for the firm's future success focuses on its addition of a highly skilled team of younger trial attorneys who are

diverse in both their backgrounds and legal specialties. Daniel Iracki, the youngest-named shareholder in Coker Law's history, is among them. "We have more Florida board-certified trial attorneys than any other Jacksonville-based firm, as well as 14 Super Lawyers, putting us in the top 5% of the state," said Iracki. "However, we aren't just looking for the best trial lawyers, but also those who reflect our community, which allows us to better represent our clients. Having attorneys from different walks of life is in the best interest of our clients."

In addition, Coker Law has contributed more than \$1 million to charitable and community organizations across the First Coast. Giving back is part of the firm's core values. The legal team is firmly focused on organizations and causes where members can be actively involved in addition to providing financial support. Coker Law's ongoing commitment and care for a wide range of civic organizations is foundational to who they are as a community partner.

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David Batts and Ken Moore



Avondale barbers open second shop in LaVilla

International Blades & Shears celebrated the grand opening of its second location in historic LaVilla Jan. 30. Like its Avondale location, the new LaVilla shop will blend old school barbering with the latest trends and techniques.

The new location is a joint venture between two local barbers, Ken Moore and David Batts. Both hair specialists, who teach the art of barbering, have a total of 30 years of experience. In bringing the new business to LaVilla, the two men hope to serve an underrepresented population while

helping to revitalize downtown Jacksonville.

“2020 was an unprecedented year, and we were blessed to reopen with the support of our clients. We know the appeal of a well-groomed man, and we tailor top-quality haircuts and grooming services to each client’s unique image and personality,” said Moore, noting the shop will offer haircuts, beard trims, hot towel shaves and more. “We are excited to open a second location in the heart of downtown Jacksonville,” he continued. “This area was known as the Harlem

of the South in the 1920s and 1930s. We hope to restore the vibrancy of the LaVilla community through our barbershop becoming a place for not only haircuts, but also community conversation.”

Batts agreed. “I’m proud to own this barbershop where men of all races can interact with each other, regardless of age, class, education, and occupation,” he said. “I believe this shop can be the backbone of this community and become a huge role in strengthening the history of the LaVilla community.”

Wells named new head football coach at Episcopal



Episcopal School alumnus Marcus Wells has been named his alma mater’s football program head coach and program director. Wells, a member of Episcopal’s class of 1990, has served on the ESJ football coaching staff for eight years, the last seven as associate head coach and defensive coordinator.

Wells will take the place of former Jaguars quarterback Mark Brunell, who served as head football coach at Episcopal for eight years. Brunell is returning to the NFL as a member of the coaching staff for the Detroit Lions. “Coach Wells is one of the key reasons for our team’s most recent success, highlighted by back-to-back playoff appearances and three playoff victories,” said Episcopal Director of Athletics Andy Kidd. “He has a strong

understanding of what it takes to be successful both on and off the field at Episcopal, and I am confident he will ensure our student-athletes reach their full potential. We are excited to welcome him as our head coach for the upcoming season.”

Wells was one of the most decorated players in Eagle football history. He set several school records on his way to earning an invitation to play for Cornell University. Wells finished his education at the University of Florida before starting his career as an educator. In addition to his coaching duties, he will continue to work full-time on campus.

In 2017-2018, Wells received the Timothy Award, an award presented annually to an Episcopal teacher who exemplifies the ideal of Christian

service to students and to the community.

Wells has four children. Noah and Maia are graduates of the Episcopal School, while Olivia is a sophomore and Christian, a freshman.

“There is no better choice for Episcopal than Marcus Wells as the new head coach of our football program,” said Head of School The Rev. Adam Greene. “His character, leadership, and the outstanding contributions he has made to our community over the past eight years are truly exceptional. Our students will benefit from his talents as a football coach and former player and most importantly from his talents as a mentor and a leader. We look forward to the next season beginning under his leadership.”

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Martin hired as Bolles leadership gift officer



Ed Martin has been hired to serve as the leadership gift officer for the Bolles School.

Originally from Deland, Martin is returning to his home state after serving as chief philanthropy officer for the Old North State Council, an independent non-profit operation of the Boy Scouts of America in Greensboro, N.C.

Martin, who will work in the Bolles' Office of Advancement, brings over 15 years of experience in fundraising and major gift campaigns to the school. He graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science degree in public relations and communication.

Martin is married to his wife, Sarah, and has a daughter, Aubrey, age 7.

"I am excited about the opportunity to serve the mission at Bolles and support the advancement team. Projecting the valued traditions and working to implement a shared common vision is very important to me," he said, adding that he hopes to help realize the aspirations that Bolles alumni and the school community can be proud of.

New officers lead Memorial Park Association

New officers were appointed by the Memorial Park Association's board of directors during its meeting Jan. 13.

Serving as president will be Michele L. Luthin. Rounding out the officers' ranks will be Laurie N. Jarvis, executive vice president; Kate A. Hallock, secretary and chair of the Communications & Marketing Committee; Ann R. Mackey, treasurer; Vickie L. Mangin, vice president and chair of the Development Committee, and Patrick M. Emmet, vice president and chair of the Finance Committee.

In addition to serving on the MPA board, Luthin is a sales director for an international data analytics company. Jarvis is co-owner of the Cool Moose Café, on Park Street in Riverside. Hallock is marketing and communications director for the Jacksonville Historical Society. Mackey has a 35-year career in the financial industry; Emmet is a principal with Heritage Capital Group and managing director of Business Valuation,

Inc.; and Mangin owns and operates Avignon Service LLC.

At the nonprofit's first meeting of the new year the board also approved a second three-year term for two directors, Mary W. Jarrett, who chairs the Board Affairs Committee, and Kelly H. Varn, chair of the Special Events Committee, as well as a six-month term for outgoing treasurer Matthew B. Cochran, to support officer transition. The board also bid farewell to two directors, Emily R. Lisska and Mendy Thompson.

Rounding out the board are Barbara H. Arnold; Timothy A. Burleigh, immediate past president; Agnes E. Danciger; David W. Foerster; W. Robinson Frazier III; Stanton W. Hudmon; Leah Kavanagh-Lim, chair of Landscape and Grounds Committee; Eric W. Lycke, chair of Construction Committee; Elizabeth G. McRae; Joan W. Newton; Percy Rosenbloom III; Timothy M. Tyler, and H. Warner Webb, M.D.

"Memorial Park is such a special place in Jacksonville, and it is important that we continue to protect, preserve, and promote it," said Luthin. "I am excited to lead the board in implementing the Memorial Park Master Plan developed in 2013 as we lead up to the centennial celebration of this grand park in 2024."

"Memorial Park is such a special place in Jacksonville, and it is important that we continue to protect, preserve, and promote it."

- Michele L. Luthin

Gilman named Berkshire Hathaway 'Rookie of the Year'

Marilyn Gilman of the Avondale/Ortega office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty was recognized as 'Rookie of the Year' during the company's 2020 annual awards.

Gilman finished the year with 16.75 closed units and \$5 million in closed volume.

She was one of individual agents or brokers to be recognized in the annual awards program.

Also recognized was Elizabeth Hudgins of the Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office as the top producer with \$47.6 million in closed sales.

Stefanie Bernstein of the St. Augustine/Murabella at World Golf Village office received three key awards. She was named top listing agent with 48 listings; top transaction agent with 187.10 transactions; and top sales agent with 82.05 sales.

The Rigdon and Combs team of the St. Augustine/Murabella at World Golf Village

office was recognized as the top producing team with \$27 million in closed sales.

The Beaches/Intra-coastal West/Southside Office, under the leadership of Managing Broker Don Cline, received the Top Office/Chairman's Cup Award, which recognizes success in a number of categories including client feedback, recruiting, listing sides, closed sides, per person productivity, closed volume and profitability.

During the 2020 year, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty achieved \$1.44 billion in sales volume, exceeding all previous sales records. The company is a regional leader in luxury properties throughout Northeast Florida. Among properties priced \$750,000 and above in Duval, Clay and St. John's Counties, the company ranked No. 1 in closed sales with a 13.2% market share. It was also No. 1 in



new listings with a 13.5% market share, No. 1 in pending sales with a 13% market share, and No. 1 in active listings with a 10.3% market share.

"Our amazing and dedicated Realtors, managers, and support team faced the challenges of 2020 with resilience and innovation to meet and exceed the needs of our company and our clients," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty President and CEO Christy Budnick. "I'm incredibly proud and grateful to lead the very best Realtors and team in the business."

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UNDER CONTRACT

4258 ORTEGA FOREST DR.
\$1,999,000
4 BD / 3 BA / 4,508 SF



1431 RIVERPLACE BLVD. • #2203
\$275,000
1 BD / 1 BA / 1,125 SF



2818 ERNEST ST.
\$220,000
3 BD / 1 BA / 1,247 SF



2024 ERNEST ST
\$275,000
4 BD / 2 BA / 1,354 SF



Claire Franson
REALTOR®
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Zackery Williams
REALTOR®
(904) 962-5479



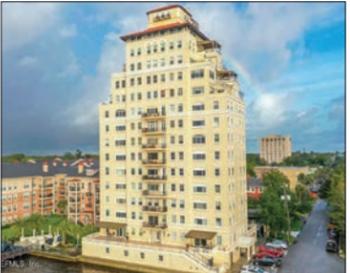
UNDER CONTRACT

1840 MALLORY ST.
\$865,000
3 BD / 2 BA / 1 HBA / 3,144 SF



UNDER CONTRACT

1326 AVONDALE AVE.
\$700,000
3 BD / 3 BA / 2,708 SF



1846 MARGARET ST. #7A
\$279,000
2 BD / 1 BA / 1 HBA / 1,313 SF



UNDER CONTRACT

2972 COLLIER AVE
\$260,000
3 BD / 1 BA / 1,012 SF



Shannon Gullion
REALTOR®
(904) 686-4312



Kimberly Waterhouse
REALTOR®
(904) 742-8889



UNDER CONTRACT

3618 WALSH ST.
\$330,000
3 BD / 1 BA / 1,274 SF



UNDER CONTRACT

1931 FAIR ST.
\$475,000
3 BD / 2 BA / 2,369 SF



UNDER CONTRACT

2970 ST JOHNS AVE. 7C
\$575,000
3 BD / 2 BA / 1,822 SF



NO SHOWINGS

2525 COLLEGE ST. • #2305
\$354,900
2 BD / 2 BA / 1,382 SF



Genni Jett
REALTOR®
(904) 802-0820



Joy Walker
REALTOR®
(904) 699-4417



UNDER CONTRACT

1357 WOLFE ST.
\$310,000
3 BD / 1 BA / 1,230 SF



UNDER CONTRACT

3343 ERNEST ST.
\$157,000
2 BD / 1 BA / 768 SF



SOLD

3858 HOLLINGSWORTH ST.
\$375,000
4 BD / 3 BA / 1,552 SF



SOLD

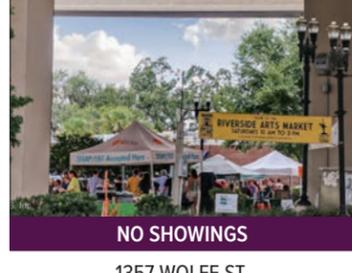
1900 EDGEWOOD AVE. S.
\$1,480,000
6 BD / 5 BA / 1 HBA / 3,840 SF



Melissa Keyes & Bronwen
Krause, REALTORS®
(904) 616-6425 / 616-6523



Jim VanSoest
REALTOR®
(904) 713-7000



NO SHOWINGS

1357 WOLFE ST.
\$310,000
3 BD / 1 BA / 1,230 SF



UNDER CONTRACT

3343 ERNEST ST.
\$157,000
2 BD / 1 BA / 768 SF



SOLD

3858 HOLLINGSWORTH ST.
\$375,000
4 BD / 3 BA / 1,552 SF



SOLD

1900 EDGEWOOD AVE. S.
\$1,480,000
6 BD / 5 BA / 1 HBA / 3,840 SF



Linda Maxwell & Sarah
Leuthold, REALTORS®
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Susan Tuohy
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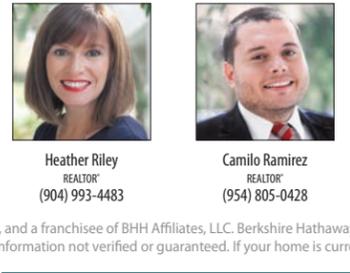
NO SHOWINGS

1357 WOLFE ST.
\$310,000
3 BD / 1 BA / 1,230 SF



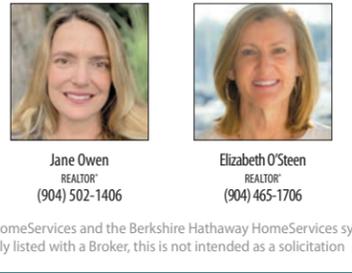
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SOLD

1900 EDGEWOOD AVE. S.
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6 BD / 5 BA / 1 HBA / 3,840 SF



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Healthcare heroes travel to Super Bowl



Kelly Guion, Lori Fiallo, Caryn Parkhurst, Andrew Fowler, Jody Dolan-Aldrich, Ed Gorak M.D., Vincy Samuel, Tujuana Dudley, Alicia Carter, Lance Roxas, Jodie Bisogno, Jennifer Bloom

The Jacksonville Jaguars selected 12 COVID-19 vaccinated Baptist Health team members to travel to Tampa to attend Super Bowl LV as their guests. The group gathered at TIAA Field on Saturday, Feb. 6 with some fanfare to travel south by bus.

As a gift to the NFL team's official health care provider, the Jaguars worked alongside Baptist Health to identify the dozen healthcare workers who went above and beyond the call of duty to provide care to patients in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reward was Super Bowl tickets. The selected attendees joined approximately 7,500 other vaccinated health care workers in the stands at Raymond James Stadium Feb. 7 as part of the NFL's tribute to health care workers.

Selected to be honored were Edward Gorak, DO, MBA, MS, FACP hematologist oncologist with Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center; Lori Fiallo, PharmD, Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville & Wolfson Children's Hospital; Vincy Samuel, PhD, MPH, CIC, Baptist Health; Kelly Guion, RN, Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville; Jodie Bisogno, RN, Baptist Medical Center South; Alicia Carter, CNA, member of the Flex Team; Jennifer Bloom, RN, Baptist Medical Center South; Jody Dolan-Aldrich, RN, Baptist North Medical Campus; Tujuana Dudley, RN, Baptist Medical Center South; Andrew Fowler, RN, Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville; Caryn Parkhurst, BSN, RN, CCRN, Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville; Lance Roxas, RT, Baptist Medical Center South.

GO RED

February been federally designated American Heart Month every year since President Lyndon B. Johnson's official declaration in 1964. On the first of each February, the nation comes together on National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease by igniting a wave of red from coast to coast. From landmarks to news anchors, neighborhoods to communities; this annual groundswell unites millions of people for a common goal: the eradication of heart disease and stroke.

Last year, the First Coast American Heart Association captured the largest National Wear Red Day photo ever taken, with more than 1,000 people assembled in the shape of a heart along the St. John's River outside the Knight and FIS headquarters. Although that photo didn't face any competition this year, the support from the First Coast community was no less conspicuous in 2021.

Landmarks in downtown Jacksonville, including the Acosta Bridge and Florida Blue, helped turned the city red on February 5th. Meanwhile, dozens of local companies took group photos of their employees wearing red shirts, Zoom calls and in person wearing masks, to show their support for the American Heart Association. Anchors, reporters and producers broadcast their support as well, posting photos on social media and highlighting supporters and volunteers on air throughout the day.

"We are so grateful for the ongoing support of the American Heart Association from our First Coast community," said Amber Wilson, executive director of the First Coast American Heart Association. "National Wear Red Day is as another powerful reminder of what our community can do when we come together. This February has been truly a month to remember."



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| 22 PARCELS 955 Albert St. \$900,000 | UNDER CONTRACT 4810 Arapahoe Ave. \$850,000 | 22 PARCELS 738 Lafayette St. \$700,000 | UNDER CONTRACT 1648 Woodmere Dr. \$675,000 |
| UNDER CONTRACT 1265 Challen Ave. \$369,900 | UNDER CONTRACT 1327 N. Kyle Way \$359,999 | SOLD 1260 Hollywood Ave. \$342,000 | SOLD 9608 Bembridge Mill Dr. \$305,000 |
| 3838 Walsh St. \$259,900 | UNDER CONTRACT 8124 Niska Trail \$245,000 | UNDER CONTRACT 6139 Briarforest Rd. N. \$245,000 | NEW LISTING 1503 Parrish Pl. \$239,900 |
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TOP: Employees at Diamonds Direct flash their red in support of the American Heart Association's National Wear Red Day. MIDDLE: Florida Blue, a local sponsor of the First Coast American Heart Association, turned the lights red on their landmark tower downtown on Friday, February 5th in recognition of the American Heart Association's National Wear Red Day. BOTTOM: Employees at CSI Companies gathered together in the company's office lobby to capture a group photo of everyone wearing red in support of the American Heart Association's National Wear Red Day.

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Shine-Thru prom enjoyed globally



Although its format was different due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tim Tebow Foundation's 7th Annual Night to Shine, still was able to provide an unforgettable prom night experience. The worldwide event was held Feb. 12 with a virtual experience video gaining thousands of views globally as thousands of guests attended socially distant events. This year, Night to Shine was hosted by 470 churches throughout the United States and in 32 countries throughout the world, simultaneously, including in Jacksonville. Tebow, himself, safely surprised volunteers and guests at Shine-Thru locations in Tucson, Arizona, and Las Vegas, Nevada. He and his wife, Demi, encouraged guests and volunteers by cheering and dancing along the red carpet as the honored guests drove down in style

and shared the message of God's love with all involved. "I am so overwhelmed by the support shown for the 2021 Night to Shine. Six months ago, we could not say with certainty exactly what this night would look like. But we knew two things for sure. First, we could not allow the opportunity to love those who need it most to simply pass us by. For our friends who have been so significantly impacted by the ongoing pandemic, it was imperative that we stepped up to show them that they are not only not forgotten...they are Royalty! Secondly, with God, all things are possible. In His way and His timing, through prayer and much conversation with wise council, He led us to the best possible solutions within the challenges we faced," said Tebow.



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UNDER CONTRACT
1375 Wolfe St.
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UNDER CONTRACT
1649 Glendale Rd.
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UNDER CONTRACT
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\$139,500



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2761 Flynn Ct.
\$135,670



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\$135,000



SOLD
6159 Harlow Blvd.
\$120,000

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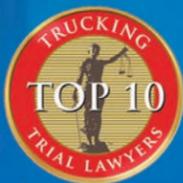
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Donation from hobbyists will maintain Nemours model train



Christie Harrod, manager, Nemours Volunteer Services Program; Beverly Wingate, administrator, Nemours Florida Site Practice; Dr. Gary Josephson, chief medical officer, Nemours; Anita Sanford, North Florida Village Collectors Club; and Larry Shughart, Train Collectors Association.

A group of train enthusiasts from the Train Collectors Association, Southern Division (TCA) and the North Florida Village Collectors Club have donated \$16,000 to Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville. The funds were raised by the two groups after their planned annual 2020 convention was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds will go toward Volunteer Services at the clinic to help cover the costs of maintaining the landmark toy train that is a beloved centerpiece of the Nemours lobby. Funds will also benefit patients via the ADAPT (Assisted Dogs and Pony Therapy) program.

Each year, the TCA and the Department 56 collector clubs each hold a national convention. The 2020 convention was to be the first-ever event to be held jointly between the two groups. "The overlap between the collector groups is well illustrated by the lobby display at Nemours, which is maintained by a dedicated group of people that utilize both trains and villages," said Anita Sanford, president of the North Florida Village Collectors Club.

Both groups have a tradition of selecting a charity to benefit from convention proceeds. The COVID-19 pandemic meant the groups couldn't meet in person. Over 1,000 pieces of village houses, accessories, and toy train parts had been donated to support convention fundraisers. The groups opted to use online

auctions to dispose of the items and were able to continue to support Nemours as their selected charity.

The model train and village display is an attractive feature of the lobby at Nemours. Dedicated volunteers from the Northeast Florida Model Railroad Club, known affectionately as "The Choo Choo Crew," visit Nemours four times per year to maintain the trains and tracks, and to change the village for each season, providing some levity and contentment for children who come to the clinic for specialty care for their complex medical issues. The model train at Nemours is the largest size available and is known as "G" scale, for "garden," since many collectors use them outside in their flower beds.

"This generous donation from the North Florida Village Collectors and the Train Collectors Association allows Nemours to provide a fun, unique and interactive experience for our patients when they enter our lobby," said Chief Medical Officer Dr. Gary Josephson of Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville. "The train has served as a landmark in our lobby for over 30 years and will continue to be a vital experience for years to come."

The new renovations at THE PLAYERS Lobby at Nemours Children's Specialty Care included a new base for the train, and enhanced accessibility to view it.

Virtual Wolfson Children's Challenge raises \$96,000

Almost 400 children and families from across 15 states participated in the 12th annual Wolfson Children's Challenge: Virtual Edition. The participants logged 1,532.83 kilometers of physical activity on the Wolfson55 app in January. Together, participants and supporters raised more than \$96,000 to help fund the purchase of life-saving trauma equipment and technology for our most critical patients at Wolfson Children's.

The first-ever virtual format allowed the iconic Jacksonville event to expand beyond Northeast Florida borders and encourage participants in communities across the country to recruit their families and friends to get active and fundraise.

As of Jan. 29, the five top fundraising teams included: CSX Retirees, \$16,578; Addison's All-stars, \$2,620; Team Char Char, \$2,374; Ashlyn's Armada, \$2,150; and Team Sunshine Stevie Mae, \$1,829.

Children and families of all ages, fitness levels and abilities participated in the month-long challenge via the Wolfson55 mobile app. The innovative event experience allowed users access to virtual challenges,

features to monitor their physical activity, tools to track individual and team fundraising progress, and a virtual closing ceremony celebration. While the races were not timed this year, fitness-minded participants had the opportunity to log their miles and minutes for the various activity challenges.

The event's inclusive and accessible activity challenges included a 20K individual walk/run and a 200K team walk/run. Participants also had the unique opportunity to put their own creative mark on fundraising with weekly social and compassion challenges such as notes of encouragement, game nights, animal-inspired workouts and more.

The Wolfson Children's Challenge honors 55 children each year, representing the wide range of services Wolfson Children's Hospital offers to children of North Florida, South Georgia and beyond. Each of the honorees and their families were recognized leading up to and throughout the event, as well as during the virtual closing ceremony on Jan. 30.

"Each year, the Wolfson Children's Challenge brings together hundreds of supporters to help turn miles into miracles for our children who need it most," said Michael D. Aubin, FACHE, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital and a San Marco resident. "Despite being virtual to keep everyone safe, this year's challenge was just as powerful, even though individuals and families supported

us from a distance. We are grateful for the generosity of our region and everyone who participated, as it ensures we can continue providing the best care for our children for years to come."

To date, the Wolfson Children's Challenge has raised more than \$4 million for the Wolfson Children's Challenge Endowment, helping fund the purchase of life-saving

equipment and technology. This year, the endowment will focus on the development of an MIBG therapy room on the oncology floor of Wolfson Children's Hospital. As the first of its kind in Florida, the new room will give Wolfson Children's the ability to offer the newest upfront treatment for children with high-risk neuroblastoma, the most common solid tumor of childhood cancer.

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Riverside's Cherry Museum elevates yard art to its finest



By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Move over Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, there is a new "micro" art gallery in Riverside.

Visible only to pedestrians, joggers, and perhaps slow-moving cyclists, the new Cherry Museum sits adjacent to Cherry Street, just inside the walls of the Riverside Avenue home of nationally renowned artist Lana Shuttleworth and her husband, Jacksonville Architectural Historian Wayne Wood.

Known for their advocacy of "yard art," the couple's spacious property located at 2821 Riverside Avenue is a showplace of architectural wonders from Jacksonville's past and parts beyond that have been saved from the wrecking ball. Included among their treasures is a giant chicken made from 200 safety cones, which was once an answer on the national gameshow Jeopardy. Also of interest in the yard is a koi pond, a "hedge of heads," that includes busts of presidents and other notable people including Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Socrates, Beethoven, and Barak Obama, which is

actually a bald Chia Pet. Near the pool is a Zen garden with Buddha and octopus tentacles and an array of "lawn pearls" that are painted bowling balls.

The couple has also removed a glass addition to their 1913 home that had been placed on a balcony in 1987 and converted it into a glass shed near the pool. "We made the balcony into a stage for the band when we host parties like Wood Woodstock," said Wood, noting they saved all the windows from the glassed-in balcony and reassembled it. Hanging on the house is a stuffed woodpecker that the couple had formerly used on their wedding cake, which had been shaped like a wooden stump.

When the city decided to replace old pavers along Cherry Street, Shuttleworth decided to recycle them, creating Cherry Walk, a new edition to their property along which special art exhibits that are visible from Cherry Street can be displayed.

"We get an awful lot of joggers, especially with COVID, and Cherry Street is one of their favorite routes," said Wood, noting that foot

traffic often extends from the banks of the St. Johns River to Willowbranch Park. "From time to time we have put little things out here. Lana had the idea of having a little micro gallery where we can display our works of art."

Slow-moving motorists will miss the signage, which is apparent only to those traveling on foot. Chalk drawings of cherries on the sidewalk with a cherry garland above and a small sign heralding the greatness of Riverside points the way to a view over the wrought-iron fence where the couple's special exhibits are on display.

"You can see the announcement overhead that we change periodically. It's to give people something to pep up their day and stimulate their appreciation of the neighborhood," said Wood. "We want to celebrate the pedestrian nature of the neighborhood. Riverside is one of the most walkable neighborhoods in Jacksonville if not in all of Florida. With beautiful trees, sidewalks, houses, and river views, on almost every block something can be found to delight the eye. A lot of people have art inside their houses where no one

can see it, but we put our art outside so that people walking can see our things. Lana had the idea of not just putting art in the yard but of actually having a little museum," he continued. "We want this to be savored by people who can walk, stop, and study their surroundings. You have to have a keen eye and be looking for something of interest."

Shuttleworth agreed. "There is a sense of discovery in it," she said.

The main exhibit in Shuttleworth's micro art gallery is an artistic display that sits in a small aquarium atop an old bedpost the couple found discarded on Riverside's streets. Within the aquarium is a creation made entirely of recycled materials -- a block of wood discarded by a handyman Wood had hired that is covered in black-and-white striped paper from an old coffee bag. On top of the block are painted clay figurines of food items, including a hot dog, cherry, and lemon. Within the center is a clay heart painted red, perfect to honor Valentine's Day.

"There is a system in the neighborhood," Wood explained. "People don't throw away

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cool things that they don't want anymore. They instead put them out by the sidewalk, and they usually last out there about an hour."

"We are notorious for picking up stuff as we walk along," said Shuttleworth. "We were on a walk last week and we found a beautiful pot, vase and a wonderful ornate plant hanger and trellis. We also put stuff out all the time, and it is amazing how quickly it goes."

Also visible from the street along Cherry Walk is a garden kaleidoscope created by Shuttleworth for her husband. The kaleidoscope picks up its colors from a nearby potted plant.

A carousel horse, a statue of a small girl with an umbrella, and a squirrel and bird feeding station with a sign that reads "Dining Room" are also visible if you know where to look. The sign came from "The Woodshed," a large Riverside boarding house owned by Wood's grandmother, where she used to house and feed as many as 65 people during The Depression. The squirrels dine on a corn cob attached to a

\$16 bungee cord from Amazon.com. "The squirrels line up and go through an ear of corn every day. We have it placed so we can see it out our kitchen window. Instead of watching TV we just watch the squirrels," Wood said.

Also lining the paver walkway as well are some glass items that Shuttleworth calls her "fake chill-huly" after the famous glass sculptor Dale Chihuly.

Pedestrians who stop by once to view the exhibit should not think they have seen it all. The couple plans to rotate the exhibit frequently throughout the year. We want it to generate a sense of surprise and discovery that helps people to marvel at the wonder of this very eclectic neighborhood that has so many rich, visual experiences," he said.

"And we hope to encourage other people to become purveyors of yard art in their own yards," Wood continued, adding that he hopes enough residents will hear the call so that Riverside can eventually have a "Yard Art Tour."



TOP (left to right) Lana Shuttleworth and Wayne Wood; Chalk art points the way toward Cherry Street Museum; The kaleidoscope can be viewed by pedestrians on Cherry Street; Lana Shuttleworth stands beside a carousel horse along the Cherry Walk near her home; Cherry Street's first micro exhibit. BOTTOM (left to right) Artist Lana Shuttleworth's creation of a giant chicken made of 200 safety cones sits in the yard of her home on Riverside Avenue; Wayne Wood and his wife, Lana Shuttleworth in front of the "Wonder Wall," Wayne Wood's workshop where he and his wife construct artistic creations.



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Jacksonville Historical Society surprised by unexpected gift

The Jacksonville Historical Society received an unexpected gift in late December from a longtime user of its facility at Old St. Andrew's Church – the JAX Chamber's Downtown Council.

"When our in-person meetings at the Old St. Andrew's Church halted last March due to COVID-19, the Downtown Council board missed our JHS partner and knew we wanted to find a way to collaborate," said Gracie Simendinger, Downtown Council president as well as development director

for B.E.A.M. (Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry). "Every year we strive to raise funds through our signature event Painting of the PawPrints, where proceeds raised support Downtown programs and initiatives. We were able to still hold the event yielding enough proceeds to make a significant \$5,000 contribution to an organization dear to us. The JHS preserves and elevates Jacksonville's rich history, something the Downtown Council truly values. We believe we create a brighter future when we learn

and acknowledge our past, and the Downtown Council often looks to JHS to teach our members about Jacksonville's historical significance," she said.

"Alan Bliss has been a Downtown Council member for a number of years and continues to provide value and insight to the Council's board and greater membership, she said, referring to the Jacksonville Historical Society's CEO. "We look forward to continuing our partnership and finding unique ways to honor our history while engaging the greater community, such as the music history museum project," Simendinger said.

Bliss acknowledged the gift, noting it would be put into the restricted fund for the music history museum project. "The membership of the Downtown Council has been supportive of the Historical Society in many ways, and getting to know this smart, dynamic group has been a privilege," said Bliss. "When they learned about our music history project and the scope of its museum, they saw the potential immediately. It's great to have the Chamber among our stakeholders in this new way of telling Jacksonville's many stories."



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Jax Chamber Downtown Council member Laura Edgecombe created the display which garnered enough votes to earn the coveted "People's Choice Award" in the Jacksonville Historical Society's 18th Annual Gingerbread Extravaganza. The display included a representation of the Cowford Chophouse and a portion of Bay Street, where the painting of the pawprints occurs each August prior to the opening of professional football season.

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Service dogs in training brighten life at St. Matthews Catholic School

Since the end of last year, furry-faced wonder dogs have been brightening the hallways at when students arrive at St. Matthew's Catholic School.

With the advent of COVID-19, it is a common sight in the morning carline to see touch-less thermometers in hands of teachers, parent volunteers, and the principal, Kathy Tuerk. However, beginning in December 2020, a new addition changed the ritual of students' arrival. First Pumpernickel, a two-and-a-half-year-old Golden Retriever, and now, Al Capone, a two-year-old Golden Retriever, brighten the school doorways.

The dogs became part of a collaboration between the school and New Horizons Service Dogs (NHSD) when Tuerk became a foster parent. "Teachers are stopping by my office more often for a quick visit," she said. "I knew of the great work of the organization and wanted to contribute to our community. When considering the additional benefit to our school community, it was an obvious win-win all the way around," said Tuerk.

There are few things that evoke an immediate reaction more than the presence of a loving and well-trained dog, said Tuerk. In fact, furry friends can help with mental health and relieve stress, according to Health.com. Now, more than ever, stress and anxiety is observable in adults and children in the workplace and classrooms. The mere appearance of a dog can make students, teachers, parents, and grandparents stop, smile, and take in an extra breath, she said.

Fitz Fluegel, a kindergartner, cried when Pumpernickel had to leave. Courtney Fluegel, his mom, knew of the service dog, but not his name. When she asked why he was leaving, Fitz said, "It's okay, Mom, Pumpernickel's going to help someone." Pumpernickel began his life's mission in late December as a service dog companion for quadriplegic in the Jacksonville area.

Kate Vaughan, administrative coordinator of Volunteer Outreach of NHSD said her organization is a Florida-based, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that "breeds, raises, professionally trains, certifies, and places service dogs with individuals who have mobility and balance problems. It specializes programs for wounded war veterans, veterans with PTSD, and children with autism."

New Horizons Service Dogs provides free of charge, a rigorously trained dog for a lifetime of unconditional love and service. The dogs and recipients are partners that making it possible for individuals in need of help to go into schools and even become employed. They are the hands and feet proving mobility, independence, increased self-esteem, better health, ability to self-care, and an improved quality of life to many who are struggling.

A quadriplegic since the age of 7, Janet Severt began dedicating her life to puppy raising and training in 1968. As the founder of New Horizons Service Dogs, Inc., she also is a service dog user. "My dog can pick up dimes or credit cards off my tile floor,"

explained Severt. The training procedure is extensive, and cost is minimized by a rotation between volunteers who provide all expenses covered in foster homes and the prison training of inmates who raise the dogs. The cost of service-dog training averages \$25,000-\$30,000.

Training is completed when the dogs return to the New Horizons staff for work on 80 commands the dogs are taught. The dogs can then be matched with the partner with whom it spends the rest of its life as a companion in service. The recipient goes through a two-week in-person training program including a written and field experience exam at New Horizons.

Requests for service dogs are ever increasing. It will take over one year to provide the 139 people currently on a waitlist to receive a service dog through the program.



RIGHT: St. Matthew's Catholic School Principal Kathy Tuerk with Pumpernickel.

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National Merit Finalists Announced



Hallie Knight



Brianna Broberly



Caroline Guiler



Braden Witkovich



Donald Kohla



Jameson Gatewood



Paul Fouts



Sally Barksdal



Artin Rzaei



Audrey Plauche



John Blake Caven



Devi Priya Patcha



Edward Sun



Jessica Zeng



Lara Morello



Yash Gupta

Officials with the National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced the names of 15,000 finalists in the 66th Annual National Merit Scholarship Program and several students from Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods were on the list.

Approximately 90% of the students named as semi-finalists advanced to the final round. Each will be presented at their school with a "Certificate of Merit," from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Only 7,500 students – half of the finalists named – will make the final cut to receive a Merit Scholarship*. Those

scholarships, worth more than \$30 million, will be awarded in the spring.

In all 16 students who reside in or attend schools within Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods made the cut. Of a long list of students from Stanton who were on the list of finalists, John Blake Caven, Audrey Plauche, and Artin Rzaei reside in the San Marco area.

Five students from The Episcopal School of Jacksonville made the grade including Braden Witkovich, Donald Kohla of Ortega, Jameson Gatewood, Paul Fouts, and Sally Barksdale of Avondale.

Brianna Borberly and Caroline Guiler from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts were on the list. Hallie Knight of Bishop Kenny High School was also named.

And Yash Gupta, Lara Morello, Devi Priya Patcha, Edward Sun and Jessica Zeng from The Bolles School were included among the finalists.

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, a test that served as an initial screen for program entrants. The semifinalists represented less than 1% of high school seniors in the United States.

To become a finalist, semifinalists submitted a detailed scholarship application, in which they provided information about their academic record, participation in school and community activities, leadership abilities, employment, honors and awards. All finalists have outstanding high school academic record, have been recommended by a high school official, and wrote an essay.

Eagle Scout spruces up Stockton Elementary



Wheeler Handford and John Stockton Elementary Principal Stephanie Brannan stand near the new benches at the entrance of the elementary school.

John Stockton Elementary School started off the year with a welcoming addition to its entrance, thanks to a very handy Eagle Scout.

Wheeler Handford, a student at Episcopal High School and an Eagle Scout, approached Principal Stephanie Brannan with the idea to build the beautiful benches that currently line the walkway up to the school's entrance.

Not an easy feat, Handford had to submit a proposal, meet with Brannan about the project, fundraise for money to help build the benches, and lay down mulch. "Considering I have moved multiple times, for my Eagle Project I jumped on the chance to help the elementary school which almost all of my friends attended and loved. I decided to create something that would improve the environment for the after-school students as well as adding a colorful touch," said Handford, adding that he is thankful for the opportunity to help his community.

Handford's blue and yellow benches, a showcase of Stockton's colors, have had a positive impact on the elementary school. Students and parents alike are enjoying the seats. They will be an appreciated piece of the campus for years to come.

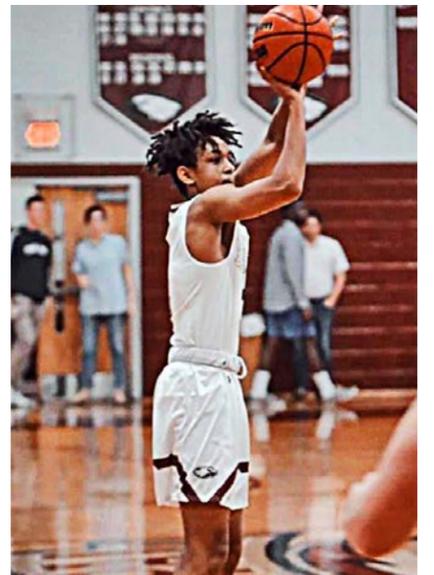
Record number of three-pointers powers Episcopal victory

It was a basketball game no Eagle will ever forget. The Episcopal School of Jacksonville's boys' basketball team carved its name in the record books when it set a Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) record by sinking 24 three-point baskets on its way to an 81-55 victory over New Smyrna Beach High School. The game took place over the school's winter break.

Episcopal's Kent Jackson, a freshman, sank 12 of the 24 buckets, converting on 12 of 16 attempts from three-point territory. He finished with a total of 38 points.

Tallying up 24 three-point shots in a single game hands the Eagles a Top 15 national record, according to the National Federation of High Schools.

After the New Smyrna Beach victory, Episcopal earned its 10th win of the season on Jan. 5 with a victory over Englewood.



Episcopal's Beza Miller takes aim the basket



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Episcopal Science Fair Winners Miranda Doro, Daniel Delong and Sally Barksdale

Barksdale, Delong and Dora win Episcopal Science Fair

Sally Barksdale, Daniel Delong and Miranda Dora were the winners of the Science Fair held at Episcopal School of Jacksonville in late January.

Barksdale took home top honors in the senior biological category with a project titled, “Machine learning to predict cancer treatments with genetic biomarkers. Delong and Dora both took top honors in the senior physical category. Delong’s project was titled: “A robotic arm with computer vision to manipulate objects.” Doro’s project was titled, “Lead removal with silver nanoparticles.”

The projects were displayed on the Kirwan Flag Plaza on the Munnerlyn Campus after school, where the judges interviewed the students. The judges – Tess Peterson, Peter Blumeyer, Jason Marks, and Isaiah Nields – are all graduates of Episcopal. They said they were impressed with the students’ creativity, presentation skills, and scientific reasoning.

First, second and third place winners as well as those receiving honorable mention presented their projects at the Regional Science Fair, a four-day, hybrid event, Feb. 20-23.

Other place winners are as follows:

Senior Biological: Second place, Tom Commander – Nanoparticle-based hypothermia; Second place, Jordan Harrow – Environmental buffers in freshwater; Third place, Matthew Schinsing – Mite eradication on bees; Honorable mention, Natalie Rabil – Lead nitrate toxicity to amphipods; Honorable mention, Isabella Buschini – UV light on chicken embryos; Honorable mention, Ariel Largen – Comparison of online learning vs. in-person learning.

Senior Physical: Second place, Julia Kagiliery – Novel method of water analysis; Third place, Jace Bankston – Shark skin denticles on rockets; Third place, Sean Ramsey – Martian construction materials; Honorable mention, Chris-John Griffith – Electrical stimulation of earthworms; Honorable mention, Cole Nigro – Zinc analysis in lettuce; Honorable mention, Jackson Whitchurch – Measuring UV-C for disinfection.

RPDS students check on the St. Johns River



TOP: Brodie Colyer with RPDS Head of School Ben Ketchum run a test on St. Johns River water; BOTTOM: Parker Jones and Alex Hughes test water from the St. Johns River

At the end of January, sixth grade students at Riverside Presbyterian Day School (RPDS) completed a routine river check as part of their St. Johns Riverkeepers partnership. The sixth-grade scientists tested the water temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, salinity, pH, nitrate, nitrite, and ammonia. The results from the tests were reported to the Water Rangers, a group that monitors the health of water worldwide. Water Rangers’ mission is to build the tools to help citizens and scientists easily record and analyze water data so that they can use the data to learn about problems, share discoveries and engage with their neighbors. The sixth graders plan to take monthly trips to the St. Johns River for the remainder of the school year as they continue to test and analyze their samples.

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100 Days of School

RPDS Kindergarten students celebrated the 100th Day of School on January 26th by turning into centenarians for the day. Students came to school dressed up like they were 100 years old! The classes enjoyed a day full of “100th Day” lessons and activities including counting exercises to 100 and writing about what they hope their life is like when they’re 100 years old.



Bolles boasts of Davis Ellis committing to UPenn

Davis Ellis is a shining student athlete at The Bolles School, captain of the Bulldogs football team. Come fall, he’ll be playing for the Ivy League, after his recent commitment to the University of Pennsylvania’s team.

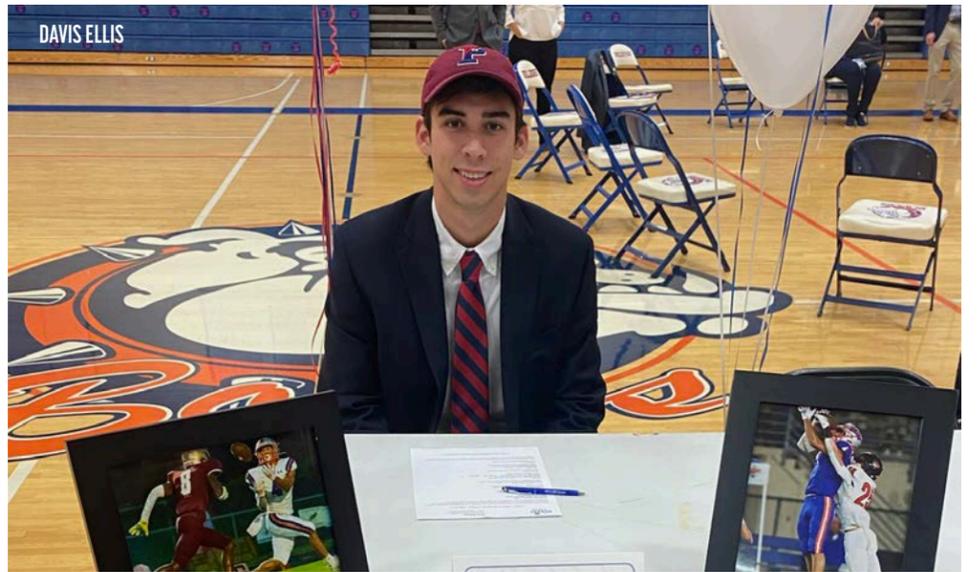
Since 2020, the senior has racked up numerous football awards and titles, including News4Jax Athlete of Week, All-First Coast team member in Northeast Florida, and Florida Class 4A Wide Receiver.

In addition to leading the football team, Ellis plays basketball and runs track for Bolles. He is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, too. All of this Ellis does while maintaining stellar academic status.

Ellis’s 4.2 GPA has earned him membership in the National Honor Society in addition to the Spanish Honor Society. Other academic awards and achievements include Episcopal School of Jacksonville Head of School’s Academic List in his freshman and sophomore years and First and Second Honors on Bolles President’s List as a junior and as a senior. Ellis has also won AP Scholar Awards two years in a row.

It’s not only his athletic agility and his academic prowess that make Ellis shine but also his 120+ hours of community service work with younger athletes as counselor at two camps: Grit Summer Camp and Bolles Football Camp.

At the University of Pennsylvania, Ellis will attend the Wharton School of Business.





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Kindness not bullying stressed at West Riverside Elementary



Derek, Monica, Cailianys, Ian and Bryanna, all students at West Riverside Elementary stand with Principal Shawna White

West Riverside Elementary School for earned a Gold Level Tier 1 Model PBIS School Award from Florida PBIS – Florida’s Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support Project. The award recognizes schools that have proactive, positive behavior supports and recognition in place.

West Riverside Elementary Principal Shawna White said she places a high priority on kindness and inclusion at her school. Her students will tell you “there are no bullies at this school.” The school has seen a 60% decrease in disciplinary referrals and now requires a lottery system due to popularity among parents seeking a space for their children due to West Riverside’s reputation as a place where kindness among students is a priority.

“We are thrilled to receive this state award. We did this through the “Precious NOT Prickly program” from American Civility Association,” said White. “This partnership has had a profound impact on our campus. “Precious Not Prickly” encourages children to be precious like a hedgehog, not prickly like a porcupine.

In the program, students enjoy reading and discussing inspiring books. They earn HEDGIE badges through doing acts of

kindness, exhibiting positive behavior, and gratitude expressions. HEDGIE stands for “Help Everyone Do Good in Everything.” During the pandemic, West Riverside teachers included a virtual “Precious NOT Prickly” component by awarding students with virtual HEDGIES while learning remotely. This virtual expansion of “Precious NOT Prickly” gained the attention of the PBIS Project and resulted in the honor of West Riverside being named a Gold Level Tier 1 Model School.

“A critical component to the success of the “Precious NOT Prickly” program is the Kindness Challenge Week. This is when students experience doing acts of kindness as a lifestyle,” said Amy Barnett, president of American Civility Association. “It becomes a habit with benefits they enjoy throughout life, like meaningful friendships.”

This year at West Riverside, kindness week was the week before Valentine’s Day and students had daily celebrations of kindness and gratitude. Each day held a different theme like “Dreaming of a Kinder World Day” when children wore their favorite PJ’s. On Valentine’s Day students wore pink and red to celebrate peace, love, and kindness.

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Strumming along at Ruth Upson

Fifth-grade students from Ruth Upson Elementary who are hoping to attend LaVilla Middle School for the Arts next fall are fortunate to take an after-school guitar class under the tutelage of Kenneth Bevis. The class is sponsored by the Jacksonville Guitar Society and has been helping five guitar

students prepare for their audition by meeting four days a week for 45 minutes. Emphasis in the class is placed on developing proper playing technique and reading music notation. The students are also looking forward to performing in front of their Ruth Upson schoolmates later this year.

LEFT: Giovanni Bramuchi, Ariyona Gibbs, Emily Hall, Judah Jacobs, and Jake McGinley.

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Bolles student-athletes sign on to play in college



Bolles student-athletes sign commitment papers to play in college

San Marco resident Davis Ellis and San Jose residents Layne Rivera and Izzy Kimberly were among 13 Bolles student-athletes honored during a special ceremony Feb. 3 for committing to a particular college or university to continue their athletic and academic careers.

Family, friends, classmates, coaches, and faculty gathered in Davis Gymnasium on the San Jose Campus to celebrate their achievements. Athletic Director Matt Morris welcomed everyone, and several coaches introduced their respective athletes.

Ellis signed on to play football at the University of Pennsylvania. Also signing on to play football at the collegiate level were David Adewale at the United States Air Force Academy,

Justin Cayenne, also at the University of Pennsylvania, and Avery Epstein at Wabash College.

Kimberly was recruited to play women's soccer at the University of Southern California.

Rivera signed a commitment to run both cross country and track and field at the United States Naval Academy. Also recruited to compete in track and field was Audrey Wuerffel for the University of South Florida.

Jaden Flowers and Burke Steifman were recruited to play baseball. Flowers will compete at Tallahassee Community College while Steifman will play for the University of Mary Washington.

Three student athletes will swim on college teams. Jose Lopez will compete for Brandeis University, while Marlie Rittenhouse will swim for University of Delaware and Lauren Thomas for Trinity College in Connecticut.

Ella Schellenberg will play volleyball for Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina.

The ceremony was the second of three college commitment ceremonies planned at Bolles this school year to recognize student-athletes as they commit to colleges. Eight Bolles student-athletes were honored on Nov. 11.

Assumption Celebrates Catholic School Week

Students joined with their families, faculty, parishioners, and community members to kick off the celebration of Catholic Schools Week (CSW) with a Mass that was celebrated at Assumption Catholic Church on Jan. 31. This event traditionally begins on the last Sunday of January and runs throughout the week with many fun and memorable activities.

The Mass was led by Fr. Eric Stelzer. His many words of inspiration were centered around this year's CSW theme "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service." Students participated during Mass and showcased their support by wearing their school uniforms.

Fr. Eric Stelzer was assisted by eighth grade students Christian Alligood, Evan Chau, Jonathan Rogero, and Owen Delaney. Eighth grade students Bridget Lawrence and Sebastian Raker conducted the scriptural readings, and seventh grade student Sean Trull, sixth grade student Erin Trull and seventh grade student Emma Gallup participated as altar servers. Junior High Religion Teacher Wendy Nelms joined eighth grade students Jonathan Rogero, Owen Delaney, Christian Alligood and Evan Chau who served as ushers during the Mass.

During this week's event, the school focused on the values of Catholic education, the contribution to its church, the community, and the nation. At Assumption, the students began the school week on a high spiritual note with the Eucharistic Procession which traveled throughout the campus in celebration of the Lord Jesus. Many of the other amazing activities included the annual religion Bishop's Bowl Competition and a Student Appreciation Day with a free lunch for all students. Parents made virtual presentations as part of STREAM Career Day.



Sean Trull, Erin Trull and Emma Gallup served as altar servers during Assumption Catholic Week.

Students also had the opportunity to serve others during the annual Day of Service and grandparents were invited to join the classrooms virtually in honor of Grandparent's Day. As an act of service, students brought in jelly for Catholic Charities, made cards for JSO officers, firefighters, and Assumption parishioners who are homebound, made Valentine's Day boxes for seniors at Fort Caroline Gardens, activity kits for children at Wolfson Children's Hospital, and pray for other students at Catholic schools around the country. The school also served as host of an essay writing contest. Students were asked to write an essay answering the question, "How has attending a Catholic school helped you unite with others in Christ?"

Because of COVID-19, this year many of the activities were adapted or performed in a virtual environment to preserve the health and safety around the school community.

Troop 35 Celebrating 100 Years, seeks relics and photos

Do you have any memorabilia, images, or memories to share? Troop 35 will have its 100th Birthday, officially on April 1st, and is looking for photos & memorabilia as leaders prepare to celebrate at its home, Southside United Methodist in San Marco. Contact Assistant Scoutmaster, Jon Singleton, via email to jon@jonsingleton.com to join in the fun, festivities & sharing of fond memories.

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Eight Crusaders sign to play college athletics

Eight Bishop Kenny student athletes signed letters of intent committing to play a sport at the collegiate level on National Signing Day Feb. 3. The students will attend seven different colleges and universities with five sports being represented.

Michael Myslinski signed to play football for the University of Iowa. Myslinski will be playing center on the offensive line for the Hawkeyes. "BK football has really taught me a lot about teamwork and dedication, and I want to take that to the next level," he said. Myslinski's goal is to major in exercise science and play in the NFL.

Matthew Helow signed as a preferred walk-on to play football for the University of Georgia. Helow was one of the team captains at Bishop Kenny and played offensive positions as a safety and wide receiver. "I come from a very athletic family and I grew up watching Crusader football. The program guided me to become a strong leader and to use my spirituality to help those around me," he said. Helow would like to pursue a business major and return to Jacksonville to work with his father.

Jamia Nesmith signed to play women's basketball for the University of Charleston. She started playing basketball in middle school and has been a huge offensive weapon as a power forward. "The most successful people see adversity not as a stumbling block, but as

a steppingstone to greatness," said Nesmith. She is currently the historian for the Diversity Student Union and would like to major in psychology with the goal of joining the FBI and working in the Behavioral Science Unit.

John Costa and Charlie Pellicer both of San Marco, signed to play baseball in college. Costa committed to Tallahassee Community College as a pitcher. He has been playing baseball since the age 3 and has not missed a season. "My time at Bishop Kenny has been an awesome experience and Coach Edwards and Coach Pasqual have really helped me continue my dream of playing at the next level," Costa said. He is active in Crusader life and is a member of the Science and Spanish Clubs and is a member of the National Honor Society and Spanish Honor Society. He would like to major in finance and become a certified financial planner after graduation.

Pellicer committed to Daytona State College as a shortstop. He also is excited to continue at the next level. "The work ethic that I was taught at Bishop Kenny will shape my college career on the playing field and in the classroom," he said.

Samantha Morrison committed to Lees-McRae College for Cyclocross and Criterium racing. An Avondale resident, Morrison has been cycling since seventh grade and trains six days week and is a four-time Cyclocross State Champion and a State Criterium Champion.



John Costa, Matthew Helow, Maggie McLaughlin, Samantha Morrison, Michael Myslinski, Jamia Nesmith, Charlie Pellicer, William Weinbecker

"I embrace the freedom I feel when cycling, and I truly enjoy the peace of being alone and bring that strength against my competitors at each race," she said. She is active in Crusader life and is a member of the Interact Club and St. Vincent de Paul Society. Morrison would like to major in exercise science and continue Cyclocross and Criterium racing after college.

Mary McLaughlin of Ortega and William Weinbecker of San Marco both signed on to sail in college. McLaughlin committed to the University of South Florida. She has been a member of Bishop Kenny's sailing team for four years. "I love being on the water sailing in the sun, it challenges me to factor in the wind current each time I am on the boat to be competitive," she said. She is active in Crusader life and is a member of the Latin and Science Clubs and honor societies. She

is also a member of the Mu Alpha Theta, Rho Kappa, and the National Honor Society. In her spare time, McLaughlin works at the Florida Yacht Club giving sailing lessons to younger children. She would like to major in biology and psychology with the goal of becoming a pediatric psychiatrist.

Meanwhile, Weinbecker has committed to sail at the United States Merchant Marine Academy and has been sponsored by Florida Senator Mark Rubio. Weinbecker began sailing competitively at the age of 7. "I love sailing because it gets me out on the water, and I get that instant calm feeling." He is a member of the History and Spanish Clubs, a four-year NJROTC cadet and a member of the sailing team. He would like to major in mechanical engineering and eventually serve in the U.S. Merchant Marines.

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St. Johns student heads to fourth First Coast Bee

Winning spelling bees is becoming just routine for super speller Erik Williams. The St. Johns Country Day eighth grader secured his fourth trip to the First Coast Spelling Bee by winning the Clay County Spelling Bee, Feb. 3.

“After 10 rounds of challenging words like salubrious, beguile, legalese, and disparate, Erik correctly spelled the championship word—venerable—and received his trophy,” said Rachel Robison, school spelling bee sponsor and Latin teacher.

“In addition to representing the academic excellence of St. Johns,” continued Robison, “Erik’s kind spirit and humble nature inspired many of the officiants to approach me and compliment his extraordinary character—he is truly a Spartan in every way!”

The First Coast Spelling Bee will be held virtually on Monday, March 29, 2021.



Erik Williams with his mother, Annica, brother, David, and father, Alan Williams.



Erik Williams successfully spelled ‘venerable’ to win the Clay County Spelling Bee



Finley White, Colton Marsh and Miles Pittman dressed up as their favorite words during a Vocabulary Parade at Ruth Upson Elementary School.

Vocabulary fun at Upson Elementary

Words took on new meaning during Literacy Week at Ruth Upson Elementary. During the last week of January, students were able to dress up as their favorite vocabulary words and parade through the school. Many of the costumes were quite clever with students and teachers participating in the fun.

Catholic Schools Week honored at Bishop Snyder High School

Bishop Felipe Estévez made his annual pastoral visit to campus Feb. 2 in honor of Catholic Schools Week at Bishop Snyder High School. The day began with Mass and a celebration of Estevez’s birthday. Estevez visited classrooms and participated in a wide variety of discussions including topics such as immigration and the death penalty. He also met with members of Snyder’s Student Government Association and its Campus Ministry class to discuss the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) pastoral letter on racism, “Open Wide Our Hearts.” Students shared class discussions about the diverse backgrounds each of our students bring to the Snyder community.

Estévez’s visit concluded with the Campus Ministry students asking him to bless the new Padre Pio CALM room, a project the



Members of Ashley Gonzalez’s class celebrate winning the Jelly Trophy during Catholic Schools Week at Bishop Snyder High School

students completed themselves. The CALM (Christ Always Loves Me) room is a dedicated space for students to reflect, refocus, and remember.

Catholic Schools Week concluded with the annual Catholic Charities on Jacksonville Food Drive competition. Throughout the week students were asked to bring in jelly as part of a friendly competition. Snyder students collected 485 jars of jelly. Ashley Gonzalez’s American History class took home the Jelly Trophy for the second year with 228 jars collected.

Run for Rachel raises money for Bishop Snyder

Although it was a cold and rainy on Feb. 6, the 2nd annual Run for Rachel 5K race was another great success. Former classmates, friends, families joined forces to run and raise money in the honor of Rachel Quinones, a graduate of Bishop Snyder High School class of 2009.

While at Snyder, Quinones was involved with every aspect of the school from cross-country to membership in honor societies and extra-curricular activities. She was the Valedictorian of the class of 2009. After earning her undergraduate degree at the College of William and Mary, Quinones was accepted into the Alliance for Catholic Education Master of Education Program at the University of Notre Dame. She served her internship at St. Joseph’s Catholic School in Brownsville, Texas.

Quinones died in 2018 after a battle with cancer. Loved and respected for her intelligence, compassion, and spirit, the race was created in her memory with all proceeds going to scholarship programs at St. Joseph’s and Bishop Snyder High School. Duffy-Garcia McDonalds served as the sponsor for Run for Rachel 2021.

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Catholic Week fosters community involvement at St. Paul's

St. Paul's Catholic School-Riverside fostered community involvement and creativity as it celebrated Catholic Schools Week on Jan. 31-Feb. 6.

The weeklong event, which commenced with a mass by Bishop Felipe Estevez of the Diocese of St. Augustine, stressed on the importance of community through a school-wide food drive for Catholic Charities USA and a celebration of the role played by community helpers in helping those in need.

"Bringing in the idea of community helpers in our younger grades encourages the children to think and reflect upon the jobs that keep us safe, healthy, smart, and tended to. They have to share who they are and why they selected to dress as they did," said Principal Kim Repper.

A flag-raising ceremony also honored the country's troops and members of the school community who serve the nation.

In addition, a Book Character Day was hosted to nurture creativity and literary appreciation among the students and staff. "When students dress up as their favorite literary character, it provides them an opportunity to express their connection to literature and learning, as well as practice their public speaking skills as they usually have to share who they are and why they selected that character," said Repper.

Current health and safety measures to prevent the spread of the pandemic gave the annual festivities a different look this year. In lieu of in-person assemblies and guest speakers, activities were modified to include a virtual show to encourage and celebrate students' individual talents. Students also expressed



St. Paul's Middle School students express appreciation during Catholic Schools Week.

their appreciation to parents and teachers by creating virtual cards and presentations.

"The purpose of the week is to focus on the invaluable education Catholic schools provide to young people, as well as the celebration of our contributions to the church, service to our communities, and honoring our nation," added Repper.



Wesley Revenaugh and Angel Toro join representatives of Catholic Charities as St. Paul's Catholic School helped collect food as part of a food drive to benefit Catholic Charities USA.

St. Paul's holds food drive for Catholic Charities

St. Paul's Catholic School-Riverside led a school-wide food drive to help stock food pantries of the Catholic Charities USA. The food drive was part of the school's efforts to promote community involvement among its students as it celebrated Catholic Schools Week on Jan. 31-Feb. 6.



The Bishop Snyder State Champion Cheerleaders

Bishop Snyder athletics celebrates successful year

So far, this has been a banner year for Snyder athletics. Last fall, the football team won a state championship in the Sunshine State Conference and since school resumed in January the school's cheerleaders won the FHSAA state championship in the 1A non-tumbling competition.

In February, Destiny Cox, Alicia Horton, Ericka Perez, and Anna Pham, members of the Snyder girls weightlifting team advanced

to the state championship. Alicia Horton claimed the regional title.

Finally, the boys' basketball program won its first district championship in two tough battles over Providence and Andrew Jackson High School.

The student athletes at Snyder are anticipate more success this spring as the baseball, boys' weightlifting, softball, tennis and the track and field teams begin the spring season.



The Bishop Snyder District basketball champions

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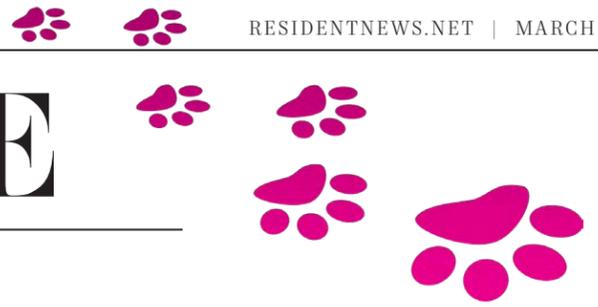
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Senior Pet Adoption

By Julie Kerns Garmendia
Resident Community News

Animal rescuers are continuously amazed when mistreated or homeless animals, express unconditional willingness to embrace and deeply bond with adopters, despite past traumatic experiences. When a senior homeless pet catches the attention of a potential adopter, physically and emotionally they radiate joy if given another chance to spend their golden years safe and loved with a forever family.

Like all homeless pets, many situations cause senior pets to be abandoned or surrendered to shelters. Owners become unable to care for pets due to finances, illness, disability, hospitalization, a move to pet-restricted care facilities or death. Too often pets left behind are unwanted by family or friends. Senior pet rescuers urge pet owners to never assume that a family member or friend will adopt their beloved pet if that becomes necessary. Specific arrangements for pets must be included in wills or final instructions.

Other senior pets become homeless if owners want a puppy or kitten, develop allergies, have a new baby or new job, prefer to relocate pet-free, move to pet-restricted housing or develop incompatibility with family members or other pets. The worst case scenario is if the now unwanted senior pet is abandoned in woods or parks, "it will be fine outside, it can hunt", or abandonment near pedestrian areas like schools or shopping centers where, "somebody will take it". Those terrified senior animals, used to love and care, are at the mercy of weather, unprepared to survive the desperate hunt for shelter, food and water or outdoor dangers.

Senior pets may not be able to jog or play as energetically, but have boundless love left to give according to senior pet rescuers. Their goal is the successful adoption of every homeless senior pet, to provide another chance for that animal to live out its lifetime comfortably in a loving home.

Old age is not a disease, it truly is just a number as active senior citizens know. Senior adults and pets typically have many golden years to enjoy due to improved medical care, nutrition and knowledge of the importance of healthy lifestyle, weight and regular exercise. Both experience similar health and mobility issues that can be managed to preserve quality of life. Just as human seniors adapt to physical changes of aging, senior pets move more carefully and adjust to diminished vision, hearing or other conditions.

Large dogs or indoor cats can live from ten to fifteen years and small dogs can live

longer. Outdoor cats, vulnerable to many dangers, only survive an average of two to five years. It is a myth that pets age seven human years for each year of their lives, according to the American Veterinarian Medical Association (AVMA).

The lower activity level of senior pets are often compatible with many adopters, including professionals who work long hours or remotely from home, or for senior citizens. All adopters greatly benefit from loyal companionship, the enjoyment of play with a cat or the exercise of walking a dog. Calm, less energetic senior pets are also perfect for those who live in small spaces, have a disability or limited mobility.

Those who open their heart and home to adopt a senior pet enrich their lives with an affectionate, constant companion who cuddles and wants nothing more than to enjoy a walk, car ride or any activity shared with their owner. Their long life experience and calm temperament helps them adapt to the lifestyle and activity level of a new home.

Senior pets are carefree compared to puppies, which must be house-broken, walked constantly and chew everything. Likewise, kittens need to be litter-trained and learn where they can safely scratch. All young animals require long-term training to avoid household damage.

Senior pet adopters get to skip all of that work because these pets are already trained, have household manners and only want to please their new owner. Unlike young animals, senior pet personalities are already developed.



Julie with her Sammy, an oversized senior shepherd dumped in woods next to Sam's on Beach Blvd., so traumatized it took weeks and many rescuers to finally safetrapp her.

Adopters know their adult size, grooming and exercise requirements. Also, shelter and rescue staff thoroughly assess animals to match adopters with a compatible pet that will successfully meet their specific requirements.

Debi Blizzard of Avondale, a fulltime paralegal and longtime volunteer at Duval County Animal Care & Control (ACPS), felt drawn to the senior dogs. During visits to ACPS she noticed that dogs with at least some basic training and positive, relaxed behavior were the lucky ones most often adopted. Blizzard became a dog trainer, to teach shelter animals basic commands and reinforce positive behavior to improve their chances of adoption.

Blizzard vividly recalls the emotional, gut reaction she felt at ACPS when she first saw

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Denise Madonia adopted Truman from Roland Senior Dog Rescue.

Unfortunately, those odds of adoption for senior pets are low. Senior dogs and cats are the most overlooked pets, with the lowest adoption rates and are most in danger of euthanasia. Of that group, large senior dogs are the least likely to be adopted and most likely to be euthanized.

Denise Madonia of San Marco is a former vet technician, now an elementary school art teacher, who adopted her third rescue dog in 2018. Madonia searched online for a senior dog to adopt and found Roland Senior Dog Rescue's website, with photos of adoptable dogs.

"I wanted a senior lap dog with silky hair. I scheduled a visit to meet the Roland's adoptable dogs with absolutely no idea what to expect when I arrived at their home. There were big dogs outside and small dogs everywhere inside, on their laps, shoulders, furniture, in dog beds, all excited to meet me. They swarmed me like bees, but were so well-behaved and all got along with each other. The Rolands obviously care so much for these dogs and are absolutely dog whisperers!" Madonia said. "The very last dog to approach me, hesitantly, was a fifteen-pound Jack Russell/bull terrier mix, no silky coat and definitely no lap dog. That's my Truman."

Madonia said that because she previously worked for a veterinarian, has had rescue

a twelve-year-old, large senior dog named Mika, utterly terrified and trembling in his kennel. She described it as an unbearable image of suffering, and she told Mika that she would be back to take him home with her, which she did.

"I started rescuing seniors like Mika. At first, I adopted those who most needed to get out of the shelter, but their care expenses hit me hard. JEA and vet bills piled up. I could not afford to continue," she said. "A friend suggested I form a nonprofit that can accept donations and build a network of fosters willing to house dogs awaiting adoption, who just needed more time and promotion. In 2018, I founded Geezer Senior Dog Rescue."

Blizzard said that every homeless pet has a unique story and that it is difficult to fully comprehend how traumatic the shelter life of noise, concrete and wire kennels, is on a family pet used to the comfort of a home. If a senior pet is separated from or loses their longtime owner, they mourn the loss of that loving, secure relationship. Displaced senior pets in shock from fear and sadness, may withdraw, stop eating, become depressed or develop negative behaviors that can ruin any remote chance of adoption.



Truman loves going everywhere - camping! - with Madonia.



Debi Blizzard of Geezer Senior Dog Rescue with Lana.

Anyone interested in helping homeless senior pets, but who cannot foster or adopt, can volunteer at a shelter to spend time with, walk or comfort senior animals until they are adopted or accepted by a rescue group. Every pet shelter and rescue has senior pets awaiting adoption and needs volunteers or donations.

Debi Blizzard of Geezer Senior Dog Rescue appreciates monetary donations for senior dog care, sent to: 4530 St. Johns Avenue, Suite #15-Unit 230, Jacksonville, FL 32210, or visit her Facebook.com/geezer-dogs-rescue. Contact Blizzard at geezerdogs@gmail.com or (904)328-0255. She has adoptable senior dogs available.

The Roland Senior Dog Rescue welcomes check or online donations for animal care expenses. Their mail address is: 5435 Painted Pony Avenue, Melrose, FL 32666. Call (352) 256-0286 or email them at rolandrescuegang@gmail.com. Visit their website, www.rolandrescuegang.com, to donate, volunteer, purchase tee shirts or other fundraising items and view their wish list of needed supplies. Adoptable dogs are shown on their website.

dogs before and no children, she knew her home was perfect for an adopted senior pet. Truman is partially deaf, but hears loud noises. He easily follows hand signals, because he rarely takes his eyes off of Madonia, whom he adores. Truman stoically tolerates Blueberry and Violet, Madonia's cats who constantly invade his dog bed.

"I know there are so many senior pets in shelters and they each deserve a home, to be loved and to live their lives out with dignity," she said. "...and that's what I want to provide."

The nonprofit Roland Senior Dog Rescue was founded by Navy veterans Ralph & Gail Roland, after he left his position as adoption coordinator for a rural county animal shelter in 2012. He saw firsthand the tragedy of too many senior pets dumped at the shelter, where they were rarely adopted and the first to be euthanized. Roland said the traumatized, frightened and confused seniors could not adapt well to shelter life and often would just give up and shake uncontrollably.



The day Denise Madonia adopted Truman.

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THE WAY WE WERE: PAT AND BETTY GEER

BY MARY WANSER
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Pat and Betty Geer met in Jacksonville in the 1960s, raised a family here, and continue to reside locally. They were high school sweethearts at Robert E. Lee. Loyalty to God, school, and country is what they learned and what they taught their children. “Time changes all things,” Betty said wistfully. “But I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else.”

A native of Corpus Christi, Texas, Pat (William) Geer was born to Helen and Rufus (Nat). He came to Florida in 1959 when he was 10 years old because his dad, who was a civil service employee for the Navy, had chosen Jacksonville over San Diego. The Geers lived first in Normandy and then moved in and out of various houses, ending up on Amherst Street in Murray Hill. Living there, Pat remembers building boats to float

under Roosevelt Boulevard out to Fishweir Creek and then into the river until they sunk.

Pat was the youngest of four with one sister, 16 years older than he, and two brothers. Their antics were typical—one brother accidentally hit Pat in the head with a baseball bat and the other let him fall out of a moving car. Today, Pat laughs about their tomfoolery.

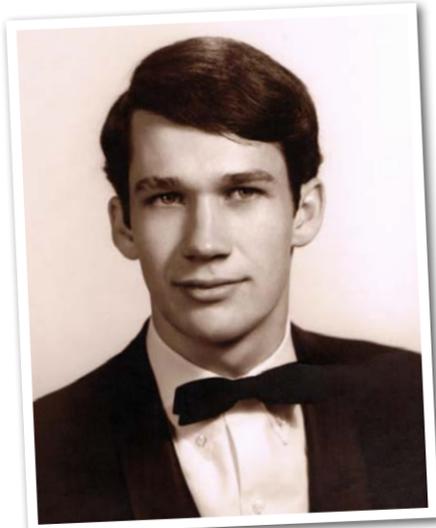
His family’s relocations were the reason for Pat attending four different elementary schools, one in Texas and three here—Normandy Village, Normandy, and Hyde Park. For junior high school, it was Lake Shore for Pat, and then onto Robert E. Lee High School where Betty already was.

Betty, a Jacksonville native, was born Elizabeth Pemberton in Old St. Luke’s Hospital. Her mother, Elizabeth Muse, was born in North Carolina and moved to the Fernandina area of Florida when she was in her early twenties. “She never worked and never drove a car,” Betty marveled. Betty’s dad, Edward R. Pemberton, came to Florida from Pittsburgh when he was just a year old because his family didn’t like cold weather in the north, and they never returned.

Betty grew up an only child in Avondale in a house her father had built on Randall Street. She attended Ruth N. Upson Elementary School where she remembers taking part in air raid drills, diving under her desk in case an atomic bomb came. “Back then, I walked to school. I lived about a half mile as the bird flies from the school, but I had to walk across Roosevelt Boulevard from the other side of the railroad tracks. That’s different; a lot of kids won’t walk that far now,” she said. She was a Girl Scout. She attended John Gorrie Junior High and



Geer Family Christmas 2016: Back Row - Pat Geer, Richard Geer, Bre Geer, Blayne Geer, Christen Geer, August Geer, Betty Geer, Jeff Strickland, Sheryl Geer Strickland. Front Row - Xander Geer, Jason Geer, Mayson Geer, and dog, Wesley



Pat Geer as a Robert E. Lee High School senior, 1967

remembers riding her bike alone to Willowbranch Park to get books from the library. “It was a great time back then. You could go anywhere and do anything without any fear,” she said. She’d roller skate on Rensselaer Avenue in metal skates that required a key. Then, it was on to Lee High, as if she were there awaiting Pat, one year her junior, to come.

Though they didn’t know each other yet, Pat and Betty both recall Saturday mornings at the Edgewood Theatre, music concerts in Woodstock Park, free dance clubs, and youth centers where teens could congregate. “We grew up in the best of times. The 50s and 60s I don’t think you can beat. We were Baby Boomers. We grew up saying The Pledge,” Betty explained. She described it as a time when religion, high school loyalty,



Betty Pemberton at graduation from Robert E. Lee High School, 1966



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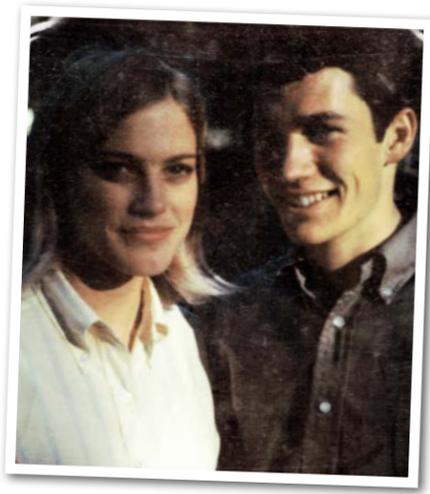


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Betty Pemberton and Pat Geer, 1966-1967

and patriotism were very important. “I would never want to replace those years of my life,” Betty said.

They first met at the Green Street Youth Center where Pat was playing drums in a band called The Malibus. “One of Betty’s best buddies, Kay Musselwhite, had a crush on our saxophone player, David Hall,” Pat shared as Betty giggled. The two friends showed up at the Center, and Betty immediately liked the drummer, Pat, and thought he was “cute at first sight,” she said. Then, they’d see each other at Lee High victory dances after football games where The Malibus would play. Pat was a drummer in Lee’s band, too, and he recalled a walkway between the main school and the band room where he and Betty would often meet to talk.

Pat told how he lived on the “opposite side of the tracks” from Betty, and he would ride his bike to her house. Mrs. Pemberton found it odd that a high school boy would be riding a bicycle because her daughter had a car as a senior. But he was a year younger, still a junior, and didn’t yet have his driver’s license.

Pat recalled riding on the bus with the rest of the Lee band to play at a football game against Fletcher when a crazy lady in a 1960 Pontiac, with her friend in the passenger seat, was driving close alongside, feverishly waving. It was Betty, wanting to catch a glimpse of Pat. “I did some reckless things back then,” Betty admitted. “I remember no fear, no stress,” she said.

Betty holds fond memories of her family’s summer home on Neptune Beach, another one her dad had built in 1962. She didn’t know back then that someday she’d be spending time there as an adult with her own children and, beyond that, occasions with grandchildren as well.

In 1966, Betty graduated from Lee. The Malibus played at her prom held at the Jacksonville Coliseum, which has since been torn down. And she got a summer job at the main post office downtown where the state attorney’s office is now. Her dad had retired from there the year before after a 46-year postal career. In the fall, Betty went off to Georgia to attend a Methodist school, Andrew College, for two years, and Kay Musselwhite went along with her.

In 1967, while Betty was away at junior college, Pat graduated from Lee and worked for a short time as a civil service apprentice at Naval Air Station before joining the Air Force. Pat carried a photo of Betty and himself in a footlocker while on active duty. The young couple kept in touch via handwritten letters, and Pat has saved many.

On May 10, 1969, they were married in the church Betty grew up in, Trinity United Methodist Church in Avondale on the corner of Glendale and Eloise Streets. It has since changed to Holy Trinity Anglican Church, but before it did, Betty had been heavily involved as an active volunteer.

Their first home was a second-story rental on Forbes Street near Kings Street. That was before purchasing from Betty’s parents their Randall Street house, the one in which

Betty grew up. “Then, Betty’s parents wanted their house back,” Pat said. Her parents weren’t happy in their new home in Southside, they missed Randall Street, and the Geer family was growing, so ownership changed again. Pat, Betty, and their three children—two boys with a girl in the middle—moved a couple of blocks away to Wolfe Street. “We kept migrating all over the neighborhood,” Betty said.

The Wolfe Street house wasn’t quite big enough; a large room was added onto the side. Matching bricks could not be found for the addition, so Pat and Betty removed the bricks from the end themselves, chipped them out one by one by hand, to reuse on the new front so that it would match the existing front. “That was a hard job. I can remember it like it was yesterday,” Betty said. “And after all that, we moved to Oak Street,” Pat added. Their migration to bigger places continued.

“I wanted kids so badly,” Betty said. She admitted to feeling lonely without siblings, so she knew she wanted to have more than one child. “Betty’s focus was the kids, making sure that they grew up right, while I was out working,” Pat said.

After his active duty in the Air Force, Pat went back to work for the Navy for a little while and then for Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, which became BellSouth Telecommunications. He retired from there 35 years later, prior to the AT&T purchase, and went into business with his first son, Richard, forming Geer Services, Inc., a web design and development company. The two moved into an office in what is now called the TIAA Bank Center, a skyscraper on West Bay Street. “I was kinda lazy,” Pat admitted. His BellSouth office was in the same building. “So, I just had to move my stuff on a freight elevator down to the fourth floor,” he said. They are still in operation today but have since moved up to the fourteenth floor. Father and son maintained parallel careers, serving simultaneously in the Air National Guard—Pat for 31 years and Richard for 20. The duo was featured in an Air Force Times article.



The Malibus 1966

In addition to being a businessman, Pat is active in many community causes. He is on the board of the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association; he is a Mason, a past master of Albert J. Russell Lodge No. 126; he is involved with the Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial; and, together with his son, their company provides the website and some marketing for Wreaths Across America Jacksonville.

Pat is also on a committee, working with Norman Abraham and others, to preserve the name of their alma mater, Robert E. Lee High School. He helps on the technology side, with the website and online marketing. “The reason I feel so strongly is because of the memories that Betty and I have from there. We don’t think you should change history. You should teach history,” he said. He believes the money that would be spent on name changing would be better spent on education and safety.

Pat & Betty now live on Park Street near Cedar River within a mile of where they

each grew up and have their three children living within a 10-mile radius. Richard purchased the Murray Hill house that Pat grew up in. Their daughter, Sheryl Geer Strickland, lives in St. Nicholas in a house that had belonged to Betty’s paternal aunts and uncles. Their younger

son, Jason, who has given them four grandchildren, lives in the Whitehouse area. And both houses built by Betty’s father are still in the family. “We’re like a commune,” Betty said through her light-hearted laugh. Jacksonville is not only where they live, it’s what they love.



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As Jones retires, he leaves RAP in good shape



Warren Jones

After three years as executive director of Riverside Avondale Preservation, Warren Jones will retire this spring.

Although he has guided the nonprofit for a relatively short time, Jones has made an indelible mark on the community. “Under Warren’s watch, we have strengthened the organization through the development of our Strategic Framework, a strategic plan for the Riverside Arts Market and a Development and Membership Strategic plan,” said Brooks Andrews, chairman of the RAP Board of Directors. “We have established a new organization, the 5 Points Collaborative, to bring together stakeholders in the community to merge their individual visions for their organizations into a set of priorities that benefit this vital commercial district.”

Jones leadership has also proved invaluable to the preservation organization as it encountered unforeseen challenges due to COVID-19, Andrews said.

“Warren’s steady hand and leadership has been especially evident during this past year given the fiscal challenges brought by COVID. Limitations brought about a need to quickly pivot from our plans, activities, and events for the year. Warren has led us through this unexpected period with a focus on alternative means of communications,

spending discipline, a focus on development and membership and outreach to our community. Ironically, RAP is stronger in many ways, having gone through this challenging period,” he said.

Prior to moving to Jacksonville, Jones spent 34 years working as an executive in a hospital in Tallahassee. In moving to Northeast Florida, Jones said he and his wife, Faith, were looking to live in a “walkable neighborhood with great restaurants.” Avondale more than fit the bill, he said.

“We found friendly, diverse, interesting people, wonderful business districts, creative artists, and neighbors who are passionate about the uniquely special environment we have the opportunity to live in now and preserve for the residents to come,” Jones said. “The opportunity to work with Riverside Avondale Preservation was very fortuitous for me because it provided the opportunity to work to preserve our neighborhood and help the people who love their community. That kind of work is very satisfying.”

Jacksonville Historian Wayne Wood, founder of RAP, said finding someone to take over for Jones would be difficult. “Warren has been one of the greatest executive directors that RAP has had since I

“We look forward to volunteering here in our community, our home”

- Warren Jones

founded the organization in 1974,” he said. “He brought a level of professionalism, knowledge, and concern for the neighborhood that we and very few nonprofit organizations have had. Since he preceded this job as a hospital executive of in Tallahassee, he has a legion of skills for running an organization, and RAP has been the beneficiary of that. He leaves very big shoes to fill.”

Although he has lived in Avondale a relatively short time, Jones said he and his wife think of it as home and plan to remain in the historic neighborhood. “We look forward to volunteering here in our community, our home,” he said.



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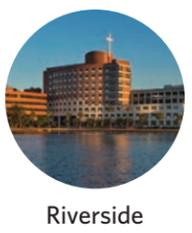
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Shari Duval

February 4, 2021 - Sept. 23, 1945
Ponte Vedra Beach



Shari Duval, 75 years old, had a peaceful passing as she slept on Feb. 4. Cancer was the cause. Her family and three dogs were by her side.

She was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on Sept. 23, 1945 as Sharon Lee Fink to parents named Melvin and Ruth. She was a graduate of Woodward High School before attending the University of Cincinnati.

She was wife for 25 years to Bob Duval, a PGA Champions Tour victor and Golf Channel analyst. She was mom to Jamie and Brett, stepmother to Deidre and David, and grandma to 11.

She held a variety of jobs throughout her life, including worker in an ophthalmology office, employee for Gibson Greeting Cards, and an original owner of the Players Café in Ponte Vedra Beach. In Jacksonville's historic communities, Duval was philanthropist, volunteering with and fundraising for charities within the city devoted to veterans, where she learned of the staggering number of warriors who return home suicidal, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In 2011, after her son, Brett Simon, had become one of those traumatized heroes after having served two tours in Iraq in 2005 and 2010, Duval founded K9s for Warriors, a nonprofit organization that provides service dogs to disabled American veterans. The charity rescues and trains shelter canines, preparing them to be pets of vets suffering from PTSD, brain injuries, and/or military sexual trauma.

The idea came to Duval to help struggling veterans in this way because, prior to his military service, her son was a member of the Cincinnati Police Department's K-9 unit. He went to Iraq as an independent contractor for the Department of Defense with a mission of handling dogs that searched for weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, upon his return, he was not the same man. Duval noticed that the only joy she saw in her son's eyes was when he was with dogs.

Duval's organization began in a 1,000-square-foot Palm Valley house that she and her husband had purchased on an acre of land. They rescued shelter dogs, and Simon trained them. She reached out on Facebook, looking for struggling veterans to live in the house and partner with the dogs. Three came for three weeks. Their suffering lessened.

It took two years to expand into a bigger house that could accommodate five veterans at a time. Thanks to Duval's successful efforts in finding donors and supporters of the cause, the

expansion continued and within another two years, the need again exceeded the space.

In 2015, the current headquarters in Ponte Vedra opened on nine acres of donated land that encompass enough suites to accommodate 12 warriors per month on their three-week stays, 67 kennel stalls, training grounds, and offices for administration. In 2018, a second campus in Alachua County near Gainesville was donated, featuring nine bedrooms on 67 acres. Plans are underway for a 30-kennel dog training site in San Antonio, Texas. K9s for Warriors is the largest provider of its kind in the United States. The 501(C)(3) has rescued over 1,268 dogs and over 653 warriors whose service spans five branches.

In her lifetime, Duval's valiant accomplishments in saving dogs on the brink of euthanasia and saving war heroes on the brink of suicide, ushering them toward lives of dignity and independence, did not go unnoticed.

In 2015, Duval was hosted on a CNN segment. In 2017, she held a golden apple, as she was named a winner of a Florida Times-Union EVE award. The following year, Governor Rick Scott toured the K9s campus and gave a press conference there.

In 2017, the same year that she announced her retirement from K9s for Warriors while continuing as a board member, Duval gave a TEDx Jacksonville talk. In 2018, she spent five days in Washington, DC as a selected volunteer to assist in decorating the White House for the holiday season. Less than a year later, she was honored with a Medal of Honor from the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Hundreds of the vets whose lives Duval changed forever for the better, including ones who called her "Mom," left comments on Facebook in response to her passing, referring to her as "an angel on earth."

Rory Diamond, CEO of K9s for Warriors, is quoted as saying of Duval, "I'm heartbroken. She was like no one else I've ever met, and she changed my life forever."

"We can say with conviction, Shari's legacy will live on not only through K9s for Warriors, but through the countless lives and families she helped save," said Brianna Bentov on behalf of the K9s for Warriors organization.

The Duvals will hold an unannounced private service for Shari. Once COVID-19 protocols are lifted, a public service will take place at The Shari Duval K9s for Warriors National Headquarters in Ponte Vedra.

"We can say with conviction, Shari's legacy will live on not only through K9s for Warriors, but through the countless lives and families she helped save."

- Brianna Bentov



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4753 ATTLEBORO ST - \$250,000
3 BR / 2 BA / 1,221 sqft.

From 5 Points, West on Park St. to Edgewood. Right to Post St. Left to Murray Dr. Left to Attleboro. Right to 4753 on Right. Beautiful 3 bedroom, 2 bath vintage home in Murray Hill. This home has hardwood floors throughout. Roof, windows, tankless water heater, AC, all redone in 2017. Entire house has been repiped and all new electrical wire that same year. Kitchen with 40 inch soft close cabinets, granite countertops and stainless steel Samsung appliances all in 2017 also. Bathrooms have been updated with new plumbing, tile and new fixtures. This home is a must see! Detached garage being sold "as-is".



2823 COLLEGE ST - \$395,000
3 BR / 1 BA / 1,395 sqft.

From 5 Points. R on Margaret. Left on College to 2823 on Right. Come see this 3 bedroom, 1 bath bungalow in Riverside! Original butler's pantry and breakfast nook right off the kitchen. The separate dining room and living room with a wood-burning fireplace. Relax after work on either the swing on the open from the porch or out on the back deck near the fire pit. Garage has a studio apartment over it that had new floors and paint in 2020. Great way to help with that mortgage payment. Easy to show. Make your appointment today!



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FEATURED LISTING

2063 OAK ST - \$1,250,000
1 Building / 2 Stories / 5,500 sqft.

Fabulous Klutho property - Drs. Love & McGinnis Residence featured on page 135 of Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage. Located in the heart of 5 Points, this property is a gem. Presently used as multiple office spaces. Downstairs has reception/sitting area, 3 offices and 1.5 baths. Upstairs 4 offices, 2 baths plus kitchen and balcony, Covered parking for 2 cars. This is a one of a kind building in Jacksonville and a must see.



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8032 CONCORD CIR - \$164,500
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This gorgeous home is light and bright with upgrades galore which includes custom Kitchen w/ European cabinets, custom bathroom, light fixtures & window treatments. Beautiful refinished hardwood floors throughout to compliment the trending paint colors for style, calm, and harmony. Huge fenced-in back yard & washer/dryer hook up in the garage. This home is directly across from Concord Park with playgrounds and picnic areas. All new plumbing, A/C & appliances only 3 years old. All the furniture and TV on the wall comes with the sale.



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FEATURED RENTALS



2055 HERSCHEL ST 3 - \$1,595 (Residential)
2 BR / 2 BA / 1,000 sqft. / \$1,595 security deposit

RIVERSIDE HOME FOR RENT. From 5 Points, west on Park, right on Stockton, left on Gilmore to corner of Acosta. 3 BR, 1 BA, LR, DR, kitchen (R/R), CHA, w/d hookup, non-working fireplace, large screened in porch, freshly painted, new carpet, approx. 1239 sf, corner lot, 1 year lease, no pets [AVNSLB pm eh] available now.



1815 VAN WERT AVE 1 - \$1,950 (Residential)
3 BR / 2 BA / 1 HB / 1,950 sqft. / \$1,950 security deposit

AVONDALE TOWNHOME FOR RENT. From 5 Points, Park St west, south on Edgewood, right on Pine, right on Van Wert to corner of Pine. 3 BR, 2.5 BA, living/dining combo, kitchen (R/R/DW), CHA, approx. 1700 sf, wood floors downstairs, carpet in bedrooms, common laundry, \$1950 sec dep, 1 year lease, no pets, [AVLB pm fm/sh] available now.



712 EDGEWOOD AVE S - \$2,495 (Residential)
2,125 sqft.

COMMERCIAL MURRY HILL OFFICE FOR LEASE - From 5 Points, take Park St west, right on Edgewood Ave S, continue north to property on the left after College St. - This charming house is a great fit for a professional office or retail space in the popular Murray Hill area. 2,125 sf of space, the building contains a front room that could be used as waiting area, kitchen, 1/2 bath, storage, one office, and a reception area downstairs. There are 3 office spaces & a full bath upstairs.