

## SCHOOL IS COOL



Tianna Fordham and Ben Meadows attend Riverside High School and Finnley Meadows attends LaVilla School of the Arts



Avery Bilanchone attends Stockton Elementary



Azi and Zuri Benn attend Riverside Presbyterian Day School

SEE MORE ON PAGE 43



## Local Parents And Schools Clash Over Mask Mandates

BY KEVIN J. MEERSCHAERT  
Resident Community News

As the mask mandate debate continues, a recent ruling was passed down Aug. 27 by 2nd Judicial Court Judge John C. Cooper which ruled the state ban on mask mandates invalid and the Governor overreached in his authority.

Cooper said the argument against masks “reflects a minority, perhaps even a small minority of medical and scientific opinion.” He even went so far as to say that the CDC is the “gold standard” for public health, critics would argue the CDC has issued contradictory guidelines since the start of the pandemic, first stating that masks were only necessary for health care workers and people who were sick.

“I conclude that this evidence demonstrates that face mask policies that follow CDC guidance are at this point in time, reasonable and consistent with the best scientific and medical opinion guidance in the country at this time,” Cooper said.

As the number of Delta variant cases of COVID-19 continues to rise, a battle over mask mandates

in schools is raging in Jacksonville and across Florida.

Gov. Ron DeSantis previously issued an executive order banning mask mandates by school districts. He also signed into law the “Parents Bill of Rights” passed by the legislature this summer in HB 421. The rulings in question surround much of the language in sections 1014.01-.06.

1014.03 states:

**Infringement of Parental Rights — The state, any of its political subdivisions, any other governmental entity, or any other institution may not infringe on the fundamental rights of a parent to direct the upbringing, education, health care, and mental health of his or her minor child without demonstrating that such action is reasonable and necessary to achieve a compelling state interest and that such action is narrowly tailored and is not otherwise served by a less restrictive means.**

Another key section that is being argued is 1041.04, which states:

**(1) All parental rights are reserved to the parent of a minor child in this state without obstruction or interference from the state, any of its political subdivisions, any other governmental**

**entity, or any other institution, including, but not limited to, all of the following rights of a parent of a minor child in this state:**

Of the nine subsections, lettered a.-i.), e. is an argument that will also be critical in any appeal, it states: e.) **The right to make health care decisions for his or her minor child, unless otherwise prohibited by law.**

**Despite Governor’s order, mask policies implemented**

Since the beginning of the school year, at least ten Florida school districts, including Duval, have defied the governor and implemented mask mandates. Many private schools have followed suit. Over half of Florida students are now under mask requirements.

That has led some parents to cry foul, saying the mandates violate the “Parents Bill of Rights” since they should be the ones to make healthcare decisions for their child or children.

The debate over masks has been fierce, particularly in recent weeks as kids head back to school across Florida and the rest of the country.

READ MORE ON PAGE 22

## Murray Hill residents pursue next steps to ending ‘noxious odors’

BY KAREN RIELEY  
Resident Community News

The federal judge’s dismissal in July of a lawsuit by Murray Hill homeowners Jenny Wright, Natalie Soud, and James Cobb accusing a Westside Jacksonville chemical plant of creating ‘noxious odors’ that endanger their health, keep them from enjoying their neighborhood and negatively affecting their property values might have seemed like a death-knell for the case. Instead, homeowners are considering refiling the lawsuit.

“The court dismissed the IFF case on a procedural issue. Since that time, we have been considering all of our options and will proceed accordingly once the plaintiffs have determined which approach is in the best interests of their case and their proposed class,” said Laura Sheets, attorney with LITTLE & DUBIN, P.C., Detroit, Mich., which is representing the homeowners.

U.S. District Judge Brian Davis ruled that the lawsuit filed in January didn’t belong in federal court because the people suing and the company that they sued were all Florida citizens. Lawyers for Jacksonville homeowners noted that IFF Chemical Holdings was incorporated in Delaware.

But Davis pointed to a 2017 decision by an appeals court that said a company incorporated in one state and doing business mostly in another, as IFF Chemical Holdings does, is really a citizen of both states, and because of that, the case had to be dismissed.

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"As is still the case with a multitude of industries across the country, private solid waste companies are struggling to find and keep employees. The companies we contract with have expressed difficulty with being properly staffed and tell us that is leading to delayed pickups. This has been an ongoing issue. We continue to see a large increase with yard waste which causes trucks to fill up faster than in the winter months. We understand this can be frustrating for customers and we are working on solutions. In the meantime, many City employees in our Solid Waste division are working seven days a week to fill the gaps.

Citizens are encouraged to report problems with missed collections. To report a problem, please use the MyJax app or Myjax.custhelp.com. Citizens can also call 904-630-CITY (2489) but may experience wait times due to a high volume of calls. This is how we track missed pickups and know when to enforce fines against contractors. We greatly appreciate the patience of our citizens during this time."

For District 14, Ortega, Venetia and the east side of Murray Hill are serviced by Waste Management (formerly Advanced Disposal Services). Avondale and Riverside are serviced by the City.

After many discussions with Waste Management, I can report the situation is changing. They have accelerated their hiring process and are now offering enhanced wages, a generous signing bonus, and education opportunities for drivers, their spouses, and their children. As I pen this letter WM now has 10 new drivers finishing the in-house training, 3 starting that process, and 6 with offer letters.

Thank you to everyone who has reached out in the last few weeks. If your pickup is missed, please log it with the City. I recommend leaving the missed items by the curb so they may be collected upon first opportunity. I hear your frustration and I share it. With these additional drivers joining the pick-up crews, we will see service return to normal.

*Randy DeFoor  
Council Member*

## Main Library site for monoclonal treatment center

The Main Library in downtown Jacksonville is now the long-term site for the COVID-19 monoclonal antibody treatment center instituted as a partnership between the state and the city. Governor Ron DeSantis has announced that the new rapid response unit will administer the treatment to high-risk residents in the early stages of a COVID-19 infection as part of the state's effort to expand these treatments across Florida.

A standing order in Florida signed by the State Surgeon General allows patients to receive this treatment with a prescription or referral if administered by an eligible health care provider, according to Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry's office.

The treatment center is accessed using the 304 N. Main St. entrance to the library building. It has triple the capacity of a mobile unit and 300-plus spots available daily, according to Gov. DeSantis.

The center is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Preregistration is suggested by visiting [www.patientportalfl.com](http://www.patientportalfl.com) but not required.

In the treatment room, people receive four shots – two in the arm and two in the stomach area. Monoclonal antibodies are

authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under an Emergency Use Authorization for use in adult and pediatric patients (12 and older).

According to the Florida Department of Health, two groups of people are eligible for the treatment: people with a positive COVID test and high-risk people, including but not limited to people who are exposed to COVID; people 65 years and older; those who are overweight; people with chronic kidney, cardiac or lung disease; diabetics, immunocompromised people; people with sickle cell disease; and those with neurodevelopmental issues.

There is no copay for the treatment. Insurance will be billed for administrative costs, but no one will be turned away due to inability to pay, according to the State Health Department.

Two hours of free parking are available at the library parking garage (via the first floor and first-floor ramp) and the garage located at 33 West Duval St. Also, some parking meters are marked "Patient Parking" on Duval Street between Ocean and Laura streets and on Monroe Street between Laura and Main streets.

## WHAT IF?

The Front-Line Covid-19 Critical Care Alliance has recommended a regimen for early Covid treatment. It involves a medication that no local Jacksonville hospital will use in Covid patients.

The medication is inert in vertebrate mammals such as humans and it is perhaps the safest drug in any pharmacy. It has also been shown to have antiviral properties in over twenty viruses including COVID-19. Nevertheless, despite many studies showing benefit, this safe and inexpensive medication has been rejected for use in COVID-19 by our CDC and NIH.

So, who will ask for our forgiveness if not using this medication proves to be mistaken? Will the heads of the CDC and NIH simply say "Oops"?

Will scores of physicians resign in disgrace?

Will the moral injury of nurses be unbearable?

Will they all claim to have "followed the science"?

As Covid patients continue to perish without every possible opportunity being given to them, please tell me.... What if we're wrong?

What if we're wrong not to use Ivermectin?

*Eduardo Balbona M.D.  
Internal Medicine*

## 40th Lineup Revealed for Jacksonville Jazz Fest

More information can be found on the Jacksonville Jazz Festival social media channels and website [jacksonvillejazzfest.com](http://jacksonvillejazzfest.com).

Kicking off the festival on September 29 at the Florida Theatre, the Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition presented by Keyboard Connection - The Piano Place will feature a performance by emcee Noel Freidline. Five piano finalists, accompanied by Dennis Marks and Clyde Connor, will compete for cash prizes and the opportunity to perform at the festival on October 1.

While the festival is free to attend, limited upgraded premium experiences are still available for purchase. The premium experience options include the VIP Full Festival Experience package, VIP Single-Day Experience package and the Preferred Seating package. For full details, please visit [jacksonvillejazzfest.com](http://jacksonvillejazzfest.com).

Stay tuned to the Jacksonville Jazz Festival social media channels @jaxjazzfest and website [jacksonvillejazzfest.com](http://jacksonvillejazzfest.com) for further announcements and updates including information on the Sacred Jazz Brunch, Jazz Jam, Jazz Clinic and more.

### About the Jacksonville Jazz Festival

The Jacksonville Jazz Festival is a free, multi-day music festival produced by the City of Jacksonville Division of Sports and Entertainment. The festival welcomes residents and visitors to enjoy live music performances, food, drinks and activations throughout the weekend in Downtown Jacksonville along the St. Johns River. The Jacksonville Jazz Festival includes two stages of great music, Piano Competition, Sacred Jazz Brunch, Jazz Marketplace, Jazz Clinic and more. For updates and information, please visit [jacksonvillejazzfest.com](http://jacksonvillejazzfest.com).



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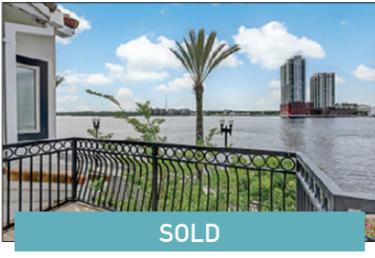


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## REAL ESTATE



# City Council Gives Final Approval For Floating Navy Museum

After over a decade in the works, the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association is now able to bring the USS Orleck to a permanent home downtown on the St. Johns River.

The City Council signed off on the lease agreement on August 10. The Association can now take the final steps to move the destroyer to Jacksonville to become a floating museum.

The Orleck will be dry docked in Port Arthur, Texas as it is given an inspection of the hull to make sure it is capable to make the trip to Jacksonville and be used as a floating museum. If it passes it will receive some hull repairs and mostly preservation work before it comes to town.

It will be docked on East Bay Street near the old Shipyards area where the new Jaguars' development is planned. The Association hopes to have the ship in place by Veterans Day.

It's been a long time coming for supporters to get a floating Naval museum to Jacksonville. "This is a big step for us. We are excited about the opportunities before us and proud of all the folks that navigated our way here," said Daniel Bean, JHNSA President.

Launched in May of 1945, the USS Orleck was commissioned shortly after the end of World War II and served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

It's the most decorated post-WW II ship ever built and was awarded 18 battle stars.

The Gearing Class destroyer was recognized as the "top gun" in Vietnam for firing over 18,000 rounds of ammunition. The Orleck included two duel cannon five-inch gun mounts, an Anti-Submarine Rocket Launcher, and a Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopter System among its major weapons systems.

It's over 390 feet in length. After its Naval Service, it was transferred to the Turkish Navy. It was transferred back to the U.S. in 2000 to become a museum ship.

# Jacksonville Committee Kicks Off Council Redistricting

BY KEVIN J. MEERSCHAERT  
Resident Community News

With the local 2020 Census numbers being released on August 12, the city of Jacksonville can now begin the decennial task of drawing new district lines for the city council and school board seats.

The Special Committee on Redistricting is tasked to draw the new lines that reflect changes to the city's population over the past ten years. On August 18 the committee, which includes five city council and two school board members, began their discussions.

Deputy Managing General Counsel Peggy Sidman explained to the committee their legal requirements and considerations it must follow when drawing the maps. Director of Planning and Development Bill Killingsworth presented to them the hard numbers and where populations changes have occurred in the past decade.

According to the census, Jacksonville's population, including the beaches and Baldwin is 995,567. The populations of the districts can't diversify by more than 10-percent. The committed can legally either use the total population of Jacksonville or those of voting age to draw the lines. Previous committees have stayed with the total population and court cases have favored using them. That would leave each council district with a population of around 74,000.

In past years, an effort was made to keep the three beach communities in the same district and to minimize having district lines cross the St. Johns River. The river had to be crossed ten years ago, but Killingsworth said it is possible to avoid that this time around if the committee so wishes. He said it will be up to them if they want to keep other areas represented by one district. "Should Cecil Field all be in one district or should it be represented by multiple districts? Should downtown be in one district or be represented by multiple districts? Clearly, if you

make a decision to minimize the river that bodes for at least two council districts," he said.

If the committee wants to make other changes like avoiding crossing interstates or dividing neighborhoods, they can do so as long as the numbers work. The four traditional minority-majority districts are not a legal requirement. However, while districts' boundaries can't be drawn along racial lines, they must also comply with the Voting Rights Act that requires some districts to be shaped to enable minority voters to act as the majority in a given geographic area. Committee Chair Aaron Bowman said he doesn't expect any problems being able to maintain the four minority-majority districts.

The good news for the committee is that Killingsworth said while the largest amount of population increased occurred in the southeastern part of the city, there has been enough growth in other areas that new maps can be drawn without having to make major changes if the committee desires. He said only District 11 is out of compliance with the 10-percent rule.

The committee doesn't appear interested in major changes to districts as it directed Killingsworth to start with the current boundaries as a guide.

Bowman said he would like to see the committee wrap up its work by mid-December ahead of the Holiday break.

By law, the proposed maps must be submitted to the Council Secretary by January 9. It is then submitted to the Rules committee.

The committee then must hold at least three public hearings in different parts of the city over the next 45 days for the public to submit their input.

The full council must approve the new maps, which include the seven school board districts and five at-large region maps by April 12, 2022.

Since the numbers were released later than during the previous census counts the maps will be finalized too late for the 2022 elections.

The new boundaries will take effect for the spring 2023 council elections and the 2024 school board races.



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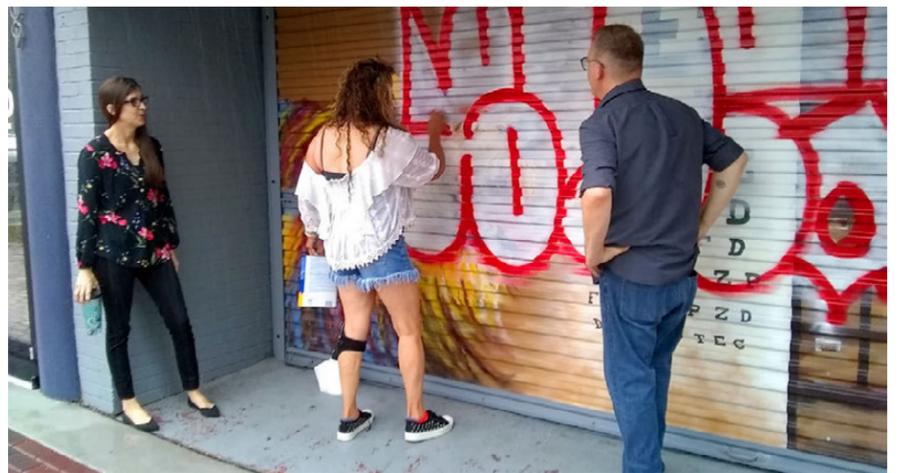
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# YOU ASKED FOR IT. HOW TO DEAL WITH GRAFFITI



Davalt Optical owners Clinton and Kelly Ross, artist Mary Jo Hinson cleaning up graffiti on roll down gate.

Sometimes it's beautiful. Usually, it's just an eyesore. Graffiti has been a problem for years in Jacksonville. It's illegal, but if your property gets tagged, the city of Jacksonville expects you to remove it. There have been numerous incidents in recent months. One of the most prominent occurred at Davalt Optical on Lomax. Their new mural on their roll down gate was tagged just before it was to be unveiled at the Lomax reopening last month..

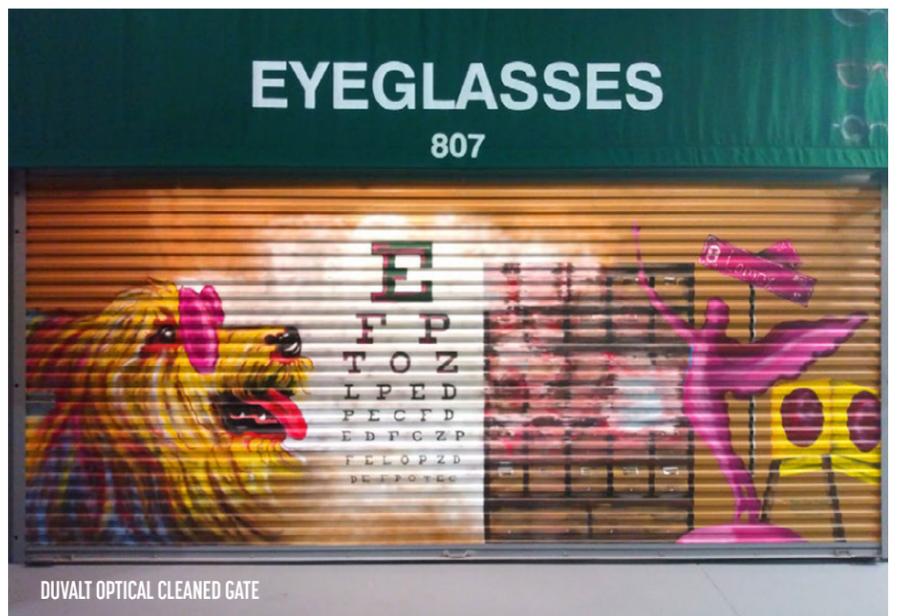
Jacksonville's Code Compliance Division enforces ordinance 518.202(9) on graffiti. On private property, clean-up is the responsibility of the owner.

Code enforcement has two ways to cite an owner.

Notice can be given and the owner has 15 days to remove the graffiti or the city will do so. The other is to issue a citation and give the owner a reasonable time to remove the graffiti. Failure to do so can lead to fines starting at \$250 and increasing based on progressive enforcement. It's possible the city will remove the graffiti and place a lien on the property.

Removal of any graffiti on public property is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works.

While graffiti is a problem, there haven't been a lot of citations. According to the city Public Affairs Department as of early August there was only one active complaint in Riverside and 11 since last October. They said there has been a total of 71 citywide during that same time period.



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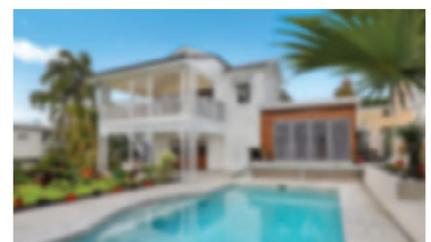
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# \$1M TO IMPROVE DRAINAGE IN 2022 NEAR BELVEDERE



A crowd of residents amass at Belvedere Park #2 with Jacksonville City Councilwoman Randy Defoor of District 14.



City Chief Engineer Robin Smith



Jacksonville City Councilwoman Randy Defoor

**BY JOEL ADDINGTON**  
Resident Community News

Flooding in several areas of Riverside is nothing new, but now the city's spending \$1 million to improve drainage in the northwest section west of Riverside High School.

It was not necessarily enough for some residents in the area, who fear the Belvedere Avenue Drainage Improvement project may not help standing water on Challen Avenue during storms.

The residents, who declined to be quoted for this story during a meeting with the city's chief engineer Robin Smith and City Councilwoman Randy Defoor at a nearby park on July 29, said multiple vehicles left parked on the street are destroyed annually and the wakes from passing vehicles during flood events push water into homes, requiring the use of sandbags.

"These poor people are getting their living rooms flooded," one woman said.

Another frustrated resident even asked if the city could provide traffic barricades for her to put out when storms come through to prompt vehicles to turn around, rather than wade down Challen.

Mr. Smith said the city rents them as needed and doesn't keep them on hand. "I wouldn't recommend it," advised the city engineer.

He said the city plans to enlarge drainage pipes and culverts that should increase the volume of water that can flow into the Willow Branch Park canal from the west, explained Mr. Smith during the public input meeting with about 50 concerned residents.

Mr. Smith said the drainage lines were surveyed for obstructions, and while some were found, including a shopping cart, they've been removed within the last year.

"As of today we have videoed the system and there are so significant blockages," said the engineer, now in his third year in the position.

Councilwoman Defoor said she grew up on Avondale Circle so she's intimately aware of the flooding challenges in the neighborhood. She committed to mounting a push for more drainage improvements should the \$1 million Belvedere project not provide significant improvement.

The project is in the design phase and it's expected to go to bid in October with completion next year.

"The positive thing is we're going to have something come from this," she the District 14 council representative. "This is not just talk. I'm not a talker, I'm a doer, so we'll figure this thing out. If [Challen] is not a part of this, then we'll have a separate one."

She described the flooding problems in the area as partly the result of sea-level rise and climate change while the engineer noted that most of the stormwater management system for Riverside and Avondale is also a century-old now.

"When they designed these storm systems a hundred years ago, they were designing them for daily rain. They weren't getting the kinds of storms we're getting now and there wasn't the density around the neighborhood to compound the issue ... It would be hundreds of millions of dollars to replace the whole system. So we have to try to find problems we can address that have the most impact. Replacing this pipe is going to impact this whole side of the [Willowbranch] canal."

Residents said flooding problems have grown increasingly worse in the last few years, particularly since Hurricane Irma damaged so much the neighborhood in 2017. Some of it is still being repaired today.

Six-year Avondale Avenue resident Matt Wolfe, who's been in the neighborhood for more than 36 years, said the frequency of standing water after storms and home and vehicle damage residents experience now is unparalleled.

"I had never had an [rain] event when there have been kayaks going down the road. But in the last five years, I've had two events when people kayak up and down Avondale Avenue," he observed.

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# Caution urged after deadly encounter with vehicle burglar

BY JOEL ADDINGTON  
Resident Community News

U.S. Coast Coast Guard member Caroline Schollaert, 26, of the 2700 block of Myra Street was shot and killed by a vehicle burglar during a confrontation at her home while she called police about 5:30 a.m. on August 3.

A week later the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) arrested Tyree Parker, 22, of the 400 block of Godwin Street, who turned himself in at its Bay Street headquarters after an arrest warrant with no bond for second-degree murder was issued against him in the fatal shooting.

Clerk of Court records show his arraignment date scheduled for September 1 but subject to change. His public defender filed motions demanding the state file more specific information about the allegation. His arrest

and booking report doesn't show why he is a suspect in the murder.

Retired Navy pilot, former Jacksonville City Council member and King Street insurance broker for several decades, Jim Love, has seen similar tragedies unfold in the neighborhood before.

He often advocates for anti-crime initiatives to better protect the neighborhood, particularly from vehicle burglars. His office is a short walk mere blocks from the recent fatal shooting scene.

"I was disheartened to hear about the murder on Myra Street especially to one of our service members," said the president of the Park and King Area Association by email recently. "I work and have lived in the historic Riverside Avondale area for more than 38 years and unfortunately I have endured a few of these tragic events. The last shooting I recall was on July 22, 2015, when a King Street restaurant employee was shot and killed while taking out the

garbage one evening. Fortunately, the perpetrator was caught and sentenced."

The association often meets with JSO to discuss local crime issues concerning residents and business owners.

"For the last few years, the leading crime has been burglaries to autos. Since many of the homes in the historic district do not have garages they must park their cars on the street and unfortunately some bad apples test the door handles at night and steal what they can," he said. "In some cases, this leads to guns being stolen as well as other valuables."

JSO promotes many tips to avoid becoming a victim: Always lock your vehicle, but especially if you park on the street; never leave firearms or other valuables like purses, wallets, computers, phones, laptops, etc. inside vehicles; and make a habit of checking locks on vehicle and home doors at 9 p.m. daily, just in case.

"In addition, many residents have been using inexpensive home video cameras such

and Ring, Wyze and Blink. Many times the video from these cameras has helped JSO with solving some of the local crimes," said Mr. Love. "As City Councilman from 2011 to 2019, I worked with JSO to request additional help when needed. JSO extensively uses statistics to determine the most efficient areas to deploy patrolman but relies on citizen help to be the eyes and ears of the community."

He encourages residents to be part of the crime solution by participating in JSO watch groups. Learn more at [www.jaxsheriff.org](http://www.jaxsheriff.org).

"Currently, many are meeting online," said Mr. Love.

If you have a non-emergency tip for JSO you can call 904-630-0500 or you can call anonymously at 866-845-8477.

"The bottom line is to be aware of your situation and don't be afraid to call the sheriff's office (911 in an emergency and 630-0500 in a non-emergency) when you see something suspicious," said Mr. Love.

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# Groundwork Jacksonville Breaks Ground On Emerald Trail

BY KEVIN J. MEERSCHAERT  
Resident Community News

Over 100 years ago, legendary architect Henry Klutho envisioned what he called an “Emerald Necklace” that would connect a series of trails, parks, creeks, and greenspace around Jacksonville’s urban core.

After years of planning, Groundwork Jacksonville has broken ground on the first phase of the Emerald Trail.

The LaVilla Link will connect Brooklyn to LaVilla and the S-Line Rail Link. Construction will begin in September and about a year to complete. The estimated construction cost is about \$8.9 million.

The 14-foot-wide concrete pedestrian/ bike trail will include shade trees and native plants and flowers along the route.

The first phase of the path will stretch over the Park Street Bridge and head north along Lee Street, turn west at Church St and meander northward across Beaver St until reaching the S-Line Rail Trail at Wilcox and State streets.

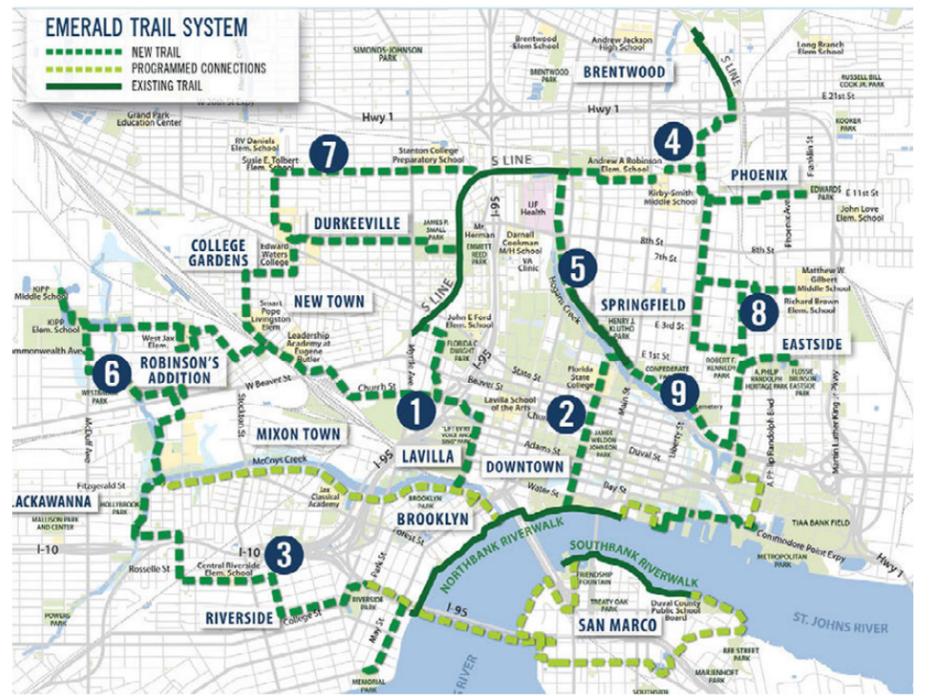
When it is eventually completed the 30-mile Emerald Trail will connect 14 historic Jacksonville urban neighborhoods to downtown, the St. Johns River, and McCoy’s and Hogans Creeks. It’s hoped to be completed by 2029.

Groundwork Jacksonville CEO Kay Ehas said the trail has been a collective vision of Jacksonville residents for over a century and one of the primary goals in establishing the Groundwork Trust. When she came on board in 2017, Groundwork didn’t have a plan in place. That led to the master plan for the Emerald Trail which has been approved by the City Council and has garnered financial support from the city and private donations.

Ehas said being able to connect historic neighborhoods is one of the most exciting parts of the trail. “People will be seeing neighborhoods that they’ve never seen before,” she said. “When you see black neighborhoods they look just like Riverside in terms of their housing stock.”

Ehas said the project would not have been possible without dedicated funding from the recently approved gas tax increase in Jacksonville. Of the billion dollars expected to be raised through the six-cent gas tax hike over the next 30 years, \$132 million from tax has been earmarked for the Emerald Trail.

The next phase will be Hogan Street. It will run from Hogan’s Creek to the FSCJ campus. Ehas said they are currently working with landowners on the plan. That piece will cost about \$7 million.



Stakeholders engaged in the Emerald Trail project tossed dirt to celebrate the first phase of the trail getting underway.



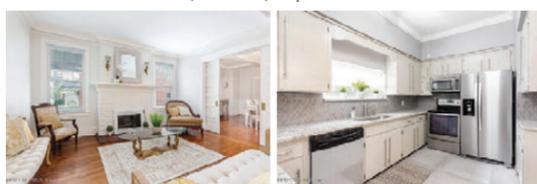
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#### What's your favorite part about being a realtor?

- C: Meeting new people, hearing their stories and being a part of a major milestone in their life. It's the most rewarding job I've ever had.
- D: Aside from essentially being my own boss, it's all about relationships. As a Realtor, I get the opportunity to help people realize their dream of home ownership. For many, buying a home will be their largest purchase and it's a wonderful feeling to see buyer's eyes light up as they sign on the dotted line.

#### Why do you love Jacksonville?

- C: I was born and raised in Jacksonville so this is home for me. I love how much this city has to offer. There really is something here for everyone!
- D: Jacksonville is my home. I've lived here most of my life and thoroughly enjoy all the natural splendor our city has to offer. As an avid kayaker, Jax is simply amazing. There are several spots around town that seem so remote while on the water, you'd think you were in an entirely different country.

#### What's your real-life super power?

- C: I am an excellent parallel parker.
- D: My mother used to say that I've never met a stranger. I have an uncanny ability to find common ground with most anyone. Regardless of your walk of life, I'll find a connection and kick it with a tasty groove.

# Riverfront Parks endorses duPont Fund's conceptual Esplanade Plan

BY KAREN RIELEY  
Resident Community News

Riverfront Parks Now (RPN) endorses Jessie Ball duPont Fund's recently unveiled Esplanade Plan for the publicly owned Shipyards and Metropolitan Park lands.

"We're encouraging the community rally behind this public space plan and the corresponding social, cultural and urban planning principles," said Nancy Powell, chair of the RPN Steering Committee. "The Esplanade Plan aligns with our vision and benefits our community with activated riverfront spaces that will attract people downtown and provide access and enjoyment, but also will reduce flooding damage, connect to the Emerald Trail and attract business investment."

The Esplanade Plan was developed by international design firms DVDL and WXY in conjunction with the duPont Fund and the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA). It is in response to the preliminary results of the duPont Fund's community engagement process that included benchmarking research, surveys, community meetings and lengthy discussions with local experts and key stakeholders.

The plan includes 49.5 acres of public parkland and reimagines Metropolitan Park and the Shipyards as one active park along the river with wide-open greens, unobstructed river views, kayak ramps, walking piers, splash zones, spaces dedicated to boutique



retail, dining, and more. The Esplanade Plan also incorporates the relocation of MOSH and a luxury hotel proposed by Jaguars owner Shad Khan, as well as the Orleck Naval Ship Museum.

"This is not yet a final park design, and the amenities and features will be developed with further public input," said Powell, "But first we need the park boundaries to be delineated so that the city and collaborating entities can plan in a holistic way and with a phased approach. The duPont Fund has shown here that it's possible to provide ample space for play areas, cafes and bars, native plants, and cultural activities as well as space

to host large events, festivals, and Jaguar celebrations, too."

Riverfront Parks Now is a citizen-led initiative consisting of representatives from non-profit organizations including the American Institute of Architects - Jacksonville Chapter, Duval Audubon Society, ElderSource, First Coast Freethought Society, Garden Club of Jacksonville, Greenscape, Ixia Chapter - Florida Native Plant Society, Jacksonville Urban League, Late Bloomers Garden Club, League of Women Voters, Memorial Park Association, Scenic Jacksonville, Sierra Club of Northeast Florida, and the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund convened a series of conversations about how best to activate the city's downtown waterfront for the benefit of all of residents and visitors. Project partners included DVDL, an agency of cultural forecasters working with cultural institutions and public spaces around the country, leading the project and development of the activation plan; Groundwork Jacksonville, leading the community engagement work in their capacity as the city's nonprofit trust dedicated to creating a more walkable, liveable community; WXY, a New York-based design and planning firm; and JLP+D, a funding strategy and development firm.

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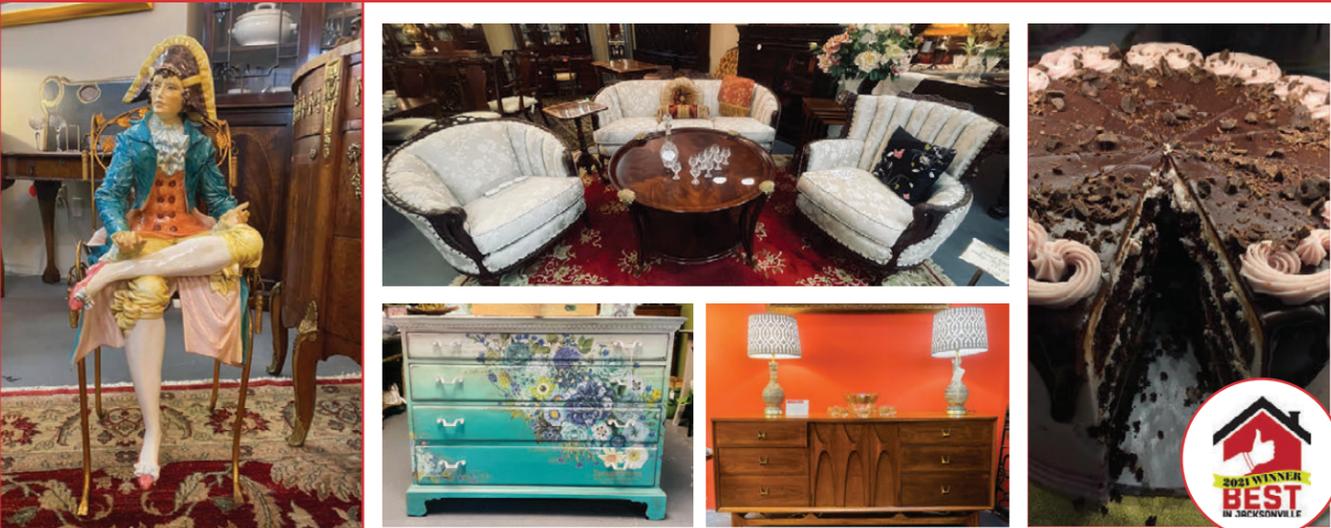
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# Brooklyn: Bridging the old and the new



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**BY SUSANNAH PARMENTER**  
Resident Community News

Brooklyn, one of the oldest neighborhoods in downtown Jacksonville, is opening a new chapter in its ongoing story of growth and revitalization via several new commercial and residential ventures.

The neighborhood is situated along the St. Johns River, south of downtown. It is bounded by McCoys Creek and the CSX Railroad lines to the North and Interstate 95 to the south.

Established shortly before the Civil War as a residential neighborhood, Brooklyn has since expanded from its humble beginnings of wooden houses and small stores into a sprawling mixed-use area that puts a heavy emphasis on fostering a healthy lifestyle and sustainability.

The expansion includes green areas, outdoor foot paths, shopping centers, coffee houses, brew pubs, full-blown restaurants and modern apartment complexes with views overlooking the St. Johns River as well as swimming pools and workout studios.

The latest and largest addition to this evolving and up-and-coming area is Fidelity National Services Inc. (FIS), a provider of financial technology services.

FIS, a Fortune 200 company, in 2019 received city and state approvals on an economic development package for its plans to build a new, expanded world headquarters in Brooklyn. In June, the company celebrated the topping off of the final steel beam alongside local leaders, including Mayor Lenny Curry.

A spokesperson for FIS offered insight into why the company chose to consolidate its Jacksonville operations in a new complex located at 323 Riverside Avenue. -

“FIS is looking forward to opening its new headquarters in 2022. There is a revival taking place in Brooklyn, and we believe this new building will add to the neighborhood’s aesthetics. It will be one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in Jacksonville, LEED Platinum certified and built in line with the WELL Building Standard. For our growing employee base, it will feature 12 stories and 25,000 square feet of state-of-the-art client engagement and innovation centers, a workout facility, and an on-site dining hall—all with expansive views of the St. Johns River. Additionally, it will provide a scenic, continuous shaded walkway from Riverside Avenue to the Riverwalk, including a linear garden walk with engaging public art, benches and a 21 foot-green wall that the whole community can enjoy.”

Atlanta-based developer Jeff Fuqua is also investing in the area. Fuqua is working with the Downtown Investment Authority on turning the former Florida Times-Union property into a mixed-use development. The project is titled ‘One Riverside Avenue.’

Lori Boyer, DIA Chief Executive Office, said the development is a combination of retail and residential. “The city gets the land that it needs to widen McCoys Creek and a new park space. There are a couple acres of new parks that are Riverfront and it’s adjacent to the railroad tracks. Everything from McCoys Creek over to the railroad track would be a new public park. The development proposal also includes another

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new grocer and additional retail, including restaurants along McCoy's Creek and along the riverfront."

At its most recent meeting, the DIA board did not approve the project - but Boyer says to interpret the decision as "go back and work with the developer on a couple aspects."

Boyer hopes to have an updated proposal, with a restaurant in the initial development phase, approved at the DIA Board's next meeting, on September 2.

Fuqua previously teamed with Jacksonville-based Regency Centers Corp. to develop the Brooklyn Station on Riverside Avenue. Anchored by The Fresh Market, the shopping center continues to be a popular mainstay since it opened in 2014.

Along with new commercial developments, Brooklyn also is experiencing residential expansion. Vista Brooklyn, a new apartment community, opened in April at 200 Riverside Avenue.

Lisa Gunderson, Vice President of Asset Management, Bristol Development Group, was drawn to the history and potential of the area. "We identified this neighborhood close to 10 years ago as a place that we saw an opportunity for growth. We loved what we saw in the neighboring areas, in Five Points and Avondale. We loved that this was a bridge between those areas and downtown. We loved the history of the neighborhood and all the things that that brought to the experience. We thought that there was a need for a differentiator in a housing opportunity."

Gunderson says Vista Brooklyn is designed to be an "experience for everyone who walks through its doors." The 10-floor property's amenities include a gift-wrapping room, pet spa and a rooftop pool and beer garden where

residents can bring their own keg for a celebration. According to Gunderson, the property is currently 40 percent leased.

Brooklyn Vista's ground-floor retail space also is getting a new resident: NAI Hallmark. The brokerage and property management firm will lease up to 40 percent of the ground floor. The company is also in "serious negotiations" with several food and beverage providers to lease the remaining space.

Gunderson adds that "wellness" is a focal point of Vista Brooklyn. To that end, the complex includes a fitness center, wellness studio and bike room.

Complementing Vista Brooklyn's health and wellness focus is the Winston Family YMCA, a 72,000-square-foot hub that offers fitness activities, exercise programs and workout equipment.

It is also home to the Luther and Blanche Coggin Healthy Living Center, in partnership with Baptist Health, Brooks Rehabilitation and Florida Blue.

Named after the late James H. Winston, a Jacksonville civic leader, real estate developer and philanthropist, the YMCA also has expansion plans on the horizon. Tim Burrows, District Executive Director, said, "We're working on a capital expansion of our first floor and part of those discussions is having an outdoor fitness space on the river. We have a beautiful grass space outside of our aquatic center and we're looking to create community fitness classes." Burrows is also working with a committee to build a rooftop wellness center with views of the river.

According to Burrows, plans call for the outdoor fitness area to be completed by next summer.

Brooklyn's growth story also contains some lows as well as highs. In July 2016, Top Chef

season seven winner, Kevin Sbraga abruptly shut down his eatery, Sbraga & Co. The restaurant had opened the prior November at 220 Riverside. The opening of Sbraga was followed by Hobnob and Brix Wood Fired Pizza. All three of the restaurants eventually closed.

On the bright side: Anejo Cocina, a Mexican restaurant with a location in Ponte Vedra has moved in to 220 Riverside. Anejo is a new restaurant concept from Blanca Valencia and family. The family also own Salsas and Que Pasa Mexican restaurants in the area. The new restaurant opened in March.

Asian restaurant Bento has also opened a location in Brooklyn Place Shopping center. The center is located adjacent to Brooklyn Station.

Along with restaurants, new hotels are also moving into the neighborhood. A Marriott Residence Inn is being developed at 357 Oak Street. Owned and operated by Miami-based Baywood Hotels Inc., under the Residence Inn brand, the hotel includes studio, one- and

two-bedroom suites with separate living and sleeping areas. The hotel is on pace to open by the end of next month.

Burrows has seen Brooklyn evolve over the years. "I'd probably say over the past five years, the neighborhood really developed itself." He says he is optimistic about the new developments. "It's really just blown up. I don't know a better word for it. And there's even more growth to be had."



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# City Council Approves Jaguars Performance Center



The Jacksonville City Council has unanimously given its approval to the Jacksonville Jaguars' plan to build a new \$120 million football performance center. The city will pay \$60 million of the cost. The Jaguars will cover the rest, including any cost overruns.

The 127,087 square foot facility will include one indoor and two outdoor practice fields, executives' coaches' and scouts' offices, a weight room and a team store, medical facilities, and new concession areas and bleachers.

The city will own the facility which will be leased back to the Jaguars. It's a 30-year lease with two ten-year extension options. The Jags lease of the stadium that runs through the 2030 season, is not part of the deal.

The existing flex field will be used by Jacksonville's Parks and Recreation Department

for various activities. The Jaguars will pay for 75-percent of the maintenance for the flex field since it will be used during game days and other team activities.

Jaguars President Mark Lamping said it is a huge step for the franchise. "Journeys start with a single step but when you look back upon it the first step is the most important and this is the key first step in the stadium's future and the team's future in northeast Florida," he said.

Lamping said he expects they'll be able to begin construction right after the end of the year and be completed by the beginning of the 2023 season.

He said he expects the Jaguars' plans for the Shipyards, which includes a hotel and other amenities will be submitted to City Council in September.

## NOXIOUS ODOR IN MURRAY HILL | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

"Murray Hill Preservation Association is closely monitoring the progress of the class action lawsuit regarding the chemical smell. Hopefully the case will be refiled in the proper

jurisdiction so that the merits of the claim can be assessed by a court of law," said Joshua Gellers, a Murray Hill Preservation Association (MHPA) board member who is representing

the association on the odor issue. "In the meantime, we encourage all of our community members to stay vigilant and continue to report incidents to city authorities at <https://myjax.custhelp.com/> or by calling 904-630-CITY (2489)."

As previously reported by *The Resident News*, according to its website, International Flavors and Fragrances, known as IFF, is a global fragrance company that uses "by-products from the paper-making process to make ingredients for fine fragrances and products for personal care, fabric care, and home care." It uses sulfur and turpentine in its processes that are discharged in wastewater.

Murray Hill residents think the odor that they describe as "sickly sweet" is coming from an IFF factory located at 2051 North Lane Avenue, three to five miles away from Murray Hill. The City of Jacksonville's Environmental Quality Division served IFF with a cease-and-desist citation on Dec. 11, 2020, and is working with IFF to resolve the matter. Three residents of Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods filed a civil lawsuit on Jan. 12, 2021.

The company denies that its factory is the source of the odor described by residents.

"IFF is committed to doing better for our people, customers and communities. We do not believe that IFF is the source of objectionable odor in the Murray Hill area and will vigorously defend any lawsuit if another one is filed against IFF," said Michael Munz, spokesman for IFF.

"We previously engaged environmental, health and safety experts to conduct scientific review and full evaluation of our Jacksonville facility. Their review confirmed that our Jacksonville facility is not the likely source of objectionable odor in the Murray Hill area. We had this study conducted because we also want to know, just as the community does, what is the true source of the odor. We have shared this information with the various agencies at the state and city levels and made it available to the community as well. We are working hard to better understand what residents in Jacksonville are experiencing and are fully committed to investigating every complaint submitted to IFF."

IFF's website at [www.IFFJaxCommunity.com](http://www.IFFJaxCommunity.com) includes a Contact Us page for residents with inquiries or ideas.

At issue is the fact that many complaints cannot be validated because they are made at after normal work hours when the Environmental Quality Division cannot investigate. The Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board has authorized funding of a study by Envirosuite to better understand and manage the odor complaints within urban areas of the city. Envirosuite provides 24-7 monitoring of air pollutants and their origins, which the City's Environmental Quality Division is not able to do.

"Completing a 12-month study with continuous monitoring will provide the city with additional information that may help enable future response to community concerns even at times when personnel may not be available to perform a site inspection and a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the odor being perceived, said Caroline Adkins, public relations specialist for the City of Jacksonville. This study will also ... take in all the different possible weather variables through the year that might have a different effect on how the odor is perceived through the city."

Eleven sensors will be deployed within the study area. Those sensors will compile continuous monitoring information which can be pulled with reports at any time. It will not, however, monitor any particular facility or obtain evidence to document a violation of any law, rule or regulation during the study period.

City Councilmembers Al Ferraro, District 2, and Randy DeFoor, District 14, co-sponsored ORD #2021-0461 on July 27 seeking to appropriate \$125,392.00 in a fund balance from the Environmental Protection Fund to conduct an urban area odor study. The ordinance was amended to provide a carryover of funds through Sept. 30, 2023, and approved by the Transportation, Energy & Utilities Committee on Aug. 16 and by the Finance and Rules committees on Aug. 17. It includes a funding agreement between the City of Jacksonville and EMS Bruel & KJAER, Inc. D/B/A Envirosuite, Inc., with oversight by the Neighborhoods Department of the Environmental Quality Division and a final report to the Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board.

City Council passed the ordinance at its Aug. 24 meeting as amended with 16 voting nay and none voting yea.




## Concert Calendar

# FALL SEASON 2021

<p><b>Fri 10/1 @ 7 pm</b> (Reception 6 p.m.) <b>*Opening Night Kick-Off and Reception</b> Fanya Lin, Piano</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Sun 10/17 @ 3 pm</b> <b>Sister Cities Concert</b> Bold City Brass</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Thu 10/28 @ 7 pm</b> <b>UNF Faculty Voice Recital</b> Professors John Daugherty &amp; James Hall</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Fri 10/29 @ 11 am</b> <b>UNF Faculty Voice Recital</b> Professors John Daugherty &amp; James Hall</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Sun 10/31 from 1-5 pm</b> <b>Harvest Fest</b> Trick or Treat Fun for the Whole Family</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Fri 11/5 @ 7 pm</b> <b>UNF Chamber Singers</b></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Fri 11/12 @ 7:30 pm</b> <b>**Chris Thomas Band</b> Ticketed Dance Event</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Sun 11/21 @ 3 pm</b> <b>Kyle Dzapo Flute Soloist</b></p>	<p><b>Thu 12/2 @ 7 pm</b> <b>Hollywood Jazz with Nick DeCarlis</b></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Fri 12/3 @ 11 am</b> <b>Hollywood Jazz with Nick DeCarlis</b></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Thurs 12/16 @ 7 pm</b> <b>*Holiday Concert</b> Bridges of Harmony Chorus</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <p><b>Fri 12/17 @ 11 am</b> <b>*Holiday Concert</b> Bridges of Harmony Chorus</p>
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# Nemours Children’s Health Dedicates the Daily’s Foundation Pavilion to Celebrate Transformational \$5 Million Gift



The dedication ceremony for The Daily’s Foundation Pavilion at Nemours Children’s Health, Jacksonville featured Aubrey Edge, President and CEO of the Daily’s Foundation with Lawrence Moss, MD, President and CEO of Nemours Children’s Health.

Nemours Children’s Health and The Daily’s Foundation officially dedicated The Daily’s Foundation Pavilion at Nemours Children’s Health, Jacksonville during a small private gathering to minimize COVID-19 exposure on Monday, August 23. The dedication commemorated the partnership of the two Jacksonville-based organizations, and featured the unveiling of the new, co-branded signage at Nemours Children’s Jacksonville.

The Daily’s Foundation’s \$5 million gift to Nemours Children’s, announced last December, underscores Daily’s commitment to improving the health of children in the Jacksonville community and beyond. This transformational

gift also reflects the profound collaboration between Nemours Children’s and Daily’s as the missions of both organizations are dedicated to bringing health and well-being to families where they live, work and play. Daily’s support will help fuel innovations to improve care across the health system and support the enhancement of facilities in Jacksonville.

“The dedication of the Daily’s Foundation Pavilion reflecting this new co-branded signage is a visual representation of the incredible partnership between Nemours Children’s Health and the Daily’s Foundation,” said R. Lawrence Moss, MD, President and CEO of Nemours Children’s Health. “This

transformational gift establishes the Daily’s Foundation Pavilion as a beacon for children’s health— one that supports and shares Nemours vision of health at home, in school, in the community, and through excellent medical care!”

The Nemours and Daily’s partnership began in 2019. Most recently, Daily’s launched a fundraising campaign in 76 of its stores across North Carolina and Florida called “Help Spread Hope to Children Everywhere.” This was the second of two campaigns since 2020 that encouraged customers to donate to Nemours Children’s. Daily’s also hosted The Daily’s Foundation Charity Golf Tournament where proceeds benefited Nemours as well as the Inaugural Daily’s Foundation Concert featuring Brantley Gilbert’s “Not Like Us” tour.

“This dedication reinforces our commitment to children and families in Jacksonville and to furthering the amazing work of Nemours Children’s Health,” said Aubrey Edge, President & CEO of Daily’s. “It is our honor to partner with such an incredible organization and help support the next-level care that The Daily’s Foundation Pavilion at Nemours Children’s Health, Jacksonville provides. Our hope is that the partnership will bring comfort and well-being for children in need of advanced care and added resources to the outstanding clinicians and programs at Nemours Children’s. The Daily’s Foundation is proud to support Nemours Children’s Health in this exciting new chapter.”

In May, Nemours Children’s Health announced the health system’s name change

as a reflection of its new strategic direction to redefine children’s health and unveiled a new brand mark called “The Loop of Care.” An infinity symbol, The Loop of Care represents the enduring relationship between a child and caregiver, as well as Nemours Children’s continuous quest for innovation. The launch of Nemours Children’s Health’s new brand and official name change also occurred on August 23.

Moss added, “Our vision to create the healthiest generations of children will be accomplished with the help of committed philanthropic partners such as the Daily’s Foundation. Nemours Children’s Health is very grateful for our continued partnership to improve the world in which every child lives.”





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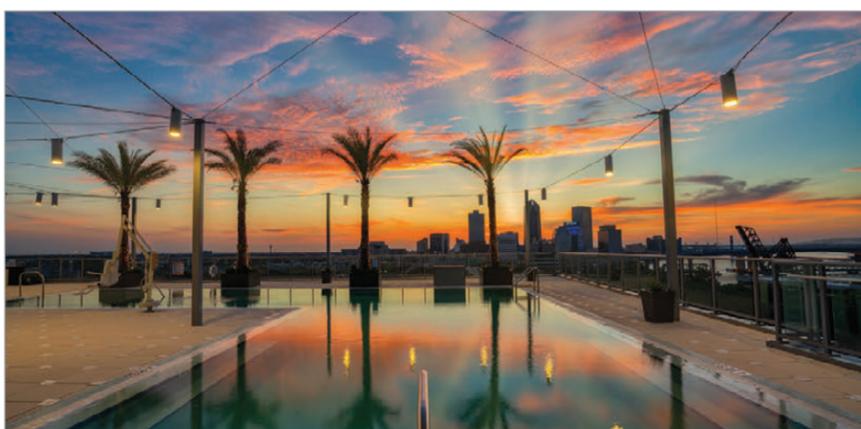
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# Experience Nature through Art

Two local exhibits offer unique perspectives of natural world



British artist Rebecca Louise Law's "The Journey" exhibit includes 1.2 million flowers that she has collected, dried and preserved for more than 50 installations, in addition to the blooms provided by the Cummer.

**BY KAREN RIELEY**  
Resident Community News

From now through early January 2022, Jacksonville residents and visitors can experience nature as expressed by two artists – one local and one from Wales – in two local museums.

"Structure of Nature | Nature of Structure" is a retrospective of the work of photographer and installation artist Doug Eng, a native and current resident of Jacksonville. It can be viewed at MOCA Jacksonville through Jan. 2, 2022. Eng highlights the need to preserve Northeast Florida's endangered wetlands and

forests in works such as Streaming South, My Real Florida, Decoding the Infinite Forest, and The Forest re:Framed, as well as Eng's most recent project, Drowned Forest of the Ocklawaha.

"This exhibit is especially meaningful to me because Jacksonville is my birthplace and home, and much of the work is indigenous to the area," said Eng. "I start with several works of local Florida landscapes, followed by works that demonstrate how presentation and design can change the way we look at things. Finally, I highlight some of the environmental issues specific to the South that I became aware of."

"I think we all need some relief from the mental anguish we experience every day,

especially last year during the height of the pandemic and political turmoil. Escaping into nature and thinking about silence and beauty can be powerful healing forces. We also need to be aware of causes and situations that affect the environment," he said.

Eng grew up in the Southside/San Jose area of Jacksonville, was a member of Sandalwood High School's first graduating class and started his software company here. His photographic exploration took root as a self-described hobby. After selling his company to another company in Canada and working in Montreal for three years, he retired in 2008 and brought his wife, Dorian, back to Jacksonville.

He visited the Riverside Arts Market and met local photographer Bill Yates. Yates invited Eng to Southlight Gallery where he talked with gallery director Michael Dunlap, who invited him to exhibit during the May 2009 Downtown Art Walk. Eng developed Southlight's website and helped them move locations. He became involved locally in exhibitions, awards, publications, affiliations and clients and moved his studio to the CoRK Arts District.

Eng's recent projects focus on raising awareness of deforestation and the effects of climate change on the health of our forests.

"I try to reflect what I see without commentary, letting viewers decide for themselves what to think. Some images may feel depressing or full of despair, but I always seek to find the inner beauty of my subjects with optimism for the future."

MOCA Jacksonville hours and admission information can be found at [www.mocajacksonville.unf.edu](http://www.mocajacksonville.unf.edu).

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens offers the opportunity to view a site-specific

installation using flowers and natural materials by British installation artist Rebecca Louise Law. The exhibit, named "The Journey" is open to the public through Jan. 9, 2022. It incorporates 1.2 million flowers from Law's previous installations around the world and required more than 1,200 community volunteer hours to install.

"In recent months, most have at times felt fragile, depleted and vulnerable," said Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Ph.D., the Museum's George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and CEO. "Law's poetic installation, incorporating millions of delicate dried and fresh flowers that have been painstakingly linked together by hand, is an apt metaphor for our shared quest to emerge stronger and more resilient than ever."

Law uses both dried and fresh flowers in her work to illuminate the time-bound and natural process of decay. Law's "sculptures" are suspended from above and held together with copper wire.

"More than 50 installations have been hand-made and wired over nearly 20 years," Law said. "Each installation is taken down, boxed and preserved. I've never thrown anything away."



Local photographer and installation artist Doug Eng

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A World Above – St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, St. Marks, FL, 2019. Image courtesy of the artist, Doug Eng

As its commitment to the project, the museum provided 10,000 additional live blooms that volunteers wired by hand onto copper wires. The volunteer effort began in mid-July, with 25-30 volunteers per day working together for 10 days in stringing together garlands of flowers.

Mary Watson has volunteered for the Cummer, primarily in its gardens and for garden-related events, for 25 years. In 2020, as a member of the Cummer Garden Committee, she was asked to find a source for the 10,000 stems of blooming flowers that Law would need to create her exhibit. “Kuhn Flowers was a superb source,” Watson said. She enlisted others to wire the flowers cut from these stems.

“I love the energy, people and direction the museum is taking to be all-inclusive,” said volunteer John Hurtubise, who lives in Riverside. “I worked seven days wiring several types of blooms. It was fun opportunity to reconnect with friends, meet new

ones and be part of creating a one-of-a-kind piece of art.”

Jacksonville Arts & Music School’s visual art students also contributed to the making of Rebecca Louise Law’s, site-specific installation. The students thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to engage with the artist’s process, using natural elements as art materials with a collective response of “This is pretty cool!” according to Erin Kendrick, their visual arts creative leader.

“This allowed my students to think outside of the box and reconsider what it means to be an artist and how broad art-making can be,” she said.

Through Sept. 3, visitors can experience Law’s “The Journey,” with free admission during the “Summer at the Cummer” event series presented by PNC Bank, 4-9 p.m., each Friday. The experience includes live music, art experiences, lawn games and more. Hours and admission, including other opportunities for free admission, are found at [www.cummermuseum.org](http://www.cummermuseum.org)



Volunteers string together 10,000 live blooms that the Cummer provided for “The Journey” exhibit.

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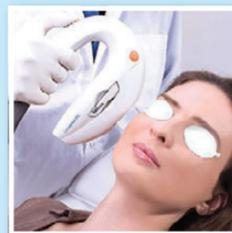


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**MASK MANDATE** | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

The Duval School Board initially passed a rule mandating masks for teachers, staff, and students with an opt-out for parents. Less than two weeks later, with COVID numbers on the rise in the district, the board modified its rule and required all students to be masked beginning September 7th for 90-days except those with a note from a licensed health care provider stating a medical, physical, or psychological condition that would prevent them from wearing a mask.

Parents opposed to the mandates say they should be the ones to decide if their kids should wear a mask. They also say the masks can harm the mental state of some students, making it more difficult for them to learn. Supporters say it's a public health issue that supersedes opponents' objections.

While the Centers for Disease Control, the American Medical Association, and the American Association of Pediatricians, including the Florida chapter all recommend students wear masks in schools, not everyone is convinced.

Jacksonville M.D. Dr. Carmen Martinez told the Duval School Board cloth masks aren't necessary. "The treatment for this is Vitamins D, C, A, and Zinc," she said. This is what we should be doing. Not wearing masks. The holes in the masks are huge compared to the size of the aerosolized virus."

Other doctors like Duval County Medical Society Foundation President Dr. Sunil Joshi said masks are not the only thing that can be used to fight COVID, but they are a benefit. "Our hospitals are at near capacity. This is not just about children. It is about the spread in the community," he said.

**Private School ruling pending, arguing mandates violates law**

A group of parents has filed suit against Episcopal High School in early-August after the school implemented a mask mandate for its student body, the decision was rendered the day prior to the return of students to campus.

They say the "Parents Bill of Rights" supersedes the school's rule and they should be the ones to determine if their kids should mask up.

Attorney Daniel Bean, of Abel Bean Law P.A., is representing the parents. He says since the U.S Food and Drug Administration says the mask is a medical device, the schools, both public and private are making a health care decision for children and argues that the policy is in violation of the law.

"All of these parents love their school, they love it so much that they don't want to see it interfere with the law," said Bean. "They also want to be clear that they have respect for the senior leadership [at ES]." He said the parents understand the difficult position school officials were in. It is just that the decision to wear a mask should be left to the parents.

Episcopal attorney Stephen Busey said the "Parents Bill of Rights" doesn't apply.

"The governor's executive order and the statute relied on by the parents are not applicable to religious private schools," he said. "Moreover, the parents agreed in their enrollment contracts to abide by the school's policies, existing and as they may be amended in the future."

Government law attorney Chris Hand said the "Parents Bill of Rights" doesn't apply to either public and private schools regarding mask mandates. He said the State Constitution mandates that "Adequate provision shall be



Pro-mask parents rally in front of the Duval County School Board Building on August 3rd, 2021

made by law for a...safe...system of free public schools". Hand said since COVID-19 is a health crisis, administrators have a legal responsibility to keep schools safe.

Senior Circuit Court Judge Robert Foster will decide on September 3rd if he'll grant a stay of existing mandates or proceed to trial for further arguments. The trial would begin in early October. As of this writing, it's unclear how the Cooper ruling will affect Foster's decision, which deals with a private school and not public, but has serious implications for every parent.

Cooper also ruled the "Parents Bill of Rights" gives school districts the authority to require masks based on their discretionary powers.

"The doctrine of separation of powers requires that the discretionary power exercised by the school board, cannot be interfered with by the judiciary, or by the executive branch of government, and neither the judiciary nor the executive can substitute judgment for the school board's power."

Cooper also said the State Department of Education can't financially punish School Board members who wouldn't comply with their order.

The state is expected to counter and take the case to the First District Court of Appeals. We will continue to cover events as they occur, stay tuned via Facebook for any updates and a follow up in October.

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# Blues, Brews, and BBQ benefit Florida Theatre



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Success for the 2021 annual fundraiser!



Beale Street performs

On Aug. 19, the annual Blues, Brews and BBQ once again entertained patrons with music, dining and drinks, while they worked to outbid each other in a silent auction, all to raise funds in support of The Florida Theatre.

"The bands set the perfect mood for an evening filled with delicious local food and beverages, and the crowd in attendance seemed to savor every minute," said Jake Brown, the theater's director of marketing. "We raised \$45,000 in funds that will be used to support the nonprofit Florida Theatre."

The more than 350 guests enjoyed BBQ prepared by the area's best restaurateurs, drinks from a range of brew vendors and sweets while listening to the Snacks Blues Band and Beale Street. VIP guests enjoyed a special liquor tasting with sweets. A silent auction offered enticing items such as autographed memorabilia and gift certificates.

"The funds raised from the event support costs such as restoring the building, subsidizing Title 1 schools to attend Theatretworks programs and subsidizing the rent for other charities to use the building for their own fundraisers and nonprofit programs," said theatre president Numa Saisselin.



Guests enjoying BBQ, brews and sweets.



Chris McGhie and Bryana Dunn



John Miller and Greg Johnson—Bold City Brewery



Greg Antonich and Denise Demico



Jeff Bump and Greg Coviello



Wesley Roberts and Vincy Samuel



Juliette and Ed Vaughn with Bridget



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Susan Greene with Juliette Mason and Jennifer Mayo



Former Baptist Health AgeWell Director Earl Evens and AgeWell Director Gayle Blackmer



Mary Green, Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville Auxiliary President



From left: Hospital President Baptist Medical Center Beaches Joe Mitrick, Timothy Groover, MD, MBA, CPE, FACHE, President of Physician Alignment, Baptist Health, Chief Medical Officer, Baptist Physician Partners; Brittany Groover; Susan Greene; Michael D. Aubin, FACHE, Hospital President Wolfson Children's Hospital

## AgeWell Dinner honors, informs donors

Baptist Health hosted the AgeWell Advocates Dinner sponsored by Dynamix at the River Club on June 23 to inform donors about changes and progress in the medical center's AgeWell Center for Senior Health. AgeWell is designed to help people 65+ who want to be proactive with their health to live their best life.

The dinner honored Earl Evens, who retired as AgeWell director on July 9, and introduced the incoming AgeWell director, Gayle Blackmer. Three major changes to the program were highlighted as well including the program's expansion to seven locations beginning with Nocatee, Neptune Beach and Fernandina Beach; expansion of telehealth; and expansion of House Call and in-home palliative care programs.

"Dynamix has had a tremendous technology partnership with Baptist Hospital for many years," said Jesse Baker, who represented Dynamix at the dinner. "A large number of Dynamix' employees live in the greater Jacksonville area. It's our belief that [AgeWell] provides incredibly important services that are laser focused on the unique needs of older adults. That is what forward thinking health care is all about."

Baptist Health leadership attending the dinner included President & CEO of Baptist Health Dr. Michael Mayo and his wife, Jennifer; Wolfson Children's Hospital President & Interim Chief Philanthropy Officer Michael D. Aubin; Baptist Medical Center Beaches President Joe Mitrick; President of Physician Alignment, Baptist Health, and Chief Medical Officer, Baptist Physician Partners Dr. Timothy Groover and his wife, Brittany; Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville Auxiliary President Mary Green; Baptist Health Foundation Board Chair Jane Rollinson; Dynamix representatives Bill Boyle and Jesse Baker; Baptist Health President Emeritus Dr. Bill Mason and his wife, Juliette; former Baptist Health CEO and President High Greene; Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville Auxiliary President Mary Green; and Dr. Diane Raines.

The AgeWell program offers seniors longer appointments, a team of geriatricians, pharmacists, rehab therapists and mental health experts who specialize in older adults; all services working together under one roof; a complete health picture based on an initial comprehensive assessment; and Medicare coverage.



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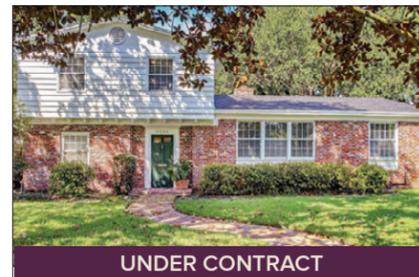
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# New PGA TOUR event coming to Timuquana Country Club



Jim Furyk, a 17-time winner on the PGA Tour and the only professional golfer to post two rounds below 60 on the PGA Tour, is the Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS golf tournament's official host.

**BY KAREN RIELEY**  
Resident Community News

When Tabitha and Jim Furyk moved to San Marco about three years ago, they decided to debut a new event to raise funds for their foundation that would highlight their favorite sport – golf – in a new location.

Through a multiyear agreement, the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation will bring a new PGA TOUR Champions event with the addition of Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS presented by Circle K, Oct. 4-10.

“Timuquana Country Club has a rich history as a great golf course,” Tabitha Furyk said. “The golfers tell Jim that it

is one of the best courses on the PGA TOUR. It is known as a challenging course and beautiful location.”

The club's classic Donald Ross course includes 18 holes of tree-lined fairways, tight rolling approaches and immaculate greens. The routing provides a variety of holes to challenge golfers of all levels.

“Timuquana is excited to be the host site for the tournament,” said Greg Sheara, the club's general manager. “When we were approached by Jim and Tabitha regarding the opportunity, we found that their vision of the event, its impact on local charities and showcasing the west side of Jacksonville was a perfect match for the club. Our membership has embraced the event by helping the Foundation's team in securing sponsorships and volunteers who will help bring that vision to life.”

The event promises music, food and fun for all, in addition to celebrity participants. All proceeds will benefit northeast Florida charities. Constellation, an Exelon company, a leading competitive energy company providing power, natural gas, renewable energy and energy management products and services for homes and businesses nationwide, has selected five charities to benefit from the event - MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation, First Tee of North Florida, First Coast Chapter of Blessings in a Backpack, St. Johns Riverkeeper and Habitat for Humanity (Habijax).

“Our goal is to raise \$1 million for these charities this year,” Tabitha said.

“We've been blessed to be a part of this community for the past 25 years. With Jim's success as a golfer, we were able to start the foundation as a platform to give back to the kids in this area. For 10 years, we been expanding to generate more dollars to give more funds for local charities.”

Jim Furyk is a 17-time winner on the PGA TOUR and the only professional golfer to post two rounds below 60 on the PGA TOUR. He will serve as the tournament's official host.

In addition to Constellation as the title sponsor and Circle K as the presenting sponsor, Founding Friends

include Baptist Health, FIS, SRS Distribution and Miller Electric.

The Monday Pro-Am and Tuesday Pro-Am Pairings Party are private events.

The Furyk Foundation Concert presented by SRS Distribution on Oct. 5 at Daily's Place begins at 7:30 p.m. and is open to the public. Darius Rucker will headline the concert with Scotty McCreery. This year's concert will be a salute to service men and women, with 1,000 tickets provided to the military courtesy of SRS Distribution. PGA TOUR Champions players will be in attendance along with other celebrities. All concert tickets come with a tournament ticket.

General admission tickets for the golf tournament at Timuquana Country Club, Friday, Oct. 8 - Sunday, Oct. 10, provide access to the tournament grounds, Circle K ParTee Porch, Publix Tailgate Village, Fan Expo area and more. Youths 17 and younger are admitted free to the tournament with a ticketed adult. There is no limit to the number of youths admitted per adult.

Vystar is providing free tickets to military service members who verify their military service online. (A \$1 verification fee per military service member applies.) Vystar is also hosting the Vystar Patriot's Outpost during the tournament with free food from Firehouse Subs and Applebee's for military service members.

Named after Jim Furyk's famous 58 during the final round of the Traveler's Championship, the Club 58 premier hospitality suite overlooking the 17th green will offer complimentary food and beverage, including full bar, available throughout the day. Tickets for Club 58 are available on the tournament website.

Circle K is sponsoring a free water taxi that will bring fans from the YMCA in the Brooklyn neighborhood to the Timuquana Country Club docks. Details are available on the tournament website.

For information on tickets and parking, visit [www.constellationfurykandfriends.com](http://www.constellationfurykandfriends.com) or contact the tournament office at [information@furykandfriends.com](mailto:information@furykandfriends.com).



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# SINGLETON TEAM DELIVERS, OFFERS A POOL OF RESOURCES FOR BUYERS AND SELLERS

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They're not really a team. At least not technically. In the traditional sense, a real estate team involves a figurehead, a lead generation system, and junior associates beginning to get their feet wet. The contrast between this approach and the system built into the Singleton Team's methodology is night and day. Years of transactions now lend to a smooth, winning combination that alleviates stress, worry, and delivers strong oversight before, during, and after a sale.

The Singleton Team operates as a collaborative group of talented professionals who specialize in helping people navigate life's transitions, after all, buying and selling homes are major undertakings. It takes the right advice, patience, and confidence in the process that only seasoned realtors offer. Jon Singleton is the central dynamic figure — the Rainmaker — he's committed to leading the charge. But his partners in operations, Susan Hopkins and Katherine Wohlers, are highly skilled and bring undivided attention and availability that you often times won't discover while working with a single agent. Each is focused on bringing their different strengths to assist in all facets of the process.

For Singleton, an interest in historic preservation developed while he was working

at the Pentagon, his passion for older homes was ignited and he's never looked back. "I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to turn my passion into a profession," he shared. "Now, I'm fielding referrals and relationships a few generations deep and across all portions of Northeast Florida."

His tenure in real estate now affords him the time to share expertise, avoid pitfalls, and navigate any situation, alongside his trusted business associates. Jon has spent the past twenty years building a brand, and he is proud to have become a go-to resource for historic area real estate. Having helped over 750 friends and customers buy or sell homes, there are few challenges he hasn't encountered and overcome with the help of his team.

His experience and background afforded him the ability to navigate properties built in the 1920's, 30's and 40's, and he loves to share stories (and solutions) with his colleagues and customers.

"We've helped buyers re-engineer electrical and plumbing systems and have even written letters to the VA [Veteran's Administration] with documentation to help overcome challenges and get loan approval," said Singleton. To share his hard-won knowledge



Susan Hopkins, Jon Singleton and Katherine Wohlers

with his professional community, Jon spent 7 years serving as Chair of the Historic Council for the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors as well as President of San Marco Preservation Society.

His hybrid team is focused on investing in their community and helping people

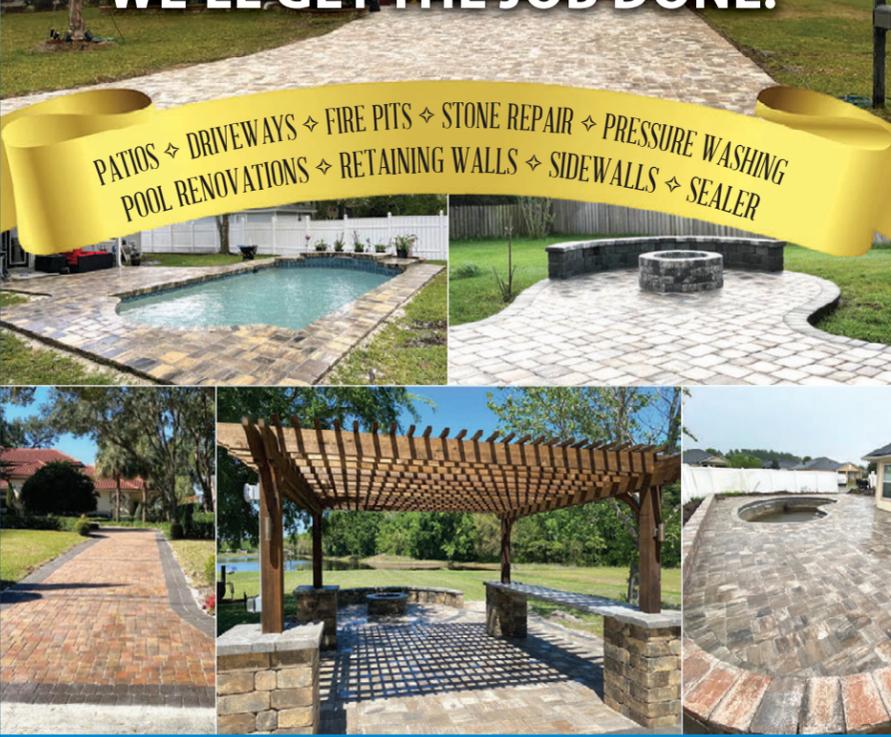
with their homes. They're raising their kids here, all while supporting their favorite local restaurants, artists and businesses, making it a priority to donate time while having raised over \$20,000 for local charities that benefit servicemembers and veterans alike.



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## Hair Peace exemplifies the best in the industry MUSSER LEADS BY EXAMPLE, ALWAYS ON THE CUTTING EDGE



Musser, photographed back in 1996, during a consult at the former 5Points location

For 31 years, Bruce Musser, hair designer, owner, founder and the heart and soul of Hair Peace in Riverside, has lived by one tenet: “Behind every excellent head of hair is a person whose life is as noteworthy as their ‘tress-talent.’”

Our clients tell us that our salon is warm, friendly and professional, and that is very important to us,” said Musser. He focuses on giving each client their best look.

Musser operated Hair Peace in Five Points for 20 years, until 2016, when he moved a half-mile away to 2534 Oak Street. In 2020, he bought and renovated the historic Delgado Building next door at 2544 Oak Street, which resulted in a total of 3,400 SF for the salon.

“I had already developed plans and leased the space before the pandemic hit, so I decided to use the space to create socially distanced services,” said Musser. “Once we could open up again, we were able to serve as many clients as before and maintained 100 percent employment.”

The move to Oak Street has allowed Musser to add services. In addition to hair design, Hair Peace offers waxing, color, DevaCurl, lashes, in-house makeup artists, microblading and permanent makeup (PMU), as well as services for bridal parties and other formal occasions.

“We have incredible technology now for color, styling products and texture services. We’re doing a very new technique in body waves called

American Waves – it’s not your mom’s perm,” he said.

Musser believes in continuing education for himself and his staff. He is currently pursuing certification as a master hair cutter. He has hired a director of education who manages the shop’s in-house education calendar and guest artists who are invited to do teaching programs for the staff.

Originally from Madison, Fla., where his family had a quail hunting business and grew corn, soybeans, cotton and timber, Musser moved to Jacksonville because “Talla-hassee was too close to home and Atlanta was too far,” he said. “I wanted to move and build a creative business, but I didn’t want to be too far from the farm and my family.”

After first moving to San Marco, he was drawn to Five Points when deciding where to open a shop. He has now lived in Avondale for 26 years.

“I liked the shops and the historic homes, especially the bungalows like the one I have,” Musser said.

Musser married on March 14, 2020, “the last big wedding before COVID shut things down,” he said.

He’s also been very involved since 1998 as a volunteer in the community. Since 2010 he has volunteered with JASYM and currently serves as the board chair. The nonprofit supports LGBTQ young people. He did hair and makeup for Theatre Jacksonville in San Marco for 10 years and event design for the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville for eight years.

## Memorial Park Association receives prestigious preservation award

Memorial Park Association was among those who received awards from The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, which announced its 2021 Florida Preservation Awards recognizing people, organizations and communities who have worked to protect Florida’s extraordinary history and heritage.

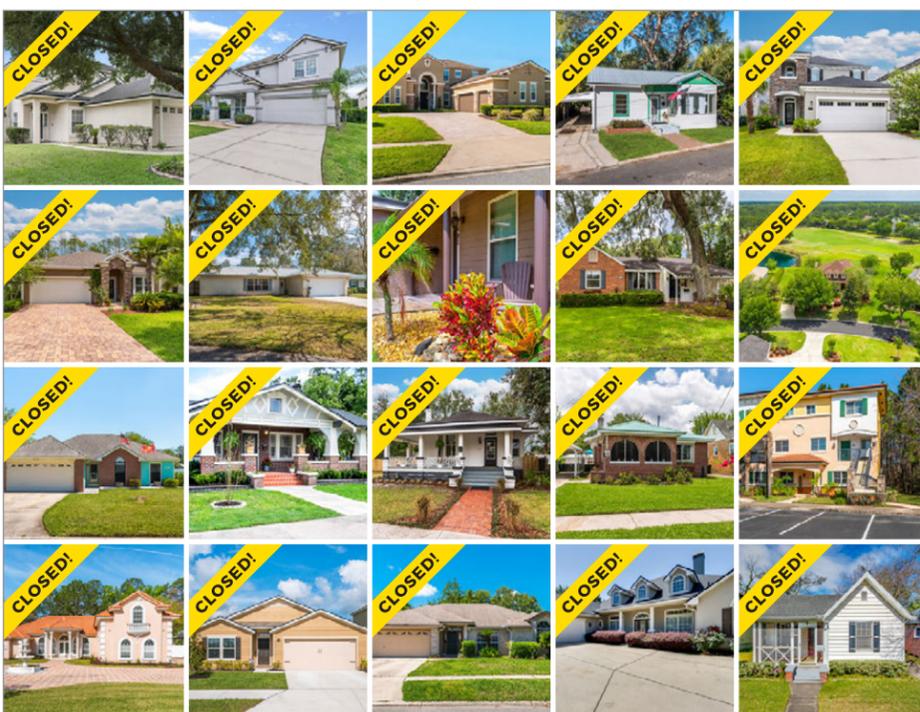
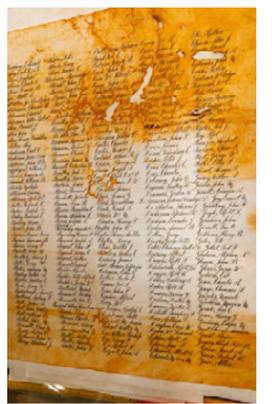
The Jacksonville-based nonprofit received the Outstanding Achievement Award in the

Organizational Award category for its restoration/rehabilitation efforts in Riverside-based Memorial Park, as well as for Dr. R.B. Rosenberg’s research of the Florida Fallen – the more than 1,600 who served in World War I – and for the upcoming Life Scrolls exhibit planned for November 2021-March 2022 at the Museum of Science & History.

“Memorial Park Association checked several of the boxes for those activities,

including raising over \$1.5 million in our Spirit of Victory campaign for park restoration; the establishment of an endowment through the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida to maintain the park in perpetuity, and for planning the Life Scrolls exhibit to show the exquisite restoration of the water-damaged scrolls by Ann Siebert, an expert paper conservator,” said Michele L. Luthin, president of Memorial Park Association.

The restored Life scrolls will be on exhibit beginning November 12, 2021, at the Museum of Science & History, through March 2022. (Photo courtesy of Mark Krancer, Kram Kran Photo, for Memorial Park Association)



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## Women's Board announces co-chairs for Florida Forum

*Date change for lineup in speaker series*



Jan Kirby and Frances Hutto

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital announced a new Florida Forum Speaker Series date for the appearance of award-winning singer/songwriter/actor Tim McGraw. The new date is Feb. 16, 2022.

McGraw was originally scheduled to speak at the Florida Forum in September, but rescheduled to begin production of "1883," the highly anticipated prequel to NETFLIX series, "Yellowstone."

The Florida Forum Speaker Series also features four-time Super Bowl champion and broadcaster Terry Bradshaw on Oct. 26, 2021, and Maj. Gen. Charles F. Bolden, Jr., a retired Marine officer, astronaut, and former NASA Administrator, on Nov. 17, 2021. The series will take place at the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts.

Presented by The Women's Board, the Florida Forum raises awareness and funds for Wolfson Children's Hospital of Jacksonville, supporting its mission to provide the

highest quality of advanced pediatric healthcare regardless of ability to pay. The series is made possible by long-time partners and generous sponsors Wells Fargo Florida Blue and Landstar. The moderators are Jeff Lageman, Capt. Mark T. Gould, MD, USN (ret), and Jennifer Candelino. Serving as 2021 co-chairs of the Speaker Series are Jan Kirby and Frances Hutto.

Since 1992, the Florida Forum has been honored to host renowned speakers from around the world offering profound insights and discussions on a broad range of issues. In addition to enriching Jacksonville's intellectual and cultural life, the Florida Forum has contributed more than \$9.2 million to Wolfson Children's Hospital of Jacksonville.

For tickets or additional information, visit [www.thefloridaforum.com](http://www.thefloridaforum.com), call 904.202.2886, or email [womensboard@bmcjax.com](mailto:womensboard@bmcjax.com).

## CAP appoints Chen to new position

The Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) recently appointed Dr. Lucy Chen as its first Vice President of Advocacy & Community Engagement.

Dr. Chen's responsibilities will include convening the Any Given Child Jacksonville collaborative in partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; promoting Jacksonville's LEAD artlook® map in partnership with Ingenuity and the National Endowment for the Arts; and fostering a network of stakeholders to maximize the impact of advocacy for equity and access to arts education.

"The creation of this new position is an important part of CAP's strategy to advocate for Northeast Florida to lead the nation in providing quality and transformative arts education for children," explained Rev. Kimberly Hyatt, CAP President & CEO.

"The Cathedral Arts Project is an organization that I have long admired. Its quality arts education programs contribute to Jacksonville's cultural fabric and enrich the lives of youth in Northeast Florida. I'm honored to serve alongside a dedicated team of arts leaders and excited to share the CAP vision with our Jacksonville community and beyond," Dr. Chen said of her new role.



Dr. Lucy Chen, Vice President of Advocacy & Community Engagement

Dr. Chen brings with her extensive experience in administration, advocacy, and education. She founded the Keys on Parade group piano program to serve students at two public schools in Duval County. Her education programs have been featured around the country and many of her students have won national and international competitions and awards.

Dr. Chen is also an award-winning soloist and collaborative pianist who has performed in New York, London, and China. She earned her Bachelor of Music from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and her Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from Boston University.

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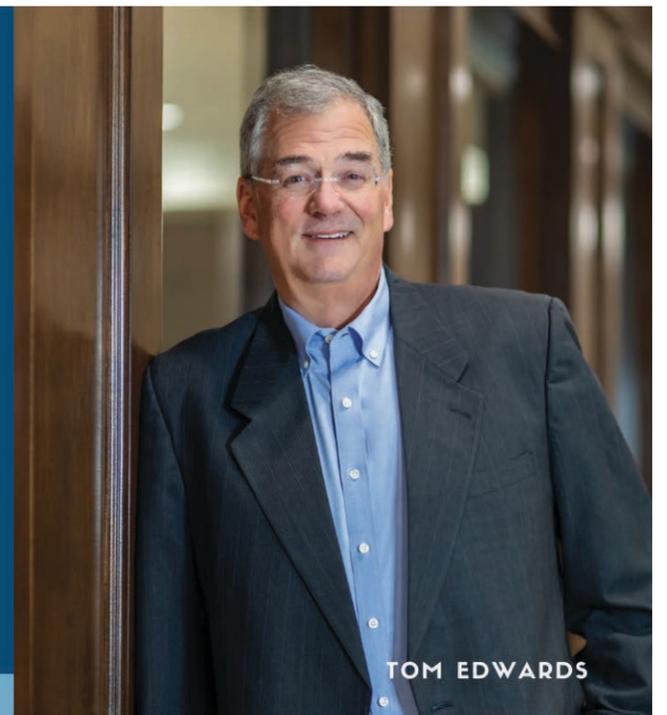
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*Jewish Federation & Foundation announces new President*



JENNIFER PLOTKIN

Jennifer Plotkin, senior vice president and senior relationship manager at Bank of America, was elected president of the Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida. She leads a ten-member executive committee and prestigious board comprised of Jewish community leaders from various professions.

Executive Director Alan Margolies expressed his enthusiasm for the new president and board of directors. "We are all excited and look forward to working with our new executive committee and board. Jennifer brings many years of solid experience in volunteer leadership positions to her challenging role as president, having served as treasurer, major gifts chair, and campaign chair."

# Armistead named CEO of UF Health Jacksonville

Russell E. Armistead, M.B.A., started work as UF Health Jacksonville's chief executive officer on August 9. Armistead was the former CEO of the hospital system from 2018 until his retirement in December 2017. He steps in to lead UF Health Jacksonville now following Leon L. Haley Jr., who passed away on July 24.

Armistead has broad experience in academic health center and medical school administration. He has skillfully navigated numerous areas — from finance to clinical operations, to patient care, education and research. He helped the organization achieve key financial goals and plan for future growth at the same time the hospital was rebranding, while ensuring the system maintained its reputation for quality patient care, stating early on that the patient experience would be his No. 1 priority.

During his previous tenure, the health system opened numerous primary care practices as well as the hospital, multispecialty office building and emergency room at UF Health North. He also was instrumental in the improvement of quality and patient safety measures, and UF Health Jacksonville received numerous health care designations and recognitions.

"Russ has an excellent track record leading UF Health Jacksonville to new heights," said David R. Nelson, M.D., senior vice president for health affairs at the University of Florida and president of UF Health. "We're excited to welcome

him back and look forward to what we'll accomplish together."

For nearly a decade until he became CEO in 2013, Armistead served as associate vice president for finance and planning for UF Health in both Gainesville and Jacksonville. Prior to joining UF, Armistead was president of Armistead Consulting LLC, a North Carolina firm that provided management and consultation services to academic health centers, hospitals and other health care organizations.

In comments that he made at Armistead's retirement in 2017, Dr. Haley said, "When I first came to serve as dean of the College of Medicine, I was immediately impressed by Russ' tenacity and dedication, not just to the patients we care for, but also to each person on this campus. Employees' reactions to him were impressive. His response to them was inspiring. People instantly sensed his genuineness. It's clear that Russ is invested in the betterment of this organization. People truly matter to him. He recognizes that everyone who is a part of this institution contributes to the quality we've achieved. And it shows in how he conducts business."

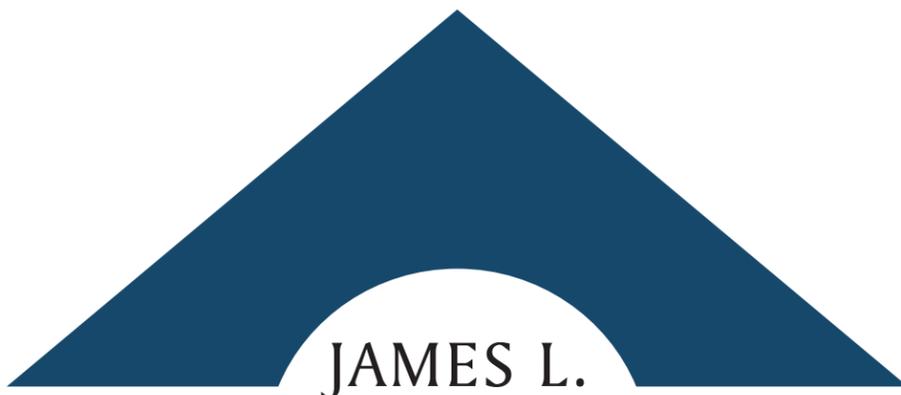
Haley died as the result of injuries he sustained in a jet ski accident in West Palm Beach. In 2017, he was hired as the Dean of the Medical School of the University of Florida and Jacksonville and was soon appointed as CEO of University of Health, Jacksonville in 2018. He was the first African American to hold that role.



Russell E. Armistead, M.B.A., CEO of UF Health Jacksonville

“People instantly sensed his genuineness. It's clear that Russ is invested in the betterment of this organization. **PEOPLE TRULY MATTER TO HIM.**”

— Dr. Leon L. Haley Jr.



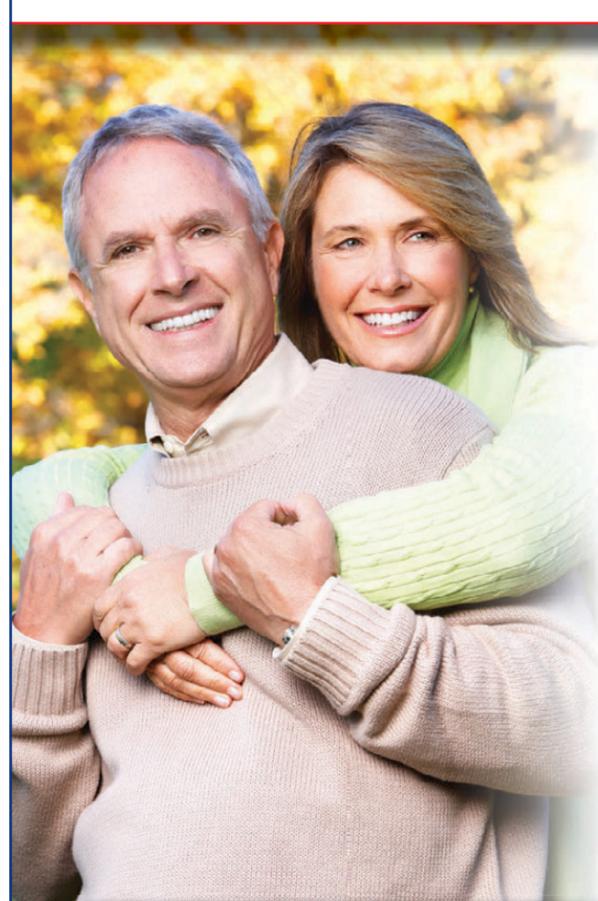
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## Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center names Michael R. Olson, MD, PhD, as head, Division of Radiation Oncology



Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center has named Michael R. Olson, MD, PhD, as head, Division of Radiation Oncology effective July 1, 2021.

Dr. Olson has held numerous leadership roles for the division of radiation oncology since its inception in 2015. Most recently, he has served as head

ad interim, and adjunct associate professor at MD Anderson Cancer Center. He serves as the chief of service, radiation oncology for Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and has led the expansion of radiation oncology services to Baptist Medical Center South. He is certified by the American Board of Radiology in radiation oncology, and hospice and palliative medicine.

"I'm honored to assume this role and oversee the continued expansion of our radiation oncology program at Baptist Health's downtown and Baptist Medical Center South locations," Dr. Olson said. "Each year, we've been able to serve more patients, and we look forward to helping additional patients receive the multidisciplinary cancer care they need."

## Sally Suslak to serve as Chair of NAR panel

Sally Suslak, the Owner-Broker-Realtor with Traditions Realty LLC was named Chair of the National Association of Realtors 2022 Single Family Investment Management Committee. NAR uses more than 100 nationwide committees to guide its official policies and priorities. The process has been designed to increase transparency within the association and ensure America's 1.4 million Realtors—agents and brokers—are being accurately and appropriately represented by the nation's largest trade association.



"I'm so pleased that Sally Suslak will chair NAR's 2022 Single Family Investment Management Committee," said NAR's current First Vice President and 2022 President Leslie Rouda Smith. "Sally went through a highly competitive process to earn this honor, and we are thrilled that she will have the opportunity to represent America's Realtors® as part of NAR's ongoing fight for homeowners, homebuyers and private property rights."

Suslak has been a Director of Florida Realtors for ten years and is in her second three-year term as a NAR director. She also served as President of the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors in 2015.

"I am thrilled to receive this appointment which came as a shock to me as I had applied to be a committee member and instead was chosen for this prestigious leadership role," said Suslak. "I thank the NAR for trusting me with this incredible honor. I look forward to being involved in shaping and implementing policies that will help owners and tenants through the United States for years to come."

## FLORIDA THEATRE CONTINUES TO EARN SUPPORT

*Corporate partner values arts, culture, and entertainment*

Support for the Florida Theatre has never been more important and in light of the impacts of COVID and shutdowns, live shows and entertainment were sidelined throughout 2020, making things more difficult than ever to gain revenues and support. The historic Theatre first opened its doors on April 8, 1927, and it fights for funding today, to continue delivering for fans of arts and entertainment in North Florida.

In early August, the Theatre announced a renewal of support from Main Street America, a company that has been a Corporate Partner of the Florida Theatre since 2005.

"Main Street America is proud to be a long-time supporter of the Florida Theatre as part of our commitment to support the communities where our employees, who are regular patrons of the Theatre's great programming. We are honored to associate ourselves with an organization such as the Florida Theatre, which has such a strong community presence," said Anna Parker, Vice President of Human Resources.

"The historic Florida Theatre is pleased to play its part in providing Northeast Florida with the music, dance and theatre programs that are part of what gives Jacksonville the unique character that we have all come to appreciate, and expect, as residents of a great city," said Florida Theatre President, Numa Saisselin. "The Theatre earns 85% of its annual budget from its business activities, and support from the business community, like our returning Corporate Partner Main Street America, helps to close that small budget gap every year and keep the Florida Theatre and its programs something special for our community."

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## Restaurants participate in 16th annual Dining Out For Life®



Derrick Odom and Dawn Lopez outside of Biscotti's in Avondale

On August 26, local restaurants participated in the 2021 Dining Out For Life® fundraiser. This was the 16th year that the Northeast Florida AIDS Network (NFAN) produced the event to help them serve the city's more than 10,000 people living with HIV/AIDS.

Partner organizations, community volunteers, and corporate sponsors contributed to the event's success. Participating restaurants, including Biscotti's in Avondale that has participated for all 16 years, generously donated 25-50% of the day's proceeds to NFAN to help support their efforts. Diners had the option of eating in, taking out, or requesting delivery.

NFAN on Oak Street, a 501(C)(3), is the longest standing AIDS Service Organization in Northeast Florida, established in 1989. They have three goals: to prevent the spread of HIV, to care for individuals living with HIV/AIDS and their families, and to advocate on behalf of consumers of HIV/AIDS services.

"Education remains our best defense against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Florida leads the nation in new HIV cases, and Jacksonville ranks 6th in the state. This is a conversation that we must continue to have within our community in order to stop the spread of HIV, especially amongst our youth," said Donna Fuchs, Executive Director at NFAN.

## DESC DEFENDERS LIVE! Breaks Another Record



DESC Defenders display top fundraising teams

The poverty fighting fundraiser, DESC Defenders: Against All Odds, in support of the Downtown Ecumenical Services Council, broke all fundraising records for a second year in a row, raising more than \$195,000.

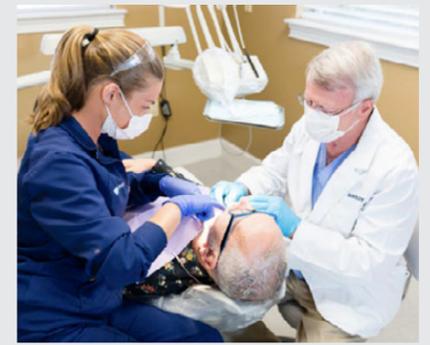
Honorary Chairs, Lisa and David Williams and Susan and Rick Brodeur, led the event along with a Host Committee and Event Committee that recruited sponsors, donors and volunteers to great success.

"It's awe-inspiring to have so many donors and volunteers step up to help families fight poverty," said David Clark, DESC's Executive Director. "They're determined to bring in as many resources to help their neighbors and ensure this ministry can spread hope and encouragement during times of crisis."

# GUM HEALTH IS VITAL

*Berdy Dental Group Shares Insights & Treatment Options*

According to the CDC, nearly half of all adults aged 30 or older show signs of gum disease. During September's National Gum Care Month, Berdy Dental Group is working to educate the public on the importance of proper gum care and the many available options for gum disease treatment.



### Maintaining Gum Health

Gum health is the foundation for overall oral hygiene. When your gums are properly cared for, they protect your teeth and provide a barrier to bacteria. This staves off dental problems such as plaque buildup and cavities while also supporting the health of your entire body.

A baseline routine for good oral health begins with proper flossing and brushing your teeth twice daily with an ADA-approved fluoride toothpaste. Berdy Dental Group recommends using a Waterpik® just before and just after you have flossed and brushed. Remember to only floss the teeth you want to keep!

If your gums are irritated, swollen, a deeper red color, and possibly accompanied by bad breath, you may have some form of gum disease. Another telltale sign of gum disease is bleeding gums. Healthy tissue should not bleed unless heavily agitated – so regular flossing should not cause your gums to bleed. Most are familiar with the early form of gum disease: gingivitis, which is often caused by inadequate oral hygiene.

### Exploring Treatment Options

Periodontal treatment is often necessary for those with more serious gum disease, which usually involves receding gums, as "pockets" between the teeth create a breeding ground for bacteria to accumulate. Berdy Dental Group is one of few practices that has expertise

with the Chao Pinhole® Surgical Technique – a simple option to beautify your smile while minimizing the progression of gum disease. This innovative surgery corrects gum recession without the use of scalpels or sutures; rather, a tiny hole is created in the gum tissue, which is then gently loosened and pulled back over the area of the tooth where the gums have receded.

Patients who need periodontal treatment could also opt for LANAP® treatment from Berdy Dental Group. This laser-assisted gum therapy uses a soft tissue laser to eliminate diseased tissue and bacteria from the mouth and remove plaque from tooth roots. LANAP® treatment is simple to perform, minimally invasive, and results in less discomfort, quicker recovery and better long-term results than many traditional gum procedures.

Whether you're overdue for a cleaning or are reviewing treatment options for suspected or diagnosed gum disease, Berdy Dental Group is a trusted local resource for advanced technology that's paired with compassionate care. Call 904-389-1376 or visit [BerdyDentalGroup.com](http://BerdyDentalGroup.com) to learn more and schedule an appointment today.

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# Hugo's celebrates 100 years of quality and service

BY MARY WANSER  
Resident Community News

Hugo's Interiors celebrates their 100th anniversary this month. For four generations, this family-owned firm has been serving generations of Jacksonville families. "Our business is based on quality and customer service," said Mathew, great grandson of the company's founder.

What started with a 1,000-square-foot showroom has expanded to 30,000 square feet over the past century. With an extraordinary collection of modern and traditional name brand fine furniture and superior accessories, there can be found an eclectic mix of lamps, mirrors, pictures, and other decorative home accents.

The legacy began in 1921 when Albert Hugo, a German native who was expert at paper hanging, cabinet making, and re-upholstering, stepped off a train in Jacksonville, Florida and stayed for the rest of his life. He set up shop in Nina Cumber's home in exchange for his professional services. Albert married Euna, a Jacksonville hat maker, who began sewing elaborate window treatments for prominent local families while her husband designed the interiors of their homes with custom-built furniture and original upholstery.

At that time, there were no bridges crossing the river, and most everything was on the north side of the water. Once bridges were built, Albert moved operations to the south side of Jacksonville, to the area now considered East San Marco. "He wanted to form a business where he was the center of the wheel," said his grandson, Richard, current owner of the corporation. That Philips Highway location is where Hugo's Interiors remains today.

In 1947, the second generation of Hugos—Edward and Charles—took over the family business as their father, Albert, went into retirement. It is Edward's son who is president of the company today. Edward's daughter, Renee, is now retired but had been active in the family business for many years. Richard's children, Mathew and Jennie, make up the fourth generation of Hugo's Interiors.

Hugo's acreage in East San Marco allows space not only for their extensive showroom but also for workrooms where custom furniture is manufactured, new and re-upholstery projects are fulfilled, and draperies are designed—a legacy left behind by Euna.

The large showroom of Hugo's Interiors is open to the public and is brimming with décor from a variety of sources. It is not a gallery of any particular manufacturer, and many items found there are one-of-a-kind pieces. "We go to market and cherry-pick all lines to bring back to Jacksonville," Richard said. And if you find an upholstered piece but prefer a different fabric or color, Hugo's has access to thousands of samples from multiple fabric houses to choose from.

Another benefit of shopping at Hugo's is that there is no ordering to be done. You buy what's on the floor. "What you see is what you get," said Richard. You can see

it, touch it, and take it home. In today's world, that's important, as mass production, product availability, and prompt shipping has suffered greatly due to the pandemic. At Hugo's, there is no waiting until next week, next month, or next year. Most deliveries to your home can be arranged within a couple of days.

For four generations, combining quality with service has been a mainstay of this century-old, yet ever-current business. "The quality we have starts where most furniture stores stops," said Richard. And as generations have evolved, so has the service reach of Hugo's Interiors. Over time, the Hugos have broadened their client base beyond the bounds of Jacksonville. Their residential offerings now extend to customers throughout the southeastern United States.

Hugo's furniture manufacturing and interior designing have expanded into the commercial arena as well, with their wholly owned subsidiary Benchmark Commercial Services, a manufacturer and supplier of commercial, casework, countertops, and trim. With corporate clients nationwide and beyond—Benchmark brings with it Hugo's high standard of service values and quality craftsmanship that Albert brought to Jacksonville 100 years ago. The Hugos are committed to listening to what customers' needs are and to servicing those needs, no matter where they live or work.

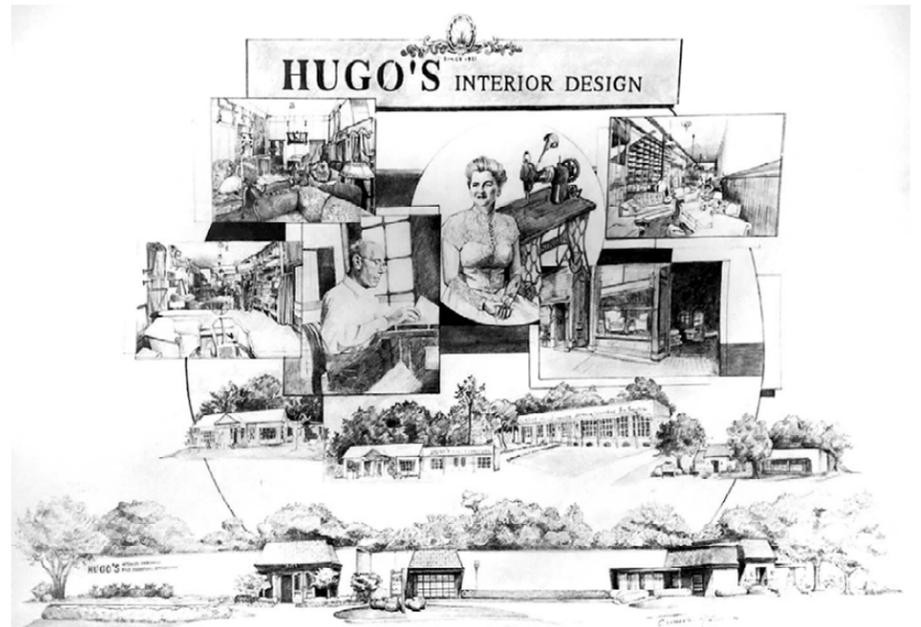
For artisans looking for employment, "We're always hiring," said Mathew, who assists his dad in the running of Hugo's. The Hugo family is committed to supporting the local economy, and they are fortunate that the demand right now for high-end products is great. Those interested in work can apply directly on the website, [HugosInteriors.com](http://HugosInteriors.com), under the Careers tab. "The most important resource we have here are the people we work with," Mathew said.

Jennie, Mathew's sister, operates Crosby Designs, a second wholly owned subsidiary of Hugo's. Her 3,000-square-foot design studio is located on Riverside Avenue in Riverside. Its opening in 2011 felt like a "going back home" according to Richard; his daughter's studio is very near to where his grandfather started the business back in 1921. There's a coming around full circle to know that Albert's great granddaughter is carrying on a facet of the family tradition near where he began it 100 years ago.

Jennie has a traditional American work ethic that seems to run in the blood of the Hugo family. In partnership with Hugo's and Benchmark, Jennie and her team at Crosby Designs have an existing and growing clientele. Staff at the studio is available to bring to life your every design dream, with no project too big or too small.

The great grandchildren of Albert Hugo are now serving the future generations of his first customers. "We are a generational business that has been serving generations of Jacksonville families," Richard pointed out. Be part of that tradition. Visit weekdays their showroom of quality merchandise in East San Marco. Or call to book an appointment for your next residential or commercial design project.

For their 100th anniversary, the Hugo family plans to have a celebration in the fall, including a private sale for their current clients.



JENNIE HUGO



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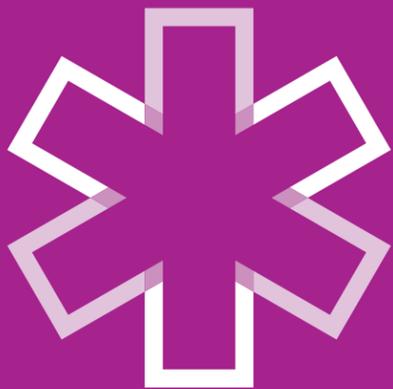
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# THE WAY WE WERE

## HOLT AND BETTY ANN GRAVES

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS  
Resident Community News

Like the lace on Betty Ann Gordon's dress the day she married Holt Graves at St. John's Cathedral in 1980 the couple's lives are intertwined and patterned in a beautiful and fitting filagree of family history. Betty Ann's wedding dress had been worn by Holt's mother, Tayloe Graves and several of his aunts; it was embellished with intricate lace which had belonged to Holt's grandmother. That delicate yet enduring connection continued when six years ago, the dress was disassembled, and Betty Ann made throw pillows for the granddaughters of all the women who had worn the dress and she made little ring bearer pillows as well.

Holt and Betty Ann's marriage is the culmination of an amusing journey of near misses for two people born in Jacksonville in 1955 only three months apart- she in Old St. Luke's Hospital - he at St. Vincent's. Betty

and Richard Gordon carried their baby home to Lakewood. Ed and Tayloe Graves carried baby Holt to Ortega Forrest. The infants grew up within fifteen miles of each other. (Only three miles across the river from Florida Yacht Club to Epping Forrest.) Holt's mother went to high school with Betty Ann's father. Both sets of grandparents lived in Jacksonville; Betty Ann and Holt were confirmed at St. John's Cathedral on the same day when they were twelve but did not know each other; both worked on degrees in Accounting and Business Administration during the same time period at Emory and Georgia Tech universities in Atlanta only a few miles apart. Yet their paths never crossed.

Each one recalls a childhood of freedom - a busy household for Betty Ann with four siblings riding bicycles all over Lakewood, spending time at the Lakewood Pharmacy, Dipper Dan's Ice Cream shop, the Toy Parade and French Novelty. Holt recalls, "Leaving after school and coming home at supper time." With his pals, he rode his unicycle across Roosevelt Boulevard to go to Carter's Pharmacy and all around the Ortega neighborhood. There were dance classes for Betty Ann at Mervyn's Ballet Guild of Jacksonville on San Jose, (while in college she trained at Atlanta Ballet.) And, there were piano lessons, swim team, camp in North Carolina in the summers. Holt played sports in high school - Episcopal and Robert E. Lee - went boating with his mother and dad and two younger brothers. "We had the



Lawton, Sarah, Betty Ann, Holt, Corbin and Lyerly Graves

2nd Hobie Cat in Jacksonville." Idyllic childhoods on opposite sides of the river yet mirror image experiences in many ways. Finally, twenty years after being so close yet so far away, these two lively people connected geographically and romantically.

But, it was not in Jacksonville. It was not in Atlanta. It was not when they joined a college tour group and sat about twenty feet apart on a plane bound for Europe. It was 4,000 miles

from home at Heathrow Airport in London that their parallel lives finally intersected.

Holt laughed as he recalled that of the forty-two people in the travel group only seven were guys. "A stat I'll never forget." As fate would have it, after the 8- week tour, Betty Ann went back to Atlanta to work for the Coca Cola Company. However, Holt explained laughingly, "When she came home for Christmas in 1978, she called me. Make



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Holt and Betty Ann with grandchildren

grandmother gave her a machine for her 16th birthday. That skill came in handy since she made many of her bridesmaids' dresses. She is an accomplished seamstress who also makes baby quilts and other items including matching outfits for the family for a 2019 Disney Cruise. She enjoys helping with the grand-children, has been a Sunday School teacher and until a recent knee injury, an active tennis player. According to Holt

she is the keeper of their extensive social calendar. They belong to the casually formed Lakeside Drive Dock group, two supper clubs with friends of over 38 years, and she organizes get-togethers and reunions for former work friends, college pals and even camp friends from years ago. It is evident that keeping in touch and maintaining connections is important to these laid back, friendly, congenial folks who value family and relationships. Holt continues his work with Reynolds, Smith, and Hill, plays tennis, and remarked that he and Betty Ann have a "pretty good division of labor." He does not cook but Betty Ann says he "is a good cleaner." They both do yard work- she mows - he trims the hedges. They enjoy boating and their sailboat "The GRAVY Boat" bobs in the Ortega River at the dock of their Lakeside Drive Home. They enjoy cruising up and down the intercoastal,

sure you mention that SHE CALLED ME!" Betty Ann remarked that as a result of that conversation Holt asked her to a birthday party for a friend who was turning thirty. "We thought he was really old! We dated the rest of that week then dated long distance for a while until I moved back to Jacksonville." Holt added, "I was a hero in her mother's eyes because I got her to come back home."

At their wedding, of the 400 people in attendance there was only one overlap of guests that both families knew! Holt and Betty Ann are the parents of Lawton, an attorney in Jacksonville who is married to Sarah and the father of three girls - Weslyn, Sidney and Chambers. He was the 5th generation of their family to be married at St. John's Cathedral. And Corbin, a CPA who lives in Raleigh with his wife Byerly and their children Chesson, Walker and Anna. Sticking to tradition, Corbin and Lawton and the grand children's names are all family names or derivatives of family names.

When asked about what is most important in life Holt said, "It's all about family." His wife agreed saying, "Even when I was going to school at Emory and working in Atlanta, I knew I'd come back to Jacksonville. I can't think of anywhere else I'd rather be since my family and friends are all here." Holt expounded on that comment. "Five generations of my family have lived here. I grew up here and I wasn't going to follow a job somewhere else." Holt and Betty Ann are CPAs although she retired in April after 39 years with American Heritage Life Insurance now Allstate Benefits. Among other activities, she remains busy with a group which meets to sew dresses for DESC and during the past months has made a quilt for each of her six grandchildren. Betty Ann learned to sew even before her



Holt Graves 1959

going on "cocktail cruises" and to Jekyll Island or just across the St. Johns River to watch the moon rise.

On their walls are family photos, commendations and a framed memory box with the Yacht Club Flag tied into knots as a result of hurricane winds which was presented to Holt when he finished his service as Commodore in 2004. Holt has been active with Riverside Rotary Club for thirty plus years where he was past president.

The family is anticipating being with their children and grandchildren at what was Holt's maternal grandparents' home in Cashiers, North Carolina. They have completed a guest house there to accommodate their family visitors. Betty Ann confessed that they are a competitive bunch even when it comes to dominoes, so these should be lively gatherings. Holt and his extended family of many cousins still have land in South Carolina which was a land grant. The house which had been on their land was burned during Sherman's march through the South in the Civil War and although "it is just pine trees now" the family voted to keep the property as a connection to their ancestors and as a meeting place or "field trip" destination for the cousins.

The Graves family has many memories and legacies from family members on both sides and back many generations. They have branched out from their roots on the St. Johns River and have traveled to Alaska, the Baltic Sea, Australia,

gone on Disney Cruises- and the one that started it all- that fateful trip where two young Jacksonville natives who had lived only a few miles apart their entire lives traveled all the way to London in 1976 to meet and eventually start a life together.

When asked what meaningful relationship or event most influenced his life, Holt smiled, leaned over, touched Betty Ann, and said, "When Betty Ann called and asked me out - and that trip to Europe." Betty Ann smiled, "I can't top that. Without all that coming together we wouldn't be here now." The couple said they never argue, although Holt jokingly admitted to getting mad at his wife once around 1980.

The Graves have a shared history separated only by geography and that river which runs through it. Their mutual philosophy - family first, maintain connections, value relationships, honor and cherish the previous generations, find joy and humor in everyday things- certainly good advice coming from folks with a joyful, casual attitude and forty plus year marriage (with only one disagreement which Betty Ann doesn't even remember!)

Two individuals, two families, many generations leading similar lives and holding the same strong values have been delicately yet tightly laced together as Betty Ann and Holt's parallel lives merged into one journey right back where they started.



Betty Ann Gordon 1959



Holt and Betty Ann Graves 2021

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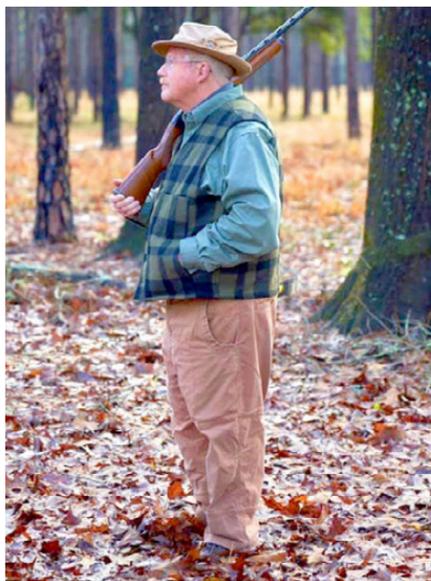
# IN MEMORIAM

## BART COLBERT

OCTOBER 21, 1952 – JULY 25, 2021

“I can say one thing for sure, Bart Colbert was a **GOOD GOD-FEARING MAN!** Our conversations would always turn to talking about the Bible and striving to be a better Christian”

— Ray Pringle



**J**ulian Bartow Colbert III, known to family and friends as Bart, had a peaceful passing on Sunday, July 25. One moment he was in the hands of slumber, and the next he was in the arms of his Lord.

“We lost our beloved Bart Colbert. He was a dear soul and a funny man,” said Cathleen Lee, Vice President of Norville Realty, Inc. where Bart had spent the last 15 years of his four-decade career as a realtor. Sales Leader was one of the titles he had held there. Prior to Norville, he had been with Watson Realty Corp.

“I can say one thing for sure, Bart Colbert was a good God-fearing man! Our conversations would always turn to talking about the Bible and striving to be a better Christian,” said Ray Pringle, one of Bart’s many friends. “We had some wonderful times at the Gun Club shooting sporting clays and cooking steaks on the barbie.”

Bart was a fourth-generation Florida native who had deep roots in the Jacksonville and Fernandina area. As a young man, Bart was an avid surfer. Out of the water, he spent time swinging on a trapeze and walking the high wire for Barnum & Bailey Circus. He had a fondness for camellias and azaleas, which he had inherited from his grandfather who owned wholesale nurseries in Virginia, Alabama, and Florida.

Bart was entrenched in the local community. He used his Lifetime Membership at the Jacksonville Gun Club to serve as Safety Director, to instruct Scouts, and to help Disabled Veterans. He was a true outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting, fishing, and camping.

Bart was also a 32 Degree Mason of the Scottish Rite. He served as Treasurer and Master of Solomon Lodge #20 and was Treasurer for the Scottish Rite Library Educational Charities.

Bart was a lover of family. He leaves behind his wife of almost 30 years, Winslow Colbert, Administrative and Financial Coordinator of Ortega Church; two daughters—Jeanne Lamar Petersen and Amelia Rain; three grandchildren—William Petersen, Emily Anne Rain, and Wade Rain; his father—Jack Colbert; one sister—Barbara Smith; and two nieces—Michelle Snowden and Katherine Harrington. Bart was preceded in death by his mother, Jean May Colbert.

On Saturday, July 31, a service to celebrate Bart’s life was held at Ortega Church on Roosevelt Boulevard. Donations in memory of Bart can be made to that church or to BSA Troop 2, c/o Jim Doherty, 1423 Avondale Avenue, Jacksonville, Florida 32205.

To leave virtual notes for the Colbert family, visit [Guestbook@Jacksonville.com](mailto:Guestbook@Jacksonville.com).

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Basketball players at Willow Branch Park will be playing above Keith Doles' mural of a pond with koi fish once the art is completed in October.

# 'Guardian Angels' add second mural to Willow Branch Park

BY KAREN RIELEY  
Resident Community News

Since 2019, members of the AIDS Memorial Project of Northeast Florida have been steadfastly improving Willow Branch Park in Riverside to commemorate those in the community who have died of HIV/AIDS. This year, they are eagerly anticipating the completion of a mural called "The Pond" by local artist Keith Doles. It will be painted on the park's 50 x 94 square foot basketball court and ready for public viewing by October, if the weather cooperates.

"It is a semi-realistic koi pond with a variety of multicolored fish," said Richard Ceriello, who is founder and president of the nonprofit. "Keith's art is whimsical and lively, but it also shares a deeper message that, like the fish in the mural, we are all beautiful fish with different colors, stripes and types swimming in the same pool together. We must all learn to swim together, or we won't survive."

Doles is creating the mural with the help of associate artists Adrian Rhodes, Ramses Allen and Iven Gillespie. His painting style includes influences from Cubism and Abstract Expressionism where geometric shapes are layered in perspective with expressive color.

In 2020 Doles painted the culvert across the creek that flows the width of the park from Sydney Street to Park Street with a sunflower mural. In addition to the murals, the nonprofit has planted trees, created a butterfly garden, installed a gate to keep cars out of the park and, in general, overseen the beauty, cleanliness and safety of the park.

Stonewall Sports — Jacksonville, an LGBTQIA & Ally nonprofit sports league, regularly uses the park for competition kickball.

"They are committed to keeping the park clean and require everyone who comes to their events to pick up after themselves," Ceriello said.

"The park is now a safe location for families to enjoy," Ceriello said.

In 1978 Willow Branch Park was the site of Jacksonville's first Gay Pride Festival. Ceriello recalls that in the early 1980s, Willow Branch Park was essentially Ground Zero for the HIV/AIDS.

"Almost all of the people infected with HIV/AIDS in Jacksonville lived within a mile or so of the park," he said. People died in scores, leaving almost no neighborhood block around the park unaffected. The disease was characterized as a gay disease or a drug user disease, even though it affected all segments of the population.

The group continues to raise funds to realize its plans for a permanent memorial in the park, what it hopes will be the second memorial in the Southeastern United States to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

As of January 2020, one in seven people in the United States were living with HIV and were unaware of their infection. In 2018, the Florida Department of Health reported more than 7,600 people living with HIV in Northeast Florida. Of the 344 newly diagnosed cases, about 86 percent of people lived in Duval County.

Learn more about the AIDS Memorial Project of Northeast Florida at [www.JaxAIDSMemorialProject.com](http://www.JaxAIDSMemorialProject.com).

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# IN MEMORIAM

## JOHN RICHARD SPENCE

NOVEMBER 29, 1928 –  
DECEMBER 17, 2020

“Dad knew a lot about a lot of things not just a little bit about lots of things.”

— Susan and Catherine Spence



Emma and Richard (Dick) Spence

## MARY EMMA (GRADY) SPENCE

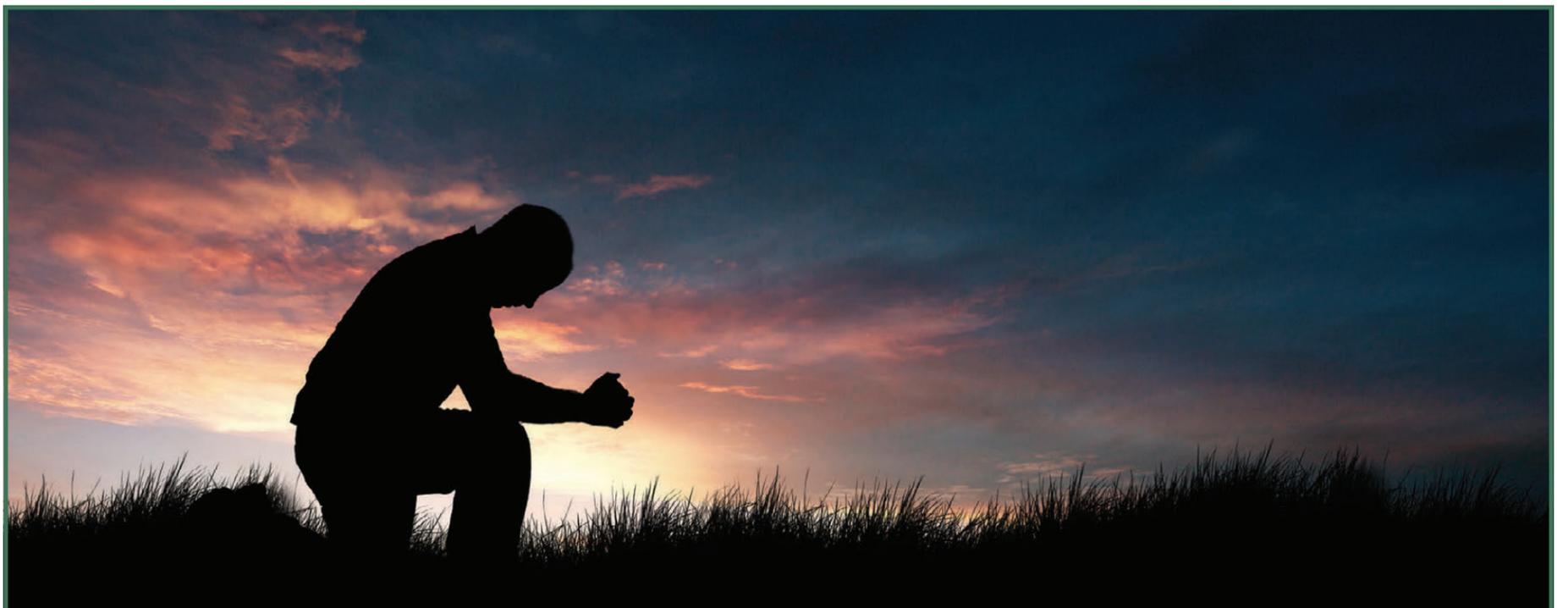
MARCH 25, 1933 –  
JULY 15, 2021



Emma and Richard Spence - wedding photo 1955

The Spence siblings agree that their mother died of a broken heart after losing her husband Dick after 65 years of marriage. Dick and Emma married at St. Paul's Catholic Church in August of 1955 where Emma had gone to school. For the first year of their married life, they were at Ft. Bragg where Dick served with the Army Corps of Engineers. After a brief time in Dick's state of Wisconsin there was a "non-negotiable" part to their marriage contract. Having grown up with the oaks and magnolias of Avondale, the snow and freezing cold of Michigan was too much for the Florida native bride, so the young couple returned to settle in Jacksonville where Dick founded the Jacksonville Construction Company in 1958. Children arrived over the next years and Emma, a Home Economics major from Barry College in Miami, had her hands full with Celia, Catherine, Susan, John and Tom. Michael was stillborn in 1963. She taught 4th and 5th grade at Assumption for one year and worked as a "merchandising assistant" at Furchgott's Department Store which Susan and Catherine find amusing since her actual job was working at the scarf counter and it lasted about a month. The siblings said Mary Emma ran a "tight ship" at home. Tom remarked, "We spoke when spoken to. You couldn't

answer the phone until you could say, "Spence family, Tom speaking." Susan reiterated, "There was a chart for chores – a blackboard on the back of the kitchen door - set the table, clear the table, take out the garbage, sweep." The Spence kids, like most kids of the time played all over Ortega Forrest but Susan said, "It was important for everyone to be together for dinner." Catherine mentioned that her mother had a whistle which she would stand outside and blow 3 times to summon her children. "By the second blast you had better be on the way home and get washed up." Basketball, dance classes, swimming at the Yacht Club, the YMCA, various camps, church events, creating and sewing dance and Halloween costumes or bridesmaids' dresses, Emma Spence was on the go. Tom said they spent a LOT of time in Cloth World which was at Cedar Hills Shopping Center. Emma was busy caring for her family while Dick was busy selling all the rebar that went into making the overland bridge for I - 95, building houses in Confederate Point and many of the houses in Ortega Forrest. He built the Lowndes County High School Stadium (where Tom filmed a football game for CBS SPORTS a couple of years ago) and he built condos in Colorado and served as a consultant on many other projects. He served as chairman of the building committee in



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the construction of the St. Matthews Catholic Church Parish Center where they were members, sat on the front row and “faithfully served” throughout their married lives.

Recently, Catherine and her husband drove around Ortega Forrest as she pointed out all the houses her father had built including Dr. and Mrs. George Trotter’s house and Dr. Totter’s office in Riverside. When Dick bought property on Longbow to build a house for his family in 1971, he consulted the kids on the plans, explained that it would cost \$35,000.00 and engaged the children in decision making. They discussed many details — the cost of windows, how to save money on various aspects of the design. The siblings agreed laughingly that their dad was a miser. Tom recalled having to go out to their electric meter every day and mark down how many kilowatts they were using and put it on a chart. If they went over the designated amount their dad allowed, he pulled the power switch. Catherine laughed. “Then we had to read with flashlights. It happened about once a month.”

In between her other activities Emma served as the “contractress,” as she called herself, for the new house. She arrived at the worksite carrying the house plans and wearing a shirtwaist dress accessorized with a tool belt and a hard hat. Every Friday night or Saturday the kids served as the clean- up and painting crew. Susan remarked, “It was so cool to have a tie in to our house.”

The Spences instilled a sense of “stick- to- itiveness,” a respect for education, frugality, faith, honesty, loyalty, dedication to home and family and a strong work ethic in their children. Dick worked until he was 88 years old at his second career of thirty seven years with Northwestern Mutual Insurance Company. As Susan and Catherine said, “He worked longer at his second career than most people work on their first! Dad knew a lot about a lot of things not just a little bit about lots of things.”

The Spences played tennis, were members of the Florida Yacht Club - Dick, an avid life- long sailor was also a member of the board of directors. He also served on the board of Ye Mystic Reveller’s, the Speech and Hearing Board and was a member of Arlington Rotary Club. At St. Matthews Church Emma founded the VIA program and volunteered in the 4-year-old classroom. She was a member of the Ladies Auxiliary at St. Vincent’s Hospital for 50 years! Dick and Emma were held in high regard in the community and will be remembered fondly by all who knew them. They leave a legacy of honesty, integrity, and devotion to family set by the example of their faith filled lives. Their love for each other was evident in the way they treated each other, never arguing or fussing, kissing each time they left the house, even if it was just to run to the grocery store, and kissing on their return. Their lives and marriage were an example of stability, love and devotion for their children, grand and great grand- children to model and cherish.

## Senior living community hosts event, raises donations, supplies for students



Wendy Dotson with Julie VanBeveren, Therese Meyer and Amber Young

The Windsor at Ortega community, which provides assisted living and memory care for its residents, hosted a back-to-school supply drive and professional mixer on August 4 to help students at Ortega, Venetia and Timuquan elementary schools have a good start to the new school year. Those who attended were encouraged to donate school supplies and monetary gifts. Every person who donated was given a raffle ticket to try to win a Grand Door Prize.

“We’re a big believer as a privately owned community that we need to support the local community, including students going

back to school and their families in this immediate area,” said Wendy Dotson, corporate sales specialist for Legend Senior Living, which operates The Windsor at Ortega. “Even though we focus on seniors, we also work with their families and children. Together we’re stronger.”

More than \$300 and lots of school supplies were donated by those who participated. They received a meal to go and a bottle of wine for their contribution. The Windsor’s chef prepared hors d’oeuvres and takeaway meals. Bluestone Physician Services sponsored libations.

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# BACK TO SCHOOL



# History-Making at Bolles

BY MARY WANSER  
Resident Community News

The Bolles School launched the 2021-22 school year on August 12 with many of the typical First Day of School festivities and events, including the annual Senior Breakfast where black dresses and ties were donned along with shades and tiaras. But there are some exciting history-making firsts to take note of.

One historic hallmark of the new year is a near max capacity student body of more than 1,700 students on all four campuses and the reception of boarders from 17 states and 18 countries. These students are joining an already culturally and ethnically diverse community of learners, many bi-lingual. Bolles students in grades Pre-K through 12 come from a variety of backgrounds and a total of 52 countries.



Upper School San Jose Campus

New highs in school advancement and operations add to the energy of the 2021-22 school year. The Bolles Annual Giving Fund is at a 15-year high with \$1.7 million and a 40 percent increase in donors. The School's endowment is up to \$25 million, and more than \$35 million of the planned \$50 million capital campaign has already been fulfilled. This has helped stimulate important

enhancement and maintenance work on all four campuses, including changes to the Ponte Vedra Library on the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus, among many others.

History is in the making at the Upper School San Jose Campus. Bolles Hall will soon have its first elevator installed. In another first, female boarders are moving to new rooms in Bolles Hall later this fall. The expansion project will double the capacity to meet increasing admission demand.

Further, Bolles Hall will be 100 percent solar energy dependent thanks to a new SolarSmart program commitment. "The community benefits not just from the increase in green generation, but also from breathing in cleaner air," said JEA Media Relations Coordinator Simone Garvey-Ewan.

The full scope of work hinges on future completion of the Center for Innovation, Math and Science building planned for the Upper



Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus

School San Jose Campus bluff. This building is expected to house the School's science, math, robotics, and technology offerings and add classroom space displaced by the residence hall expansion.

School Chief Financial Officer Jeff Role shared additional plans to Bolles Hall, including the expansion and reconfiguration of Verlander Hall, which is the indoor dining area, and the creation of a new outdoor dining area.

Renovation to Cain Gymnasium is planned and, as another exciting first for the School, the first full school year of swimming in the Tarver Pool that was installed in the spring.

"There is so much good happening as we begin a new season of cultivating and educating young minds at Bolles," said Bolles President and Head of School Tyler Hodges.

## Historic weekend for the Bolles Resident Life program

On Saturday, August 21, female boarding students moved from their longtime dorm quarters on the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus to recently renovated riverfront rooms in the new Llura "Lulie" Liggett Gund '58 Residence Hall for Girls on the Upper School San Jose Campus — a history-making event! Their move marks the first time in school history Bolles Hall has become a home-away-from-home for both male and female boarding students.

The move was made possible by a generous gift from American businessman, philanthropist and professional sports owner, Gordon Gund and sons Zack Gund and Grand Gund, who provided funding for the Llura "Lulie" Liggett Gund '58 Residence Hall for Girls to honor wife and mother, Bartram alumna, Lulie. Lulie Gund attended Bartram School for girls in the 1950s before it merged with The Bolles School in 1991. An avid supporter of both schools and a philanthropist who made tangible changes in the realms of blinding retinal diseases,

conservation and renewable energy, Lulie Gund passed away in 2020.

"This gift fulfills our community's longtime vision of locating our Girls Residential Life program on the Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus and allows the program to grow and expand in its experience," said Bolles Chief Advancement Officer Carol Nimitz.

The female boarders are part of a culturally and internationally diverse resident community of students from 17 states and 18 countries this school year.



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# Students Create “Something Beautiful” with Collaborative Project



First – fifth grade students recently participated in a collaborative art project designed to bring beauty to the surrounding Episcopal St. Mark’s Campus community and raise awareness about unique urban art within the greater Jacksonville community. In the book “Maybe Something Beautiful” by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresia Howell, students learned about a young girl who adds a drawing of a sun to the wall of a dark alley. This one simple drawing inspired others to create art and bring brightness and color to a once gray community.

“Maybe Something Beautiful” is based on a true story about the Urban Art Trail in San Diego, California. Applying what they learned about the Urban Art Trail, each St.

Mark’s Campus student designed a single mosaic section pieced together to create a beautiful mural along McCullough Lane for passersby to enjoy. In addition to creating their own mural, students were encouraged to observe and submit photos of murals around the greater Jacksonville community and beyond.

The Episcopal St. Mark’s Campus mural is inscribed with a memorable quote within the book — “My friends, you are all artists. The world is your canvas.”

Anne Draper, Librarian, and BeBe Alexander, Art Instructor, utilized a multidisciplinary approach to inspire Episcopal St. Mark’s Campus students to create something beautiful for this project.

# Back 2 School Jamboree



William Jackson, Educator; Taylor Richardson, Bolles Senior; Daryll Willie, School Board Member; and Geraldine Ford, CEO of Alpha Starz Inc.

School board members, educators, students, and community volunteers gathered last month to help make the ninth annual Alpha Starz, Inc. Back 2 School Jamboree a success.

This year, 1,200 backpacks stuffed with books and school supplies were given to elementary, middle, and high school students from low-income families. At the event, COVID-19 vaccines were administered, goody bags were offered, and food was distributed. A photo booth was set up, too, just for the fun of it! The generosity of a long list of local organizations made it all possible.

Students in many Duval County public schools will now have access to free laptops to aid them in building digital skills, involve them in virtual and classroom learning activities and projects, and help them prepare for future careers.

The event was held at the Emmett Reed Community Center on West 6th Street. It was organized by Geraldine Ford, CEO of Alpha Starz, a youth development organization, and Glendora McCargo.

“It’s about the service! Always!” said Taylor Richardson, a senior at Bolles who is known as Astronaut Starbright on social media and who happens to be Ford’s granddaughter.

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## DA Graduates Pursuing Their Passions

**Tanase Popa** (2002) a University of North Carolina School of the Arts graduate is a producer on iconic television series and films including “Glee”, “American Horror Story”, “Pose”, “Halston” and many others with Ryan Murphy Productions. He has been nominated for five Emmys and is the recipient of an AFI Award and a Peabody Award.

**James Boyd** (2006) completed his BFA at SUNY Purchase College in 2010 and traveled the world performing with music icons Elton John, Lady Gaga, Mary J. Blige, and Bruce Springsteen. Today, James is an international faculty member of the Manhattan Dance Project, and a full-time faculty member of the Troy University Theatre and Dance Department.

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# App-titude for Success

BY CASEY CRAIG  
Resident Community News



LYMAN STARMER

Most kids going into their senior year of high school spend their time sending off college applications, counting down the days until graduation, and enjoying the last bit of leisure time with hometown friends before they go off into the adult world. Within a few years and degrees later, they can expect to start getting their foot in the door and begin their careers.

Lyman Starmer, however, sets himself apart from his contemporaries and the traditional high school experience. The incoming Wolfson High School senior has dedicated the last year of his life to jetsetting across the country to attend investor meetings, network, and promote his business: Perspective, a political-discussion based mobile app.

The app's release is both timely and opportunistic: in the past decade, social media has often spurred heated political arguments and can brew a divisive tone among friends and family members. Perspective aims to bridge the gap by allowing other users to engage with each other across the political spectrum through a questionnaire-based algorithm the user fills out before joining. "The objective is to give a range of ideas and room to grow," Starmer explained, "We believe true growth is finding consensus points with people you normally wouldn't agree with." As media and social sites continually grow more convoluted, it appears that an app like Perspective will soon become a necessity. So how did the promising Avondale-based tech developer come up with an app he projects to have millions of users by 2023?

"I remember it, actually. I was sitting on my porch, it was Election Day this past year," he said. "My father had already gotten off social media (due to the politics) and I left, too. As people got off of it, I was inspired to start this." Around this time, Starmer had recently transferred from Episcopal School to Wolfson as a standout basketball recruit. Once he began to shift his focus to developing Perspective, he found had to choose between two very different routes. As his passion for the app and its traction grew, he sat down with his coach and decided to drop off the team. However, Starmer has no regrets. "I've always had an entrepreneurial mindset." It's become quite apparent that he's on to something, as several national firms are reaching out to get in touch with the young developer to learn more about the app, and in turn, what it might learn about them as well.

Joining Perspective starts with giving the new user a 15-minute survey asking about their views on hot-button

topics ranging from abortion to gun rights and so on. This data is used to introduce the user to certain stances they agree with while also exposing them to counterpoints and other users that they may not see eye-to-eye with. To keep content and conversations fresh, the app continually will refresh questions for the user while they're still new to the platform. "In the beginning, every week, the app will ask you 2 questions as it analyzes your responses. Based on those answers, your 'perspective' changes slightly." Perspective also follows somewhat of a bipartisan metric- or a way to gauge a site or author's objectivity and bias. The metric will let users know a person's content is bipartisan- but the user can also choose to not show it. "This stabilizes accountability when it comes to writing content," said Starmer. He hopes that the app can be distinguished from other forms of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. As they are all predominantly image-sharing and short-form post sites, a user's worth on those sites has potential to be found in rapid value. "Usually, your popularity is based on 'likes' and 'retweets' (on those sites), but Perspective is based on socioeconomic discussion from the other side of the political aisle." An aisle that continues to grow, but with Perspective's release date looming, there may be hope for a more passive passage across it.

Starmer isn't entirely sure about his collegiate future at the moment. He's already been courted by several Ivy League schools, but is considering doing a gap year to put further work into his app. It's evident he takes pride in his work and has no plans to slow down. "I want to add more developers. I have a really great founding team and advisory board."

While Starmer prepares for the app's invite-only beta launch on August 25th, he's also inspiring his classmates to animate their dreams and ideas into reality, he and various students & staff at Wolfson are planning "Innovation Night," an evening where kids pitch small business ideas to find growth and support for them. Their ideas range across a broad plain of industries and markets. "Some people think you have to be industry-specific to make a successful company, but you don't."

Starmer has the potential to be minted as Gen Z's more politically- approachable Zuckerberg- before he even dons his cap and gown- but reminds us all that innovation and collaboration can have many faces- even the ones you don't think you'd talk to.



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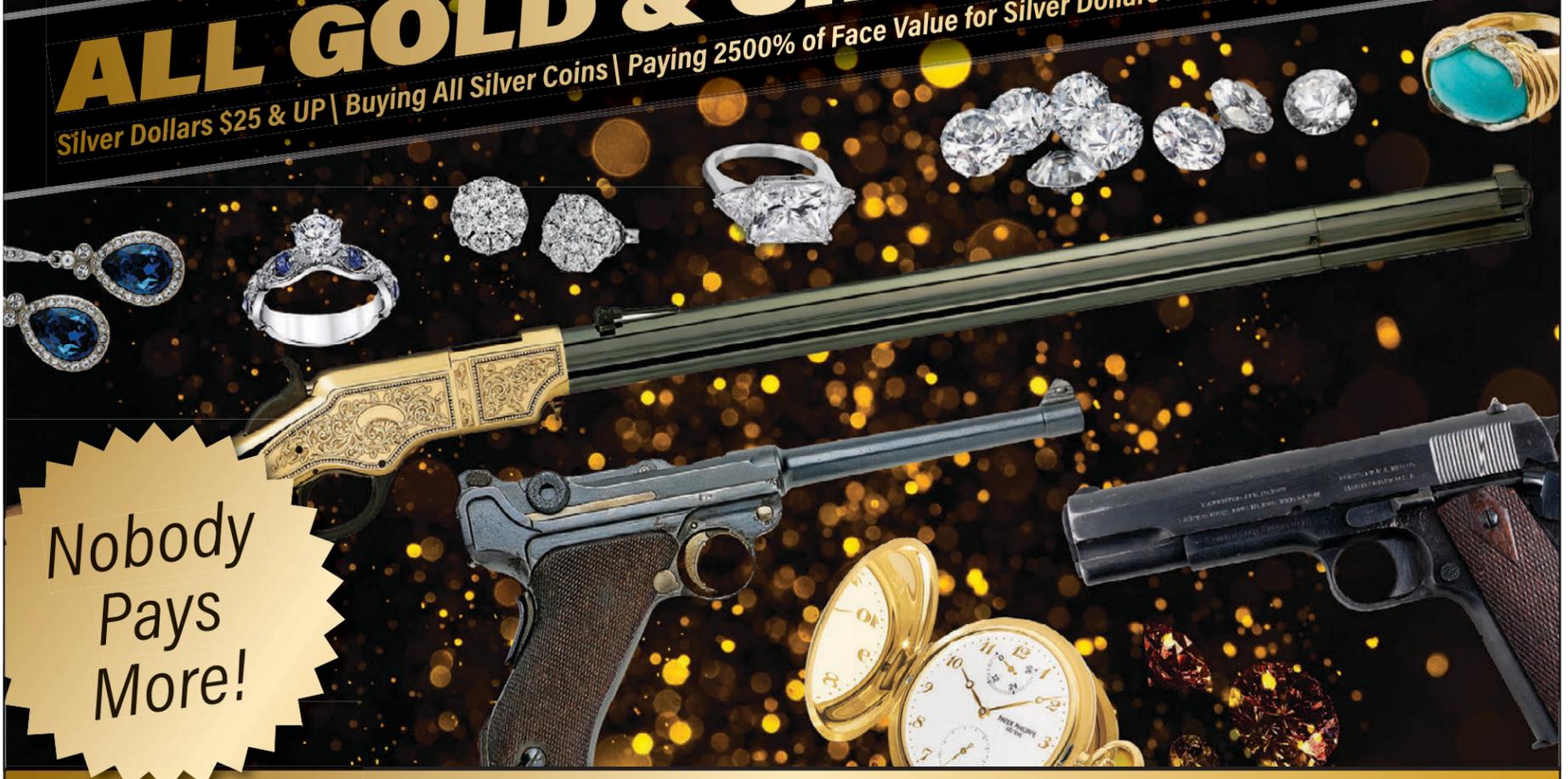
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