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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Resident

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SPRING FORWARD MARCH 13TH



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MARCH 2022, VOL. 15, ISSUE 03

## Real Estate market update, 2022 taking shape

*Neighborhoods, historic homes hold high values*

Older homes, those unique, yet all too familiar in design style and motifs, appeal to newcomers drawn to historic areas, as new arrivals seek belonging and friendliness. Along with quality of life and a defined sense of place, local home values are holding fast and have only become more valuable as inventory shrinks and demand increases.

North Florida continues to offer buyers an outstanding place to call home – but one had better be quick on the draw – and prepared to compete with cash buyers, investors, not withstanding, higher interest rate/s, in order to compete for a purchase in this current climate.

Read more about market conditions and the outlook from local professionals as we move through the first quarter of 2022. The growth is palpable, and the market doesn't seem to show any sign of slowing down throughout the region.

READ MORE ON PAGE 15

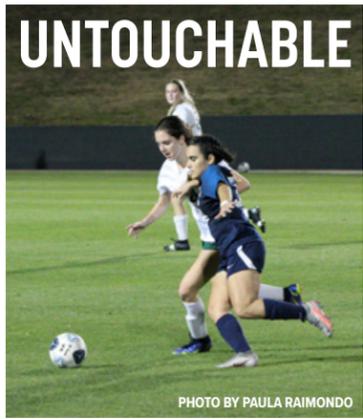


PHOTO BY PAULA RAIMONDO

On February 23, at Deland's Spec Martin Stadium, the St. Johns Country Day School Girls Soccer team garnered their 11th straight State Championship and 14th overall State Championship title. Under the direction of Coach Mike Pickett '83, the team overcame a tight first half in which the Shorecrest Prep Chargers met and turned back every attempt at a goal.

But at the 55-minute mark, Senior and Southern Mississippi-commit Julia Boaventura knocked one in past Shorecrest's top-notch goalie. After breaking the 0-0 tie, the Spartans loosened up and played on, allowing Boaventura to score yet another goal just four minutes later, bringing the game to a 2-0 close and securing the legacy for another generation of Spartans.

The Spartans now trail St. Thomas Aquinas' 15-Championships lead in the state record books by only one title.

PRSR, STD. US POSTAGE PAID STUART, FL PERMIT No. 300



## St. Mark's River Run grows future Champions

Medal winners made their way through the streets of Ortega, as towering oaks welcomed runners from all over Jacksonville to the Episcopal School of Jacksonville - St. Mark's Campus, Feb. 26, for the Ascension St. Vincent's Ortega River Run.



## Legos, learning and exploration

*RPDS lego league relates to jobs, logistics*

Riverside Presbyterian Day School had three LEGO League Explore teams composed of 1st through 3rd Grade students. The three teams included the RPDS Robot Builders, RPDS Golden Builders, and RPDS Legends. These teams have been meeting since August working hard on the Cargo Connect season.

Students learned about the way cargo is transported throughout our community and the importance of each step of the journey to make sure communities receive vital supplies and materials from all around the world. Teams also utilized LEGO WeDo 2.0 to create motorized aspects of their builds with programming.



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**ON STANDS NOW**

# your **OPINION**

Thanks to *The Resident*, the community has access to Jacksonville's current events, interesting neighborhood personalities, and many other topics that are not easily available elsewhere to your readers. The fact that it is free to us all, makes it appreciated even more. We look forward to each issue.

*Keep up the good work.*  
Don Burchell

The St. Johns River runs through the heart of Jacksonville, shaping our lives and driving our economy. Our river is also one of Florida's most productive estuaries and the nursery grounds for numerous species of commercially harvested fish and shellfish we love to eat.

The St. Johns' delicate tidal balance of salt and freshwater has historically enabled healthy underwater grasses to thrive, providing critical habitat for fresh and saltwater species that have attracted sportsmen from near and far.

Now our thriving estuary and fishing economy are at risk. Due to pollution, development and increasing saltwater intrusion, underwater grasses are disappearing, wetlands are stressed, and fish habitat in the river is vanishing from Welaka to Jacksonville.

The loss of our river's submerged grasses also increase the threat of toxic blue green algae and increase flood risk throughout the lower St. Johns.

More than 50 years ago, the Rodman Dam was built across the Ocklawaha River, the largest tributary of the St. Johns, as part of the failed Cross Florida Barge Canal. This resulted in the clearing and flooding of approximately 7,500 acres of floodplain wetlands, while submerging over 20 springs beneath a massive pool of water

that significantly reduced freshwater flow to the St. Johns. The boondoggle canal project was eventually halted by the federal government, but the dam remains in place after all these years.

The good news is that we have an opportunity to finally breach the dam and allow the Ocklawaha to run free, once again. By reuniting the natural connection of Silver Springs, the Ocklawaha and the St. Johns, we can restore more than 150 million gallons of fresh water a day to our estuary, improve water quality, offset saltwater intrusion and restore habitat for fish and wildlife in the St. Johns River.

A free-flowing Ocklawaha will also restore a lost migratory pathway used by numerous fish species that historically migrated between the Ocklawaha River and the ocean.

Few efforts to restore Florida's biological wealth hold the prospect for such far-reaching benefits.

The science is clear and there is overwhelming public support. More than 85% of participants in a St. Johns River Water Management District survey expressed a desire to restore the Ocklawaha River. A recent Barcelo & Associates poll found nearly 80% of likely voters in Putnam and Marion Counties support restoration.

In addition, a recent TaxWatch report concluded it would be "dam shame" for taxpayers if funding was not appropriate to breach the Rodman dam.

The time has come to finally restore the largest tributary of our St. Johns River and unleash the significant ecological and economic benefits of a free-flowing Ocklawaha.

Visit our Website to Save the St. Johns and Free the Ocklawaha – [www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org](http://www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org).

*Lisa Rinaman*  
St. Johns Riverkeeper



**www.ResidentNews.net**

**GOT NEWS?**  
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## Nick Howland wins special election runoff for Jacksonville City Council seat



Republican Nick Howland clinched the necessary number of votes to take the City Council At-Large Group 3 seat. The seat was left vacant when Tommy Hazouri, who was a former council president and mayor, died in September.

The election went to a runoff in December, when none of the four candidates were able to get more than 50% of the vote. The top two vote-getters — Howland and Polson — advanced.

Howland won with 51.69% of the vote to his opponent Democrat Tracye Polson's 48.31%.

## Tiny Dock Concerts Back in Action

*Coming soon to a dock near you in early March*

River enthusiasts, music lovers and plain ole' good time seekers will appreciate the upcoming season and lineup of the Tiny Dock Concert Series, which was announced Feb. 14.

Currently, concert goers can join in on the action by boat, kayak, SUP, or perhaps some may want to grab a spot on the St. Johns River Taxi to enjoy lie, local musicians from unique venues on the St. Johns River.

Concerts are free to the public, and donation-based tickets are encouraged to support the concert series and St. Johns Riverkeeper, the Voice of the St. Johns River.

The next installment of the series will feature Missionary Blues Band on Saturday, March 5, just South of Sadler Point Marina on the Ortega River Basin from 3-5 pm. Listeners might ask...what genre of music does the band play? What is the low country sound? It can be summed up as Southern, electric, funky blues. Formed in 2013, the band's rousing live performances span the genres of Chicago Blues to New Orleans funkiness. Other concerts are tentatively slated for April 24, June 18 and Dec. 3.

Anchor around 30 16.054 N 81 43.386'W and experience something new, while also supporting the awareness and consideration of the St. Johns and Ortega Rivers. For more information, visit [facebook.com/TinyDockConcerts/](https://facebook.com/TinyDockConcerts/), or email [tinydockconcerts@gmail.com](mailto:tinydockconcerts@gmail.com).



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## Market News

### What's happening in our neighborhoods?

New listings are lagging compared to this time last year, and are well below historic norms. Buyer activity continues to be higher than normal. Interest rates for mortgages have increased slightly and are expected to continue trending upward through the year, while remaining historically low overall.

If you're considering selling this year, sooner is better than later. Feel free to call or email us for the latest available market data!

### *Did you know?*

In 2021, the median sale price for agent-assisted sales was 18% higher than for sale by owner sale prices across the country.

Source: National Association of REALTORS®  
2021 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers



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# Artist Walk inches closer to completion

## City Council gavel another 5-million investment

**BY JOEL ADDINGTON**  
Resident Community News

The City of Jacksonville is investing \$8.8 million in the Artist Walk streetscape project with an adjoining skate park where the preliminary groundwork is underway east of Riverside Park in the Five Points neighborhood.

Shannon Blankenship, director of the Riverside Arts Market (RAM), anticipates a significant increase in vendor space under the Fuller Warren Bridge for more arts, crafts and produce vendors; food trucks, in addition to new bike and walking paths. She believes it will shrink the current vendor waitlist.

"We currently have 30 approved vendors for RAM that are on the waitlist, pending an opening," she explained February 11 by email. "However, we've also moved to an invitation-only based market, where vendors are invited to fill out an application only after receiving an invitation based on our knowledge of their product. This is an attempt to reduce the number of vendors on our wait list that are

unlikely to make it into the market within the application year.

"[Artist Walk] will allow us to expand the offerings during the Saturday Riverside Arts Market, and even include an early morning 'european style' market featuring fresh pastries, produce and locally-made coffee. The new Shared Use Bike Path will give patrons a view of the market from above, and bring a new perspective to how we use the space. We look forward to bringing in more public art and improving the current Riverside Arts Market, which we can do with the expanded market capacity on the other side of Riverside Avenue."

The Artist Walk is envisioned as one segment of the Emerald Trail now under development in the urban core.

The Artist Walk portion would extend from RAM on Riverside Avenue northwest to Park Street under Interstate 95 and connect to College Street.

The Jacksonville City Council on February 8 approved \$5 million in funding for the project in addition to \$3.8 million already pledged in the city's parks improvement plan, said public relations specialist Caroline Adkins.

Planned for the Artist Walk project, she said, are the following features and amenities:

- A plaza space with landscaping, sculptures and seating near Riverside Avenue. This area will be a visual gateway between Riverside and Brooklyn. This space will also function as a transition space for the Fuller Warren bike/pedestrian bridge and the connection to the Emerald Trail and Riverwalk.
- Connection with the Emerald Trail and associated lighting, landscaping, and site amenities.
- A synthetic turf lawn that will be utilized as programmable space. This area is contained within the ramp areas of I-95 Fuller Warren at Park Street.
- An artistic skate plaza with three "rooms/spaces" between the freeway pillars for various skill levels. The skate park entry area creates a "JAX" stage that will front the synthetic turf lawn.

"The project is in the design refinement phase as we have engaged stakeholders input," said Ms. Adkins by email. "This project will focus on the first phase located between Park and College Street. The second phase is adjacent to Riverside Park and will continue the Emerald Trail connections to College Street. This is project is 1000-feet in length; equivalent to three city blocks."

The latest \$5 million in funding was approved as part of a \$30 million city-wide parks improvement plan.

The Emerald Trail master plan and implementation strategy from consultants for Groundwork Jacksonville in August, 2021 described the Artist Walk as a "linear park space under the Fuller Warren Bridge from the St. Johns River across Riverside Avenue, Park Street, and College Street, ending at Riverside Park. The Artist Walk will include the multi-use trail connection, parking,

pedestrian corridors, and landscaping. It will support the Riverside Arts Market, which has been open between the river and Riverside Avenue since 2009, and a much needed public space for the [City of Jacksonville]."

According to Downtown Jacksonville's website, "The Artist Walk will include a public skate park ... and other park amenities." The city council concurred in February passing ordinance 2022-46 with an amendment for the skate park, which Ms. Blankenship said was a priority for Mayor Lenny Curry.

Local historian and one of RAM's early founders, Wayne Wood, said the coming expansion of RAM was their "ambition all along."

The market started smaller but with a bang in 2009.

"We envisioned when RAM reached a level of success to expand across the street, we'd do other things outside the traditional role of RAM. We'd look for different types of markets on the other side, but more parking was badly needed, so the idea was to create a corridor to the John Gorrie Dog Park ..." recalled Mr. Wood.

And it's been a long time coming.

"It's a triangle of activity with Memorial Park, [RAM and the Artist Walk]. It's place-making," said Mr. Wood. "It's such a rich area with the Cummer Museum and RAM, the architecture, the parks, Five Points; this is the keystone for all that."

He's not stopping now though.

"We're talking about water features and more development. It's a concentrated area and there are numerous things to do in terms of cultural amenities that people can peel off to," he said.

Mr. Wood estimated that opening day at RAM drew some 25,000 people 13 years ago.

"It was so packed. It was amazing; cars lined all the way down to the TU building. A dead stop coming down to RAM," said Woods.

It's been 15 years since he and others began early work to launch RAM, which was spawned by Riverside Avondale Preservation. He's taken a back seat now but he remembers what it took to get here.

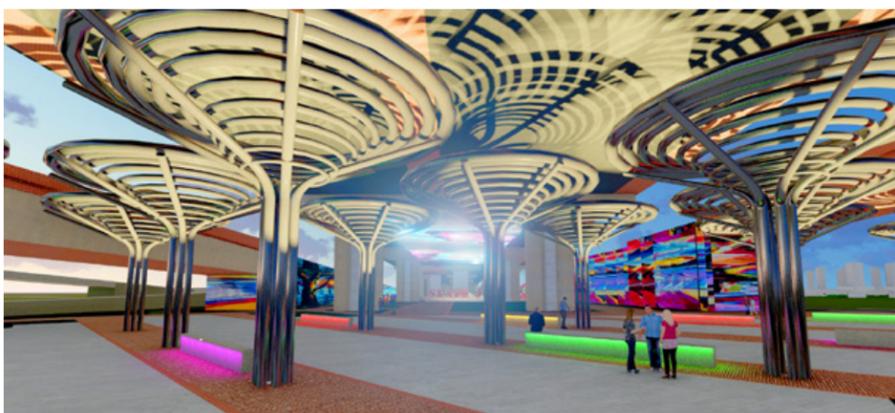
A market blending local arts, horticulture, entertainment, food and other crafts was unique at the time.

"Everything you buy at RAM is made by the person selling it to you," he said, adding that an independent committee ensures it's made locally.

"At the time it was a radical concept. We got a lot of pushback. Our motto is buy local, sell local, make local. And a number of brick-and-mortar businesses have started at RAM," said Wood.



Artist rendering of a potential skate park design for the Artist Walk.



Artist rendering of potential streetscape for Artist Walk.



L-R- Teresa Fish, Cindy Guy, Dr. Wayne Wood, Pamela Tellis and Doug Coleman, back in 2009.

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# Property deal closes, demolition ahead for former Times-Union HQ

BY LILLA ROSS  
Resident Community News

The demolition, expected to start this month, at 1 Riverside Ave., will start a new chapter at the riverfront property that was home to The Florida Times-Union for 50 years.

The newspaper, which was sold in 2017, now has offices in the Wells Fargo Center. The Morris family of Augusta, Ga., retained ownership of the property, which has recently sold to Fuqua Development of Atlanta. Fuqua paid \$25 million for the 18.5 acre site, including about seven submerged acres and two buildings that have been vacant since 2018.

TriBridg Residential bought approximately 4.3 acres for \$15.5 million to develop 270 apartments along the river. The apartments are part of a \$250 million multi-use development that Fuqua plans to build in two phases. In addition to the apartments, Phase 1, which is expected to be completed by summer 2024, will include a grocery store, restaurants, retail and an eight-story garage.

Last year, the Downtown Development Review Board signed off on the design, and the City Council approved a \$31.59 million incentives package. The demolition also means the beginning of the restoration of McCoy's Creek, part of the Emerald Trail project. The city bought about five acres along the eastern side of the property for \$6 million. The city, in partnership with GroundWork Jacksonville, plans to restore the creek, which now runs under one of the buildings.

Kay Ehas, executive director of GroundWork, said the creek will be daylighted and moved closer to its original location. "McCoy's Creek was totally straightened and bulkheaded in the 1920s. It was moved to higher ground, which isn't natural and exacerbated flooding," Ehas said.

The plan is to move the creek closer to the railroad track and widen it from 40 to 80 feet. A new 2.5-acre city park will be developed between the creek and the CSX tracks. The project now moves into the design phase.

Meanwhile, the first link in the 30-mile Emerald Trail is under construction on Park Street and is expected to be completed by fall, Ehas said.



## AVONDALE 5K CLASSIC

March 19th, 2022

**The Sanctuary on 8th Street** will partner with 1st Place Sports again to hold the Avondale 5K Classic, a scenic run through the historic Avondale neighborhood. There will also be a one-mile fun run.

[www.1stplacesports.com/races/avondale/](http://www.1stplacesports.com/races/avondale/)

## COMING SOON, TWO GREAT SPRING EVENTS

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**Resident COMMUNITY NEWS** | [RIVERSIDEAVONDALEPRESERVATION.ORG](http://RIVERSIDEAVONDALEPRESERVATION.ORG)

## What's New at Jacksonville's Cathedral

**Lenten Evensong**  
Sunday, March 6 | 5 p.m.  
Cathedral Choir  
Timothy Tuller, Canon for Music

*The Cathedral Bookstore & Gift Shop presents*  
**Second Sunday on the Porch**  
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Sunday, March 13 | 11 a.m. to Noon

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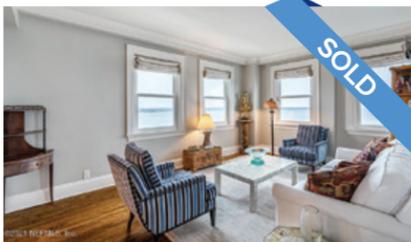
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# SPACE: THE DUVAL FRONTIER

Leaders are vying for a piece of the astronomical economic pie

BY WINDY TAYLOR  
Resident Community News

It's a sight as Floridian as an alligator: a massive rocket steaming away on the launch pad at Cape Canaveral, ready to depart on another journey into the vast darkness of space. We've all cheered the triumph of a successful launch, and felt the frustration of a scrubbed attempt. Less than a month ago, the launch of a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket was delayed five times before successfully launching on Monday, January 31. The last delay, which scrubbed the launch at T-minus 33 seconds, resulted from a cruise ship wandering into the hazard area.

As frustrating as these delays are for spectators, they are far more frustrating - and costly - for the companies involved in getting rockets and their payloads into space. Each delay is estimated to cost a company like SpaceX a quarter of a million dollars. And each setback not only affects that day's launch, but every other military and commercial payload in line behind it.

Since 1950, Cape Canaveral has been the primary rocket launch location for all NASA spacecraft, but the rapid expansion of private commercial space carriers - led by Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origins - has increased the need for additional launch and recovery sites. Currently, the Federal Aviation Administration has approved fourteen such spaceports throughout the United States, with four located in Florida. Three are dotted around Cape Canaveral.

The fourth is right here in Duval County, at the site of the decommissioned Cecil Naval Air Station on the westside. Since being licensed as a spaceport in 2020, the site has seen construction of an air traffic control tower and mission control center, as well as approval of funds to construct a beltway road on the site. Cecil Spaceport is currently managed by the Jacksonville Aviation Authority (JAA), which also runs the Cecil Airport at the same location.

That may change soon, if Wyman Duggan has his way. The State Representative from Jacksonville, whose 15th District includes the Cecil Spaceport, is sponsoring HB 1303, which would create the Northeast Florida Regional Spaceport Authority to promote the commercial use of the Cecil Spaceport and - more importantly - gain access to state and federal infrastructure money to further improve the site and attract commercial space carriers to Northeast Florida. The bill passed the House Tourism, Infrastructure and Energy Subcommittee on February 8, but unless something major happens in the next week, it may stall out for this year.

Wyman remains hopeful that enthusiasm generated over the coming months will help propel the bill further in the 2023 session. "It can take a couple years with a big concept bill," he said. Duggan noted that Speaker Designate Paul Renner ran for the 15th District seat eight years ago, and is therefore very familiar with the potential of the Cecil site.

In addition to Jacksonville's beaches, golf courses, and cultural treasures, North Florida offers several benefits unique to space commerce. Its location near the equator means that vehicles can be launched into space using less fuel than launches at higher latitudes. Additionally, the nearby Atlantic Ocean serves as a hazard area in the event of mission failure.

Beyond that, Jacksonville has been laying the groundwork to provide the most critical piece of a thriving commercial space economy - industry-specific education opportunities. Over the last twenty years, the School of Engineering at the University of North Florida has risen into the top 15% of engineering programs in the country. The Cecil campus of Florida State College at Jacksonville has already developed programs in fields that provide support to commercial aviation. The school's proximity to the planned 370,000-square-foot Boeing facility at Cecil Airport could lead to tailored partnerships for the training of the future spaceport workforce.

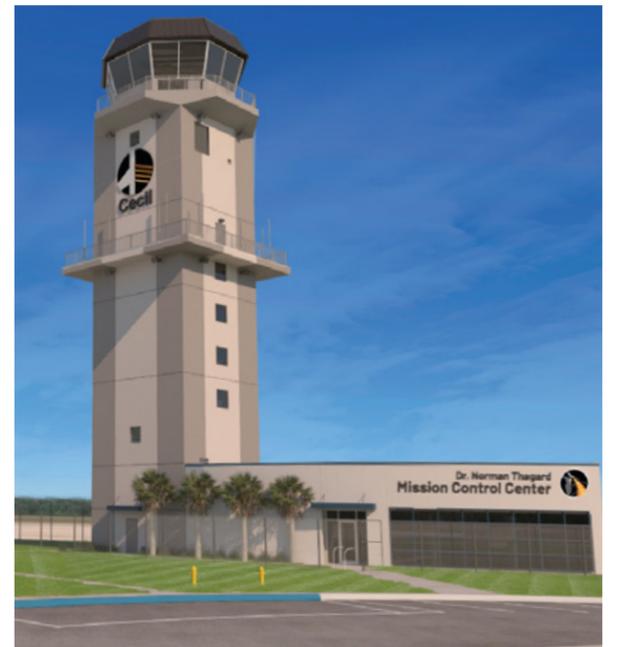
The Cecil Spaceport has been licensed for horizontal launches, as opposed to the more traditional vertical launches that occur at Cape Canaveral. In a horizontal launch, a rocket is attached to a large airplane, which flies out over the ocean before the rocket is detached and ignited. Horizontal launches have a few key advantages over vertical launches - chief among them the ability to avoid weather delays by flying the rocket to an area of clear skies before ignition.

Another key difference between Cecil Spaceport and the Kennedy Space Center is that the Cecil site is operated by the municipal JAA, while Kennedy is an active United States military base. At a time when global tensions are high, Kennedy may prioritize military operations at any point, leaving commercial space ventures at the back of the line for launch pads and support.

"The facilities around the Cape (Canaveral) are victims of enormous success," Duggan said. "Between NASA and DOD and Blue Origin and SpaceX, they are bursting at the seams. There is limited ability for a new operator to get in there. So creating (the Northeast Florida Regional Spaceport Authority) is not going to take away anything from Brevard, it will create an opportunity for new users and operators who can't get in down there."

But what, exactly, would a bustling commercial spaceport in Jacksonville be doing? To give just one example, that Falcon 9 whose launch was delayed in January was carrying Starlink satellites. Starlink is a SpaceX project to install a mesh network, or constellation, of 40,000 small satellites which will work together to create internet service accessible from every corner of the globe, from the middle of the Pacific to the North Pole. Each satellite is about the size of a table and weighs less than 600 pounds, and Falcon 9 rockets carry them to space in groups of about 40. These satellites are programmed to de-orbit every 3-4 years, burning up in the atmosphere on re-entry. Like a transcontinental juggling act, batches of Starlink units are manufactured in Washington State, then shipped to Florida to be launched and finally falling back down to Earth a few years later. The constellation will need constant replenishment as old satellites are removed from service, and the rockets that deliver the satellites will need constant maintenance. The average starting salary for maintenance technicians of this type is well over \$50,000 a year.

Additionally, commercial spaceports may provide critical support as some manufacturing operations move off-planet. This is known as the "space-for-space economy." For example, a space telescope is a delicate instrument that must be engineered not only to withstand the stresses of space itself, but of a rocket launch. If the manufacture of the telescope is



moved into space, where it will be utilized, it can be made bigger and cheaper than on Earth. Components would have to hitch a ride to the manufacturing facility on a rocket launched from a spaceport just like Cecil.

Commercial spaceports could also be involved in space tourism, attracting wealthy clients to the area for suborbital flights. "We have a fantastic opportunity in the commercial tourism industry," Duggan said. He pointed out that tourism clients must commit to stay in their launch location for multiple days before their trips, as launch windows can shift with the weather. Wealthy clients will "have the choice to spend those two weeks in the Mojave Desert with Richard Branson (of Virgin Galactic), or you could go to Boca Chica, Texas with Elon Musk (SpaceX), or you could be waiting at the Four Seasons downtown or the Ritz Carlton on Amelia Island. They'll be playing golf, out on the river, shopping, and eating at our restaurants until they go to space."

Duggan admits that some of this sounds like science fiction, but Morgan Stanley estimates the global space economy is already worth \$350 billion dollars and could reach \$1 trillion by 2040. Duggan wants to get Cecil Spaceport established quickly, so that North Florida can reap the benefits of this growing industry.

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# New chapter for Berkman II

## *Settlement allows contractors to proceed*

BY LILLA ROSS  
Resident Community News

The Berkman II on the Northbank riverfront has turned into Jacksonville's biggest tease.

The naked, partially built high rise has resisted all comers, who have promised to turn the site into hotel, retail, residential, even a family entertainment center.

And it has resisted the wrecking ball. Demolition has been scheduled four times. Attempts to implode the structure were abandoned in favor of mechanical deconstruction, a slower process that posed fewer hazards to nearby buildings.

But the contractor, Pece of Mind Environmental Inc. of Orlando, stopped work last August because of safety issues and a dispute with the property owner, PB Riverfront Revitalization of Jacksonville LLC, over unpaid bills.

Pece told the city the weakened structure could become a danger in an extreme weather event if winds exceeded 130 mph.

The city intervened. The mayor sought an emergency resolution for \$1.2 million in funding for the demolition from the City Council, citing public safety.

PB Riverfront Revitalization challenged the request before the Zoning Compliance Board and reached a settlement with the city.

Pece of Mind Environmental will try again at 10 a.m. March 6 to implode the building. "The @Cityofjax recently took

control of the demolition process and does not anticipate any further delays," Mayor Lenny Curry tweeted.

The adjacent Plaza Condominiums at Berkman Plaza and Marina must be protected from flying debris from the implosion. And the whole area, including the jail and Maxwell House Coffee, are vulnerable to the dust cloud.

If and when the cavernous eyesore comes down, it will close a 14-year chapter and open another.

Berkman II was meant to be a 22-story condominium, the twin of its neighbor. But in 2007, the collapse of the parking garage that killed one worker and injured two dozen others, brought a stop to construction.

In 2018, Robert Ohde of Wisconsin bought the property for \$4.8 million with plans to build a 340-room hotel, water park, Ferris wheel and parking garage. But Ohde ran into financial difficulties and abandoned the project.

Park Beeler, managing member of PB Riverfront Revitalization, said when the building comes down, site preparation will get underway. PB Riverfront Revitalization will make its presentations to the Downtown Development Review Board and the Downtown Investment Authority.

When they sign off, Beeler said he expects permitting to take about six months and construction could begin before the end of the year.

PB Riverfront Revitalization plans to build multifamily residential with first-floor retail that will wrap around the building. The retail is expected to include a restaurant and grocery store. An adjacent tower could be condos, apartments, hotel, or a combination, Beeler said.

The riverfront part of the project will have public green space between the building and the Riverwalk.



Renderings courtesy of PB Riverfront Revitalization of Jacksonville, LLC.

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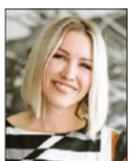
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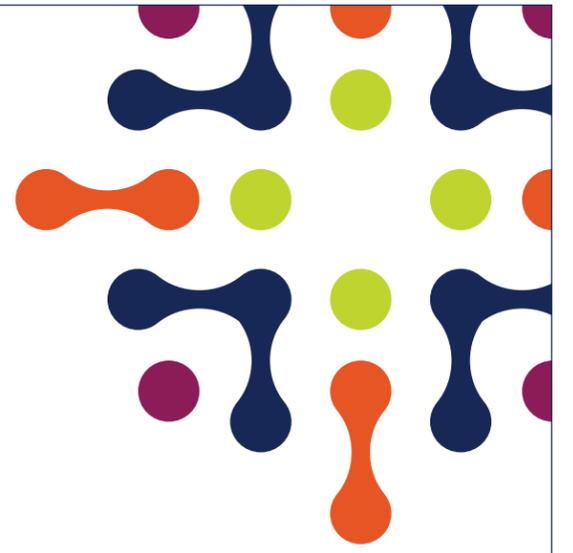
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# Residents say roundabouts project came 'out of nowhere'

*Despite public comment and meetings, residents feel sidelined*



**"What we had at that intersection was dedicated crosswalk/traffic signalization. Traffic came to a stop for pedestrians. I guess that was not cool enough. It appears additional parking [on the bridge] is a design component. Have a few beers at Harpoon Louie's and stumble out there on the bridge"**

**- Mike Webster,  
Resident of Geraldine Drive**

**BY JOEL ADDINGTON**  
Resident Community News

On a recent Monday at rush hour at the confluence of three streets - Herschel Street, Geraldine Drive and St. Johns Avenue in Avondale - most traffic navigated the new roundabouts under construction by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) with relative ease, slowing down for construction crews, barricades and pedestrians just north of the Big Fishweir Creek bridge.

The FDOT and city officials say the \$1.2-million project will make drivers, joggers and students safer by slowing down vehicle traffic.

One such driver on February 21 was the target of a prolonged horn alarm, apparently slowing too much amid all the congestion that should ease once the two new roundabouts and associated upgrades are finished, likely this summer, according to FDOT.

A second roundabout will be south of the bridge where Herschel and St. Johns split up.

Some nearby residents are raising alarms, however. They say the few public input meetings for the project in recent years were not widely enough advertised to properly give all interested residents a voice to raise concerns. They say many of their neighbors and commuters in the area were likely unaware of the coming construction despite FDOT's efforts, which included an "access management hearing" on January 22, 2020.

Two other "construction open houses" were set for July 15 and September 8, 2021 on a Thursday and Wednesday, respectively, the latter virtually in the evening. The prior open house was billed as a preliminary meeting with a full open house to be scheduled later.

Residents in the area said those attending the January meeting believed the project was a foregone conclusion with support from city officials and Riverside Avondale Preservation, often an advocate for pedestrian safety projects in the neighborhood.

The other improvements planned, beyond replacing two traffic lights with roundabouts,

according to FDOT, include new parking on the Fishweir Creek Bridge, sidewalk updates and new signage.

That means the elimination of the left turn from Herschel southbound to Woodmere Drive, left turn from Geraldine to Herschel and through movement to St. Johns, and left turns and through movement from Woodmere Drive.

The design also requires the closure or modification of driveways in FDOT right-of-way at the following locations:

- Two driveways on the north side of St. Johns Avenue in front of St. Johns Food Store and St. Johns Flower Market will be modified.
- One driveway in front of St. Johns Properties and Casablanca Day Spa will be closed.
- One driveway on Herschel Street in front of St. Johns Plaza and Harps Restaurant will be modified.
- The east driveway on Geraldine Drive in front of Ray Hardware will become right in/right out.
- The driveway in front of Herschel Animal Clinic will be modified.

American Lighting and Signalization LLC was hired to complete the project.

Marshall Butler of the Fairfax Manor neighborhood on the south side of Fishweir Creek described the public input process as an "absolute sham."

"Hampton Ray (FDOT spokesperson) will gleefully tell you that they only had to notify folks within 100 feet of the intersection, and God bless them, the FDOT notified homes within 500 feet of the public hearing. Whoopee," he said by email in mid-February. "That intersection is the primary ingress/egress point for over 100 homes in the Fairfax Manor neighborhood."

He compared the public notification process to that of those city rezoning hearings, which happen regularly and require road signage he said was not provided for this FDOT project. He reasoned that such signage would bring more commuters and neighborhood residents to public hearings, particularly when there was only one before the public hearings on construction.

"This was a done deal from the very beginning with a feel that there is a back-office deal or personal favor in play. Public comment was never taken seriously. Every person that I have spoken with at the FDOT has been dismissive of any concerns. I have personally run nearly 50 percent of the streets in

Jacksonville and have seen firsthand issues that are in dire need of attention. The FDOT should be better stewards of our tax dollars and address those issues first. This is a solution looking for a problem," Mr. Butler said.

"To make a radical change to an intersection deserves no less. And I love 'The Resident,' but the days of public notices appearing in printed publications is an outdated mode of notification. But then again, the FDOT didn't really want comment on this project. Even those lucky enough to attend that single meeting where public feedback was allowed will tell you they were dismissed and railroaded," he said.

"Once the design was released we immediately began voicing our concerns," he continued. "We were told they would accept comments through email. Many of us sent in emails. We also confronted the FDOT in one of [Councilwoman] Randy DeFoor's town hall meetings but since the public comment period was past, they really didn't care. I can personally attest to calling DeFoor's office on a regular basis. She spoke to the Rotary Club of West Jacksonville on March 4, 2020 and publicly agreed to facilitate a meeting between the neighborhood and the FDOT. Excuses were made and that meeting never took place."

Councilwoman DeFoor has said previously that a majority of her constituents support the project that should benefit the safety of drivers and pedestrians alike.

She agreed that more public notice of such projects is warranted.

"Involving the public in decisions that affect them is vital to a strong neighborhood," said Councilwoman DeFoor, Feb. 22. "I fully support my colleague, [Florida House] Representative Wyman Duggan, in modifying the processes laid out in the Florida Statutes to bring more voices into the planning process."

She said in addition to flyers, newspaper ads and press releases, several community meetings took place on the project, including as early as Oct. 24, 2019 at Riverside Presbyterian Church and at Ortega United Methodist Church on January 30, 2020, in addition to FDOT's three public meetings.

"However, I believe the pandemic negatively impacted people feeling a part of this project," said Ms. DeFoor.

Beyond more public notice, Mr. Butler said among his biggest concerns is the project may push traffic from his neighborhood to exit further south of the bridge at the Marquette intersection with Herschel, which is already narrow and dangerous.

"If there is a truck or SUV stopped there you will have to hop the curb to get in. It is also a blind curve," he said.

Another concern voiced by residents is pedestrian safety with Fishweir Elementary nearby on Herschel.

"Even with flashing yellow lights, you take your life into your hands at Boone Park and in the Shoppes [of Avondale] trying to cross the street. Are parents and children going to be expected to cross without the safety of a stoplight protecting them?" said Mr. Butler. "And since the lights have been brought down near the Flower Market, I have walked the stretch of sidewalk along the curve off of Herschel onto St. Johns in front of the apartments a number of times in the evening. Cars now come flying through that curve without a [traffic] light. It won't take much for a car to hop the curb and take someone out."

He said he liked the roundabouts plan initially until he saw the design.

"Designed by the people that are still trying to fix the I-10/I-95 interchange. Designed by the people who thought putting black chain link fence on the Fishweir Bridge was a great example of beautification," he said.

And he's not alone. Geraldine Drive resident Mike Webster said his concerns boil down to additional parking near a bar and the less than stellar efforts at gathering early public input.

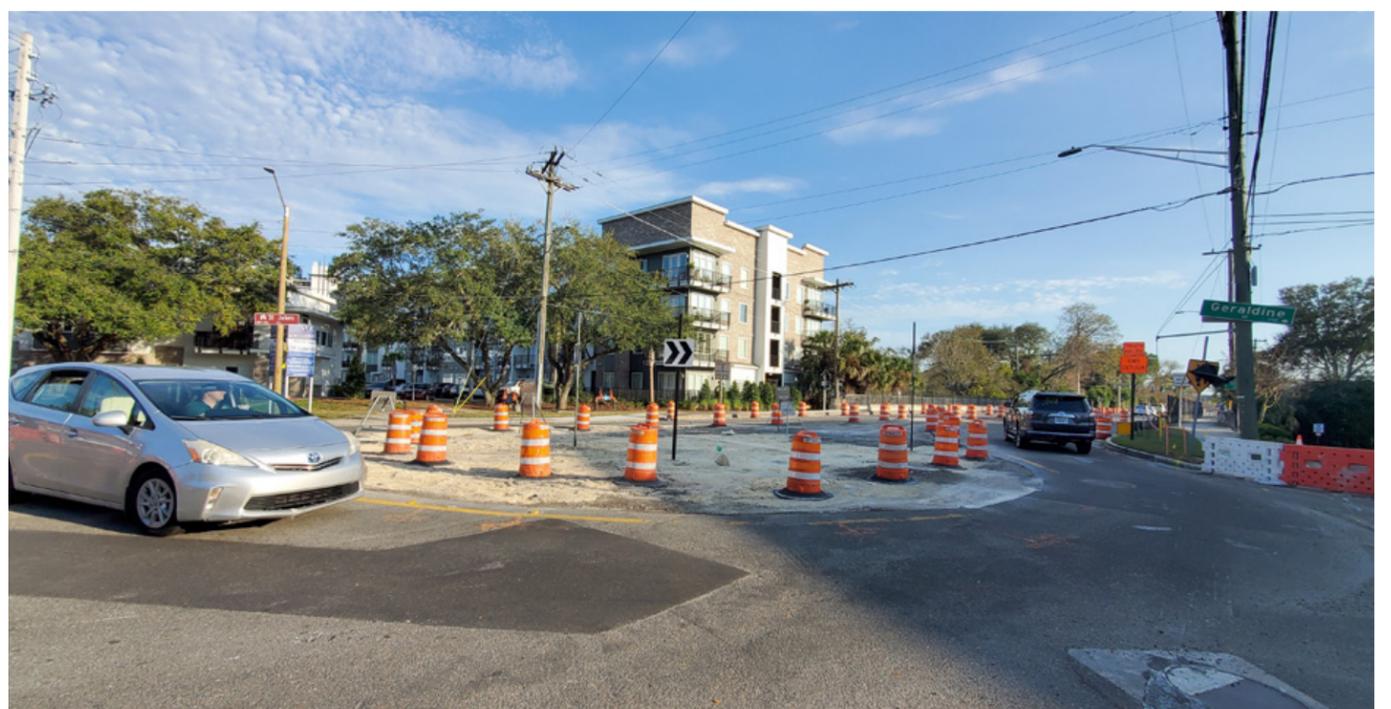
He understands the benefit for commercial interests in the neighborhood, who favor anything to boost foot traffic for their businesses.

"What we had at that intersection was dedicated crosswalk/traffic signalization. Traffic came to a stop for pedestrians. I guess that was not cool enough. It appears additional parking [on the bridge] is a design component," he said. "... Have a few beers at Harpoon Louie's and stumble out there on the bridge."

He said the project "seemed to come out of nowhere."

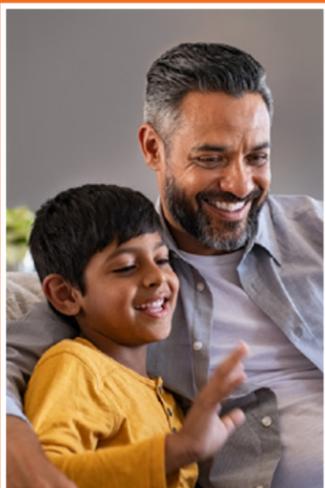
"I realize there were a series of public meetings. COVID likely thwarted residents' project awareness and participation," he said in mid-February.

"I attended one neighborhood meeting where a [City of Jacksonville] representative was on the agenda to discuss the roundabouts. I asked the city spokesperson if the roundabout placement was to accommodate future growth. The answer was, 'I will need to get back to you on that.' I never ever thought, in 20-plus years as a Geraldine Drive resident, 'Gosh, we need a roundabout here!'" said Mr. Webster, who has lived on Fishweir Creek since 2000.



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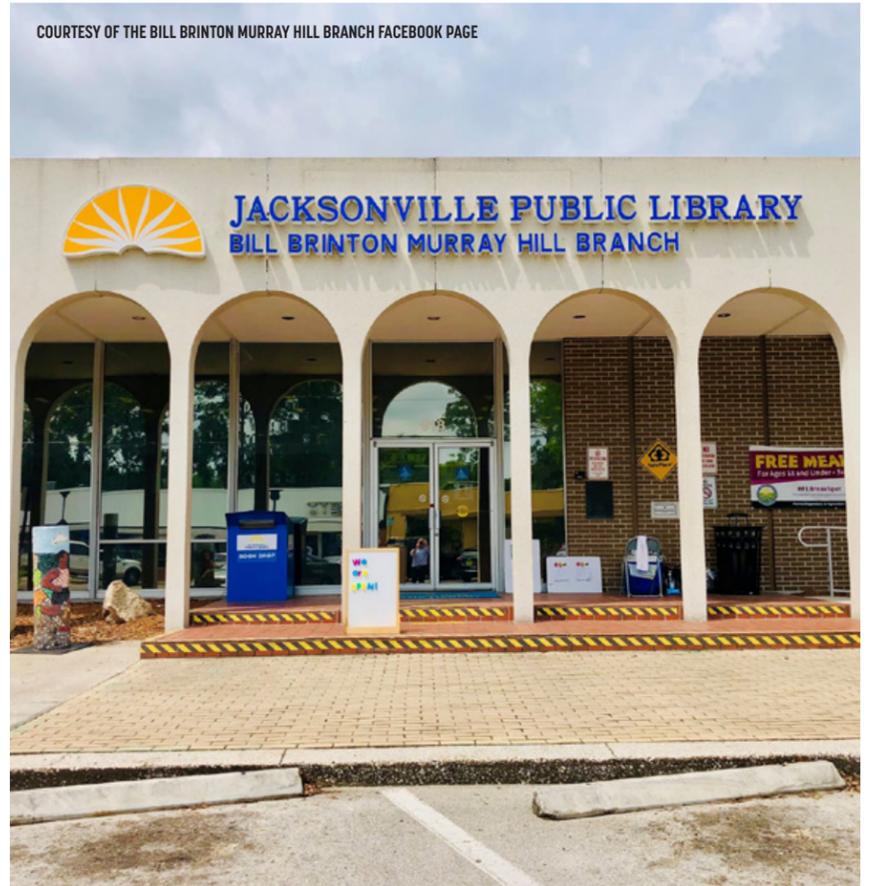
# Murray Hill Library hosts annual meeting, nonprofit leaders seek input

Friends of the Bill Brinton Murray Hill Library will hold their 12th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, March 29, 2022 at Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1171 Edgewood Ave. Social begins at 6 p.m. The meeting at 7 p.m.

There will be door prizes from local merchants and refreshments. The meeting is open to the public.

The mission of the non-profit Friends of the Bill Brinton Murray Hill Library is to promote education and a higher quality of life through a strong library system, advocate for neighborhood libraries, strengthen support of the Murray Hill branch, and ensure that the Murray Hill branch library is open to all seven days a week. Members will be able to sign up to join or renew a membership at the annual meeting. For more information visit [www.murrayhilllibrary.org](http://www.murrayhilllibrary.org).

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# Industry experts predict housing market maintains strength into 2022

BY KAREN RIELEY  
Resident Community News

Local real estate professionals are solidly in agreement that the home-buying frenzy in the past two to three years will continue, albeit at a slowing pace, throughout 2022. The

pandemic's obvious side effects coupled with low mortgage rates and office workers moving from in-office to remote work have created a perfect storm for the housing market. One cannot help failing not to mention, the flight to Florida for less burdensome restrictions on living standards and pandemic safety measures.

"I don't think 2022 will be when we see it slow down much," said realtor Neil Bridgers, office manager for Watson Realty Corp's San Jose office. "All economic indicators point to a

continuation of a hot real estate market across the nation. Rent also continues to climb, so this is only going to spur more people to get off the fence and start looking for options to buy a home."

"Housing price increases will probably be in the 1% to 5% range compared to a 25% increase last year," said Janie Boyd, realtor, broker/owner of Janie Boyd & Associates Real Estate Services. "Mortgage lenders were very careful about making 'good' loans, and many buyers paid a lot upfront to get an offer accepted and there were a lot of cash sales."

Ted Miller, managing broker for Miller & Company Real Estate in Ortega said, "We expect interest rates to tick up a little bit, but when you add that into the mix of low inventory and high demand, it won't slow us down much in the coming year. This year will be consistent with 2021, with tight inventory and high demand."

"This is a seller's market," said Sally Suslak, managing broker for Traditions Realty in Riverside. "With the Federal Reserve raising interest rates - currently 3-1/2% from the high 2% rates six months ago and predicted to go to 4-5% - buyers will have to change what they can buy. Sales prices will probably not go down, but they will be increasing more slowly throughout 2022."

The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR\*-See attribution) reports that, as of January 2020, Duval County's median home sales price was \$300,000, up 22.4% from a year ago and 5.4% lower than the month prior. Median days home



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HOUSING MARKET: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15 ...

stayed on the market increased by 5% from a year ago and compared to the month prior by 5%, and 36.1% of homes closed over list price, a whopping 128.2% higher than a year ago and 6.3% higher than in December 2021. List price received was 99.4%, an increase of 1.5% over a year ago and .1% higher than in December 2021. There was only a 1.4-month supply of housing inventory in January 2022, down 22.4% percent from a year ago and up 38.2% from the month prior.

“Baring any unforeseen dramatic economic events in the country, the greatest factor that will change the market will be rising interest rates,” Bridgers said. “I believe that continued house demand coupled with lower buying power will help us start to see inventory open up.”

In response to rising mortgage interest rates, the rental market will continue to increase as well.

“The rental market is very competitive, too, making it difficult to find a rental right now,” Miller said. “We started to see an uptick in Spring 2021 in investment companies buying homes to rent out. That has calmed a bit in in-town and historic neighborhoods, but it is rampant in planned communities, because newer homes require less work for investment managers to get ready to rent and they are in a centralized area.”

**THE SUNSHINE STATE IS THE PLACE TO BE**

“We’re seeing a lot of migration to Florida and within the state from south Florida to north Florida,” said Miller. “We’re a more affordable market, and remote work has made Florida more attractive. And as South Florida continues to grow and expand, people want to stay in the state but in a less congested area.”

“Both working people and their families and retirees are moving to Florida,” Miller said. “Retirees are moving here to be closer to their kids, perhaps in reaction to the pandemic that made it hard for them to travel to see family. And I’ve definitely noticed more multigenerational moves with parents and their adult children moving together to the state.”

“Jacksonville was just named the number two city on Zillow’s top 10 markets in the United States for 2022, so I feel we are going to continue to see an increase in out-of-state buyers,” Bridgers said. Zillow named Tampa as the top market. Jacksonville is followed by Raleigh, N.C.; San Antonio, Texas; Charlotte, N.C.; Nashville, Tenn.; Atlanta, Ga.; and Phoenix, Ariz.

“A lot of new businesses are moving here. They see Florida and Jacksonville as an amazing long-term opportunity,” said Alex Sifakis, president of JWB Real Estate Capital in Jacksonville. “Developers are seeing that Florida with its weather, lower tax environment, no big lockdowns - has tailwind while other cities have headwind.”

“More people are moving into Florida, but there isn’t enough inventory for them,” Suslak said. “The new apartments are filling up very quickly. The older population is moving into the luxury apartments.”

**“ THIS IS A SELLER’S MARKET. WITH THE FEDERAL RESERVE RAISING INTEREST RATES - CURRENTLY 3-1/2% FROM THE HIGH 2% RATES SIX MONTHS AGO AND PREDICTED TO GO TO 4-5% - BUYERS WILL HAVE TO CHANGE WHAT THEY CAN BUY. SALES PRICES WILL PROBABLY NOT GO DOWN, BUT THEY WILL BE INCREASING MORE SLOWLY THROUGHOUT 2022.”**

— Sally Suslak  
Managing Broker, Traditions Realty

“For someone wanting to rent or buy, there’s not a lot of supply,” said Sifakis. “We can’t get land developed and housing

built fast enough. I could sell 1,000 houses this year, but we can only build 500-600.”

“The area is experiencing much higher rent and sales prices,” he said. As interest rates go up, demand will increase. At some point this will level out but definitely not this year and maybe not for another two to three years.”

“You can’t go into any community and buy a new home that is available right now,” Miller said. “You have to be willing to wait, or, if you have an immediate need for housing, you basically have to take what’s in front of you or find something to rent until you can get what you want.”

“Affordable housing for first-time home buyers in the \$100,000 to \$300,000 range is extremely difficult right now,” said Miller. “There is lots of investor activity in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 range and five to 10 potential buyers for every listing.”

**JACKSONVILLE’S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS ARE HOT, HOT, HOT!**

“In my view and from talking to people around the country who are considering moving, the secret is out - Jacksonville is a wonderful place to live,” Miller said. “The historic neighborhoods remind people of places where they grew up or of similar neighborhoods in the North that they’re fond of. Our restaurants, shops, parks, sidewalks, weather and our friendly way of life is appealing.”

“People wanting to move into historic neighborhoods see residents enjoying their communities and they want to be part of it,” said Miller. “The future is very bright. We have a good seasonal and financial climate.”

“I don’t think that prices will ever be lower than now, even more so in historic neighborhoods, because you have demographic shifts with people wanting to live there and revitalize,” Sifakis said. He predicts that historic neighborhoods will have even higher and faster appreciation than elsewhere.

“It’s a mix of who wants to move into the historic neighborhoods with their great diversity - all sizes of homes, duplexes, quads. They are walkable and have great retail options. They’re diverse in terms of people as well - younger people in their first job, single people working downtown, seniors downsizing,” Sifakis said. “These are people who want to be near an urban area because that’s what they’re used to.”

“The main difference in historic homes sales versus new homes sales is simply availability,” Bridgers said. “The demand for historic homes in neighborhoods such as Avondale,

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“THE RENTAL MARKET IS VERY COMPETITIVE, TOO, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO FIND A RENTAL RIGHT NOW. WE STARTED TO SEE AN UPTICK IN SPRING 2021 IN INVESTMENT COMPANIES BUYING HOMES TO RENT OUT. THAT HAS CALMED A BIT IN IN-TOWN AND HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT IT IS RAMPANT IN PLANNED COMMUNITIES, BECAUSE NEWER HOMES REQUIRE LESS WORK FOR INVESTMENT MANAGERS TO GET READY TO RENT AND THEY ARE IN A CENTRALIZED AREA.”

— Ted Miller  
Managing broker for Miller & Company Real Estate

Riverside and San Marco remain high while inventory in these neighborhoods remains low.”

“There are very few historic homes for sale,” Boyd said. “They are snapped up by local neighbors just waiting for one to come up. Buyers like having no HOAs to deal with.”

**WHAT HOME BUYERS NEED TO KNOW**

The area’s aggressive home sales price presents challenges for buyers, however.

“In the historic neighborhoods we are seeing first time home buyers being pushed out more and more as prices go up,” Bridgers said. “You also tend to see more cash buyers in these neighborhoods, and someone looking to finance typically can’t compete with them.”

“My suggestion any buyer looking to combat this situation to make sure you have an aggressive agent on your side, meaning they are quick to respond to you, quick to get you in homes or give you a video tour and has experience writing competitive offers. Also remember a competitive offer isn’t just about a higher purchase price,” said Bridgers.

“Get with an agent who has a finger on the pulse of the neighborhood you want to be in,” Miller said. “Have your financial affairs in order and get preapproved so that you have the ability to be nimble if something you want comes available.”

“Keep your wits about you. Don’t overpay,” said Miller. “Balance what you need with your risk tolerance. Multiple bids can wear on a buyer. Understand the risks, be comfortable with the amount you’re paying and be aware of what you’re buying in terms of the age and condition of the home. Consider

whether the neighborhood can support the price you’re paying for the house and keep an eye on resale.”

On the other hand, for buyers who are planning to live in the home until they can realize the equity they want, paying over asking price isn’t necessarily a bad strategy, according to Sifakis.

“Home prices are going up faster than appraisers are willing to adjust their comps,” he said. If five people offer \$200,000, then that’s what the house is worth.”

“In this market, it is important for a buyer to be preapproved and prequalified, because you’ll need to move quickly when a home you want comes on the market,” Wilson said.

Sifakis says that buyers will need to persevere and may need to consider an off-market deal. Most generally, “off market” means that a property wasn’t listed on the MLS by an agent.

“Real estate investor groups will buy and sell homes at a lower price because the place needs some work,” Sifakis said. “Buying a house that needs work is one way to get a house that others wouldn’t buy.”

“Make your best offer. If your first offer isn’t accepted, ask for your offer to be accepted as a back-up in case the first offer falls through,” said Suslak. “Some sellers want their home to be sold to a person rather than an investor, but the buyer needs to have all of his ducks in a row and be ready to move fast.”

“But don’t be discouraged. The market always changes,” she said. “Never buy something you’re not 100 percent comfortable with. Listen to your gut.”

Suslak warns against writing a “buyer love letter” to a seller explaining why the house should sell to the buyer.

“That is a fair housing violation,” she said. “The realtors are instructed not to pass on those letters or even accept them.”

According to the National Association of Realtors, while this may seem harmless, these letters can actually pose fair housing risks because they often contain personal information and reveal characteristics of the buyer, such as race, religion, or familial status, which could then be used, knowingly or through unconscious bias, as an unlawful basis for a seller’s decision to accept or reject an offer.

Institutional investors are complicating the market as well.

“First-time home buyers are competing against investors to get properties in their price range of typically \$250,000 or less,” Suslak said. “These institutions come in from out of state with money from investors to buy and rehab properties to sell. When that doesn’t work out for them because rehab costs are higher than they expected, they just rent them out.

“The major problem with these large investment companies coming in and sometimes buying up an entire street of homes in a neighborhood is quite simple,” Bridgers said. “Historically renters don’t take care of a home and neighborhood like owners do. People who rent a home have very little nothing invested in that home or neighborhood which leads to less maintenance and improvement on the home and often leaves yards looking less than ideal. We start to see the value of the neighborhood diminish.”

“Some investors are buying in the historic neighborhoods, but historically the prices are higher in those neighborhoods, so they’re more likely to buy in newer neighborhoods,” Suslak said. “Investors are not set up to do major renovation. They would rather buy a whole apartment complex.”

“The primary home buyers in the historic area are individuals,” Boyd said. “There are tons of investment buyers in the up-to-\$300,000 range and for new construction less than 20 years old that require few repairs.”

**WHAT SELLERS NEED TO KNOW**

“The two main ways to see equity in your home are time and improvements,” said Bridgers. “When a buyer stresses to me the importance of gaining equity in their home, I suggest that they think about ways they can add value to the home.”

“For a seller to be most successful in today’s market they should first meet with their realtor to discuss what a successful transaction looks like to them,” Bridgers said. “For some sellers this may be getting the most money for their home; for others it may be getting their home sold quickly. An experienced realtor will be able to guide them through the process and make recommendations for how to achieve the goal.”

“Whatever you think your house is worth, list it for sale at 15% or 20% higher. You’ll probably have multiple people bidding on it,” Sifakis said. “People moving from the northeast are used to paying twice as much for the same thing here.”

“It’s tempting to sell your home for a high price and then buy larger or downsize,” Miller said. “The people moving here want to buy in the next 30-90 days. You need to ask yourself where you’re going to move and what price you’ll have to pay if you have to move quickly.”

“We are seeing an increase in sellers selling to iBuyer companies, which is really unfortunate because those sellers are leaving money on the table,” said Bridgers. “I would encourage anyone considering selling their home to give a realtor a chance to list it before resorting to an online company that has to leave room to sell it at a higher price.”

\*Source: Northeast Florida Association of REALTORS®.

“WHATEVER YOU THINK YOUR HOUSE IS WORTH, LIST IT FOR SALE AT 15% OR 20% HIGHER. YOU’LL PROBABLY HAVE MULTIPLE PEOPLE BIDDING ON IT. PEOPLE MOVING FROM THE NORTHEAST ARE USED TO PAYING TWICE AS MUCH FOR THE SAME THING HERE.”

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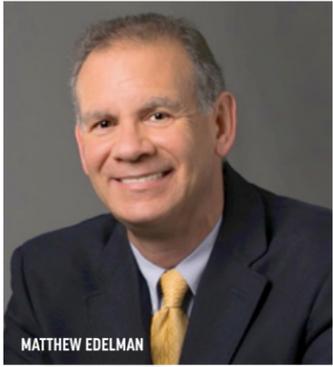
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*Scenic Jacksonville welcomes new members to its Board of Directors and Advisory Board*

## Hotel breaks ground in neighboring Brooklyn

*Downtown asset to offer new lodging options*



The newest hotel in North Florida has arrived in Jacksonville's downtown, as the newly built Residence Inn Jacksonville Downtown, a Marriott Bonvoy property officially opened in February. The hotel is located in the Brooklyn neighborhood at 357 Oak Street, adjacent to 220 Riverside. Its grand opening celebration was held Feb. 10 welcoming the first new hotel to Downtown since 2012.

The ribbon cutting took place at 4:30 pm with JAX Chamber representatives present alongside investors, managers and staff of the newly-minted brand. Food was provided by Bread and Board, a cocktail bar and distillery appearance was made possible by Burlock and Barrel alongside a check presentation for the UF Health Brain Wellness program.

A variety of rooms were open for tours for special guests, media and other parties engaged in the grand opening. Helping assist in the ceremonial ribbon cutting was (left) Michael MacCallum, Regional Manager of Operations for Baywood Hotels with Samantha Crouch, Director of Sales, Susan Hagen, General Manager, along with Nasheeba Prentice, Regional Director of Sales for Baywood Hotels.

Scenic Jacksonville welcomed four new Board members and two Advisory Board members at the organization's annual meeting on January 26, 2022.

"We are thrilled that such talented community leaders are joining the leadership team at Scenic Jacksonville to help us in our mission of preserving, protecting and enhancing the scenic character of our city," said Susan Caven, president of the Board of Directors. "Each of them brings fresh perspectives and deep skill sets for the important work we do."

### NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Caroline Brinton is a community volunteer and nonprofit consultant who serves on The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, the Women's Board for Wolfson Children's Hospital and is an active alumna of the Weaver Philanthropic Initiative, an initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. She is the daughter of Scenic Jacksonville's founder, the late William "Bill" Brinton.

Clanzenetta "Mickey" Brown founded and serves as CEO of Special Project Partners, a research and planning consultancy firm. She has served as the Operations Director for the Chartrand Foundation and was study Director at Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI). She has volunteered for many non-profits like Theater Jacksonville; ElderSource Institute; the Eartha M.M. White Legacy Fund; Leadership Jacksonville; the Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center.

Matthew Edelman is a CPA and retired partner in Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP accounting firm. He is Vice-President of Congregation Ahavath Chesed and has served as a board member of the Jacksonville Jewish Federation, the Association for Corporate Growth and the Finance Committee of United Way of Northeast Florida.

Mark Morley is founder and President of The Ohmega Group Consulting Engineers, providing electrical and structural engineering consulting services to aviation, commercial, government, and institutional markets. Mark spent 8 years in the U.S. Army Reserves as an Avionics Mechanic and is a graduate of Georgia Tech with a degree in Electrical Engineering.

### NEW ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Stephanie Garry Garfunkel is the Director of Knowledge Management and Communications at Impact Florida, a statewide nonprofit working to advance great teaching in Florida public schools. After serving in the Peace Corps, she relocated to Jacksonville in 2018 as Director of Marketing & Communications at the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. Stephanie holds a master's degree in communication from Johns Hopkins University.

Fred Pope has announced his retirement from the City of Jacksonville where he has served as Project Manager and Landscape Architect for over thirty years. In addition to providing staff support for the Tree Commission, Pope has designed a number of city parks and streetscape projects. He began his career in the private sector after graduating from Louisiana State University with a degree in Landscape Architecture.

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# Bass and Ritz, massage therapists, celebrated

Sammi Bass, MA97084 and Nicolette Ritz, MA81890 are licensed massage therapists who are being celebrated for their dedication and perseverance. Many in their industry have changed careers since COVID came, but Bass and Ritz have proven steadfast.



The two have been working for years as independent contractors at Soluna Yoga + Spa in Riverside. Dori and Christian Thomsen, the husband-and-wife team who founded Soluna in 2014, are acknowledging Bass and Ritz for their consecutive service throughout challenging times.

"They've just worked with such integrity and dedication to their clients and to their practice," Dori said.

Bass began her journey as a healer while majoring in psychology at the University of North Florida where she earned a bachelor's degree. At Alpha School of Massage, she discovered her life's purpose. Bass believes that trauma, stress, and emotions bury themselves in muscles. Her soothing energy and empathetic nature help clients relax as she concentrates on deep tissue massage and pain management modalities. MA97084

Ritz began her journey into wellness in 2014 when she graduated with her Massage Certification from Florida State College in Jacksonville. She began her practice working at a premier spa in Key West where she helped people from around the world heal while they were vacationing. Nicolette believes there is a huge consciousness shift happening today and is inspired to bring healing through the art of massage, using a range of modalities. Ritz sets intentions for love and light before every session and has a goal that clients leave from her room feeling lighter—physically, mentally, and emotionally. MA81890

The Thomsens believe that part of the reason Bass and Ritz are able to take such good care of others is because they take such good care of themselves. "You can't pour from an empty cup," Dori said.



## Best Valentine's Day present

Proud parents, Austin Rieley and Brendan Haney, and very excited grandparents, Karen and Wayne Rieley, welcomed the beautiful Ms. R. Carter Haney, 8 lbs 2 oz, 21 inches long, into their world at 11:42 a.m. on Feb. 13, 2022, at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville. Carter's great-grandmother, June C. Rieley, 95, traveled from Blacksburg, Va., and grandmother, Kathy Brown, traveled from Elgin, S.C., to Jacksonville to greet her as well.

## Community outreach in action, feeding students through blessings



Pictured from left to right: Outreach Council: Brenda McNeiland, Pat Ellis, Lynn Doiron, Joan Burchell, Kate Moorehead; Bookstore Committee: Kathryn Bisette, Sandi Dunnivant and Beth Kirwan.

As part of ongoing outreach efforts, St. John's Cathedral was able to present a check on Sunday, Feb 13. The Cathedral Bookstore and Gift Shop presented the check for \$5,500.00 to the Blessings in a Backpack nonprofit organization.

The Cathedral's "Blessings" team provides food on the weekends for over 100 children at West Riverside Elementary who might otherwise go hungry. Bookstore manager, Kathryn Bisette expressed gratitude for the hard work of the bookstore committee members, fabulous volunteers, AND customers.

To learn more or discover how to shop online, visit <https://bookshop.org/shop/jaxcathedralbooks> to help support community outreach.

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## Burdette Ketchum launches new brand, changes name to HIGH REASON

*New branding reflects agency's creative, analytical and ROI-focused methodology*



BURDETTE KETCHUM

Burdette Ketchum, a 25-year, Jacksonville-based analytical + creative marketing communications agency, launched its new brand by officially changing its name to High Reason.

In addition to the new name, the brand includes a reimagined logo and tagline, 'Creativity. Calculated.', which embraces the present and future of the marketing and advertising industry - creating with focused intention, then inspiration.

"Digital and the complexity of marketing today are driving exponential change in how companies do business," said Will Ketchum, president and CEO of High Reason. "This higher difficulty demands high reason. We've always prioritized data, analytics and ROI - and now, at the onset of our agency's next 25 years - our brand better reflects our creative approach, unique value and what is important to clients today."

There was no change in leadership or structure that drove the rebranding initiative. High Reason remains independently owned and operated.

High Reason continues to offer a wide array of integrated capabilities, including research, strategy and planning; digital marketing; branding and creative; media planning and buying; and public relations, content creation and social media. For more information, visit [highreason.com](http://highreason.com).

## Heldenbrand joins NAI Hallmark as Partner



JONATHAN G. HELDENBRAND

NAI Hallmark, a leading commercial real estate brokerage and property management firm, announces the firm's continued growth by expanding its leadership team with the appointment of Jonathan G. Heldenbrand as Partner. Jon will be focused on bolstering

the company's capital and investment platform, helping clients acquire/develop, capitalize, and actively manage commercial real estate properties.

"My expertise is in the full lifecycle of investment ownership: from identification, due diligence, underwriting, capitalization, acquisition; then post-closing asset management, investor relations; and ultimately disposition or refinancing with the goal of maximizing value considering tax efficient strategies," said Jon Heldenbrand. "The last two years have been invigorating and exciting and I look forward to expanding my services on NAI Hallmark's entrepreneurial platform."

Keith Goldfaden, Managing Partner of NAI Hallmark added, "Jon's depth of knowledge, ability to execute and strong relationships in the industry will be invaluable as we expand the company's capital and investment division. Working together on various projects over the past two years, we felt that joining NAI Hallmark as a partner was a natural fit."

## Local Toastmasters Win Contest Honors

Three members of the Top o' the Rock Toastmasters Club in San Marco have won first place awards in area speaking contests. The contests, which can lead to international competition, were open to over 150 people from 6 different clubs.



First place Area contest winners Bob Warren, Elly Liao, and Jennie Powell.

Jennie Powell won the Table Topics contest, which is responding in an impromptu manner to a question. Bob Warren took the honors for the Evaluation contest where he provided feedback and gave constructive critique to a guest speaker. Elly Liao won first place in the International Speaking Contest. Her prepared speech, "Don't wait, Create!," inspired the audience to act now on reaching their goals.

While Toastmasters is about public speaking, it is much more. According to Top o' the Rock President, Sue Mills, "Yes, we become better speakers. But we also improve our listening skills, and we learn to provide constructive feedback to others. Toastmasters is also about cultivating leadership skills, and all of this results in personal growth. It's all done in a friendly and supportive environment that encourages the development of self confidence and personal growth, and we have fun doing it! The experiences we have, and the skills we develop in Toastmasters, help us professionally and personally."

Toastmasters is a world wide organization dedicated to helping individuals improve their public speaking and leadership skills. The local group, Top o' the Rock Toastmasters, meets every Wednesday from noon to 1:15 p.m. at Aspire Church San Marco (formerly Southside Baptist), 1435 Atlantic Blvd. It is open to the public and serves all surrounding areas. More information can be found at [www.topoock.com](http://www.topoock.com).

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## Episcopal Children's Services receives \$25k grant from THE PLAYERS Championship

THE PLAYERS Championship has awarded Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) a grant to support the organization's Outdoor Play and Learning Project. This grant of \$25,000 will fund the outdoor project at one of the organization's Early Head Start centers in Northwest Jacksonville.

The center is located in the heart of one of the most challenging areas of Northwest Jacksonville, where over 40% of the population earns less than the federal poverty level and the crime rate is among the highest in the city. Despite these disadvantages, children and families deserve the high-quality early education offered by Episcopal Children's Services so they can enter school ready to learn and succeed.

## Snowberger joins United Way



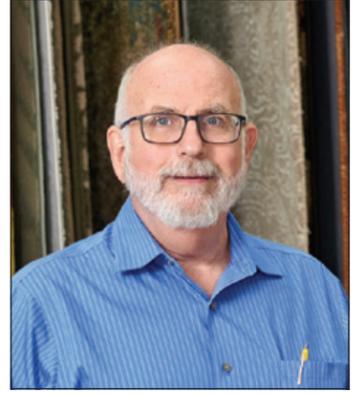
JOE SNOWBERGER

United Way of Northeast Florida announced the hiring of U.S. Navy veteran Joe Snowberger as the inaugural director of Mission United. Mission United, in partnership United Way's 211, helps active-duty military, veterans and family members navigate and access a critical range of available community resources and services.

In his new role, Joe will serve as a strategic and collaborative leader responsible for the overall implementation and success of Mission United in Northeast Florida. Specifically, he will carry out Mission United's strategic plan, focused on communications, funding, operations, and technology and data.

When not engaged with veterans and the community, Joe enjoys living a life of liberty with his family and pets; growing vegetables; and engaging in nature, arts and culture.

## Charlie Harb is Retiring Liquidating rug stock



After 33 years in the Oriental rug business in Jacksonville, Charlie Harb, owner of C. Harb's Rug Gallery in the Southside area, will be retiring. He is now liquidating the thousands of rugs stocked at his Philips Highway showroom.

To express his gratitude to the community for their patronage since 1989, helping to make his business a success, Charlie is offering the public a "buy 1 rug, get 1 rug free" deal. Further, he is willing to beat any internet price for rugs sold by manufacturers he works with. All of this is to say, "Thank you, Jacksonville."

Included in the sale are items from Charlie's personal collection of rugs, which contains several unique and interesting pieces not seen before by his clientele.

C. Harb's Rug Gallery carries a mix of both hand-knotted, authentic Oriental rugs and machine-made reproductions. Rectangular, circular, square, oval, octagonal, and runners. There are traditional styles, contemporary designs, and transitional rugs available.

C. Harb's Rug Gallery is a full-service retailer that offers cleaning and repair work that are done on the store's premises. Harb makes rug cleaning and repairs convenient, offering pickup and delivery with no rug-size limitations.

In addition to Oriental rug sales, cleaning, and repairs at his gallery, Charlie Harb does rug appraisals and consultations. He will continue until his retirement later this year.



Harb's Rugs has been a family-owned business for three generations. Visit the showroom at 7660 Philips Highway, Suite 1 on Mondays through Thursdays 10-6, on Fridays by appointment, and on Saturdays 1-5. Or call (904) 733-0203 and ask for Charlie. Email [info@CHarbsRugs.com](mailto:info@CHarbsRugs.com) for more information.

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## Braun to retire in April



Michelle Braun, President and CEO of United Way of Northeast Florida since 2014, will retire from the organization at the end of April. The search for a new leader has begun.

"After more than seven years leading this amazing organization, I look forward to life's next chapter. As the search committee works to choose United Way's next forward-thinking leader, I am committed to helping ensure the transition is successful and smooth and assisting in any way I can," Braun said.

Braun has been instrumental in the success of numerous initiatives. These include the organization investing more than \$100 million in local nonprofits and partnerships to meet comprehensive basic needs and improve health, education, and financial stability in several counties. She helped lead a collaborative effort to form the First Coast Relief Fund and helped modernize United Way's business model. Under Braun's leadership, the organization received multi millions in gifts.

"We are deeply grateful to Michelle for her tireless efforts and for leading the exceptional United Way team who, together, have worked to make Northeast Florida a better place to live and work for all," said Jim Stepnoski, the chairman of United Way's board.

## Guardian Catholic welcomes new board members

Guardian Catholic School has announced the appointment of four new board members: Kristi Aiello, Nancy Chartrand, Gregory Redmon, and Donna Williams. These appointments, effective January 2022 and lasting three years, increase the current board to 18.

Aiello holds an MBA in finance and serves as Director of Regional Business Development for Florida Blue. She has led multiple start-up customer service call centers domestically and overseas. She serves as a Florida Guardian ad Litem and on a variety of other boards. She is an active parishioner at St. John Paul II Catholic Church.

Chartrand is a longtime donor of Guardian Catholic School and helps lead the Chartrand Family Foundation, a private fund that focuses on supporting education reform in Duval County as well as health care and mental health. She has served on numerous other boards in the Jacksonville area.

Redmon is an attorney and partner with Senior Counsel Attorneys at Law, P.A., focusing on elder law issues. He is an accredited attorney and committee member for various veteran and military-related organizations. He has been an active volunteer, board member, and leader within his church and other community organizations in the greater Jacksonville area.

Williams recently retired from Guardian Catholic School after 22 years of service. Her expertise as a licensed mental health counselor is especially important during this time when social and emotional learning programs are so critical to children's well-being. She is an active member of Blessed Trinity Catholic Church in Jacksonville.

"The Guardian Catholic Board of Directors is comprised of dedicated and community-minded individuals who are truly making a difference in Jacksonville," said Jane Lanier, Guardian Catholic School Board Chair.



KRISTI AIELLO



NANCY CHARTRAND



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DONNA WILLIAMS

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This is the year to be at Daily's Place! The 2022 concert season has the likes of Zac Brown Band, Keith Urban, Sting, and Dave Matthews Band. Additional shows will be announced throughout the year. From single tickets to VIP membership, there is a way for everyone to experience this incredible year of music.

## The Venue State-of-the-Art Amphitheater

Daily's Place is Jacksonville's premier outdoor entertainment venue. Open-aired yet covered, the state-of-the-art amphitheater accommodates 5,500 seats shielded from the elements.

Headed into its fifth season, Daily's Place is un-paralleled for live music downtown for fans who appreciate close proximity to big performers.

Connected to the south end of TIAA Bank Field, Daily's Place delivers a world-class experience for both fans and artists. Attendees reap the benefits of the upscale amenities of an NFL stadium complex that attract stellar artists, who usually play in much larger arenas, performing in the intimate setting of Daily's Place Amphitheater.

## Daily's Place BLUE 5-Tier Membership Program

With Daily's Place BLUE membership, the choices are numerous, the benefits unrivaled. You get to select which tier contains the options that are right for you and extended payment plans are available.

Become a member for a superior entertainment experience. It's the only way to guarantee tickets to every single show in the best locations.

The Daily's Place BLUE program offers five tiers of membership to choose from. There are corporate packages designed for businesses that want to entertain clients, treat guests, or reward employees. There are BLUE packages that cater to individuals who want to enjoy live music with family and friends who prefer VIP treatment. Tiers are tailored to accommodate a variety of price points and to satisfy even the most discerning of tastes.

BLUE packages include valet parking, private entrance and exit, and no gate lines to wait in. Some BLUE members have access to the fully air-conditioned Fields Auto Group Terrace Suite atop the end zone, with a full liquor bar, premium food selections, and private restrooms. Other tiers include premium seat licenses with granted first right of refusal or loge boxes and lounge boxes with couches.

## Backstage Bash March 24, 5-7 p.m.

For those interested in 2022 BLUE season membership, Backstage Bash is a two-hour evening event not to miss. Doors will be open to the public by RSVP only to experience the life of a Daily's Place headliner. This is an exclusive opportunity for future BLUE members to tour the venue and learn more about the BLUE program.

Included will be a backstage tour of artists' dressing rooms. Massage therapists will be standing by. Photo opportunities will abound. Appetizers will be served, and an open bar will be provided. But that's not all. Guests will be treated all the while to live music by local greats.

Sales representatives will be available to help you discern the BLUE package that best suits your needs and tastes. Have all your questions answered about corporate event planning, entertainment options, and premium seating locations for the upcoming season.

To add your name to the March 24 guest list, contact Daily's Place today.

## Coming Soon

Tim McGraw	5/6
The Lumineers	5/18
Sting	5/20
Dave Matthews Band	6/6-6/7
The Black Crowes	6/11
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Keith Urban	8/4-8/5
Rod Stewart	9/2





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# LOCAL FOLKS

## Dori & Christian Thomsen



BY MARY WANSEER  
Resident Community News

Meet the Thomsens: Dori, a Floridian from Pensacola Beach, and Christian, a New Orleans native. They are the Riverside couple who founded Saluna Yoga + Spa in 5 Points in 2014 and who recently celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary.

They met in 2004 in Jacksonville at the University of North Florida while Dori was completing a bachelor's degree in public relations and Christian a master's in international business. They married and traveled for a while before spending five years in Costa Rica where their daughter, Olive, was born.

With a newborn in tow, the Thomsens wanted to return to something familiar, to a place that felt like home. Jacksonville was it. "We had connections with people, and we loved the Riverside-Avondale historic neighborhood, so it seemed like a great fit to settle in," Christian said.

To complete their family, the Thomsens rescued a terrier mix, Boomer, from the Nassau Humane Society. Now, much of their day is filled with dog walk and play. And that's a great thing because the family has a passion for the outdoors.

They've planted a raised-bed garden at their Riverside home, though they do like to get their hands into the earth as much as they can. Their crops rotate with the seasons and include vegetables as well as herbs—broccoli, lettuce, cilantro, basil, sage, and such. What they don't grow themselves, they buy from Grassroots Natural Market in 5 Points.

"We try to eat healthy and wholesome," Christian said. "Everything in moderation," Dori added. And then Riverside

Liquors was mentioned as one of their favorite places to buy wine.

They like Wildcrafters, the booze-free bar, too. "It's got such a great vibe," Dori said. Wherever there's outside dining is where you are likely to see the Thomsens, like at the Blue Fish and the Brick in The Shoppes of Avondale area.

When they're not walking to local restaurants or picnicking along the river at Memorial Park, Dori and Christian are biking. For longer excursions, they bought a tandem bike so it's easier for nine-year-old Olive to join them. Soon, they'd like to add a sidecar or a basket for Boomer. As a family, they bike to Jaguars games and park at ZenCog.

Being small-business owners themselves, Dori and Christian are fervent supporters of Jacksonville's local establishments on both sides of the river, and they believe in the power of shout-outs.

Sometimes, "We just like hangin' around the house, grillin' out, and just kinda bein' homebodies enjoyin' life," Christian said. Their favorite butcher for goods to grill is Cline's in San Marco; they order every week.

Another favorite San Marco spot for the couple is the Row House for exercising. "It's our release. That's our jam. We love it. We don't just do yoga," said Dori, the 500-hour experienced yoga teacher.

The Thomsens also like camping with other families. Hanna Park is at the top of their hotspot list.

Every June, Dori heads a yoga retreat in Costa Rica where they used to live. Afterwards, Christian and Olive meet her there for a family getaway. Then, it's back home to Jacksonville, to where they work and play, where they live and love, back to all the familiar places they enjoy and support.

"Buchner's Bierhalle has the best charcuterie board in town," said Dori about Murray Hill. She could not resist the urge for one last shout-out.

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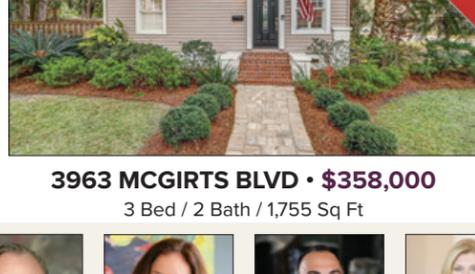
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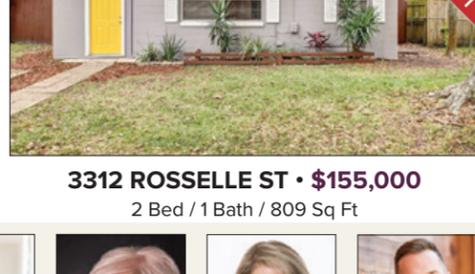
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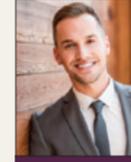
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The Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center facilities provided shade and a perfect setting for the fashion show at NFSSE

### Designs, philanthropy celebrated 10 years on stage at Heart of the Runway

Linda Cunningham and North Florida School of Special Education celebrated 10 years of the Heart of the Runway fashion show and luncheon. They celebrated this event at the new North Florida School of Special Education's Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center.

The annual fundraising event helps to raise awareness for individuals with intellectual and developmental differences and in support of the school's exceptional academics and vocational training programs.



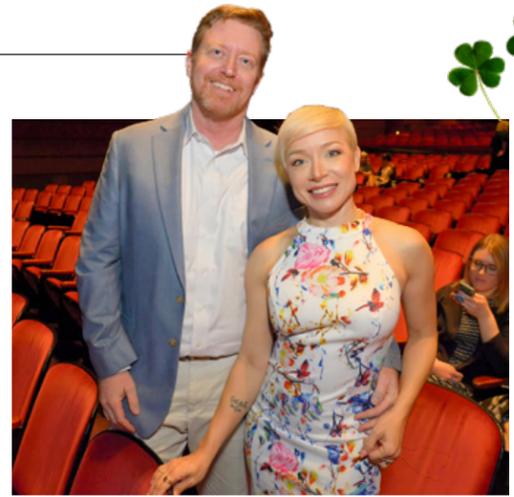
Karen Darr and her son Aiden



Linda Cunningham and student Allison



Josh Lambo and NFSSE student



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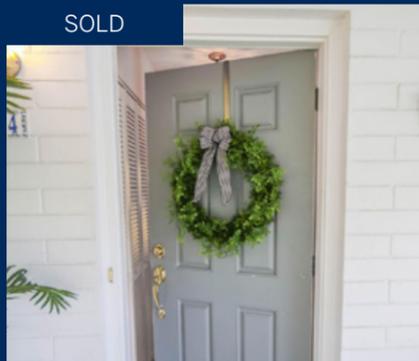
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and Catherine Cortines

## Yellowstone star lights up stage at Florida Forum

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital welcomed the final speaker of the 2021/2022 series, Tim McGraw, to the stage Feb. 16 at the Times Union Center for the Performing Arts.

McGraw stuck to his guns and made it to Jacksonville, just prior to kicking off his latest musical tour. After accepting the project of his lifetime last summer with a starring role in the production of "The Prequel - Yellowstone 1883", McGraw's plans changed immeasurably, but the Florida Forum was one of the few engagements McGraw rescheduled, due to his fondness for the mission of the hospital.

A once in a lifetime experience was made possible for sponsors, as a private Q&A experience was had following the season finale in an informal setting with the actor and country music legend.

The final installment was a hit, with a Hollywood ending. Co-Chairs of the 2021-22 Florida Forum, Frances Hutto and Jan Kirby, under the tenure of Katherine Forrester as Immediate Past President, rolled out all the stops this season during turbulent and often difficult circumstances.



Foss with Val Hancock and Kristina Powell



and Vicky Touchton



Guy Wallenbeck with Jeff Pernard, Howard Sheffield, Linda and Allen Tyre Jr. and Stewart Boline



## Sanctuary on 8th Street holds Donor appreciation happy hour

On Wednesday evening, February 16, 2022, the Sanctuary on 8th Street welcomed guests to a donor appreciation event entitled We Love Our Donors Happy Hour. The event featured complementary wine, local beer, and catered fare from Springfield neighbor, Strings Sports Brewery. Executive Director Rick Cartledge provided a tour of the building and grounds, including a brand-new piece of playground equipment and a thriving vegetable garden. Members of the Sanctuary's board of directors were on site to visit with guests and answer any questions they had about the programs. Attendees ranged from founding members of the organization to guests brought along to introduce them to the work the Sanctuary has been doing with at-risk youth for 30 years.



Jan and Pete Kenning with Dede Miles and Steve Rosenbloom



Diane Graese with Nathan Renstrom



Laura Crooks with Bernard Augustin, Pete Gunnlaugsson, Bridget McDonald and Jim Crooks



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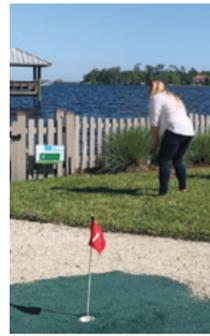
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# Boone Park continues to flourish, friends group leads the way



Dyan and Sam Dickerson with their son Charlie



Sophia and Seth Williams ready for the planting of a Southern Magnolia

One of the most iconic parks in Riverside and Avondale is Boone Park, otherwise known to locals as Boone's Park, for its sprawling oaks, pine stands and magnolias, not to mention, its Kompan playgrounds and ample parking. On Feb. 12, a day dubbed, Love Boone Park South Day, included a cleanup, adopt-a-tree planting and other volunteer opportunities.

The park, which is stewarded by the local advocacy group, Friends of Boone Park South, is continually working toward tree renourishment and replacement, as aging trees will be replaced by younger trees planted during the annual campaigns. Children and younger residents will look for shade, water mitigation and a healthy parks environment, these replacements and supplemental plantings go a long way toward insuring this occurs.

Pamela Telis, the leader of the group, is always on hand to bring the annual event to fruition, alongside Greenscape and its newly appointed executive director, Lisa Grubba, and JEA's Forester, Joe Anderson. This year marks the sixth annual outing and partnership, 20 trees will be planted by local families.

The trees are part of a mitigation fund, which delivers brand new Southern Magnolias, Oaks and other native species that will thrive in the park setting, when watered by volunteers and those dedicated to the greening of the park. Some trees are planted in memory of lost loved ones, some are simply a family tradition and others are planted by those seeking a great way to give back to their local community. For more on Friends of Boone Park South, visit [facebook.com/friendsbps](https://facebook.com/friendsbps) to learn more.



The Webb family plants a tree in memory of their beloved son Finley Reid Webb, whose memory lives on for the family that lost him to SUUD or Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood, at age 4. The family was joined by grandparents Gary and Barb Johnson, as Charles, Madeline, mother Emily with new addition Sawyer and Baton relished in the time spent together planting the family tree of remembrance.



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# RAP hosts annual meeting, presents awards to community stewards

The local neighborhood preservation and advocacy group, Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP), welcomed guests and award winners to Riverside Church at Park and King, formerly known as the Riverside Baptist Church, Feb. 17, for its annual meeting.

The historic structure and courtyards set the perfect backdrop the evening festivities, where a collective of passionate locals rallied for the organization. From displays of artwork, to merchandise and free slices of pizza, as well as wine and beverages from local purveyors, the evening was alive with celebration. The following awards were presented during the meeting:

- **Architectural Rehabilitation Award 2022** for 1085 Cherry Street presented to Roseprop, LLC
- **Architectural Rehabilitation Award 2022** for 1422 Rensselaer Avenue presented to Sarah and Mario Magliano
- **Architectural Rehabilitation Award 2022** for 3691 Herschel Street presented to Bold City Properties
- **Architectural Rehabilitation Award 2022** for 2165 Oak Street presented to South Quarter Build Company, Clay Zeigler and Christina DiLoreto
- **Architectural Restoration Award 2022** for 1415 McDuff Avenue South presented to: Trinity Lutheran Church

- **Landscaping Award**  
The Cummer Garden Restoration presented to The Cummer Museum & WLA Studio
- **Landscaping Award for Native Park II** presented to Ixia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

### Wayne Wood Award Dr. Iris Eisenberg

The Wayne Wood Award recognizes outstanding service to the Riverside Avondale Historic District. This year RAP recognized a longtime advocate, board member, committee member, and community voice, Dr. Iris Eisenberg. A pediatrician and emergency room physician, Iris cares not only for patients, but historic sites and their preservation. Since she first arrived in Jacksonville nearly five decades ago, Iris has been involved with RAP. Among her first efforts: She helped save the Martha Washington Hotel from demolition.

Over the years, Iris has served as a RAP Board Member, helped protect historic homes, and has even restored several homes. She is a standout volunteer for Luminaria, the RAP Home Tour and the Riverside WineFest. Iris helps preserve RAP's institutional memory and serves as an essential component in all the work done by the organization. This year, RAP recognized Dr. Iris Eisenberg as the Dr. Wayne Wood Award recipient.



The sanctuary at the Riverside Church at Park and King played host to the evening's event.

### Placemaker Project of the Year Lomax St. in 5 Points

Riverside Avondale Preservation, Five Points Merchants Association, Tocknell Planning Services, Envision Design Plus Engineering, Flagg Design Studio, Waitz and Moye, Kirby Development, Inc., Black Sheep Restaurant, COJ Office of the Mayor, COJ Planning

Department, COJ Public Works Department, FDOT Complete Streets - Office of Statewide Coordinator, Kay Ehas, former Council Member Jim Love and Council Member Randy DeFoor.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31...

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**Individual Service Award**

**Alice Jones, JaxParks**

Alice Jones, Project Manager for the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department of JaxParks is a champion for the Riverside/Avondale park system, which includes 26 of the city's 497 parks. Alice is the person RAP turns to in order to keep the parks operating at peak performance. She knows who to call to request repairs, maintenance, and the resources needed to improve the parks quickly and effectively.

Alice takes on every issue as if local parks are her backyard, whether it's an overflowing trash can or supervising a team of landscapers, she recognizes the challenges neighborhood parks face and is a staunch advocate for their care and oversight.



Board Chair Brooks Andrews with award winner, Iris Eisenberg, Dr. Wayne Wood. (photo courtesy of Mark Krancer)

**Community Impact Award**

**Art Bikes Jax**

Art Bikes Jax isn't just a person or a business, it is a concept that has fundamentally improved our neighborhood. Combining tourism, art, and recreation, Art Bikes Jax celebrates local art and local artists in a way that is completely unique to our neighborhood, and beyond. While highlighting local art is the main goal, Art Bikes Jax has also created a new recreational outlet for tourists and people from all over Jax to experience our neighborhood. We recognize Ron Rothberg and Holt Tucker of Open Road Bicycles for bringing this wonderful project to our community.

long-time art advocate Bob White and supported by RAP Board Member Perry Reynolds, the two recruited an advisory committee of local artists across all mediums and began a series of year-long meetings and discussions.

The outcome is a series of proposed support activities and events to be managed by the newly created RAP Placemaking Committee. Soon, the committee will be sharing the events and programs planned for 2022. RAP recognized Bob White, Perry Reynolds, Lana Shuttleworth, Rick Pariani and Cindy Guy for their work on this task force.

focus was the protection, restoration, and beautification of this historic park. The basketball court was identified as an ideal location for a prominent public art project.

Doles and his team presented AMP with a design concept that was later approved by JaxParks and supported by RAP. This undertaking was fully funded by AMP with the generosity of the larger community. RAP is proud of this public art project and its members proudly watch children play on the painted water lilies, marvel at the goldfish and manatees that are vividly displayed on the court and "walk on water". This was truly an outstanding, unique and exemplary community beautification of an urban core park, one that is in dire need of citizen advocates. RAP recognized artists Keith Doles, Adrian Rhodes, Hannah Hadzic and Ramses "Spider" Allen, as well as the project leader and funder; The AIDS Memorial Project of Northeast Florida.

**Featured Art**

**"The Pond" at Willowbranch Park**

The motivation for the Willow Branch Park basketball court mural, was a joint decision by the Board of Directors of the AIDS Memorial Project (AMP), along with a group of young artists, coordinated by Keith Doles. The primary

**New Business Spotlight**

**Mixed Fillings Pie Shop**

In recognition of the businesses that make our neighborhood unique, preserve and promote its historic fabric, and create a sense of community, RAP recognized Natasha Burton and Mixed Fillings Pie Shop. While the self-described "speakeasy for pie lovers" is a bit off the beaten path on Oak St. in Riverside, the line quickly forms as fans arrive to purchase sweet and savory pies. This small business is located in Riverside, and RAP leadership hopes to see more just like it flourish and strengthen our community.

**Riverside Arts Market Maker of the Year**

**Crystal Israel, Little Black Box**

Little Black Box is a micro-bakery based in Jacksonville, with a regular presence at the Riverside Arts Market. Owner, Crystal Israel, uses locally sourced seasonal produce whenever possible to make the best baked goods, jams, and jellies available at area farmers markets and online. Little Black Box is an endeavor of love. Their jams are handcrafted in small batches and made by artisans with a focus on local ingredients whenever possible. Little Black Box sources locally and reinvests in other small businesses including purchase of their jars, ingredients, and labels.

During the Covid-19 outbreak, Little Black Box quickly pivoted and assembled an online group for RAM Makers to sell their products, discuss challenges and explore opportunities. Crystal continues to influence RAM's marketing efforts to be effective and efficient. Her continued leadership this year has helped bring makers together and made RAM's community impact even stronger than it was pre-pandemic.

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# Three-part series attended by clergy members and Diocesan administrators

Through the Episcopal Diocese of Florida, The Rev. Adam Greene, Episcopal School of Jacksonville Head of School and the diocese's Bishop's Institute for Ministry and Leadership invited diocesan clergy to participate in a three-part series on leadership held November through January.

The virtual forums provided an opportunity for collective sharing and learning that explored "Leaning into the Call," "Leadership in a Time of Crisis and Challenge," and "Navigating Polarities." The forums were facilitated by The Rev. Adam Greene, Dale Beaman of Beaman Coaching & Company, LLC, and The Rev. Cn. Dr. Douglas Dupree of The Bishop's Institute for Ministry and Leadership.

"Leaning into the Call" focused on the initial call to ministry and a reflection on where clergy now find themselves. A recent Christianity Today article stated that the pandemic has continued to take its toll on church leaders, with 38% of clergy considering leaving the ministry. The forum delved into this topic, exploring the biggest leadership challenges during the pandemic and in a time of unrest.

"A consistent theme that emerged from the interviews is that the clergy like to share and learn from one another. In interviewing Adam Greene, we were both struck by the uniqueness of his call and the leadership skills he exercised to steer Episcopal School of Jacksonville through the worst months of the pandemic," said Douglas. "These two things - the clergy's desire to share and learn from another, and Adam's testimony of leadership - led us to think Adam would be an ideal facilitator to develop a really good leadership conversation amongst the clergy. That's how the three-part leadership series was launched."

Rev. Greene shared his call and unique career path - from his many years in international banking and corporate finance to school leadership - to illustrate the uniqueness that each clergy member brings to their own organization. Rev. Greene's background has provided Episcopal School of Jacksonville a very positive philosophy for success through the pandemic - "how," not "if." The school's more than 1,300 students learned in person and on campus across Episcopal's four pillars from the fall of 2020 through the current semester under Rev. Greene's leadership.

Small panels of additional clergy joined Rev. Greene for the final two Zoom forums. The Rev. Greene, The Rev. Canon Wiley Ammons, Rector, Redeemer, The Rev. Matt Marino, Rector, Trinity Parish, and The Rev. Lisa Meirow, Rector, St. Andrew's discussed "Leadership in a Time of Crisis" and participants enjoyed small group breakout sessions. With congregations in disagreement over management of the pandemic, members not returning to church, and ongoing challenges facing clergy, the topic facilitated helpful discussion and useful advice for participants.

"I am thankful for the Bishop's Institute for providing this forum and creating a space for dialogue to take place about some of our largest challenges. And these are challenges faced by all of us, no matter where or how we are serving," said the Rev. Greene. "Hearing from others on strategies and ideas really helped us to move forward with a new perspective and the understanding that we are not alone in our endeavors."

For "Navigating Polarities," Rev. Greene was joined by The Very Rev. Kate Moorehead, Dean of St. John's Cathedral, and The Rev. Joe Gibbes, Rector of the Church of our Saviour. The three lead the discussion and explored challenges faced by clergy in managing polarities and different value systems, as well as bringing vitality to those served during the midst of these challenges. Rev. Greene shared his philosophy of steering our Episcopal ship down the middle of the channel to avoid rocks or pitfalls on either side and focusing on a single goal that all could agree upon - ensuring students were loved, supported and learning on campus as safely as possible.



Rev. Adam Greene

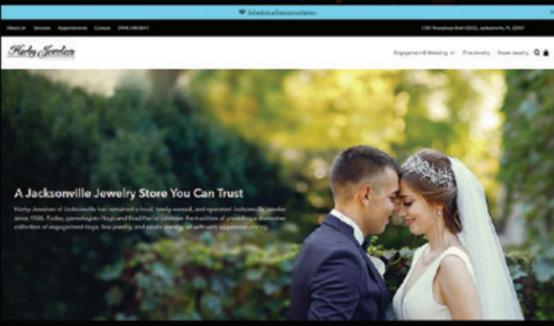


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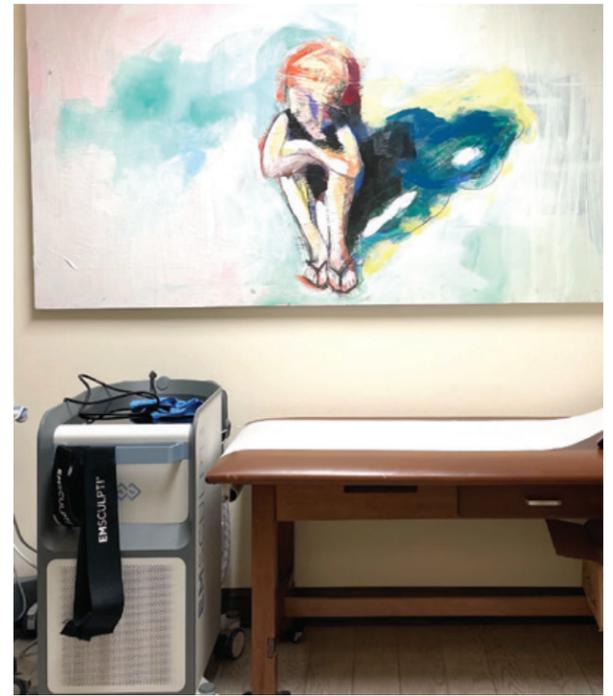
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Dr. Eduardo Balbona now offers safe, non-invasive fat removal at his Art of Medicine office in Riverside, using Emsculpt Neo® technology. The cutting-edge machine developed in 2021 employs electromagnetic waves, the same technology that is used for imaging the brain or spine in an MRI scanner. Instead of simply imaging, it is used to submaximally contract the muscles of a targeted area of the body in order to melt fat. Alternatives

such as liposuction and surgical procedures to remove fat can have serious complications and have even led to deaths in extreme cases. But Emsculpt Neo® is totally non-invasive. Nothing enters the body. The equipment lies on top of the body area being sculpted. There is no risk of serious harm. The treatments burn a lot of calories, and the fat disappears. "There is typically no pain involved. There are no electrodes, no sticky pads, and no grounding necessary," said Dr. Balbona. A single procedure lasts 30 minutes, and four sessions are recommended to yield optimal results in one month, with an average 30% less fat as well as 25% more muscle.

Fat is not inert. It causes inflammation in the body. It increases the risk of many cancers. It promotes type 2 diabetes because it soaks up insulin. With Emsculpt Neo®, not only can the body look better for the beach or a wedding, but also can be healthier. "Fat is the epidemic of our times, and it's not just a cosmetic issue; it's a medical issue," said Dr. Balbona. That's what got him interested in cutting-edge technology known as Emsculpt Neo®. He realized he can do a lot of good with it in terms of people's health. Unlike what occurs with a diet or weight loss the fat cells are not simply shrinking; they are permanently removed. The benefit of having permanent fat removal treatments done at the Art of Medicine office rather than at a spa is the supervision by an experienced physician who carefully assesses treatment candidates and monitors their progress.

Dr. Balbona has been practicing internal medicine for more than three decades. He earned his M.D. in 1990 at the Medical College of Georgia and completed specialty training in internal medicine as a resident at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. He has served as a naval officer and as a physician at the U.S. Capitol, providing medical care to representatives, senators, and supreme court justices. He has been practicing in his Riverside office since 2007, a year after purchasing the building and renovating it. He has privileges at area hospitals, including Ascension St. Vincent's and Baptist. Dr. Balbona, who is fluent in both English and Spanish, encourages folks to call and make an appointment for a no-obligation interview to be introduced to the Emsculpt Neo® technology, learn about the equipment, and to determine candidacy for treatment. It is not necessary to join the Art of Medicine medical practice to participate in the aesthetics of Emsculpt Neo® fat removal. It is not necessary to be a current patient of Dr. Balbona's nor to become one afterwards. The fat removal via this latest technology is a standalone service that he offers in his Riverside office.

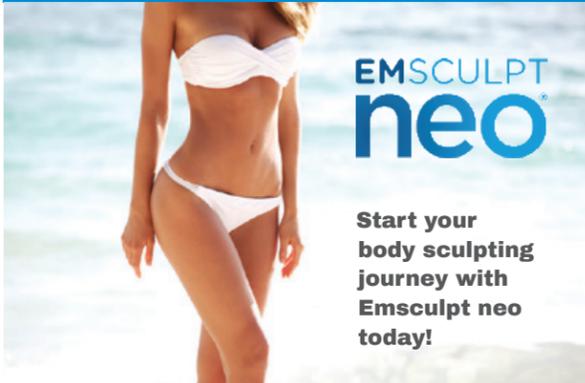


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# HISTORY *in pen & ink:*

## Jacksonville's Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum

BY MICHELE LEIVAS  
Resident Community News

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had a problem many writers can relate to at one point or another in their career: He could not figure out the title for the story he was working on.

After writing a working title down in a strong, confident hand, Doyle eventually struck it out with his pen, scrawling another option just above it. There. That was it. "The Adventure of the Second Chip" was officially changed to the story Sherlock Holmes fans across the world will surely recognize: "The Problem of Thor Bridge."



Photos courtesy of Jacksonville Historical Society, Woodward Photo Collection.

have gone into some government or university archive where the public would not have access to see these documents," he added.

The Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum is also, in itself, a historic gem within its community. Last year, the building celebrated its 100th birthday. Originally built in 1921, it served as the First Church of Christ, Scientist until the 1980s, Minor explained. Karpeles then purchased and renovated the building's interior before opening his museum in 1992. Echoes of its former life as a church can still be felt in its arched wall-to-ceiling stained glass windows, up in the balcony, which still holds rows of original seats and in the latticework that immediately draws the eye upon entrance, which once housed a pipe organ.

Preserving a historic building doesn't necessarily mean that building must stay frozen in time. As the city and community around it evolves and develops, Bliss explained these buildings can undergo "adaptive reuse."

"Often, a new use for an old building requires changes to make it functional, relevant and economically sustainable," he explained.

It is important to note that all branches of Karpeles's museums are likewise housed in repurposed old buildings in their respective communities.

In addition to displaying the Karpeles collections as they cycle through the Jacksonville location, Minor added that it also showcases local artists and performers and in doing so, the museum has been able to cultivate strong ties within the Jacksonville arts community.

"It's been used as a musical venue, a performance venue..." Minor said. "I didn't want to see the space being wasted, certainly you want to put it to good use."

Like many others, Minor said, the museum went into "survival mode" during the last couple of years but now its calendar is beginning to fill with events and more and more visitors are starting to come by, especially on the weekends.

On Feb. 26, the museum will host a book signing and writer's workshop from 1 to 4 p.m. A piano concert will be held on Saturday, March 12 from 3 to 4 p.m.

Also on the calendar is a "Nerd Burlesque" show on March 26 — a benefit to support famed comic book artist George Pérez, who announced his diagnosis of stage three pancreatic cancer in December last year. Minor said the museum hopes Pérez will be able to attend the event.

On Saturday, April 2 from 5 to 8 p.m., local San Marco-based artist Mimi Pearce and a group of other local artists will celebrate the opening of their art show at the museum.

These events have a two-fold effect, Minor said. It gives local artists an opportunity to showcase their art while also letting people in the community know the museum is there.

"[These events] bring people in," Minor added. "The manuscript exhibits are an attraction — for some people. It's hard to get people in for a manuscript but if you say, 'Hey we're having an event like this, they come in and then they come back. I look at it that way: All these different things we do really are just bringing people in and giving us some visibility."

This short story first appeared in a 1922 issue of Britain's "The Strand Magazine" and would later appear in the "Sherlock Holmes Case Load" published in 1927.

However, residents and visitors can also view a sheet from the story written in Doyle's own hand at Jacksonville's Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum as part of the museum's current exhibit on 19th century British documents, along with a series of other sheets written by or about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his enigmatic detective.

Museum Director Richard Minor stands beside the podium housing the "Thor Bridge" folio and studies it for a moment.

"What I think is important and neat about [these papers] is it actually makes these people who you sometimes disassociate from because they're just names and books and stuff like that," he explains. "But when you actually see paper they handled, it makes the reality of these people who made our history come alive."

This Jacksonville hidden treasure is one of several institutions across the country under the umbrella of the Karpeles Library. Founded by David Karpeles, the library houses a private collection of more than one million historic manuscripts.

Minor explained the museums rotate collections amongst themselves throughout the year, packing up their current exhibit and passing it on to the next location every couple of months. Because of that rotating system, Jacksonville's Karpeles Museum has been able to display documents bearing the stamp of Queen Elizabeth I, letters from Mary, Queen of Scots and memorabilia from the early days of baseball — including the contracts of Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb — as well as handwritten pages by Mark Twain and Edgar Allen Poe — to name a few.

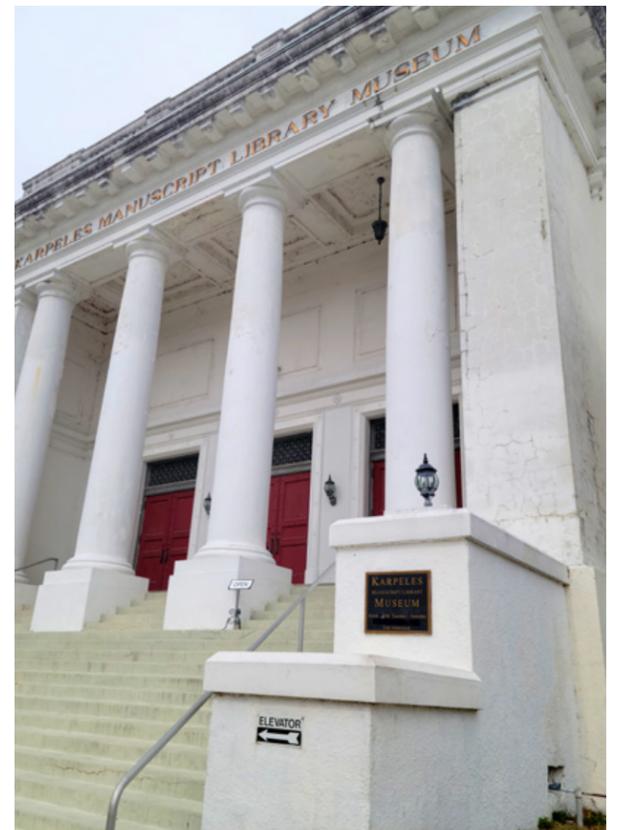
"It's great that [Karpeles] opened these museums and allows the public to see them because otherwise, what, they would

As the Jacksonville bicentennial approaches in June this year, it is important to recognize and appreciate these old buildings as integral parts of local history.

"Buildings are the fabric of a neighborhood, and of a city. Over time, they become the tangible evidence of the past, telling the stories of generations who came before us, and becoming the scenes of our own stories," said Alan J. Bliss, CEO, Jacksonville Historical Society in a statement. "By surviving, they define a place, making it unlike any other place(...)"



Rows of podiums showcase folios from various 19th century British writers, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Dickens. Photo by Michele Leivas.



The building currently housing the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum has stood on the corner of West First and North Laura Streets in Jacksonville for more than 100 years. Photo by Michele Leivas.

# LOCAL REALTOR LIVES THE PROFESSION, HELPS BUYERS DISCOVER HIDDEN GEMS

For many realtors, it is a profession that is undertaken as part of a journey, embarking on a new and exciting career path as adults. For others, it's a family affair and it begins when you are born into a family of lumber, land, and timber pioneers. Local realtor Dan Powers, the latter is true of his journey. It was a natural fit to be in a family that's been hustling real estate for over seventy years, beginning back when his grandfather and his two brothers started their own timber company in North Florida, right here on the Westside.

Matter of fact, it wasn't about real estate to begin with, the journey to real estate sales was through the introduction to timber lands, which eventually became residential sale opportunities. By owning timber land, the transition to valued real estate sales jump started the company that would one day become Walter Williams Realty, akin to the name of the brokerage where Dan now hangs his hat.

"I'm a problem solver," quipped Dan. "I've been familiar with complex transactions due to various experiences throughout my entire life." His background in sales started as young as he can recall, he was 5 years-old at the beginning of his tutoring, as he followed his father and his uncle into the field to learn as a youngster just cutting his teeth.

The same critical thinking skills that sell large tracts of land in a single deal, have also helped him create a stellar reputation in sales of residential real estate. From land, to brick and mortar, Powers has a prowess about the market. "I'm the guy that's thinking outside the box to get deals done," he said. "I've been able to sell just about anything Northeast Florida has to offer over the course of my career, and I now have the skills set that's perfectly lined up to help buyers and sellers in the area maximize their profit potential." Powers is confident that he can advise his buyers and sellers about the state of affairs in the ever-evolving process that today's real estate market brings.

As a fifth generation Floridian, Powers knows his way around North Florida and its many pockets of uniqueness, from the woods and fields of Clay County, Bryceville and Hilliard, where horse properties are found, and hunting lands abound, just as he knows the historic districts. His family has been in these areas for generations. As a confident and knowledgeable realtor, he has the skills to get the job done, and get it done well.

Powers also has a lot of resources available due to his years of proven networking, his sales numbers reflect this prowess. From family members in the business to other



industry partners that offer title and mortgage industry expertise, Dan is confident he knows the right people during this competitive time in real estate, where mere hours can make or break a sale during a bidding battle.

"I have the ability to lean on a strong family for assistance at my uncle's namesake - Walter Williams Properties - as we can help those seeking a seamless transaction from start to finish," he said, with a smile.



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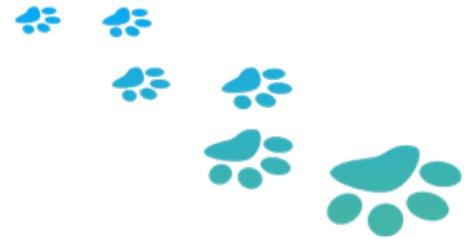
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\*Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside location

# ANIMAL HOUSE



## Wildlife Babies May *Not* Need Help

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA  
Resident Community News

The first impulse at the sight of a tiny baby bird, squirrel, flying squirrel, raccoon, possum or rabbit alone on its own, may be to scoop it up away from danger and rush to a wildlife rescue. Wildlife experts say that healthy wild babies old enough to be on their own, must be allowed to learn to forage and live independently despite the risks.

All rescue organizations are overwhelmed every Spring with orphaned, ill or injured babies unable to survive without around-the-clock care. Forced to ration limited resources and staff, they beg the public to leave healthy wild babies in the wild.

A cell phone photo of any wild baby can easily be sent to a wildlife rescue for help determining age or medical condition if

necessary. There is also basic advice regarding how to determine if a wild baby actually needs help.

First, evaluate the baby for injury or illness and notice the safety of its location. If the baby is in danger, relocate to a safer area away from sidewalks, playgrounds or streets. Protect babies from ground predators or raptors and other birds who attack from above. If it's a baby bird, wait until it can fly to safety. If it's a squirrel (Eastern Gray, Southern Flying or Sherman's Fox), raccoon, possum (Virginia Possum), or rabbit (Marsh or Eastern Cottontail), wait until it can climb shrubs, a tree or disappear into cover.

While it is true that those first hours and days are the most dangerous for newly independent wild babies, bird and squirrel parents are ferociously protective and continue to care for and feed their newly independent offspring. In those cases, babies need to remain close enough for parents to hear their calls and find them.

Sometimes baby birds or squirrels still too young to survive on their own are accidentally expelled from nests by siblings, storms, wind, tree-trimming or cutting. According to Desiree Pinder, founder of Hotel for Squirrels Wildlife Rescue, babies in these situations must be quickly reunited with parents.

This can be done by playing a recording of baby squirrel cries, Pinder said. Her organization recorded baby squirrel calls and put the recording on YouTube. It can be found online at [Youtube.babysquirrelcall=orphanGPS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=babysquirrelcall=orphanGPS).



ORPHAN EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL



ORPHAN SQUIRREL & RABBIT

The recording should be played - loudly - on a cell phone speaker left close to the baby squirrel. If a parent hears the cries, it will quickly retrieve its baby. Take care to deter predators who may respond to the sounds. If no parent retrieves the infant squirrel within an hour or two, it does not move to trees or cover and seems too young, consult wildlife rescue.

Wild babies may appear too young for independence, when they actually are old enough. Eastern Gray Squirrels open their eyes at four weeks. At ten-twelve weeks they are weaned, fully furred with bushy tails, able to leave the nest and forage. If they do not voluntarily leave home, mom hoists them out.

If a healthy baby bird is found on the ground, locate its nest in nearby shrubs or trees and return the baby bird. If the nest was damaged, collect and reassemble any pieces. If no nest can be found, substitute a small wicker or berry basket. Fill the basket with dry leaf litter, plant fluff or twigs, (nothing treated with pesticides), straw, feathers, moss or pine needles. Avoid synthetic or non-biodegradable material.

Carefully tuck the baby into the new nest. Secure the nest to the closest tree, on a sturdy branch at least eight to ten feet above ground to thwart ground-dwelling predators. Secure the basket with wire or zip ties. If no parent returns to feed the baby bird within an hour or two, contact wildlife rescue.

There are visible ways to determine if a baby bird is healthy and old enough for independence. Hatchlings are completely helpless baby birds, eyes tightly closed and no feathers. Nestlings are older with some feathers, but remain unable to fend for themselves. Hatchlings and nestlings must be cared for by parents or they will die of dehydration, cold, exposure to the elements or be eaten by predators. Fledglings are fully feathered baby birds that walk, hop, flutter, test their wings and learn to fly within a week.

Raccoons are attentive, protective parents who wean babies at twelve weeks and painstakingly teach them survival skills. Baby raccoons forage by five months and by ten months are independent. They may stay with mom for a year: unusual among wildlife. Offspring often build nearby dens and choose to live in family groups. Vanderbilt University researchers describe raccoons as among the most intelligent mammals.

Virginia possums are North America's only marsupials, with a pouch on the female's belly where she carries and nurses undeveloped babies. Possums are excellent mothers while nursing babies, but once babies leave the pouch at the age of two to three months, and climb onto mom's back for travel, everything changes. If a baby possum falls off or becomes separated, they are usually left behind.

Baby possums are weaned and forage at three to five months, when they become independent. If a possum's body, not including the tail, is at least eight inches long, it is old enough to live independently.

"Possums are animals that have changed little over tens of millions of years," according to National Geographic researcher Nizar Ibrahim, a paleontologist at the University of Chicago. One reason for their evolutionary survival? These omnivores will eat almost anything, not just plants and other animals, which is why they have survived since the dinosaur era.

Despite a somewhat negative public image, possums are among the most valuable mammals in nature. Their natural immunity to snake venom allows them to kill venomous snakes. Researchers around the world are working to understand their unique body chemistry, in order to create an antivenom to prevent snake bite deaths worldwide, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Possums also ravenously devour thousands of ticks, fighting the spread of Lyme Disease. They eat many pests in the garden and landscape,

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including small rodents and rotten fruit fallen from trees.

Both Marsh and Eastern Cottontail rabbit mothers differ because of their acute sense of smell, extreme high-stress level and negative reaction to human scent. They are quick to panic and abandon litters if disturbed by loud noises like a lawn mower or even an animal passing too close by. Babies are weaned, foraging and independent at four to five weeks. Cottontails are larger, with white, powder-puff tails. Marsh rabbits are darker with a barely visible tail.

How can the regular observer determine if a wild baby needs medical help? In all wildlife interactions, it is safest to wear gloves. If no gloves are available, disinfect hands. Birds do not have a strong sense of smell, with the

exception of vultures and it is a myth that birds reject babies touched by humans.

First, notice if there is any obvious sign of distress or injury on the bird or mammal. Look for blood, discharge from nose or mouth, body wounds, shaking or shivering, open-mouth breathing, coldness, limping, inability to hold the head or body upright or stand. Are there wet feathers or fur, lacerations or holes, drooping limbs, uneven wings? These are all signs that the baby has been picked up, mouthed, chewed or bitten by another animal.

If a wildlife baby has visible flies, maggots or other insects, it cannot be returned to the nest or left on its own. It must receive immediate medical attention. Birds and squirrels often reject babies that are cold or have injuries. Cold babies must be warmed before reuniting families, (see sidebar Warming Methods).

If there are signs of distress or injury, the bird or mammal should be quickly transported to licensed Florida wildlife rescuers for medical evaluation and care. To safely transport, use a box lined with a soft pillowcase or towel. Never pet or hold the baby, or attempt to give food or water. Place the baby gently into the box. Close and secure all sides. Place in a quiet, warm spot away from rain, direct sun or cold drafts. Protect the box from disturbance of any kind or rough handling. Wild babies cannot maintain body temperature and must be kept warm, (see sidebar). Place any warming device under the towel and not against baby's skin, feathers or fur.

Hotel for Squirrels, an all-volunteer non-profit, rescues and rehabilitates orphaned or injured small Florida mammals for release back to the wild. Visit their website for information, to volunteer, donate and see needed items list. Free volunteer training and student community service hours available.



WILDLIFE RESCUER DESIREE PINDER WITH 4 WEEK OLD ORPHAN SQUIRREL



ORPHAN EASTERN GRAY SQUIRRELS

**WARMING METHODS**

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**RESOURCES:**

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[www.hotelforsquirrels.org](http://www.hotelforsquirrels.org)  
 (904) 343-5554  
 REImagineD - Cottage #10  
 Bayard Village  
 12561 Philips Hwy.  
 Youtube.babysquirrelcall=orphanGPS:  
 recorded baby squirrel calls.

[www.orphanedwildlifecare.com/raccooncare](http://www.orphanedwildlifecare.com/raccooncare)

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# A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

*Jacksonville museum launches American folk art exhibit*

BY MICHELE LEIVAS  
Resident Community News

“American Perspectives: Stories from the American Folk Art Museum Collection” opened on Friday, Feb. 11 at Jacksonville’s Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens. The exhibit celebrates American folk art and artists.

Showcasing more than 80 works of art dating from the 18th century to modern day, by artists hailing from across the country, the exhibit’s launch has been a long-awaited event for the museum’s curatorial team.

New York-based American Folk Art Museum organized the exhibit, supported by Art Bridges, a foundation devoted to “creating and supporting

programs that expand access to American art in all regions across the nation.”

“What the curatorial team at the American Folk Art Museum was setting out to do was to celebrate the stories and the perspectives of people who aren’t necessarily in the history books,” said Holly Keris, J. Wayne & Delores Barr Weaver Chief Curator.

She went on to explain that folk art is, at its core, sharing a story — a perspective — and in doing so, it creates a space for two people — the artist and the viewer — to share a moment of connection and exchange.

“It’s that give and take — whether your story is like mine or your story is not like mine — that’s what makes a community” Keris added. “That’s what makes a nation: It’s that confluence of these layered stories and perspectives that makes us better and richer and celebrates that diversity and that’s really the underpinning of what you see in the exhibition.”

Divided into four themes — Seekers, Travelers, Founders and Philosophers — the exhibit takes viewers on their own journey through American folk art, introducing them to artists who may not necessarily be household names but are no less deserving of our admiration of and appreciation for the works they’ve created.

Considering that the stories behind these pieces are just as important as the art itself, Keris stated that booklets have been assembled and provided at the gallery entrance for viewers to take with them through the exhibit in order to learn more than the “bare bones” facts — artist name, life dates, work title — provided on the plaques beside each artifact.

George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Andrea Barnwell Brownlee expressed her own excitement for the exhibit’s opening.

“It’s a really special project and we’re so excited about sharing it with the Jacksonville community,” she said. “We’re on the cusp of

something really magical. We realize how art brings us together. This show is about similarities, it’s about perspectives...about stories. It’s about four different sections that bring us together to look at exceptional works of art.”

Museum-goers were already experiencing the exhibit during its opening weekend. Orange Park resident Gina Ledbetter wandered through the gallery on Sunday afternoon, pausing before a pair portraits by artist Sheldon Peck: Siblings Increase Bosworth and Abigail Munro Bosworth Simonds peered sternly back at her from their canvases.

Ledbetter was particularly struck by the wooden frames Peck painted around the borders of both canvases. Of the exhibit as a whole, she added, “I’m really enjoying it. I’m surprised over some of the pieces... There are a number of pieces that are really exciting.”



J. Wayne & Delores Barr Weaver Chief Curator Holly Keris stands beside “Mother Sister May Have Sat in That Chair When She Lived in This House Before Me” (2014) by Louisiana artist Jean-Marcel St. Jacques, part of the Cummer Museum’s new exhibit “American Perspectives: Stories from the American Folk Art Museum Collection.” Photo by Michele Leivas.

Recent Jacksonville transplant Nicole Harris was visiting Cummer Museum for the first time and said this exhibit “reminds you how talented Americans are.”

“We’re usually drawn to other museums and other countries, so hopefully it’ll just make people aware of what we have at home,” she added.

Celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens is a Jacksonville institution housing more than 5,000 artifacts in its permanent collection. The “American Perspectives” exhibit will remain on display for the public until May 22.



George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Andrea Barnwell Brownlee poses next to “Tiger” (1977) by New Mexico artist Felipe Benito Archuleta, part of the Cummer Museum’s new exhibit “American Perspectives: Stories from the American Folk Art Museum Collection.” Photo by Michele Leivas.

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Here, Covenant nourishes the minds of its students through classical, Christian education. As students acquire the necessary knowledge of core disciplines, they grow in wisdom to discern truth. Armed with Truth, they engage, influence, and lead their community for His glory.

Cultivating the desire in their students to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind,

and strength is paramount (Matthew 22:37). As their minds are developed through instruction, their hearts are guided to know Jesus Christ and worship Him. The eternal Truth of Scripture and a biblical worldview are woven into every subject so that an enlightened mind leads to a living faith — and a life of virtue.

Covenant partners with Christian families to pass on Christian paideia by equipping generations of Warriors who experience the joy of knowing their Creator and fulfilling His purpose for their lives. Students impact others around them for the glory of God, the good of their neighbor, and the greatness of their country.

While watching our country's history be reinvented for today's cultural trends, Covenant partnered with Hillsdale College to become Florida's first private school to be a licensed user of its K-12 curriculum. "We aim to cultivate the heart and mind of every student by teaching from a biblical worldview perspective. Our unique curriculum prepares our students to make wise choices, view the world independently, and sustain our culture," said Susan Johnson, Head of School. This liberal arts curriculum emphasizes the four core disciplines of math, science, literature/language arts, and history,

and Covenant teaches it all from a distinctive biblical worldview.

At Covenant, learning is both fun and challenging where instruction in music, the arts, physical education, and Latin, are also vital components of its comprehensive program. All of this, combined with a robust, competitive athletic program, places Covenant in a league of its own.

"The Covenant School of Jacksonville has been a well-kept secret," said Maria Johnson, Director of Development. "The secret is out, now, and we're growing exponentially!"

The Covenant Family invites you to experience the school for yourself by taking a personal tour of our campus. To schedule your tour, visit [www.wearecovenant.org](http://www.wearecovenant.org).





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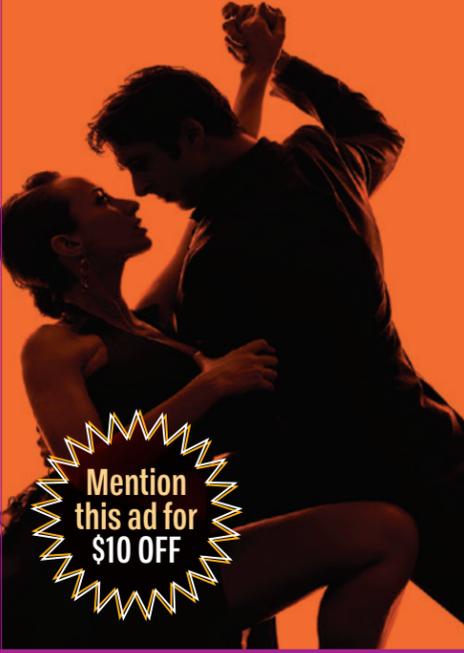


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# JUNIOR RESIDENTS

## Bishop Kenny students take home 11 awards from Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair



Front Row: Kayly Le, Emma Gregory, Ava Carrillo, Izabelle Young, Jalila Nackashi; 2nd Row: Mia Sandhu, Emilia Hernandez, Isabella Kasych, Kate Capra, Imogene Sutherland, Melanie Staples; 3rd Row: Alena Lee, Cristina Jones, Tripp Russell, Alvaro Herrero-Paylos, Michael Kachergus, Ben Belcher; 4th Row: Camryn Carpenter, Anna Bass, Mary Clare Stinneford, Elena Perez; 5th Row: Spencer Carty, Oliver Wilkinson, Antonio Valentino, Gavin Salomone and Megan Cunningham.

26 Bishop Kenny participants of this year's Regional Science and Engineering Fair held at Episcopal School of Jacksonville on February 7, 2022. NEFRSEF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and conducting an annual science and engineering fair to promote the lifelong skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, data analysis, and communication and public speaking.

BK students were awarded 11 Place Awards and 18 Special Awards.

Eleven students were selected to represent the region at the State Science Fair in Lakeland, FL. Two students were also selected to represent the region at the Genius Olympiad in New York. The student's attention to detail and enthusiasm

for scientific and engineering endeavors made the 2022 fair a remarkable STEM event.

**WINNERS:**

**Behavioral and Social Sciences:** 2nd place Kayly Le '24 and Camryn Carpenter '24

**Computer Science:** 3rd place Isabelle Young '22 and 3 Special Awards

**Chemistry:**

- 2nd place Mary Clare Stinneford '24 and 2 Special Awards

**Engineering:**

- 2nd Place Antonio Valentino '22 and 2 Special Awards
- 4th Place Gavin Salomone '24

- 2 Special Awards Tripp Russell '25 and Oliver Wilkinson '23

**In Environmental Science:**

- 2nd Place Anna Bass '24 and Emilia Hernandez '23 and 1 Special Award

- 3rd Place to Ava Carrillo '22 and 1 Special Award

**Microbiology:**

- 2nd place Mia Sandhu '25 and 1 Special Award

- 3rd place to Michael Kachergus '25

**Physics and Astronomy:**

- 2nd Place Melanie Staples '24 and 4 Special Awards

- 3rd Place to Jalila Nackashi '24 and 2 Special Awards

**Zoology:** Megan Cunningham '22 1 Special Award



Jimmy Hunt with Rebecca McNeil and Annie Jetton

## Modeling the Riverside way *Students focused on generosity and gratitude*

Riverside Presbyterian Day School 6th Grade student, Jimmy Hunt recently donated some of his old toys and magnetic building tiles to his former PreK 3 teacher Mrs. McNeil to use in her classroom. After Mrs. McNeil shared with her class about the gift from Jimmy, one PreK 3 student, Annie Jetton, took the initiative to write a thank you note to Jimmy without her parents even knowing. Jimmy stopped by his

old classroom to meet Annie and even took some time to show him how he liked to use the building tiles and toys he donated.

At RPDS, students are taught from the beginning of their educational journey in PreK 3 to live The Riverside Way. The Riverside Way is composed of traits centered around being kind, responsible, respectful, and community focused individuals.

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# Bolles students honored in school's largest college athlete commitment



Bolles student-athletes commit to continue their athletic and academic careers at the school's largest single college commitment ceremony.

Thirty-two student-athletes at The Bolles School representing nine different sports were recognized on February 2 for committing to a particular college or university to continue their athletic and academic careers. The event was the largest single college commitment ceremony in the private school's history.

Family, friends, classmates, coaches and faculty gathered in Davis Gymnasium on Bolles' San Jose Campus for the celebration. Athletic Director Matt Morris recognized the following students:

- Baseball** — Jamie Bobigan, SUNY Maritime College; Sully Brackin, College of Charleston; Graham Moore, Villanova University
- Boys' Basketball** — Ben McGraw, Williams College

**Boy's Crew** — David Santamaria, University of California San Diego

**Girls' Crew** — Kelly Kim, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Cross Country/Track & Field** — Colin Duhnoski, Tufts University; Matthew McClure, Emory University

**Football** — Reed Collins, Lafayette College (signed in December); Deklan Dougherty, Butler University; Kade Frew, Air Force Academy; Jakie Judge, Middle Tennessee State University; Bradley Mann, Vanderbilt University (signed in December); Jack Pyburn, University of Florida

**Girls' Golf** — Tori Mouton, North Carolina A&T State University

**Boys' Lacrosse** — Shep Mitchell, Queens University of Charlotte

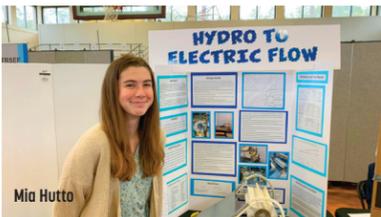
**Boys' Soccer** — Sean Breuer, Bryant College

**Girls' Soccer** — Alexi Pitt, McNeese State University

**Boys' Swimming** - Zackary Cheung, Babson College; Martin Espernberger, University of Tennessee; Harrison Herrera, Indiana University; Ethan Maloney, Virginia Tech; Miguel Rojas Newman, Virginia Tech; Kaan Orhan, Kenyon College; David Walton, Towson University

**Girls' Swimming** — Faith Khoo, University of South Carolina; Avery Lambert, New York University; Faeryn Lee, Roanoke College; Manita Sathianchokwisan, Texas A&M University; Jessica Strong, University of Florida; Lily Wetherell, University of Tennessee; Alexandra Zorn, Amherst College

Ten additional student-athletes were honored in a prior college commitment ceremony in November at Bolles, and another ceremony is planned for April 13, 2022.



Mia Hutto

# Hutto wins first place in Science Fair

8th Grade student, Mia Hutto participated in this week's Regional Science Fair. She won first place for engineering in the junior division and 6 specialty awards in engineering including the president's award,

awarded by the president of NEFRSEF at the Regional Science Fair. She moves on to the State competition next! She is also featured in the newest edition of our own ACS Knight TimePodcast on Spotify.

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## DA Graduates Pursuing Their Passions

**Dantiel W. Moniz**  
**Class of 2007**  
 Dantiel is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize, a MacDowell Fellowship, the Alice Hoffman Prize for Fiction, and has been named a "Writer to Watch" by *Publishers Weekly* and *Apple Books*. Her debut collection, *Milk Blood Heat*, is an Indie Next Pick, an inaugural Roxane Gay Audacious Book Club pick, and has been hailed as "must-read" by *TIME*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Buzzfeed*, *Elle*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*, among others. Her work has appeared in the *Paris Review*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Tin House*, *One Story*, *American Short Fiction*, *Ploughshares*, *The Yale Review*, *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* and elsewhere. Moniz is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Jacob Skiles**  
**Class of 2016, Instrumental**  
 Since graduating from DA, Jacob has studied piano under 1997 Van Cliburn silver medalist, Yakov Kasman at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). In 2018, Jacob made his orchestral debut performing with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and had the opportunity to give a recital in the historic house of Romanian composer George Enescu. During his college career, Jacob participated in and won numerous solo and Concerto competitions in Alabama. In addition to his piano studies, he conducted research on mathematical analyses of rhythm in Baroque dance forms as part of his involvement in the Science and Technology Honors Program at UAB. Since graduating from UAB in spring of 2020, Jacob will be continuing his studies at Florida State University, pursuing a Masters in Piano Performance with a graduate assistantship in teaching.

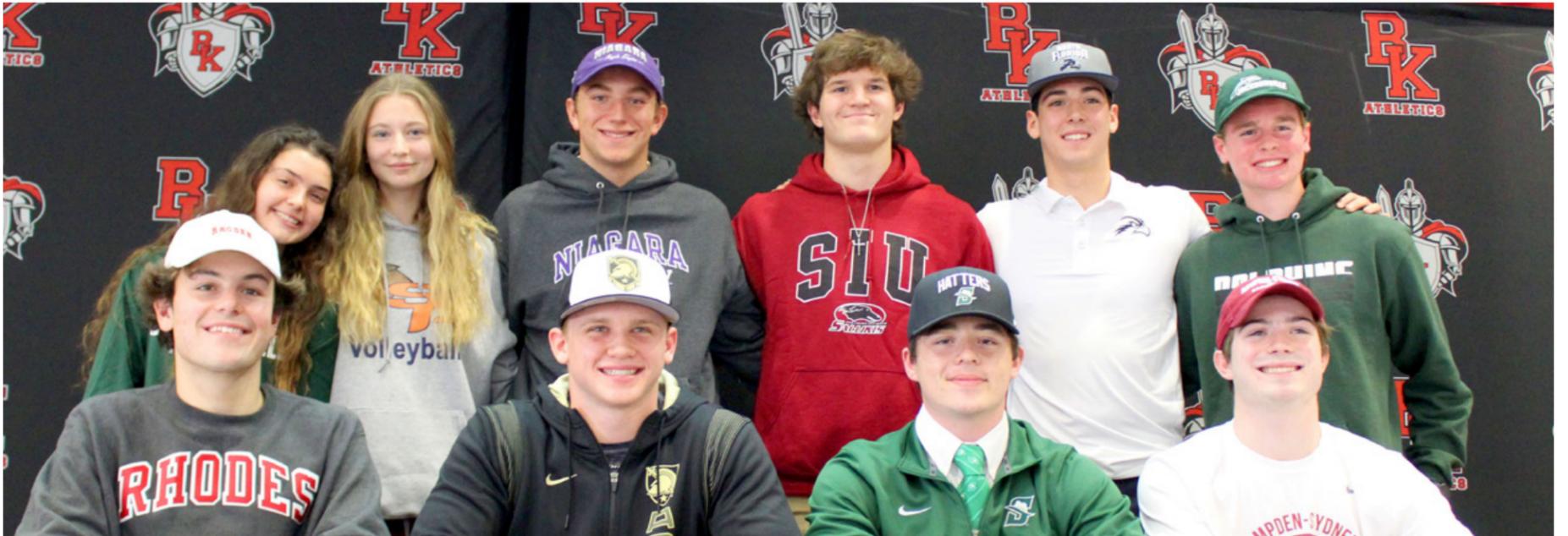
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**Like so many DA Alumni, their exceptional careers are a testimony to the foundation of excellence provided by the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts.**

# 10 students sign letters of intent committing to play a sport at collegiate level

## National Signing Day at Bishop Kenny



Jeb Brownell, Baylor Newsome, Andrew Tabor, Drew McAtee with Tina Nika, Rachel Skyles, Andrew Davis, Cory McCalip, Cal Leonard and Lewis Perry

National Signing Day, held on Wednesday, February 2, 2022, was an exciting time for 10 Bishop Kenny High School student athletes. The athletes signed letters of intent committing to play a sport at the collegiate level. The students will attend nine different colleges and universities with six sports being represented.

Cory McCalip, Baylor Newsome, and Andrew Tabor signed to play football in college. Cory McCalip signed to play football for Southern Illinois. McCalip will be playing a defensive

position as a linebacker. McCalip said, "As a transfer student, I really appreciated the academic program at BK and the high level of structure built into the football program which prepared me to play at the next level."

Drew McAtee signed to play men's basketball for Hampden-Sydney College. McAtee is very involved in Campus Ministry and would like to pursue a medical degree.

Cal Leonard signed to play baseball at the University of North Florida. Leonard played baseball and football for four years at BK and

was also on the varsity football Leadership Council. He commented, "My dream has always been to play baseball in college. I would love for the Ospreys to make it to the College World Series which is played in Omaha, Nebraska where some of my family lives!"

Jeb Brownell and Andrew Davis both signed to swim in college and were on the FHSAA Class 2A 2021 State Championship team.

Tina Nika and Rachel Skyles both signed to play indoor volleyball in college. Nika committed to Jacksonville University as a libero.

Lewis Perry signed to run Cross Country and Track & Field for Jacksonville University. Perry enjoys running and is looking forward to competing on two separate teams. "BK really instilled in me a desire to maintain a high level of academic excellence while keeping God in front of me. I enjoy building relationships with my peers in the classroom, in clubs, and on my athletic teams."



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## Sophomores Named Joe Berg Scholar Candidates

Each year, sophomores from across Northeast Florida are nominated to participate in the prestigious academic seminar series, The Joe Berg Seminars of Jacksonville. A group of 15 students from The Bolles School applied and were accepted to the program, which offers 12 seminars yearly between September and May in each of the Humanities and Sciences.

This year's Joe Berg scholar candidates from The Bolles School are:

- Katherine Asbury
- Amber Bansal
- Sophie Busker
- Cauthen Catlin
- Julia Farhat
- Lucas Harris
- Daniel Ji
- Riya Kar
- Reagan Lane
- Davis Meux
- Alex Meyers-Labenz
- Simran Naval
- Anabella Platt
- Dylan Schwartz
- Milan Thomas

The Seminars admit about 100 students from roughly 20 public and private Jacksonville high schools into each series each year.

Membership extends from the middle of their sophomore year to the middle of their senior year, at which point they will be named program scholars during the Joe Berg Graduation ceremony. Seminars this year are virtual and will be led by local college professors and experts in their field. Student scholars will have participated in 27 to 36 hours of college level lecture and discussion upon their graduation from the program.

## Troop 252 in motion, growing awareness for Scouting



Boy Scout Troop 252, local to St. Matthew's Catholic Church, is one the move, as six of the Scouts are training for their upcoming 20-mile hike. On Saturday, Feb. 5th, the Scouts and adult leaders started out from their home base at St. Matthew's Catholic Church, located at 1773 Blanding Blvd.

Over the next few weeks the troop will be hiking at a number of different trails, some near Green Cove Springs along the Florida Trail through Goldhead State Park, and Jennings State Forest. The Scouts are excited and cannot wait for their next challenge. Troop 252 meets every Monday evening 7:15pm, at the Scout Hut on the grounds of St. Matthew's Church. For more information or to contact a Scout leader, reach out to Frank Ross by calling 904-805-2040.

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### Cathedral Arts Project student performs at Carnegie Hall in Crescendo International Music Competition

Cathedral Arts Project student William Bell was awarded 2nd prize at the Crescendo International Music Competition (CIC), a youth music nonprofit that aims to inspire individuals to pursue their passion for music. As a prize winner, William was invited to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Saturday, February 12, 2022.

"I was elated to be playing at one of the most prestigious venues for classical music in the country," said William. "I am grateful to my dear friends at the Cathedral Arts Project for providing me with the gifts of music, emotion, fulfillment, passion, artistic community and, perhaps most treasured of all, friendship. CAP has presented numerous opportunities which have formed who I am as a person, as a violinist and as a dreamer."

In addition to being an accomplished violinist, William is a student at Riverside High School and serves as a mentor for a beginning violin class led by CAP String Teaching Artist Fellow Joshua Stone at Central Riverside Elementary School. William is also a member of the CAP String Orchestra, which is funded by the Kids Hope Alliance (KHA).

## Pickett celebrates 500th coaching win



On Tuesday, February 15th, St. Johns Country Day School's Girls Soccer Coach Mike Pickett racked up his 500th career coaching win as the Spartans topped Christ's Church 8-0 to win the Class 2A Region 1 Championship. "Coach Pickett has made a career out of building great teams and winning soccer games," said St. Johns Director of Athletics Traci Livingston. "With 13 State Championships under his belt and former players at Princeton, Davidson, and beyond, he has a record for leading athletes to be top notch both in the classroom and on the playing field."

Photo by Mary Beth Garrison '22

**14 OVERALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

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# Bolles Characters for Care club shares magic with DLC Nurse and Learn



On February 11, nine members of the Characters for Care club went to DLC Nurse and Learn Child Care Agency to spend time with the students during their Valentine's Day dance as Disney characters. The club members danced with the children, filled out Valentine's Day cards as their Disney character and had an overall amazing time. This character visit was the first visit of the year for Characters for Care, a club that brings the magic of Disney to children with special needs.

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### DA Graduates Pursuing Their Passions



**Matthew Manyak**

*Class of 2017, Cinematic Arts*  
Matthew is an award-winning filmmaker and serial entrepreneur based in Saint Augustine, Florida. He is best-known for his work on the acclaimed short film *After the Fall* and the Amazon Prime series *Deathless*. With numerous official selections

to his extensive portfolio, he has quickly risen to become a notable name in the Florida film scene. His work has screened at events across the United States, in venues the likes of the TCL Chinese Theater in Los Angeles and the AMC Time Square Theater in New York City. Currently, Matthew serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Alignment Entertainment, a film and television production company based in Tallahassee.



**Isabella Desendi**

*Class of 2010, Creative Writing*  
Isabella is a Cuban-Italian poet and educator. Her work has been published in *Narrative*, *Leveler*, *Small Orange*, *Two Peach*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, and *The Grief Diaries*. She was recently a finalist for the 2019 Frontier Digital Poetry Chapbook contest judged by Jericho Brown and a finalist for the June Jordan Fellowship and Narrative Magazine's Annual Poetry Prize. Isabella is the recipient of a New York State Summer Writers Institute Fellowship. She lives in New York City, where she works in finance.

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# WOLFSON NICU – 50 YEARS

*New tower features world-class technology*

BY LORRIE DEFRANK  
Resident Community News

In the five decades since Wolfson Children's Hospital opened its first dedicated Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, technology and medical interventions have advanced so remarkably that premature infants are surviving at much lower birth weights than would have been possible in its early years. With the opening this year of the multi-floor Neonatal Intensive Care Center in the Borowy Family Children's Critical Care Tower, some of the state-of-the-art technology is first of its kind.

"The Critical Care Tower is probably the most modern in the world. When you have no program and now have the best in the country, that is so rewarding," said neonatologist Thomas W. Chiu, M.D., M.B.A., Wolfson NICU's first medical director who remained involved until his retirement at the end of 2021. Fifty years ago saving the life of a 2-pound baby born at 28 weeks would have been a miracle, he said; now some born as early as 22 weeks and weighing less than a pound can survive and thrive.

In addition to the latest technology and highly skilled neonatologists, having a well-trained team that includes nurses, laboratory technicians, social workers and others is critical, said Chiu, emeritus professor, University of Florida College of Medicine - Jacksonville.



For his medical and philanthropic contributions, the fourth floor of the tower is named the Dr. Thomas T.W. Chiu and Anna Shi Chiu Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

## THE TECHNOLOGY

Wolfson President Michael Aubin called advances in the NICU's technology mind-boggling. Computer monitors in spacious patient rooms display data doctors don't yet know is a cause for concern and parents can monitor the care of their newborns anywhere on smartphones.

Aubin said the most significant technical enhancement in the building is the predictive analytics system developed in a relationship with Philips, a global health care technology company. "The first to be rolled out in the neonatal environment is right here in Jacksonville," he said. "It talks to other equipment in the room and collects lots of information."

Using complex algorithms, the system monitors an enormous amount of patient information, including laboratory and X-ray results, and alerts staff of negative trends that have not yet hit a critical status.

"It allows our practitioners to touch a screen and see charts showing trend lines of all the major organ systems of the body and know that if they don't act now, the baby may have a stroke or go into heart failure or respiratory distress," Aubin said. "We are so excited because we will also be working in partnership with Philips to further develop this system and identify other things we can add to help predict before they happen."

The tower's state-of-the-art technology also includes a neonatal MRI system designed for imagining the developing brains of tiny newborns. "We are the third hospital in the country to get it. The first was at Harvard and the second was at Yale," said Aubin.

## THE OLD DAYS

From incubators where the babies sleep to iPads used to close the blinds, differences in the NICU's early and modern days are astonishing. "They're like little space capsules," said Aubin of the current incubators, "like a womb outside of the womb for these very premature babies that keeps them safe and temperature controlled."

Cherie Baker, R.N., B.S.N., head nurse in the NICU from 1977 to 1979, recalls the latest development then being a radiant warmer, an open bed with a warmer on top. "You taped a probe on the baby's stomach that would tell you what their temperature was and the radiant warmer on top would increase or decrease, as needed," she said. "Before that, you had to reach in and do everything."

Another device, vastly improved today, was the CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine used to provide respiratory support to neonates. "They had glass bottles that were taped to the floor so nobody would knock them over," Baker said. "Hoses went over the radiant warmer."

Compared to the spectacular three-story NICU, the four-room NICU of the 1970s was miniscule. Baker said it had a large center room with a computer, tiny kitchen area and room with 11 beds for the sickest newborns.

"The whole NICU in the '70s was a little bit more than 1,000 square feet. Now, one of the rooms to manage one baby is over 1,000 square feet," said Chiu.

Before going to Wolfson, Baker had worked with Chiu in the NICU at the University Hospital of Jacksonville, later called Shands Jacksonville and now UF Health. She participated in air transports around Florida and Georgia to pick up babies in need of specialized neonatal care. Although Chiu had been deeply involved with the Wolfson NICU its entire

existence, he served on the UF faculty and was instrumental in bringing several Jacksonville hospitals together to provide neonatology services in the 1970s.

Chiu played a major role in forming the City Wide Neonatal Program where pediatricians and other specialists from University, Wolfson, Memorial, St. Vincent's, Riverside and Orange Park hospitals shared resources. They trained nurse practitioners to do NICU work, scheduled neonatologists around the clock and became a national model. Wolfson soon emerged as the city's main NICU, largely because of its surgical, neurological, cardiac and other support.

"All surgery of neonates basically is done at Wolfson now," said Chiu.

"I could not have imagined what the NICU has today," said Baker, regional director for Spark Pediatrics. "I learned a lot from Dr. Chiu. He was so diplomatic with everyone and he could get things done."

## FAMILY SUPPORT

Throughout the Wolfson NICU's history, strong family support has been its priority. Features in the new tower that cater to families are significantly enhanced just in comparison to the most recent NICU that could hold nearly 60 babies but had little or no facilities for families. It had no ability for parents to stay overnight and even the 20-bed Pediatric ICU had no private bathrooms.

In the tower, each patient room has a bed that sleeps two adults, full bathroom, storage area, large wardrobe and its own private lobby/lounge where siblings can play. A series of security systems protects families and parents are involved in their children's care 24/7.

The ability for families to stay comfortably with their children and participate as partners in their care is the most important part of the new NICU, Aubin said: "The average length of stay is 25 days. Research shows when a neonate has parents there and parents can have kangaroo skin-to-skin care, the baby's immune system develops faster, they grow faster and the length of stay is reduced."

"As excited as we are about the new building and all the features, it's the staff that takes care of these patients that makes all the difference in the world," Aubin added. "Without them, it's just a building."

## NEW TOWER HONORS BOROWY FAMILY

The magnificent building that serves as the new "front door" to the expanded campus of Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson's Children's Hospital features world-class technology that saves lives of critically ill and injured infants and children.

Five of the seven floors of the 225,000-square-foot Borowy Family Children's Critical Care Tower are dedicated to high-level children's care:

- Three-story Neonatal Intensive Care Center with three separate Neonatal Intensive Care Units on three floors
- Pediatric Intensive Care Unit that includes a Neuro-Intensive Care Unit
- Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit
- Specialty Burn & Wound Care Unit
- The \$224 million expansion project started in May 2019 and a phased opening began in February.

"They have a special place in their hearts for children," said Wolfson President Michael Aubin of Dr. Thom and Pat Borowy and their children, Hayden Borowy and Megan Borowy Walker and son-in-law Mark Walker. "The family has been very philanthropically supportive in numerous areas across Baptist for many years. They knew we needed a significant gift to be able to provide all the technology we wanted to put into the new building. So they stepped up and made that significant gift which we honored by naming the critical care tower in their honor."

The first two floors are the lobby. The new entrance includes an 85-foot skybridge from the P2 parking garage across Palm Avenue, which makes a dramatic statement that showcases artwork and donor recognition spaces. State-of-the-art technology ranges from a neonatal MRI system to humidity-controlled rooms to prevent infection in the burn unit in the Pediatric ICU.

"It's a fascinating place," said Aubin. "We tried to think about every little detail."

Aubin credits The Women's Board for raising funds for many of Wolfson's advances. "They have been working on the development of a tremendous endowment that will help us support that going forward," he said.

**How to help:** To contribute to Wolfson's Hope Starts Here campaign to transform the delivery of critical care for infants and children, access [hopestartshere.com](http://hopestartshere.com). For questions or to make dedicated gifts to Wolfson, call (904) 202-6296.



Dr. Thomas Chiu tends to a newborn in the NICU in the 1970s.

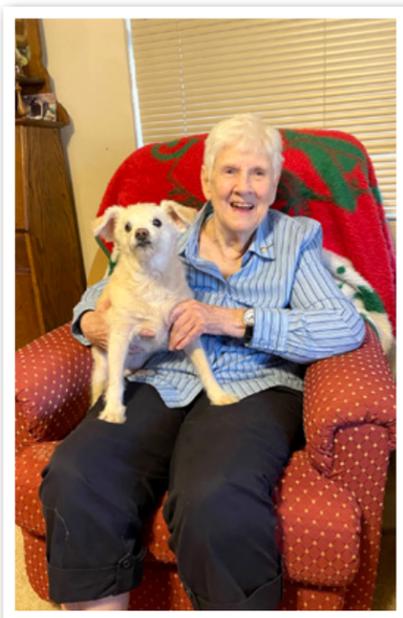
# THE WAY WE WERE

## Agnes Stack

BY MARY WANSEER  
Resident Community News

Born in Ohio in 1935, the youngest of 11 children, Agnes Stack was the only one among her six sisters and four brothers who had any musical talent. When she was 4 years old, she made herself a cornstalk fiddle, sat on the back porch, and began singing “Going Down the Road Feeling Bad,” a traditional American folk song. Stack doesn’t recall it directly, but that’s the story her mother often recounted. At 11 years old, she taught herself to play the banjo, one that her brother-in-law had given her. “He told me that if when he came back the next month to visit I could play a song on it, he’d let me keep it.” So, she did. He kept his promise, and she kept the banjo.

In 1953, just one month after her 18th birthday, Stack joined the Women’s Army Corps (WAC) and was sent to Fort Lee, Virginia for basic training. After that, she went to International Business Machines (IBM) accounting school at Fort Harrison, Indiana. She was a pioneer in the field of electronic computers. “We used to have a whole row of machines that would do what one little computer does right now,” Stack said. At 19, she went on to duty at the Pentagon, stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia. She



Agnes Stack with Corkie, 2021

remembers walking to work each day, no matter what the weather, through the pedestrian tunnel. After leaving the military in 1955, Stack entered civil service.

In her 30s, Stack was a member of the Cook County Cowgirls of Chicago, a country band of four ladies who would perform locally. She never learned to read music but had a talent for playing standards and polkas by ear. A songwriter, Stack, known as Aggie, took the girls to Nashville, Tennessee in 1968 to record an album. Selections like “Walkin’ Around On The Outskirts of Romance” and “Visiting Back Home” are available today for listening on YouTube. Two members of the band are deceased now, but Stack still keeps in touch

with the bass player, 96-year-old Elsie, who lives in Santa Claus, Indiana.

Stack has been in Jacksonville for 27 years. The weather brought her and her dog here from Illinois in February 1995 when she was nearly 60. “I came down here after I’d gotten marooned at work and did a couple of doughnuts on the ice. I had to get where it was warmer,” she said.

Stack chose Jacksonville for its northern locale in the state, preferring it over her second choice, St. Augustine, which she thought would be too touristy for work in her field as an electronic technician. “I don’t question where the Lord puts me. He’s always put me in the right place at the right time,” she said.

When Stack first arrived in Florida, she rented a room in Jacksonville Beach. Having earned a degree in electronics when she was 50 years old, she landed a position at ParkerVision, Inc., a business that made cameras for classrooms, cameras that allowed for three-way discussions, an original form of Zoom. For five years, Stack was doing inspections and troubleshooting for the company, and she giggles to think she had been on the cutting edge of today’s technology. Stack’s commute to ParkerVision from the beach proved cumbersome, so she moved to an apartment in Bay Meadows before buying a house in Spring Park in 1997.

Having a commendable work ethic, “I would work all the overtime I could possibly get,” Stack said. When not at the job, much of her free time was spent caring for her home and her yard by herself. She wasn’t in the habit of asking for outside help. “If I had a leak in the roof, I’d get some tar and get up there and fix it,” she said. One time, she did that on her lunch hour. She then admitted, “After that, I did get a new roof, let’s put it that way.”

She credits her mother as role model. “My mother could do anything! She was a very hard worker. She could wallpaper a room, then she could go out and dig up fence posts and make a garden,” Stack said.

Although not an official member of any particular church, Stack attended services on occasion, leaning toward the Methodists. Some weekends, she enjoyed the MOSH, Riverwalk, or side trips to St. Augustine. “All my spare time was spent at the beach when I lived out there,” she said.

After ParkerVision, Stack took a job at American Technical Ceramics (ATC), making minuscule components, ones not bigger than grains of salt, for circuit boards. “I loved that job so much, I probably still would’ve been there, but I developed macular degeneration,” she said. She was 67 years old when her failing sight forced her to retire from full-time work. She continued doing some limited work for ATC, jobs that didn’t require sharp vision, but eventually had to retire completely.

The biggest change Stack has noticed around Jacksonville is in the highway system. “Oh, my gosh, the expressways and all that, that certainly has changed a lot,” she said. When she was still able to drive, the way Stack would get in and out of town, taking Emerson Street to make her way to the Veterans Administration (VA) and using the Hart Bridge to get over the river, she said is entirely different now.

When she could, Stack used to visit with the last two of her six sisters who were remaining—one north in Ohio and one south in Deerfield Beach. But both of them are deceased now, like the others. “All in my family are gone now. I’m the only one left,” Stack said. Her last sibling died at 96 a couple of years ago.

Now 86 and legally blind, Stack continues playing bajo and guitar, instruments she’s been at for over seven decades. On most Tuesdays, Stack can be found at Faith Baptist Church on Orange Picker Road as one of a dozen or so musicians who meet there for jam sessions. They play mostly gospel, hymns, and bluegrass



Agnes Stack jamming on banjo, November 2021



Agnes Stack, Women’s Army Corps, 1953

favorites. Residents come to listen, they bring refreshments, and they often sing along. “I really enjoy that,” Stack said.

Pre pandemic, Stack would attend music jams at a Fellowship Hall on San Jose Boulevard. Then, she had taken a bit of a break until after she’d gotten her booster shot. But she’s back to jamming now and remembers fondly the many calls she’d gotten during her absence from folks who had missed her presence.

In November, Stack had 14 people outside her house for a music jam, four musicians on the front porch and ten listeners on the lawn. It’s her great pleasure to bring musical joy to others. Due to her sight loss, she must memorize the words to every number. “Music has played a big part in my life,” she said, so she’s more than willing to go that extra necessary mile while others can read the words from a sheet of paper.

In addition to being a musician, Stack has always been an avid reader. Adult fiction is her

favorite genre. When she could still see properly, she’d frequent the public library in San Marco and borrow numerous print books at one time. Now, she must listen to audio books that she borrows through the Talking Book Program. “That is a blessing,” she said. As she listens, she pictures the words just as if she were reading.

Stack is no martyr when it comes to her loss of sight. “I’m too blessed to be stressed. How many people I’ve met because of being legally blind! I wouldn’t have met them otherwise,” she said. People from local organizations like Aging True and Hart Felt Ministries Stack is ever grateful for. They assist her with Meals on Wheels, transportation to the VA, grocery shopping, lawn maintenance, and other tasks too. “If I didn’t need help, I never would have met those people. And they are wonderful! I want to give them all the credit in the world,” she said.

In part, it’s because of assistance from local agencies such as these that Stack is still in her Spring Park home. She resides there with her dog named Corkie, a different pet than the one she’d brought with her upon her Florida arrival all those years ago. “My faithful little terrier boy is 14 years old,” Stack said. With the pandemic, and when it was necessary to remain isolated inside, “He’s just been the greatest company,” Stack said of her beloved companion. She said that he has a “personality plus” and is quite smart.

In her life, Stack has rarely been without a dog. When one would pass, she’d swear that would be the last. “But I’d always end up rescuing another one—see one somewhere, pick it up, and bring it home,” she said. Being a dog owner, Stack has done a lot of walking in her time. All that exercise has contributed, somewhat, to her longevity, she admitted. That and the Lord. “That’s His plan,” she said.



Cook County Cowgirls, circa 1969. Elsie on bass, Glenna on drums, Dee on guitar, Agnes Stack far right on guitar.



# Alice Mach Coughlin

September 25, 1927 – January 14, 2022

Alice Mach Coughlin passed away peacefully on January 14, 2022. She was the daughter of Ruby Alice Singer and William Louis Mach, granddaughter of Alice Walton Tartt and Frank P. Singer, and great-niece of the artist, John Singer Sargent. Her great-grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War.

She was born on September 25, 1927 in New Orleans, LA. At a very young age, she and her family moved to Houston, TX. She attended schools in Houston and graduated from San Jacinto High School. After high school, she attended the University of Houston where she met a dashing young Army Air Corps officer, Warren Charles Coughlin, who was stationed at Ellington Field. It was love at first sight, and they were married at St. Mary's Catholic Church on November 30, 1945.

Their two children, Mark and Cyndi, were born in Houston. In 1953 the family moved to New York, and in 1958, they moved to Jacksonville, FL. From the earliest days of their sixty-three years of marriage, Alice worked side by side with her husband building several successful businesses. She always supported her church, Assumption Catholic Church, and was active in various charitable organizations, including, The Jacksonville Area Museum, The Late Bloomers Garden Club and American Cancer Society of Duval County.

Her career as a fashion model started during her time at the University of Houston where she was a Vanity Fair Beauty and at the Sakowitz Brothers Empire Room. Her modeling career took her to New York and across the country modeling in trunk shows for a California firm, Georgia Bullock Inc. This tradition and passion continued with trunk shows and appearances in Jacksonville, where, for many years, she was recognized by "The Florida Times-Union" as one of their "Best Dressed" and was an inductee into their Hall of Fame.

One of the greatest joys of her life was her family and friends, with whom she enjoyed entertaining and traveling. She and Warren's extensive travels took them around the world and throughout much of the United States. While many adventures and escapades were had, she most adored her time touring Germany and Europe in a Mercedes they had purchased while on their trip. They visited Asia and saw, among other places, the Great Wall of China. One of their most beloved trips was when they traveled around the world for 6 weeks with Cyndi and Kent.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Captain Bolling Singer Mach in 1945; and sister, Doris Anna Mach in 2002. Her greatest heartbreaks were the loss of an infant son in 1964, her son Mark's death in 1994, and the love of her life, Warren, in 2008.

She is survived by her precious daughter, Cynthia Coughlin Schmidt (Kent); daughter-in-law, Mary Lee Coughlin; six grandchildren; Christopher Coughlin (Karen); Allison Coughlin Muraca (Scott); Lee Warren Coughlin (Lindsay); Austin Joseph Coughlin (Katherine); Kristen Schmidt Seay (Everette); Michael Brian Schmidt (Mishayla); 13 great-grandchildren: Mark Philip Coughlin; Matthew Warren Coughlin; Scott Andrew Muraca, Jr.; Reagan Laine Coughlin; Harper Lee Coughlin; Griffin Warren Coughlin; Tanner Phillip Coughlin; Brooks Mark Coughlin; Everette Meade Seay V; Charlotte Alice Seay; Thierry Tomo Schmidt; Waylon Emerson Schmidt; and Imogen Mach Schmidt, all of Jacksonville, FL; nieces: Michelle DeCuir; Catherine Montz; Lisa Montz McDermott; nephews: Gregory Montz; and Drew Montz, of Houston, TX; nephew Lee Montz of Dallas, TX. and dear friend and companion, Rosa Lee Siplin, whom she loved deeply.

Over the years, she enjoyed memberships in the Deerwood Country Club, Epping Forest Yacht Club, the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club, San Jose Country Club, and the River Club. She had been a tennis player in her younger years, loved to sew, and was a passionate designer of homes. She and Warren built several in Jacksonville, the last being in San Marco.

Alice is especially grateful to Laquanta "Punkin" Williams for her friendship and support over the last year.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to: American Cancer Society of Duval County, 1430 Prudential Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32207; Community Hospice of Northeast Florida Foundation, 4144 Sunbeam Road, Jacksonville, FL 32257.

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FOR SALE

FOR SALE



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Celebrating their second team anniversary, LRS Team is composed of Broker Associate and Realtor, Lauren Rohman and Realtor, Rachel Shepard. They are a full service and comprehensive team that expertly represents Jacksonville homeowners, future homeowners, landlords and renters. Based in the historic district of Jacksonville, Florida, they are well familiar with all areas of Northeast Florida. With their knowledge of real estate and unparalleled customer service, they can make your transaction as simple as possible.

Lauren is currently on the Board of Directors for the Northeast Florida Association of Realtor and has earned her Commitment to Excellence endorsement from the National Association of Realtors, is a certified Pricing Strategy Advisor and Certified Real Estate Team Specialist. Rachel holds an assistant management role in the Property Management Department at Traditions Realty and is a Certified Real Estate Team Specialist.