



WOMEN'S BOARD CELEBRATES A MILESTONE, HITS 50 YEAR MARK

Co-chairs announced for the Florida Forum's 30th season

It's a big year for the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital, the women's collective celebrates 50 years of raising essential funds, growing brand awareness as ambassadors and showcasing the very best of what Wolfson Children's Hospital has to offer the region.

During this 50th Anniversary Year of the organization's founding, the Women's Board will deliver another season full of prolific speakers, they have yet to be announced for the 2022-23 Florida Forum season, but are highly anticipated by donors, sponsors and the hospital's leadership.

Co-chairs for this season's 30th Anniversary of the speaker series are Sharon Pentaleri and Beverley Brooke, the Women's Board President supporting the duo is Robin Albanese during this anniversary year. "Sharon and I are excited to be co-chairing, this season is really special and our lineup is going to be outstanding," shared Beverley Brooke. Brooke and Pentaleri wished they could share more about the speaker lineup, but negotiations are ongoing and have yet to be made official as of press time.

The legendary speaker series lineup has built momentum leading into this coming Florida Forum Speaker Series, coming off an appearance by Tim McGraw on the final installment in February of 2022.

[READ MORE ON PAGE 30](#)



BOWORY TOWER OPENS

Immediate Past Board Chair, Baptist Health Foundation, Richard Sisisky, with Board Chair, Joe Barrow, at the Borowy Tower patrons celebration.

[READ MORE ON PAGE 26](#)

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Blending the *Brushstroke* of Communities

A Vision for Art, the fundraiser and multi-day art show, has become an annual tradition which draws a big opening night crowd, pictured are Chloe Wood with Christina Crapps, Jennifer Bechan, Diana Fanning, Ginger Longmire, Rebekah Hagan, Bebe Alexander, Emily Magevney, Stephanie Davis and Nina Human.

The story about its humble beginnings and coverage of the latest showcase begin on page 34.



Home Touring with a little help from my friends

The 46th Annual RAP Home Tour brought members of the local community, visitors from out of the area and many local volunteers and passionate members of the community to browse the offerings over the course of the two-day affair, April 22 and 23.

Patrons Ben Montgomery, Keith Jordan, Richard Walker, Clark LaBlond, (in front, left) Cindy Manouilidis and Julie Sisam were snapped in this photo while parting the Mission style bungalow on display at 1366 Challen Ave.

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LETTER *to* EDITOR

I just wanted to reach out and say how much I look forward to reading the Animal House column in The Resident Community News. I love and appreciate how Julie Garmendia highlights those groups and individuals in our community who work every single day helping animals in need. Duval has some of the most compassionate citizens when it comes to helping local homeless animals and wildlife. We are lucky to have some notable large animal welfare agencies, several smaller rescue organizations, wildlife rehabilitators, compassionate veterinarians, and several individuals who will stop and help an animal in need. There is a saying in the animal community that "it takes a village" and Duval has one of the best around and I thank you for being part of it.

Thanks so much,
Jill Mero



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City Grille and Raw Bar coming to former home of Wine Cellar on Southbank

BY KAREN RIELEY
Resident Community News

When the Wine Cellar restaurant at 1314 Prudential Drive closed on Oct. 16 after serving customers on downtown's Southbank for 47 years, many wondered what would take its place. Six months later, John Nagy and his wife, Karen Belloit Thomas, answered

those questions with the announcement that they will operate the 4,200-square-foot restaurant as the City Grille and Raw Bar.

The new restaurant will focus on high-quality ingredients including raw-food cuisine, in addition to steaks and other seasonal specialties. An extensive wine list from wine regions around the world will make use of the Wine Cellar's distinctive wall-long wine rack. The restaurant plans to open in the fall with lunch and dinner

six days a week and the possibility of a Saturday and Sunday brunch.

Belloit Thomas and Nagy, who live in Avondale, also own Eleven South restaurant at Jacksonville Beach and 3 Palms Grille at Ponte Vedra Beach. Together they have more than 50 years of restaurant experience. Belloit Thomas operated The Filling Station Café, which was located around the corner from the former Wine Cellar and on Hendricks Avenue, from 1987 until she sold it in 1994.

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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 begun their upward trend as promised, though they remain historically low.

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 largest group of home buyers were Millennials, and the largest group of sellers were Baby Boomers. Gen X buyers had the highest incomes and bought the most expensive homes of all generational cohorts.

Source: National Association of REALTORS® 2022 Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends



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Neighbors resist PUD-zoning deal with Miller Electric

BY JOEL ADDINGTON
Resident Community News

Miller Electric is attempting to sell several adjacent parcels in Riverside's Five Points neighborhood that it used to call home, before relocating to the Southside.

Real estate is very valuable in the neighborhood and several tenants and others could be potential buyers, or not. Miller's representatives were uncertain, during an April 11 meeting with area residents arranged by City Councilwoman Randy DeFoor, as to who may eventually occupy the property or for what uses.

Representatives from The Southern Group, who said there are no plans for new construction, focused on Miller's application to consolidate zoning and land use designations among the parcels, some of which have flexible planned unit development (PUD) zoning, the terms of which are negotiated with city planners, and others with community general commercial (CGC) zoning.

But the land use is what has sparked opposition from nearby residents. Miller seeks to change the land use on two parcels from commercial general to light industrial, which they fear will be more intensive.

Robin Lumb, a former city councilman who resides on Gilmore Street, fears the requested PUD zoning and light industrial land use is an attempt by Miller to maximize the resale value of their property at the expense of the neighborhood's quality of life.

He said it may also be a way to avoid compliance with the historic district's residential overlay that he says encourages residential redevelopment over commercial redevelopment.

"At Monday's meeting representatives from the Southern Group admitted the only reason for the proposed re-zoning was to make it easier for Miller Electric to sell the property and to sell it at a

higher price," Lumb said by email to the councilwoman. "While I respect Miller Electric's right to seek the best possible price for its property, this is hardly a compelling rationale for a major re-zoning. If satisfying the desire to maximize resale value becomes the acceptable standard for a commercial re-zoning, there's no logical stopping point. Any commercial property owner looking to boost resale value could use the same rationale to demand a zoning change anywhere else in the city."

Miller's representatives, Chris Hagan and Taylor Mejia, countered this month that current zoning would permit up to six stories. Residents may translate that as a threat to add yet another large cube storage facility in the neighborhood, said Riverside Avondale Preservation's Director Shannon Blankinship.

Mr. Lumb certainly took it that way. He said residents should not be expected to "negotiate with themselves" to reach a compromise to achieve the requested zoning and land use changes.

Mr. Hagan and Ms. Mejia said their client is willing to negotiate on terms of a potential PUD agreement with the city. They said it could include traffic and pedestrian safety improvements, less on-street parking and the like, to please neighbors.

What neighbors would like to see is the continuation of a pattern now underway on Gilmore — the exit of a former ambulance company and the ongoing rehabilitation of several bungalows. That should mean more residential housing that is in such short supply, making living here unaffordable for many.

Another meeting with Miller representatives was scheduled for April 27, said Ms. Blankinship, at 4 p.m. at 214 N. Hogan St. downtown.

"More to come though," said Councilwoman DeFoor's executive assistant Brooks Dame on April 20. "Miller is revising their exhibits and then we'll review and have additional meetings as necessary."



Gilmore Street bungalows undergoing renovations



Top from left: Chris Hagan, Taylor Mejia and Councilwoman Randy DeFoor meet with residents on April 11, 2022

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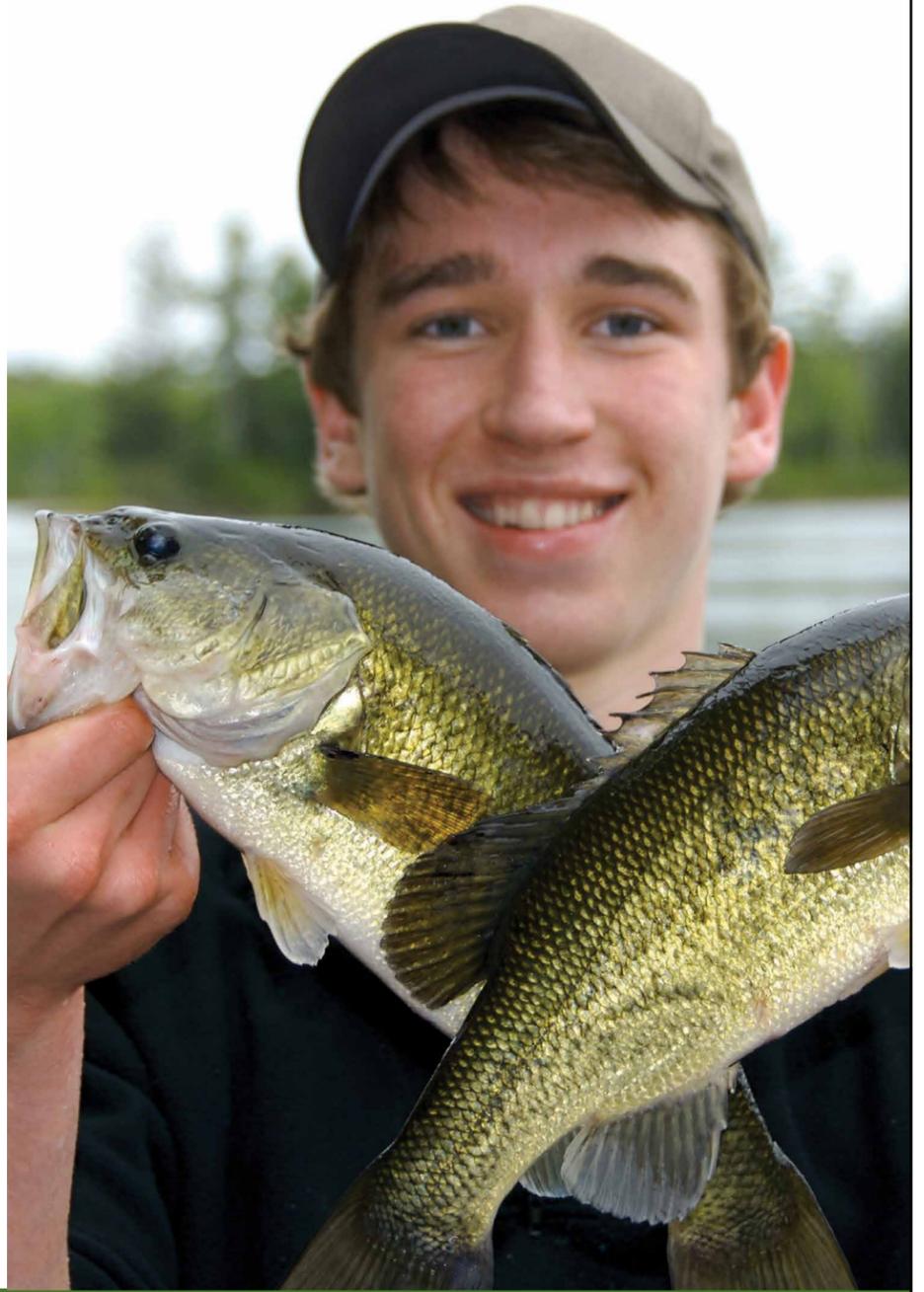
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Authorities working on coffee shop traffic snarl

BY JOEL ADDINGTON
Resident Community News

Starbucks® and state and local authorities have their eyes on a traffic snarl that has caused more than two dozen accidents in recent years at the company's US 17/Roosevelt Boulevard store in the Fairfax area.

Vehicle bottlenecks are created on the highly-trafficked thoroughfare with direct access to the coffee giant, which also has an entrance on a side road, Beverly Avenue, leading to a small parking lot at the rear of the store and looping back onto Roosevelt.

It gets very cramped at rush hours as waiting-to-go order customers crowd the parking lot, sit-down customers enjoy the sunshine on the patio and commuters fill the drive-thru. Councilwoman Randy DeFoor asked Starbucks® about a potential short-term solution, and the initial response was to make coffee faster.

The drive-thru line at 4265 Roosevelt Blvd. frequently wraps the building and spills out onto US 17 where cars idle while traffic rushes past at more than 50 miles an hour, said the councilwoman via press release.

"Over the last few weeks, Florida Department of Transportation's Traffic Services Program Engineers completed a thorough review of this location and recommended it modify their internal circulation to address the danger. The report outlined clear recommendations and tracked multiple instances where drivers or pedestrians along Roosevelt. Ave could be in danger," the release reads.

"I would like to thank the engineers and staff at the Florida Department of Transportation for completing their traffic analysis. We appreciate our Jacksonville Sheriff's Office for installing 'Heavy Traffic Ahead' signboards and assistance from State Attorney Melissa Nelson," it said.

Starbucks® appears to be listening.

"We're committed to listening to the needs of our customers and community members and always upholding a safe experience at our stores," said an email from Caroline at Starbucks media relations April 22. "We have been and continue to work directly with FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation), the Jax Sheriff's Office and Councilwoman DeFoor to address these concerns in addition to making modifications both in our café and in the drive-thru."

According to The Florida Times-Union, a Nassau County jury recently awarded some \$9 million to a Starbucks® customer hit in a drive-thru lane.

"The owner is Marc Angelo. However, it's a ground lease so the leasee is Starbucks Corporate. I believe Starbucks is responsible for managing the drive-thru line, therefore their responsibility," said the councilwoman's assistant Brooks Dame.

"There have been 28 reported crashes in the last few years," she said.

Nearby residents want a solution.

"The inconvenience of a few impatient drivers during morning rush hour should not take precedence over residents and families who live, work, and play along Beverly Avenue," said resident Cory Donoher to the councilwoman on April 22. "Fairfax is a niche, tucked away neighborhood possessing houses which date back to the early 1900s. My own home was built in the early 1920s. This street was not intended to handle automobile drives to cater to a corporation which made close to \$30B in revenue last year."

Mr. Donoher is not alone.

"Over 400 neighbors indicated this was an issue, I believe many of them have been impacted or witnessed accidents. We know not all accidents are reported to JSO so the reported number is always low," said Ms. Dame.



A view of the drive-thru lane at Starbucks, where obstruction illustrates the problem of cars remaining in Roosevelt Blvd. travel lanes while waiting in line. Hazardous results have a higher probability of occurring, due to the nature of the speeds and traffic impediments.



Councilwoman Randy DeFoor with Curry Pajcic, a constituent during a press conference in April



"The inconvenience of a few impatient drivers during morning rush hour should not take precedence over residents and families who live, work, and play along Beverly Avenue."

- Cory Donoher

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Jacksonville University launches College of Law at its downtown location

BY KAREN RIELEY
Resident Community News

Jacksonville University will open a College of Law in downtown Jacksonville in the fall of 2022 supported by private funding and a \$5 million commitment of public investment from Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry.

The College of Law anticipates an inaugural class of 20-30 students with a projected total enrollment of 150 students in Fall 2024. It will offer a three-year Juris Doctor degree program that is designed to prepare graduates for the Florida Bar exam.

"We are proud to partner once again with Mayor Curry and the City of Jacksonville to propel northeast Florida toward a stronger future," said Jacksonville University President Tim Cost.

The Jacksonville University College of Law is the state's first new law school in more than 20 years. It is Jacksonville University's fifth college and fifth doctoral program.

"Jacksonville is currently the largest city in the U.S. that does not have a law school," said Mayor Lenny Curry. "This College of Law will offer a prime opportunity for current residents and serve as a magnet to attract talent back into our city and our downtown."

Students will take courses at the university's Downtown Jacksonville location in the VyStar Tower. The Duval County Courthouse and its extensive legal

library are within a 10-minute walk, as are numerous legal organizations where students will secure externships and mentorship opportunities.

All applicants will be considered for merit scholarships, up to \$14,400 per year, based on their transcripts from previous institutions and LSAT scores. No additional application is needed for merit scholarship consideration.

"Jacksonville University continually earns the support of the community and its alumni base which will ensure the success and prominence of the university's law school graduates," said Michelle Barnett, partner of Alexander, DeGance, Barnett, and immediate past president of the Jacksonville Bar Association.

Consistent with accreditation protocol dictated by the American Bar Association (ABA), the Jacksonville University College of Law will start classes in 2022 and will begin the accreditation process in the spring of 2023 with the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admission to the ABA. The University anticipates achieving conditional approval of accreditation by the time the first class of students graduates in 2024.

Jacksonville University is fully accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The University holds nine accreditations from national organizations serving business, healthcare, the arts, nursing and orthodontics.

The University is now accepting applications for the College of Law. For more information and to apply, visit www.ju.edu/law.

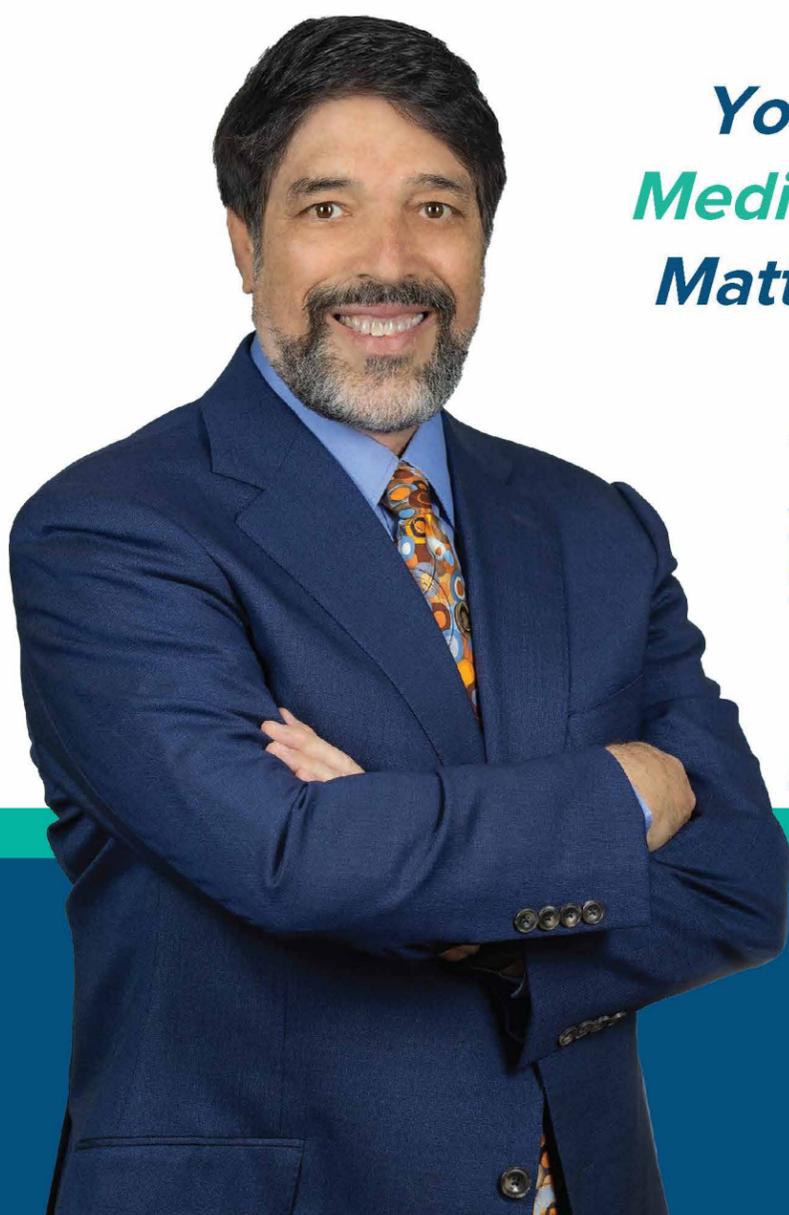


Jacksonville University President Tim Cost addresses the audience at the Feb. 28 announcement of the College of Law at Jacksonville City Hall.



Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry expressed his support for the establishment of the College of Law, calling it "a prime opportunity" for the city.

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Trends point to market stabilization

Buying still remains highly competitive despite low inventory

BY KAREN RIELEY

Resident Community News

According to the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors, while sellers remained firmly in the driver's seat by the end of the first quarter of 2022, several factors point toward a more moderate and stabilizing real estate market coming to Northeast Florida. NEFAR's April report showed a combined total of 2,676 homes were available at the end of March - 7.5% fewer than February.

"The upside is the number of new listings is 3,144, up 14% in March compared to February," said Mark Rosener, NEFAR's president. "This trend should continue over the next several months, which will make it a little easier for buyers to find a home that meets their needs."

Rosener said the additional inventory may be due to older millennials seeking to improve on their residences.

"There are signs that older millennials are looking to upgrade or upsize from their current homes, which is creating some additional inventory in first-time homebuyer price ranges," he said. "However, these listings are quickly absorbed by the younger millennials who are looking to purchase a home for the first time."

The combined median sales price of single-family homes, townhouses, and condos in Northeast Florida in March was \$350,000 with single-family homes alone climbing to \$370,050, a 4.7% increase. Meanwhile, the median sales

price of single-family houses, condos, and townhomes combined was \$350,000, a 4.5% increase over February and a 25% increase from last year at this time.

"The moderate month-over-month increase is in line with the median price trend since November of 2021 and is more evidence that pricing in our market is beginning to return to a more stabilized level. Increasing mortgage interest rates are now putting pressure on the home affordability index that dipped to 92 over the region in March, Rosner said.

The index measures whether or not a typical family earns enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a typical home at the national and regional levels based on the most recent price and income data. A value of 100 means that a family with the median income has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home.

According to NEFAR, sales remained brisk with only 15 days on the market as the median, a 7% increase from this time last year.

"Homes that closed or are under contract pending a closing are in line with historic seasonal trends with closed sales up 22.5% over closings in February and pending sales up 4.3%, Rosener said. "When compared to March of 2022, both closed and pending sales are down considerably as the first quarter of 2021 was inflated by pent up demand created by the COVID pandemic. All these factors continue to point to a slow movement toward a more moderate and stabilizing real estate market in Northeast Florida."

Missy Cady-Kampmeyer, a real estate advisor with Compass realty company in Jacksonville, still feels like this is the time to buy.

"Interest rates have gone up and it is still a seller's market, but it is also a buyer's market because the rates are still much lower than they were years ago," said Cady-Kampmeyer. "The main problem is not lack of inventory; it is a surplus of buyers. To be successful in getting the home they want, buyers need to ask the seller questions about what is most important to them and be flexible in meeting the seller's needs."

She shared the example of a seller who may not have extra money to make repairs before selling the house.

"The buyer's agent can include an offer for the buyer to deduct the anticipated cost of repairs from the purchase price," she said.

Cady-Kampmeyer also cautioned that "cash doesn't always rule."

"One reason why sellers tend to prefer all-cash offers is because those deals close more quickly. A cash sale can be turned over in a seven to 10 days. Closing on a mortgage may take 30 days or longer," she said.

"I encourage the seller to consider whether they can wait the additional days to get the same amount of money. I would rather sell a house to a family than an investor, assuming the offer is the same. The seller will have the satisfaction of putting a family in a home. It's better for the neighborhood too."

NEFAR reports that, in Duval County, the March median price of single-family housing was \$330,000, up 6.5% since February 2022. The median days on the market was 15, with 41.8% of sales closing above asking price and 100.7% of sellers receiving list price. Active inventory for the county was 1,184 homes, a decrease of 10.5% from last month and slightly less than a one-month supply. The Home Affordability Index registered at 98, down 5.8% from February.

"Thirty-three percent of homes in the Riverside/Avondale/Ortega are selling for over list price. We have 1.4 months-worth of inventory in our historic area, which is well under the six months that constitutes a stable market. The market remains highly competitive for buyers, but not impossible," said Heather Buckman, who is the broker/owner of Cowford Realty & Design in Avondale. "Escalatory clauses, appraisal gaps, shortened inspection periods, free leasebacks for sellers - these are all tactics that are being used with success."

"There is a lot of speculation right now about the market and whether it will crash. No one can tell the future, but we can say that none of the major economists are predicting any crash," she said.

"For buyers who are wanting to wait until things slow down, that's a bit of a gamble. Housing values are projected to continue to rise, and interest rates are also rising, so not only will the same house today cost more

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ...

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tomorrow, but the cost to finance that purchase will also be higher," said Buckman.

"For sellers, it's a different challenge. Many sellers say that they would love to tap into the equity of their home, but don't know where they would move," she said. "One strategy for sellers is to incorporate a lease-back into the sale of their home, where they essentially become renters in their own home on closing day, so that they can then go find something to buy without a contingency to sell their home."

"Although there has been a slight uptick, inventory of homes for sale remains historically low. Most of the data we have seen from trustworthy sources like Core Logic, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac forecasts that home prices will increase another 6.7% this year," Josh Cohen, managing broker/coach of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, said.

"The market remains super competitive and multiple offers at all price points are the norm. Buyers have many options they can implement to ensure success and make their offer stand out to the seller. Professional consultation is vital," he said.

Cohen suggested that if the property appraises for less than the offer price, the buyer can agree to cover a gap between the appraisal and the agreed upon purchase price.

"We recommend a cap dollar amount over the appraised value not to exceed the purchase price. The buyer can offer to pay all or a portion of the seller's closing cost. This increases the sellers' net profit without inflating the purchase price and could reduce concerns about raising value for financing/appraisal," Cohen said.

"If you're trying to sell your home, make sure you have a meaningful discussion with your agent on the marketing strategy," he said. "While the agent is getting the property ready for showings soon, the agent can put out a 'Coming

Soon' sign to get the neighbors talking. The agent can also begin showcasing all the home's qualities on social media platforms sharing professional photos and video. This creates a nice 'buzz' and generates positive energy on the property."

Cohen also advised reviewing best practices on how your agent will handle offers.

"It's not always in your best interest to have a 'best and final' bidding process," he said.

According to Investopedia, the best and final offer in a real estate bid is the most favorable terms the buyer is willing to offer the seller for the purchase of the property. A seller who

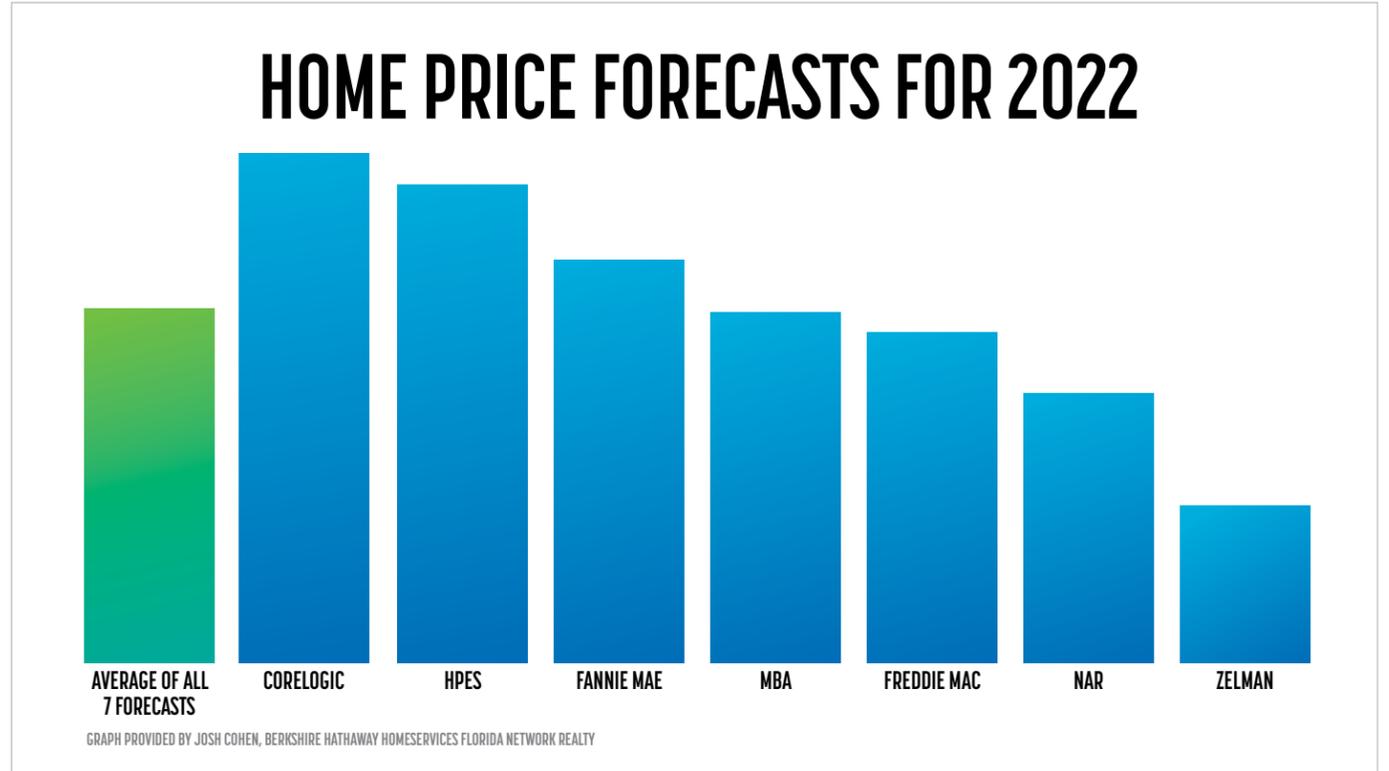
receives multiple offers will resolve the situation by asking each bidder to submit only one offer that represents their best and final offer.

"Some buyers don't want to be in a multiple bidding situation and could walk away from the property. Their offer that's on the table could be the best scenario and the seller may not want to lose that opportunity. That said, every property scenario is different. Consult with your agent on what's best for you," Cohen said.

The most recent PropertyShark study, "The Gender Housing Gap Widens: Single Women Now Priced Out of 12 More Cities Than Men," reported that Jacksonville is now the only larger

city in Florida where singles can afford to independently buy a starter home, with women spending 27% of their income on mortgage payments compared to men spending 20%."

"We tell our buyers every day that if they have a goal to buy in this market, it may not happen on the first offer that they write, but with some grit and perseverance, it absolutely can be done," Cohen said. "On the other hand, with sellers sitting on record amounts of home equity, there has never been a better time to present your home to the world. Northeast Florida is wonderful, vibrant and growing," he said.



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The Women's Board turns 50



The founding members of the Women's Board, launched in 1973 (photo from 2012). Since its inception, the Women's Board has raised more than \$34 million for Jacksonville's Wolfson Children's Hospital. Photo courtesy of the Women's Board.

more than five years now. Weatherly grew up being an active volunteer with the Cincinnati Children's Hospital, where her mother worked, so when she relocated to Jacksonville with her husband, it was natural for her to volunteer with her new local children's hospital.

“

“I'VE MADE SOME REALLY WONDERFUL FRIENDS BECAUSE WE ALL LOVE THE CHILDREN AND WE LOVE WORKING ON THE TWO EVENTS — THE FLORIDA FORUM AND THE WINTER DESIGN SHOW, IT'S LIKE WE'RE GIVING BACK SO THE CHILDREN OF THE FIRST COAST ARE SO WELL TAKEN CARE OF. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT.”

— Robin Albanese

”

“I think every member of a community has some responsibility to make that community better,” she said. “...Being that role model for my kids — you're figuring out a way that you're helping the community, you're helping the community do better, you're helping the community receive a different level of care that's unique to Jacksonville. We're setting our city apart in the level of care and healthcare from what we've seen in the past and continuous improvements, both on the healthcare and technology side of things.”

Chief Medical Officer of Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville Dr. Gary Josephson offered his congratulations to the Women's Board for their 50 years of service, stating, “... Their dedication and success in raising awareness and funds has enabled Wolfson Children's Hospital and Nemours Children's Health to grow innovative programs and provide nationally and internationally recognized care. This wonderful work has favorably impacted our ability to become both a regional influence in the care of children and a destination center for many complex services that we provide. We are forever grateful for their unwavering hard work, dedication, benevolence, and stewardship.”

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital is celebrating 50 years of philanthropy and fundraising this year.

Michael Aubin, FACHE, Wolfson Children's Hospital president and Baptist Health Foundation chief philanthropy officer, said the Women's Board is an organization unlike anything he'd ever experienced prior to arriving at Wolfson.

Throughout its 50 years, the board has raised more than \$34 million, which helped transform several hospital facilities, including the Children's Emergency Center, the Bone Marrow Transplant floor and the Oncology floor. Early in his presidency, Aubin recalled, funds provided by the Women's Board revamped the hospital's Behavioral Health Center.

“They invested in our behavioral health area and helped actually build the Behavioral Health Center when we had a very old and tired in-patient behavioral unit that really was not sensitive to kids or their families,” he said. “They made that possible when back then, 12 years ago, people were not making investments into children's behavioral health.”

The Women's Board is currently working towards reaching its latest pledge, launched in 2018 — raising \$4 million in five years for a “premiere NICU unit” — a target Women's Board President Robin Albanese says the board “feels very strongly” will be reached by the end of this year.

“

“THE WOMEN'S BOARD IS AN ORGANIZATION UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE EVER EXPERIENCED PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT WOLFSON.”

— Michael Aubin

”

“I don't know what we'd do without the Women's Board,” Aubin said.

With a volunteer force of more than 400 and a membership consisting of several legacy members — grandmothers, mothers and

daughters — Albanese says this fellowship of women has been an inspiring group to be around all while raising money for a worthy cause.

“I've made some really wonderful friends because we all love the children and we love working on the two events — the Florida Forum and the Winter Design Show,” she said. “It's like we're giving back so the children of the First Coast are so well taken care of. It's very important.”

To celebrate the board's golden jubilee this year, Albanese said the women are planning additional “little touches of golden things, opportunities coming through the next year that we don't usually have. Other ways to raise money.”

San Marco resident Kaitlyn Weatherly has been a member of the Women's Board for

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SCAN ME

Inheritance and legacy: The stewardship of the Jacksonville Historical Society

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

It is only fitting that the Jacksonville Historical Society (JHS) is headquartered in a historic building.

The JHS offices are located at 314 North Palmetto Street in downtown Jacksonville, in what was originally St. Luke's Hospital. Built in 1878, the building has since been added to the National Register of Historic Places and bears a plaque denoting it as such just inside the entrance.

The building later became the offices of Congressman Charles Bennett.

Today, JHS calls the building home.

The organization has changed drastically since its very first meeting at the Carling Hotel on May 3, 1929. Its charter membership of 231 has grown into a full-time staff plus volunteers and the organization has solidified itself as an integral part of the Jacksonville community.

JHS continues to evolve under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Dr. Alan Bliss, who would like to see Jacksonville's historical society expand and take its place as a premiere historical and educational facility for the community. Inspired by museums and historic centers in some of Jacksonville's peer cities, including Tampa Bay and Orlando, Bliss co-chaired the first Strategic Planning Project when he was on the Board of Directors.

"This is an older city than Tampa and in many ways has a much richer and more

complicated history," he said. "We think we don't do enough with that in Jacksonville... We think that if we really are prepared to live up to this city's role and its ambitions, then public history really needs to be a big part of the community discourse. That's what we do."

In addition to its community outreach and educational programming, JHS possesses a vast collection of archived materials — a collection started by those first charter members which continues to grow today with the help of material donations from the public.

"It has a wonderful archive of documents, letters, clippings and photos that is the greatest collection of Jacksonville historical memorabilia in existence," said Jacksonville historian Dr. Wayne Wood. "We're constantly trying to obtain from the public any old papers or photos that they have to add to this great collection of Jacksonville historical documents."

This growing collection, in part, is what inspired the society's \$1.3 million capital campaign to renovate the three-story brick building adjacent to its headquarters. Bliss would like to see the former Florida Casket Company factory completely renovated and its entire second floor transformed into a "a modern, state-of-the-art archive with digital processing and preservation work stations, room for the staff to spread out, room for our research collection to be safely stored and professionally catalogued."

These archived collections are available to the public for research purposes and JHS is happy to accommodate requests to review materials, although it does require community members call ahead to specify the topic or time period needed so archivists can pull relevant materials and assist if necessary.

One of the society's accomplishments Bliss has "taken the most satisfaction from," however, is its bicentennial project.

"This is all coming to a head in the next several weeks, but we've really been mindful of this for the past few years," he said. "So messaging the importance of it, the arrival of the bicentennial moment has been part of the conversation for some time."

The celebrations will take place on Saturday, June 11 in downtown Jacksonville and will include a community festival and fireworks display. Jacksonville was founded on June 15, 1822.

"In Europe, 200 years is not very old — some of the cities go back thousands of years," Wood explained. "In the United States, there's not



Photo by Michele Leivas.

The historical society's research library, including city directories dating back to the 1920s, college yearbooks and high school annuals, only shows a fraction of the society's archived collection.

many cities especially the size of Jacksonville that have been around for more than 200 years. So it's important for everybody to kind of get with it and see how important it is that we've been around for 200 years."

At its core, JHS acts as a steward for Jacksonville's legacy, preserving its past and sharing its stories with its community to strengthen citizenship, Bliss said.

"Everything is an inheritance and a legacy," he said. "And as you become aware of that, you become more aware that the generations that come after us — your children and their children — they're gonna stand on the shoulders of what we do in this moment... That's the value of history and the more you know about that, the more you become aware of your citizenship role."



Photo by Michele Leivas.

A collection of medical tools pays homage to the building's origins as a hospital and is on display just inside the Historical Society's entrance.



Photo by Michele Leivas.

The Jacksonville Historical Society is headquartered at the Old St. Luke's Hospital building, built in 1878.

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Oak Street restaurant zoning fight ends



The storefronts of the old Deluxe Laundry on Oak Street on April 25, 2022.

BY JOEL ADDINGTON
Resident Community News

A lot can change in six years.

What started as a planned unit development (PUD) rezoning of the former Deluxe Laundry and Cleaners property at 2216 Oak St. for a new blues bar and restaurant is no more after years of litigation.

The long-boarded-up buildings due to code enforcement violations were rezoned by the city in 2016 for a 150-seat eatery and bar. That approved rezoning was later appealed by a neighborhood group, PROUD, or Positive Riverside Optimized Urban Development.

Last February, the First District Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the property owner, Anthony Saleeba, who plans to renovate the dilapidated structure, leaving "nothing but four walls," for a new restaurant from Ted Stein and J.C. Demetree, restaurateurs behind Wonderbird and The Local at the beaches and in the Miramar neighborhood.

"We're excited," said Mr. Saleeba on April 25. He said the next steps, now that the zoning is secure, are to move ahead with engineering, design and permitting for the renovations, which should eliminate a long-standing neighborhood eyesore when the project is complete.

The city will have a hand in that process, he said, as the historic district where the commercial property is located requires a certificate of appropriateness.

"All exterior work in a historic district or to a local landmark requires an approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application. An approved COA is required for such work as

repairs, alterations, window replacement, additions, new construction, demolition and relocation," reads the city's Planning and Development Historic Preservation website.

PROUD and some of its supporters are willing to be good neighbors and partners in the process as well. They welcome redevelopment that could be much less intense than a blues bar with live music late into the evening.

"We held them off for six years," said PROUD supporter John Hurtubise. "What we're going to get today is a far better product than we would have had six years ago."

He calls Mr. Stein a great friend and Mr. Stein's plan for the space may be an Italian restaurant and bar without the live entertainment. He said plans have not been finalized but, "it's a nice location for a quiet restaurant; no blues bands blasting ... I wish them the best."

It appears residents and the developers have grown less at odds in recent years.

"We're all tired of fighting a lot of things," said Mr. Hurtubise.

He still thinks the neighborhood's zoning rules need to be modified to encourage residential development rather than commercial development.

"I know they keep saying downtown is going to happen but I don't see it," Mr. Hurtubise said.

But in terms of what was once dubbed "The Roost" that sparked consistent opposition from neighbors, there may be some common ground forming.

Mr. Saleeba, the property owner, said litigation can be lengthy and given the pandemic, the six-year delay was not unexpected. He said he sees the code enforcement issues associated with the property as collateral damage from the zoning fight.

He admitted there were some "missteps" in the process but now a new concept from a "first-class very successful restaurant group," referring to SDS Restaurant Group, gives him optimism. Mr. Stein and Mr. Demetree are the manager and treasurer, respectively, of SDS, corporate records show.

"It will be five stars," assured Mr. Saleeba.

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Donor impact felt by generations of art students, programming

The Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) held its 17th annual Spring for the Arts, presented by FIS, on Friday, April 15, 2022, at Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club. The organization's signature fundraiser raised more than \$650,000 in support of arts education for children and youth in Northeast Florida.

Since its inception, Spring for the Arts has generated more than \$7 million for arts education in our community. It is a fundraiser that celebrates community engagement in support of funding arts education initiatives throughout Northeast Florida.

"The success of this year's event demonstrated once again just how deeply so many throughout the First Coast care about CAP's mission to empower every child's creative spirit," said Rev. Kimberly L. Hyatt, President & CEO of CAP. "This infusion of support will have a lasting impact on CAP students, their families and our community for years to come."



Guardians of the Arts award recipients Tim and Stephanie Cost with Linda Stein and The Rev. Kimberly Hyatt



Cinda Sherman with Darnell Smith



Kirk Larsen and Kristine Cherek with Frances and Anthony Jabbour

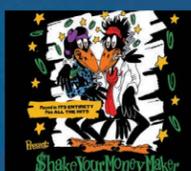
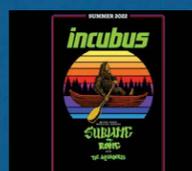


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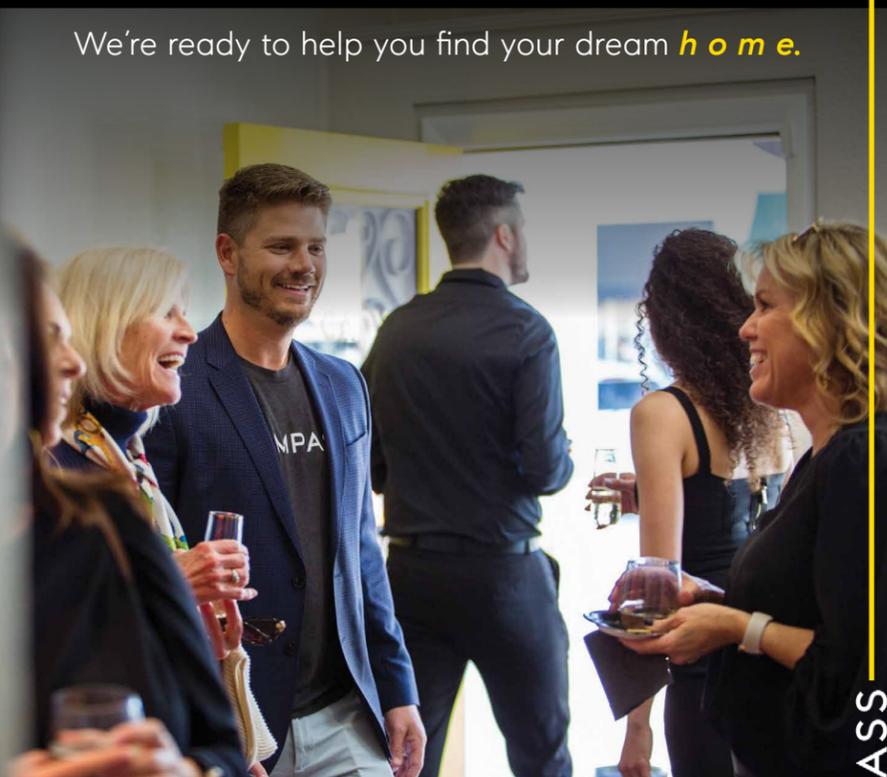


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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Jacksonville Area Golf Association launches Friends of JAGA fundraising



Fred Seely, three-term president of JAGA and founder of the Underwood Cup, shows off his membership card as the organization's first FRIEND OF JAGA.

The Jacksonville Area Golf Association (JAGA) has introduced its first-ever fundraising initiative, called the Friends of JAGA. Funds raised will meet the association's administrative costs, enhance its programs and allow the organization to grow, as well as help fund JAGA's scholarship program, according to JAGA President Jeff Adams.

"Since its founding in 1954, JAGA has made significant contributions to the growth and promotion of golf while providing financial assistance to hundreds of college-bound students in northeast Florida," Adams said. "The leadership of JAGA feels very strongly that the time is right to be proactive by

seeking new means of financial support."

For years, the primary means of funding JAGA operations has been entry fees and member club dues.

In announcing the fundraising campaign, Adams honored Fred Seely as the first Friend of JAGA. Seely is a three-term president of JAGA in 1983, 2016 and 2017 and founder of the Underwood Cup.

"I'm happy to become the first person to publicly pledge my support for the Friends program," Seely said.

A minimum gift of \$25 entitles a person to become a Friend of JAGA. Those who contribute \$100 or more will receive one premium "Coreline" personalized Friend of JAGA bag tag for every \$100 donated.

Learn more about the program's focus, how gifts will be used and how to become a Friend of JAGA at <https://jaxareagolf.org/friends-of-jaga/>.

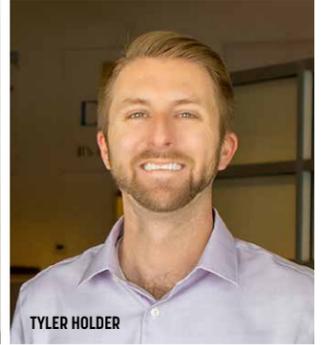
Sanctuary on 8th Street welcomes new board members



STEVE ROSENBLOOM



BRIDGET McDONALD



TYLER HOLDER

Sanctuary on 8th Street has added three new members to its Board of Directors to help lead the nonprofit. The nonprofit's core programs provide positive, supervised alternatives to fill children's idle time and offer homework assistance and computer access.

Bridget McDonald is the owner of Queen Bee Events, an event management company in Northeast Florida. She has been a member of the TEDx Jacksonville team and currently volunteers with the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

Steve Rosenbloom grew up on Jacksonville's Westside and was in the 1969 Lee High School graduating class. He had a 30-year career with Merrill Lynch in the Jacksonville Beach office. Now that he is retired he is looking forward to being involved at the Sanctuary again.

Tyler Holder serves as the director of strategic communications at High Reason. He's a senior

marketing communications leader with experience in media and public relations, social media, and corporate, internal and crisis communications. Over the years, Tyler has volunteered with organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the National MS Society and A&B Transports, a group that transports fostered or adopted dogs across states to their new owners.

In response to the changing needs of the neighborhood, the Presbytery of St. Augustine and the former Springfield Presbyterian Church started Urban Ministries of Springfield in 1992. In 2001, the nonprofit's name was changed to the Sanctuary on 8th Street after it relocated to the historic post office building at 120 E. 8th Street. The program has grown from a dozen to over 100 children in its afterschool and summer camp programs.

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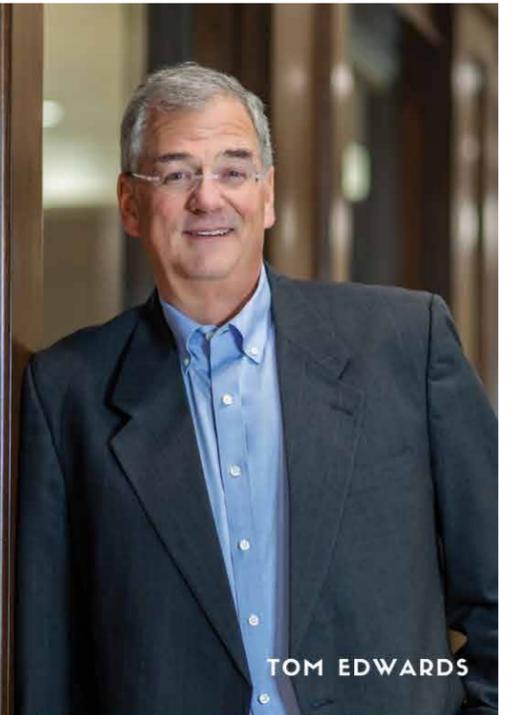
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Kelly Wilson joins Berkshire Hathaway



Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty welcomes Kelly Wilson to the Metropolitan office with locations in Avondale and San Marco.

“Please join me in welcoming Kelly to the Avondale office of Florida Network Realty! Kelly is a Jacksonville native with a strong entrepreneurial drive, which led her to establish a neighborhood-based business known as the Community Couriers of Jacksonville – a shopping and restaurant delivery service that operated from 2013-2021 in downtown, Riverside, Avondale, Murray Hill, and Ortega. In addition to her experience as a business owner, Kelly has previous real estate experience as well, mainly working in property management. Now, as a Realtor, she’s eager to share her love of Jacksonville and her local’s knowledge of the neighborhoods and communities with her clients – to help them find a house they can call ‘home.’ I’m thrilled she’s joined us, and look forward to celebrating her success here with us,” shares Josh Cohen, Broker/Manager of the Metropolitan office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty with locations in Avondale and San Marco.

JDRF announces corporate chair, date for One Walk at UNF



The JDRF One Walk is coming up on Saturday, May 21st and will take place at UNF, at the J.B. Coxwell Amphitheatre. Festivities begin at 8 a.m., the walk begins at 9 a.m.

Darnell Smith, Market President of Florida Blue is serving as Corporate Chairman of this year’s walk and JDRF staff, board members and other sponsors invite families and companies from all over Jacksonville to join in the fun in order to have a lasting impact on efforts to improve lives and cure type 1 diabetes.

Pictured at the recent JDRF Walk Kick-Off breakfast were Pam Williams of JDRF, Tom Anderson, Vice President, GuideWell, Board President JDRF, Brooks Biagini, Market Director JDRF, Darnell Smith, Corporate Chair, Gabe Rosario, Youth Ambassador and Mark Bennett, Market President for Bank of America.

The Link to register is: <http://walk.jdrf.org/jacksonville2022>, if there are any questions, call Brooks Biagini, Market Director at (904) 386-2851.

Baptist Health and Wolfson Children’s introduce free, 24/7 Crisis Text Line for all ages

Mental health support is now at your fingertips.

To address the growing need for accessible mental health resources, Baptist Health and Wolfson Children’s Hospital are collaborating with Crisis Text Line, the nation’s largest text-based crisis-intervention service, to ensure mental health support is only a text away.

Crisis Text Line is guided by a vision for an empathetic world where no one feels alone. Individuals of all ages facing mental health struggles can text LIFE to 741741 to connect with a live, trained Crisis Counselor and receive confidential support – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Counselors are trained in active listening, collaborative problem solving and safety planning to help texters navigate difficult emotions.

“COVID-19 continues to have countless negative effects on the mental health of adults, teens and children, and we are committed to finding new, innovative ways to better serve our community,” said Terrie Andrews, PhD, vice president of Baptist and Wolfson Children’s Behavioral Health. “In a focus group with local teens, we found they preferred texting for help over calling because it was easier to express their feelings. Crisis Text Line is not only an accessible option for those in need, but it’s also an approachable one, broadening our reach and helping us prevent future crises from happening.”

Since its launch in 2013, Crisis Text Line reports it has answered more than six million texts, with 75% coming from those under the age of 25.

Adults, teens and kids can also call the Baptist Health 24-Hour Crisis Hotline or Wolfson Children’s Kids & Teens Helpline at 904.202.7900 to connect with a trained mental health expert and receive emergency telephone support and assessment, crisis stabilization information and referral to follow-up care, if needed.

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Louy named a Thomas Mulkeen Award Winner



North Florida Land Trust's Director of Philanthropic Service Lee Anderson Louy has been named a Thomas Mulkeen Award Winner by the University of North Florida. Louy received the honor for the doctoral dissertation that best exemplifies practice-centered inquiry. Her dissertation is titled The Role Academic Deans Play in Public Higher Education Fundraising.

"We are proud of Lee for this wonderful honor and are very lucky that she is a leader in our philanthropic department," said Jim McCarthy, president of NFLT. "Lee joined us in August of last year and has helped to expand our donor base. We could not do what we do without her efforts."

Duval County teachers receive \$15,000 awards

Four Duval County Public Schools teachers have been awarded \$15,000 each. The University of North Florida College of Education and Human Services honored the teachers with the 2022 Gladys Prior Awards for Career Teaching Excellence.

Two of the four teach at schools in Jacksonville's historic districts — Sara Henry, first grade teacher from Ruth N. Upson Elementary School in Murray Hill and May Hotard, world languages teacher from Bishop Kenny High School in San Marco. Crystal Parker, language arts teacher from Edward H. White High School on the Westside and Meshellia Hughes, third grade teacher from Andrew A. Robinson High School in Springfield also won.

The Gladys Prior Awards for Career Teaching Excellence were established in 1998 by Gilchrist Berg, founder and president of Water Street Capital, to honor teachers with lifelong careers in education.

Berg has given more than \$2 million to honor Jacksonville teachers. The award is named after Berg's fourth grade teacher, Gladys Prior, at Ortega Elementary School.

"I have always wanted to teach," Hotard said in an interview with News4Jax. "I remember starting out teaching and thinking, they're paying me to do this!"

"I am amazed and overwhelmed and so excited right now," Henry said to News4Jax. "In my heart of hearts, I'm thinking about all of the kids that I've taught and just thinking about all the things we can do for our school with this giant check!"

Each teacher was surprised in class with their principal and Dr. Diane Yendol-Hoppey, UNF COEHS dean.



Sara Henry, who teaches first grade at Ruth N. Upson Elementary School in Murray Hill, shows off a \$15,000 check for winning the Gladys Prior Award.

Here Tomorrow launches match campaign

Weavers step up for suicide prevention

Here Tomorrow has launched a Match to Reimagine Suicide Prevention campaign with the goal of raising \$4M over the next three years to help expand access to mental health services in Northeast Florida.

Both the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund and the J. Wayne Weaver Fund have pledged to match contributions up to \$500,000 for a total of \$1,000,000. Likewise, Here Tomorrow founder Joe Kenney will match donations up to \$1,000,000. The multi-year challenge grant will run through December 31, 2024.

"Lives depend on our mission," Kenney said. Founded in January 2021, Here Tomorrow has a mission to prevent suicide by building a community where mental healthcare is acceptable and accessible. The nonprofit organization uses a peer support model to offer same-day mental health support to those in crisis and is currently serving 529 community members.

"We aren't waiting for those most at-risk for suicide to come to us and ask for help," said Hannah Hackworth, Here Tomorrow's Executive Director. "We're collaborating with the suicide hotline, community partners, and utilizing search engine optimization to identify and engage people before it's too late."

"Wayne and I are proud to support this new, grassroots effort," said Delores Barr Weaver. "Clearly, the community need is great, and we hope many people will join in to make the campaign a success."

If you or someone you love is experiencing hopelessness, contact Here Tomorrow at 904-372-9087 or Hello@HereTomorrow.org. There is no cost for the support and follow-up services. For more information or to donate, visit HereTomorrow.org.

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Family Promise names Friberg as Board Chair



ELLEN FRIBERG



JACKIE VAN LANINGHAM

Ellen Friberg of Avondale was named the board chair of Family Promise of Jacksonville. She has served on the board of directors since 2018 and previously served as vice president of the board. Friberg is retired from the Office of Chief Counsel — Internal Revenue Service. In her last position with the agency, she served as the Area Counsel for the Small Business & Self-Employed Division.

Jackie Van Laningham, also of Avondale, serves on the board of directors as the recording secretary. She is an attorney with Abel Bean Law. She has served on the board of directors since 2019.

Subaru of Jacksonville tops dealerships nationwide with \$157,889 gift to Wolfson Children’s Hospital

Donation from annual Share the Love campaign helps fund children’s trauma and injury prevention programs

The 14th annual Subaru Share the Love campaign not only resulted in Subaru of Jacksonville’s largest donation yet to Wolfson Children’s Hospital, but also the largest charitable gift of all Subaru dealerships this year nationwide. Leaders from Wolfson Children’s accepted a \$157,889.47 check from Subaru of Jacksonville’s owners Thursday.

The donation will help fund care and advanced technology to treat critically ill and injured children at Wolfson Children’s Hospital, along with child passenger safety education through THE PLAYERS Center for Child Health at Wolfson Children’s.

During this year’s campaign, Subaru donated \$250 for every new vehicle purchased or leased from Subaru of Jacksonville between November 18, 2021, and January 3, 2022. Customers could choose from four national charities for the \$250 donation – including ASPCA, Make a Wish Foundation, Meals on Wheels and the National Park Foundation – or Subaru of Jacksonville’s hometown charity, Wolfson Children’s Hospital. Subaru of Jacksonville matched every \$250 donation, plus more, regardless of the charity chosen by the customer,



Phil Porter, Owner of Subaru of Jacksonville and Michael Aubin, Hospital President, Wolfson Children’s Hospital and Chief Philanthropy Officer, Baptist Health Foundation

with all matching funds benefitting Wolfson Children’s Hospital. Additionally, Subaru of America and Subaru of Jacksonville donated \$2 and \$3, respectively, to Wolfson Children’s for every Subaru oil change at the dealership during the campaign.

Subaru of Jacksonville was the first corporate partner to support trauma services at Wolfson Children’s and established the “Subaru of Jacksonville Porter Family Trauma Services Endowment,” creating a legacy of support for generations to come. To date, Subaru of Jacksonville has donated \$1.3 million to Wolfson Children’s Hospital.

“With every passing year of this partnership, we feel more and more fortunate to be in a position to make these donations,” said Phil Porter, owner of Subaru of Jacksonville. “We haven’t always been able to make a donation like this, but the growth and success of the Subaru brand has truly helped us make a huge impact in and around our community. We consider it an honor to be able to support the hospital and all of the families that are helped each and every day.”

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Eduardo Balbona received his M.D. from the Medical College of Georgia and completed specialty training in internal medicine at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Balbona has served as a Naval Officer and Physician at the U.S. Capitol providing medical care to the Representatives, Senators and Supreme Court Justices.

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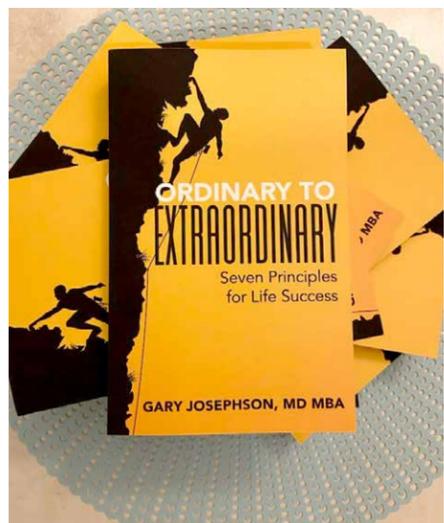
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Pediatric physician pens book, shares principles for success

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

When Dr. Gary Josephson agreed to speak at his undergraduate alma mater's commencement ceremony, he never imagined writing his speech would lead to writing a book.

Humbled but surprised by the invite, Josephson recalled asking why he'd been selected.



While the e-book of "Ordinary to Extraordinary" is available now for purchase, the paperback is set to release on Aug. 9. Photo courtesy of Dr. Gary Josephson.

Among other things, the university cited his "caring for children regardless of their financial capabilities, regardless of any background they may come from...They said, 'We decided we would like to have you. We think you can motivate and inspire the graduating class.'"

As he brainstormed speech topics, his wife suggested he discuss his seven principles — foundational principles he'd identified over the years and by which he led his life and pursued his career. So he did.

"After my address, a number of people came up to me — students and parents — and said they wanted to know more; they wanted to understand more about my principles. So when I returned home, I looked at my wife and I said, 'I think I gotta write a book so I can share with more people.'"

For the next six years, in his free time, Josephson began committing these seven principles to paper and expanding them into a full-length book.

The result was "Ordinary to Extraordinary: Seven Principles for Life Success" — a self-help book "for newly launched boomerang and early career seekers (and their parents) who intend to transform their ordinary livelihood into extraordinary lifelong success."

The e-book is now available for purchase. The paperback is set to release on Aug. 9. Josephson recently received advance copies



Dr. Gary Josephson holds his advance copies of "Ordinary to Extraordinary: Seven Principles for Life Success. Photo courtesy of Dr. Gary Josephson.

of his book and was able to actually hold it in his hands for the first time.

"It was pretty incredible and it's really amazing to actually see the finished product," he said.

Josephson believes these seven principles — attitude, knowledge and wisdom, relationships and community, sustainable wealth, spiritual core, healthy living and the art of giving — are "evergreen principles" that, when laid as a foundation for a person's life, will lead "to success no matter which career or what aspirations you have."

While Josephson does include some stories from his own life and upbringing, he envisioned and created this as a self-help book rather than an autobiography. As such, it features short essays about each principle, followed by "Matters of Fact" backed by research (with sources are cited at the end of the book) and tips on how to master each one.

Along with the book, Josephson has also launched the "O2E (Ordinary to Extraordinary) 4 Life Success" website, which will feature supplemental information pertaining to his principles. The most recent blog post discussing the first principle — attitude — underscored the importance of a positive attitude and different ways to alleviate stress.

"With the COVID pandemic increasing the rates of anxiety and depression globally, finding a simple way to alleviate stress and worry is essential," the blog post read. "Using positive mental imagery techniques has shown to improve anxiety."

Josephson is the chief medical officer for Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville. "Ordinary to Extraordinary: Seven Principles for Life Success" is available for pre-order at O2E4life.com and most major online retailers.

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Charity arm of Coldwell Banker impacts merchant association



The charitable works of the local Avondale Coldwell Banker office operations, CBV Cares, donated \$750 to the Historic Avondale Merchants Association, March 8, during a check presentation. Presenting the check were Robert Van Cleve with Christina Jenkins, Chris Dickson, Bronwyn Benoit, Wade Griffin, Erica Davis, Nancy Cusimano and Glenn Guiler.

The collective of local agents at the Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty office in Avondale sponsored the Small Business Saturday event through the Historic Avondale Merchants Association, a local non-profit, to help deliver awareness for the need of small business and merchant success.

The Historic Avondale Merchants Association puts on popular events throughout the year, including Music in Avondale and Christmas in Avondale. The merchants also support beautification of the St. Johns Avenue corridor surrounding the Historic Shoppes of Avondale.



Local Interior Designer Opens Avondale Showroom

Room with a View Interiors is the answer for those who wish to transform their living spaces with elevated design where functionality blends with superior aesthetics.

Owner Cathie Clark is devoted to merging her clients' vision for their living spaces — from several rooms to a new custom build — with the inspiration she draws from the world around her to create designs that uplift both the room's motif and one's mood upon entering it.

"It started with just realizing how your environment impacted your mood," she said. "I've always felt like having a functional and aesthetically pleasing interior has a great impact on your well-being and your state of mind."

Clark works extensively with each of her clients when they begin a new project to get a better feel for their lifestyle — do they entertain a lot? Do they like to cook? Are they

casual or more formal? — and their space planning needs while also forging a design path based on the aesthetics her clients like.

"...A lot of clients will show me a Pinterest board or a Houzz file they've made," she explained. I try to see the commonality in that and then see how I can upgrade that look to give them the best version of what they've tried to explain to me."

On May 28, Room with a View will open its first retail location in the heart of Avondale. Located at 3655 St. Johns Ave., this showroom will be a new facet of Clark's business and will feature unique and intriguing furniture pieces and accessories for purchase.

"I'm exposed to so many cool things and I thought, 'I'd love to be able to have a space where I can purchase some of those and make those available to the public, things they might not normally come across.' I'm excited to see how that goes," Clark said.

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Jax Prism holds inaugural donor event

Jax Prism hosted its inaugural debut to the community on March 17 at Estrella Cocina in partnership with Vystar and Petra. The event provided the new nonprofit with the opportunity to make more people aware of its mission and plans for the LGBTQIA+ community. Donations will fund programming and resources, as well as enable Jax Prism to open in a physical location this coming summer.

"The vision is to provide services and programming aiming to enrich, educate and uplift the LGBTQIA+ community. We believe in the growth and development of every individual and strive to offer support and resources focused on mental, sexual, trans and senior health," said Corey Brown, president of Jax Prism's board of directors.

Jax Prism was founded this year under the direction of Mateo Rogers. Kyle Stuard, operations director, will work directly with Rogers. Board members include Brown; Ryan Howard, vice president; Angel Santiago, secretary; Travis Guthrie, treasurer; and board members Dr. Tim Howard, Ray Berndt, Joann Huot, Tonee Jones and Manny Velasquez.



Ellen Wiss and Corey Brown, Jax Prism board president, visit with Cindy Watson, CEO of JASMYN



Guests enjoy Jax Prism's inaugural event at Estrella Cocina



Tonee Jones, board member; Kyle Stuard, operations director; Ryan Howard, board vice president; Corey Brown, board president; Mateo Rogers, founder and executive director; Brian Wolfberg, president/CEO, Vystar, which was the event sponsor; Angel Santiago, board secretary; Manny Velasquez, board member; and Joann Huot, board member



Michael Pajcic gives Michael McCaffrey his \$6,000 for the hole-in-one.



Pro golfer Mark McCumber with Legal Aid (JALA) President and CEO Jim Kowalski, Steve Pajcic and Michael Pajcic

Pajcic's Yard Golf event returns, benefits Jacksonville Area Legal Aid

After play was suspended for two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pajcic's Yard Golf returned this year on April 3rd. The event benefits Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA), which assists those in need with civil legal issues.

The highlight of the normally annual event is a \$6,000 prize to anyone getting a hole-in-one on the event's "island green." Michael McCaffrey was the lone winner this year.

Former pro-golfer Mark McCumber was closest to the pin during the celebrity shoot-out. He chose to donate his \$6,000 winnings to JALA. Former Jaguar and Florida State Seminole great Greg Jones was the closest to the pin among the Jaguar entourage and will be choosing his favorite charity to make a donation.

From its start a decade ago at the Avondale home of Steve and the late Anne Pajcic, the Pajcic's Yard Golf event has evolved into an 18-hole course that now includes the home of Katy DeBriere and Michael Pajcic. The Pajcics match all sponsorships and contributions dollar for dollar to benefit JALA.

Event organizers predict total donations to JALA of more than \$100,000 from this year's event.



Celebrity golfers Daniel Thomas, Kevin Hardy, Shaq Quarterman, Jay Tuefele, Artis Gilmore, Davon Hamilton, Greg Jones with Steve Pajcic (fourth from left) and Michael Pajcic (far right)



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YMCA Giving Tree Gala honors Hugh Greene with 2022 Community Impact

The Winston Family YMCA hosted its annual Giving Tree Gala on March 26 to recognize Hugh Greene, honoree and recipient of the W.W. "Bill" Gay Community Impact Award. The event remembers and celebrates contributions of Gay and the nonprofit's donors.

Greene, who served as president and CEO of Baptist Health for nearly two decades, was honored for his longstanding dedication, involvement and philanthropic efforts toward building a stronger community healthcare system.

"Hugh's servant leadership and dedication to care for others are a few of the many reasons he was selected as this year's recipient," said Tim Burrows, district executive director of the Winston and Brooks Family YMCAs.

Greene's initiatives included developing a program for the working uninsured, improving access to healthcare for the homeless, creating an endowment with the Baptist Health Foundation to support behavioral health services and advocating for human rights and LGBTQ youth. Gay and Greene are members of OneJax's Circle of Honor, and both served as annual humanitarian dinner chairs in 1983 and 2018, respectively.



Baptist Health Board of Directors Chair Joe Louis Barrow Jr., First Coast YMCA Metropolitan Board member Pam Smith, Florida Blue Market President Darnell Smith, First Coast YMCA President and CEO Eric Mann gather to celebrate the organization's achievements and impacts in the community.



First Coast YMCA President and CEO Eric Mann opened the gala.



Winston Family YMCA VP of Operations Tim Burrows and board members Emily Vurnakes, Michael Biagini, Advisory Board Chair Katie Cox, Dr. Jerome Tuitt and Danielle Carter celebrate the organization's achievements.



W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor leadership guest Debbie Craft, guest Leah Cropham and President and CEO Paul Jones (far right) present Greene with the W.W. "Bill" Gay Community Impact Award.



Hugh Greene accepts the W.W. "Bill" Gay Community Impact Award.



Michael A. Mayo, DHA, FACHE, president and CEO of Baptist Health raised a toast with the crowd of donors, staff and special guests



Mitch Owens with Women's Board Executive Director, Sally Parsons, Women's Board President, Robin Albaneze, Mark Biegler and Dave Albaneze



Pam and Len Trapane



Scott Wooten with Grace Sarber



Joanna Licherdell with Juliette Allen, Cindy Hamilton and Wesley Roberts

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Big night for Borowy Family, children's health in the region

Baptist Health, Wolfson Children's Hospital celebrate donors

With its five floors of dedicated intensive care for the region's children, the Borowy Family Children's Critical Care Tower was officially opened, April 4. The following evening, the patrons opening welcomed guests from across the region, as the area's top donors and their families were present to raise a toast to progress, innovation and robust support.

The top brass of Baptist Health and Wolfson Children's Hospital brought guests together to enjoy an evening of education, camaraderie and celebration; one that illustrated recognition and deep appreciation for aiding the hospital system as it accomplished its goals. Along with the show of gratitude for the Borowy Family's lead gift, other donors and benefactors were also hailed for their generosity. Thom Borowy shared a touching story about his children's goal to double his original gift, "...it was the proudest moment of my life," he said, as he held back tears while looking out over the crowd. Knowing his children were giving from their own inheritance to impact the quality of health care of complete strangers was overwhelming for the father, grandfather and accomplished businessman.

Following building tours and remarks by hospital leadership, a celebratory toast followed; the evening came to a close as guests were treated to "Reflections of Hope," a visual experience on the exterior of the new tower, designed by Jacksonville-based content production company, Castano Group.



Tirzah Hoffmann with Carol Gilham



Michael and Jennifer Mayo



John Linge with Darnel Smith and Doug Baer



Jacci Easterling with Doug Baer and Kathy Barbour



Daley Katrina and Bevan



Husein Cumber with Megan and Reggie Hayward



Christi Lefebvre with Eldin Kadric, Haley Sofiane and Jim Johnson



Tee Ambrose with Donna Schneider, Tawnjai and Ben Grospe



Mike Perfeito with Elizabeth Escobedo



Stephen Busselberg with Albert Holt, Lacy and David Threatt

First Coast Heart Ball raises nearly \$300,000, most funds ever raised

The American Heart Association's 2022 First Coast Heart Ball held on April 2 at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort and Spa raised \$290,288 to support live-saving research, education and raising awareness for cardiovascular diseases and stroke, America's number one and number five killers. More than 400 guests and 64 corporate businesses supported the event.

Guests sipped champagne and mingled before the program emceed by J.P. Shadrick, the voice of the Jacksonville Jaguars. Shadrick also recognized Life is Why sponsors Florida Blue and Baptist Health, for their support of AHA.

Amber Wilson, American Heart Association First Coast market executive director, shared the mission of the AHA. Chuck Divita, executive vice president, Commercial Markets, Florida Blue Guidewell, and Michel Divita, co-chairs of the event, introduced Open Your Heart honoree Eric Salter and his family.

Eric Salter and his wife, Madelen, who live in Ponte Vedra, spoke of their experience after the featured video played. Salter, an avid runner who focused on fitness, suffered from life-threatening aortic dissection on his 11-year-old daughter's birthday. He underwent 18 hours of surgery to receive an artificial heart valve and spent months in rehabilitation.

Attendees offered a standing ovation in appreciation of the Salter family. During the last paddle standing auction, a Florida Keys trip was donated to the family.

The program was followed by a live auction featuring packages such as trips to Montana, Jacksonville Jaguar extravaganza ticket packages, a Kentucky bourbon tour and a private Ocean Reef Club trip in Key Largo, Florida.

The entire 2022 fundraising campaign raised \$1.6 million, making the campaign the most successful to date for the American Heart Association on the First Coast.



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Stonewall Sports league reports successful first year

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Stonewall Sports league launched in April 2021 with kickball. In the year since then, the league has had more than 400 registered participants per kickball season and is now entering its fourth season of the sport. In January, the league hosted a one-day kickball tournament with 130 players. Bowling was introduced in Winter 2021, and the Spring season features an eight-week Yoga Club.

“At Stonewall Sports Jax we believe anyone can play and have an incredible time doing it. Our first year was filled with love, fun, and new friendships that have created a supportive and ever growing LGBTQIA+ community unlike anything we have ever seen in Jax,” said Mateo Rogers, founder/commissioner of

Stonewall Sports. “As we charge into our second year and continue to expand our sports offerings, we are doubling down on our mission for inclusivity no matter one's race, sexuality, gender expression, age, or physical ability. Any adult with an open mind and an open heart is welcome to join us.”

In the past year, the Jacksonville chapter has raised and donated more than \$50,000 to local charities through community outreach, fundraising and special events. Beneficiaries include JASMYN, Overflow Health Alliance, The Lotus Flower Project, Kamala's Closet, The Hubbard House, among others.

Nationally, Stonewall Sports is an LBGTZ and Ally community-based, nonprofit sports organization. It was founded in 2010 to provide an inclusive, low-cost, fun sports league that can raise funds for charitable organizations. The league is open to all, ages 21+.



Stonewall Sports League kickball



Stonewall Sports League kickball



Stonewall Sports League kickball

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Matt Tuohy and Ed Walker welcomed guests to the home at 3885 St. Johns Ave.

RAP Home Tour makes a comeback, Garden Tour on the horizon

The annual neighborhood Home Tour, brought to the neighborhoods by Riverside Avondale Preservation or RAP, was in full swing as it returned to action after a brief hiatus, to celebrate its 46th installment. Spring delivers beautiful gardens, blooming plants, manicured landscapes, and happy residents; due to the mild temps, coupled with sunshine and blue skies.

The Twilight Party kicked off the pre-event celebrations Thursday, April 7, at the home of Dr. Daniel Kohm and Joey Chaplow. The duo played host to the Home Tour Preview, sponsored by Watson Realty Corp. the fine Tudor home, located at 3338 Riverside Ave. blew away patrons as they mixed and mingled around a backyard oasis, complete with covered outdoor kitchen and bar, with putting greens and artificial turf surfaces. Guests were treated to a fine evening of select dining options provided by Biscottis, signature drinks from Manifest Distilling, and a wonderful performer, Dylan Gerard, who entertained the crowd.

According to Shannon Blankinship, RAP's executive director, the return of the 46th annual Home Tour was a big success. "People loved the diversity in properties this year which included

heartfelt stories from our local churches and renovation success from properties large and small," she wrote. "The Law Offices of Anidjar & Levine wooed the community with their makeshift Lemon-ade Cafe, and we received dozens of compliments about returning one of the most beloved community events to our neighborhood," shared Blankinship. More than 1,700 people participated in this year's tour and over 150 volunteers helped to make it happen.

"This gives us tremendous momentum for the second annual Garden Tour which features 15 yards, gardens, and park spaces," she continued. "It [Garden Tour ticket] also makes for the perfect Mother's Day gift."

The Garden Tour, set for May 7 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will feature live music, live art, locally made goods and drinks will accompany most gardens on the tour. Local neighborhood yards and public spaces will welcome locals and those looking for a great time to enjoy the tree canopies, shade and unique pockets of renovation and inspiration for gardens, secret hideaways and relaxing home oasis'.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit riversideavondale.org, or call 904-389-2449 for more details.



Lorri Reynolds of Watson Realty welcomed Donna Miller to the cozy, quaint bungalow on Challen Ave.



Steve and GIGI Urbanski with Brittany and Matt Wiita



Levi and Olivia Williams toured the homes for the day with Kelly and Clint Ross

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Celebrity Chefs Tasting Luncheon and Silent Auction raises funds for Salvation Army programs

The Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary hosted its signature event, The Celebrity Chefs Tasting Luncheon and Silent Auction, on April 7 at The Prime Osborn after a two-year hiatus due to COVID.

Patrons enjoyed a variety of food served by local celebrities who were offering their favorite recipes. They were able to mingle with local media personalities, sports figures, government officials and local business leaders.

The two-and-a-half-hour event also included a Silent Auction, which raises thousands of dollars each year for special projects. Funds raised from the event remain in the area and benefit the different programs of The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida.

The Auxiliary membership includes more than 70 dedicated women who work throughout the year to make the fundraising event possible. Over the past 35 years, this event has raised over more than million dollars, making it the largest fundraiser for the Salvation Army of Northeast Florida.



Jackie Culver and Major Keith Biggers



Lt. Colonel Suzanne Haupt, Major Candice Biggers, Major Keith Biggers, Captain Bernadette Correia and Captain Stephen Correia

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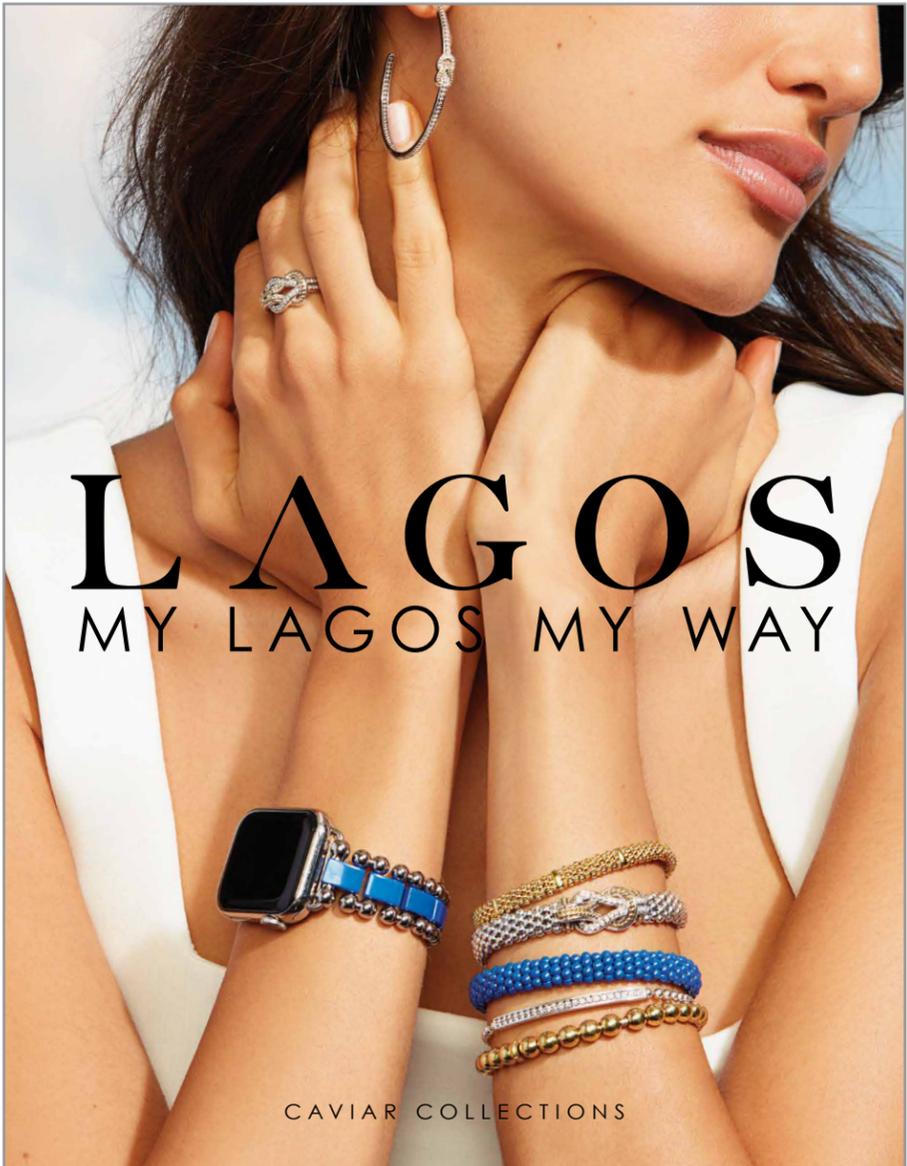
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Secret Jacksonville: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful and Obscure

An interview with the author, Mr. Delaney



BY JESSICA MALOSH
Resident Community News

Jacksonville's urban revitalization is underway and gaining momentum. This is evident in the growing high rise apartment buildings in Brooklyn, Riverside, and Murray Hill; restoration of historic landmarks, such as Renaissance Revival landmark Cowford Chophouse building; and renewed interest in connecting communities by pedestrian and bike pathways, such as the Emerald Trail project. Redevelopment of historic areas, such as Riverside, is an intricate balancing act that includes preservation of architectural heritage of existing significant buildings and streets, while encouraging investments in new residential construction to support population growth. The uniqueness of Jacksonville urban core, specifically Riverside, is the product of its rich history, geographical location, and local policymakers' vision. To better understand the Jacksonville urban core's journey and what lies on its horizon, I interviewed Bill Delaney, author of the book Secret Jacksonville: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful and Obscure.

QUESTION

What was your motivation for writing your book "Secret Jacksonville?"

MR. BILL DELANEY: I was approached by my publisher. They do similar books like this in other cities. They had been doing them in bigger cities and they wanted to start branching out into more mid-sized cities. They had success with another writer who had written a different book about Jacksonville and it sold well, so they wanted to do one

on the hidden secrets and local lore. I jumped at the chance when they called me because that's the kind of thing that I liked to research whether I am writing a book or not. It kind of gave me an excuse to get out there and dig into some of the stories, even things I knew already. I asked my friends and colleagues for recommendations and some of the time my wife and I went out and saw what we could find.

JM: What was your research and writing process like?

BD: First I made up a big list of things that I wanted to include. I ended up with twice as much as I could fit so I had to cut a lot. Having such a big list, I was able to triage what I wanted to include in the book. It was important to me to get things in every section of our region to get enough representation of northwest Jacksonville and the northside, and not just the downtown area and the beach. After that, essentially I just picked things and tried to get them where they were close together. I would do the research and get the pictures and spend a couple of days researching. Once, I took one weekend and I rented an AirBnB out on the Trout River and spent the entire weekend writing. The research took a year, the writing only took about two months.

JM: Why do you think it's important for people to learn about the history of their community?

BD: When you learn the history of the area around you, it gives you a sense of connection not only to that specific place, but to other places that are like it. It gives you more of a background of the people who lived there before and the ways that different neighborhoods


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grow differently. You learn that even when you are in a place that may not on the surface look like a unique place, it will have a combination of lots of different factors that combine to make it a unique place.

JM: What do you think makes Riverside unique?

BD: Riverside has benefitted from a series of development patterns that have made it what it is today. It started as a streetcar suburb meaning that people could connect to downtown easily and live here. It grew through an urban development pattern meaning it is very walkable and very centered. There are commercial strips that are embedded into the neighborhood. It also had the good fortune of in the 1950s-60s when a lot of people from urban neighborhoods started moving into the suburbs during white flight, black flight, just general suburbanization, Riverside's prices dropped. Then there was a combination of really cool and useful architecture and cheap prices that attracted artists, bohemians, musicians, and the LGBTQ+ community. That's what makes it such a special neighborhood.

JM: What improvements would you like to see in Riverside?

BD: I would like to see it be better connected to the surrounding neighborhoods and kind of rebuild

the connection that has been cut off by highways and historical development patterns so it can have a more seamless connection to Brooklyn, downtown, and Murray Hill, Lackawanna, and all the places around it. I also think that this area needs more housing. They need to do a better job of balancing the addition of more housing and the preservation of the neighborhood before everybody gets priced out.

JM: What do you think contributes to the diversity of the architecture in Riverside?

BD: The reason the architecture is the way that it is is that it grew up over such a long time in different spurts. It primarily grew up over the 1920s. There are some houses that are older than that. In the 1920s, people embraced many different styles. You also had a lot of different people interested in moving [to Riverside]. The wealthier section was closer to the river, there were more middle-class sections farther from the river; those were both whites-only neighborhoods. The African-American neighborhoods were farther inland. There were a lot of different people, price points, interests, and needs. It was before people had thought of cookie-cutter houses, so they built [houses] to what the standard was at the time for a style they liked: craftsman cottages, bungalows, quadruplexes, duplexes, and big mansions.

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from Mr. Bill Delaney

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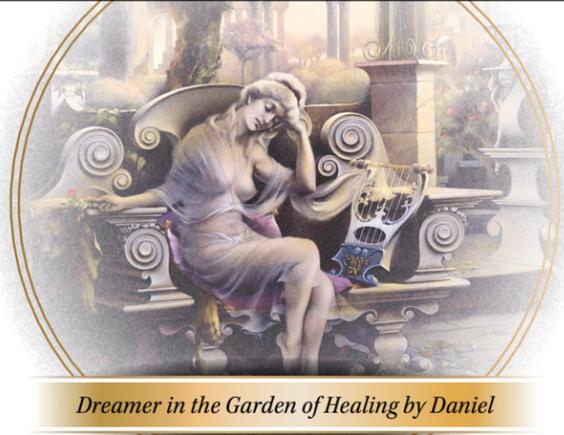






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The Vision Behind A Vision for Art



2019 Event Chairs - Kelli Chunn, Susan Kwartler, Caroline Pope, Liz Parks, Bebe Alexander, Emily Magevney, Michelle and Kevin Calloway

BY LINDSEY GAST
Resident Community News

In the fundraising world where the commonplace of silent auctions prevails, Episcopal School of Jacksonville, St. Marks Campus has managed to compose a creative, colorful assemblage that brings the city together through the medium of its people.

A Vision for Art is a multi-day art show that curates art from established and emerging artists from Jacksonville and beyond. The event has successfully raised more than \$165,000 for the elementary school to date, even with a year off during the pandemic. But even more importantly than its fundraising

success is the way the event has focused on blending the brushstrokes of the neighboring communities.

“This event started with the purpose of welcoming members of the Jacksonville community and beyond to the St. Mark’s Campus, while promoting exceptional artists and art education,” said Bebe Alexander, Art Instructor, Episcopal School of Jacksonville, St. Mark’s Campus and 2022 Art Curator.



“I am grateful to the many artists who are willing to share their talents, while supporting our wonderful school.”

Kevin Calloway, founder of Space 42, who helped curate the art for the inaugural show in 2019 and participated in the artist selection process for 2021, credited Alexander as the “heart and soul” of the event, and highlighted the special interactions the show affords to both artist and buyers.

“A lot of the artists actually show up,” said Calloway. “It’s a one-of-a-kind event where you, as a patron, get to come and have a great party, look at art, and also meet the artist there. There’s a great interaction between the art viewer and the artist.”

In the beginning, each of the 40 artists were provided a 9’ x 9’ wall, and instructed to bring enough art to fill their gallery space. But one small pivot by the event team the following year yielded them a 36% increase in sales.

“We learned very early on that we were selling work like crazy. So last year, we told them they could bring more work to replenish the wall. We had a lot more art, which showed, because we weren’t even open as many days because of Covid,” said Alexander.

The event continues to grow still. The 2022 A Vision for Art, presented by Joan and Preston Haskell, was held in April and showcased an impressive 500 carefully curated pieces from 43 artists, including featured artist Erin Gregory. The show also boasted special collaborative pieces between the students of each grade level and select artists in its “A Future for Art” student artist series.

And bringing people together remains the focus of the event.

“I think this even does a really good job of making the city smaller and introducing people from different neighborhoods to each other, and I think that’s a really great part of the

event,” said Calloway. “In this really crazy way, this small little school has broken down barriers throughout the city.”

“A Vision for Art would not be possible without the professionalism, organization, and tireless effort of so many volunteers and sponsors who support this event,” said Susan Kwartler, Director of Development, Episcopal School of Jacksonville, St. Mark’s Campus. “St. Mark’s Campus extends its gratitude to everyone who has given their time, talent, and dedication in helping to make this event a success in so many ways.”



Preston and Joan Haskell, Presenting Sponsors, with The Rev. Adam Greene, Head of School, Episcopal School of Jacksonville



2021 Event Chairs - Susan Kwartler, Melissa Vogt, Bebe Alexander, Caroline Pope, and Kelli Chunn

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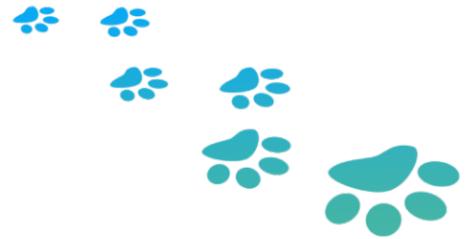
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ANIMAL HOUSE



WILD WONDERS ANIMAL SHOW

Parks & Libraries Offer Free Wildlife Programs

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA
Resident Community News

An excited group of wiggly children of all ages, teens and adults, recently gathered on a Saturday morning under an outdoor pavilion at Dutton Island Preserve to see “Dinosaurs Among Us”. The “dinosaurs” were actually their modern-day descendants: all kinds of reptiles, the stars of a free educational program called Wild Wonders Animal Show. The interactive, family program will be presented at Dutton Island Preserve four more times in May and June. It will also be presented free at several public libraries during June and July.

Mike Rossi and his assistant, Stephanie Nelson are teachers who want to introduce children to nature through safe, supervised interaction with live animals. Rossi said that one reason he does the programs is because

he knows that some children may otherwise never have the chance to see or learn about these animals. The educational program with a purpose, blends stories and music with fascinating facts and information about local species of native and invasive reptiles of Florida, plus exotic reptiles kept as pets.

Rossi and Nelson were surrounded by multiple sturdy and carefully covered pet crates, and mysterious, tightly closed plastic containers ranging in size from tiny to large. Great care was taken to prevent any accidental release of reptiles into the park: an important message of the program.

During the show, specially selected songs or movie themes introduced each animal to the audience of approximately 130. The music offered clever, entertaining clues about each animal’s personality or disposition that had the audience laughing in anticipation before the reptile was even seen.

The program included a wide variety of turtles, snakes, lizards and a baby American alligator. As Rossi or Nelson carefully held the reptiles, there were opportunities to approach any that could be touched or to have a closer look and take a photograph. Then, each reptile’s story was told, including detailed facts about that animal, with time left for audience questions.

“We offer four different animal programs that include educational, but fun lessons, lots of information about the animals and interactive activities. Besides reptiles, other topics cover how animals use their important senses of smell, sight, hearing and touch to survive in



Jacksonville Parks Naturalist Jolie Friedrich & intern Camryn Middlebrooks with non-venomous corn or red rat snake at 7 Creeks Festival.

nature,” Rossi said. “We also discuss invasive species and how they affect Florida’s wildlife and environment. It is important to teach why we should never release any pet into the wild, which happens far too often. Pets released into the wild may suffer and die, unable to survive on their own, or they can breed and cause serious problems for native wildlife and the environment.”

A fun ingredient of the Wild Wonders Animal Shows is plenty of humor. Most of the animals have names: Bernie the bearded dragon lizard, Shrek the blue-tongued skink, Rocky the savannah monitor, Princess the green iguana, Banana Boo the ball python, Boadereck the red-tailed boa constrictor, Booger the alligator snapping turtle, Booger, Jr., the common snapping turtle, Skooter the peninsular cooter turtle, Darth Gator the American alligator. The unnamed participants include a leopard gecko, Brazilian rainbow boa, box turtle and a Mexican milk snake. A fourth program called “Warm Fuzzies”, features typical pet store animals familiar to most children.

Mike Rossi has been interested in animals and wildlife, especially reptiles, since childhood. Because his mother was allergic to fur, he could never have a furry pet, but he could have reptiles. His favorites were turtles and when he became a teacher, every class he taught had a resident pet turtle. He also formed a student zoological society at his schools. Rossi’s goal has always been to teach about native and exotic animal habits, behavior, care and related environmental issues.

In 2002, Rossi started helping a friend present educational animal shows. Eventually he took over the programs when illness forced his friend’s retirement. 2022 is Rossi’s tenth year of introducing Northeast Florida children to the wonders of animals and nature through his fee-based educational programs. He presents the shows during weekends, school breaks and summers at schools, daycares, camps, YMCAs, churches, libraries, parks and birthday parties.

Rossi has been an elementary teacher since 1985. He taught science for twenty-seven years and more recently has taught language arts and math. His Wild Wonders program assistant, Stephanie Nelson, is a middle school reading teacher.

Rossi regularly rotates his animals so that they do not appear in successive programs, to avoid any stress. He is fully insured, and licensed by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission to keep, care for and transport the animals. His animals and the facilities where they are housed are regularly inspected by the USDA.

No native animals are ever taken from the wild, which is illegal. Proceeds from the Wild

Wonders programs go to care for the animals and gas for transportation to events. A portion of proceeds is donated in support of local Fraternal Order of Police, and the Jacksonville Association of Firefighters fundraisers for youth summer camps and projects.

There will be four more free Wild Wonders Animal Shows offered at Dutton Island Preserve on Saturdays at 11 a.m.: May 14 & 28; June 11 & 25.

The preserve, part of Jacksonville and Atlantic Beach, is located west of Mayport Road. It encompasses thirty-eight acres and a forested island in San Pablo River Estuary South of the St. Johns River. There are nature trails, fishing/observation pier, canoe/kayak launch, picnic areas, pavilions, camping and a free wheelchair can be reserved.

Five Jacksonville libraries will present the Wild Wonders Animal Programs free in June and July, all at 11:00 a.m.: Wednesday, June 8, Main Library; Tuesday, June 28, Highlands Regional Library; Wednesday, June 29, Pablo Creek Library; Thursday, July 14, Southeast Library; Friday, July 15, Charles Webb Library.

There are other upcoming, free opportunities for families to see and learn about wildlife and birds at both of Jacksonville’s oceanfront parks: Huguenot Memorial Park and Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park. Huguenot Memorial Park Naturalist Jolie Friedrich said that a variety of birds, dolphins, seabirds, shorebirds, wading birds and crabs are usually seen on the naturalist-guided Beach Walks offered at the park. The walks are led along portions of the Great Florida Birding Trail at Huguenot from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. on specific summer Saturdays: May 7, June 4, July 9 and August 6.

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Rossi with Shrek, blue-tongued skink

Another naturalist-led Beach Walk is offered on Saturday, July 16, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m., at Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park. A portion of The Great Florida Birding Trail also lies within Hanna Park and offers spectacular bird-watching. The Great Florida Birding Trail is a 2,000-mile collection of more than 500 Florida wilderness locations. The trail protects important habitats to safeguard birds, to promote birdwatching of native and migratory birds, and to encourage environmental education and ecotourism.

Hanna Park is the location of another free opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, to see or hear birds, owls, bats, frogs and occasionally wildlife, plus nighttime space and star-gazing. The Northeast Florida Astronomical Society (NEFAS), is a group of amateur astronomers of all ages whose serious hobby is observing and learning about objects in space. The non-profit group holds monthly public observation events at the park.



Stephanie Nelson with boa constrictor at birthday party

"We welcome the public to join us at Hanna Park on specific Saturdays at 7:00 p.m. Bring binoculars or a telescope, or view the sky through our members' telescopes. We also have member "Telescope Doctors," who are happy to help anyone having a problem with their telescope," Mike Napper said. "We have about eighty members and welcome new ones. Our website - www.nefas.org - offers resources, news, astronomy for kids, a constellation guide and our calendar with free, monthly public observation events." Napper, NEFAS President, is a retired engineer who worked on the NASA Space Shuttle Program.

John Viescas, NEFAS Director at Large, said that at the group's remote, dark sky viewing location in the Osceola National Forest, they see bear, deer, alligators and hear coyotes, owls and whippoorwills, "plus we hear some animals we can't identify in the dark." Napper and Viescas said the dark sky location sessions are specifically for members to work on their own projects, unlike the public park events. Interested individuals can attend by contacting the group for instructions. They also hold a monthly meeting at FSCJ Kent Campus with a speaker or multimedia presentation that is open to the public.

NEFAS is interested in expanding horizons through education and space observation to inform people, especially youth, about astronomy as an exciting hobby that combines space, science and technology. They offer free astronomy speaker presentations, or members with telescopes for an observation session, to schools, scout troops, non-profits or educational organizations. There is a minimum donation for private or commercial group presentations. Email info@nefas.org.

Park visitors are advised to dress appropriately for the weather and time of day, wear closed-toed shoes, bring a hat, camera, binoculars, sunscreen, insect repellent and water. There is a \$5 fee per vehicle to enter the oceanfront parks. A military discount is available with a state-issued military identification. Inclement weather may force cancellation of outdoor programs.



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At press time The Resident Community News staff learned that Jacksonville's Animal Care & Protective Services shelter is completely full and in critical need of adopters and fosters. They have approximately 150 dogs available for immediate adoption, with more added daily. ACPS desperately needs the help of our caring community to adopt, foster, become a Weekend Warrior (weekend or short-term foster), or Adoption Ambassador who fosters and independently promotes a homeless pet until its forever home is found.

Please do not attempt to surrender any pet to ACPS without first attempting to re-home it by asking neighbors and friends, or post it free of charge on www.rescueme.org. Try to find the owner of any lost cat or dog by checking for an identification tag or microchip, which can be done free at any veterinarian office. Post flyers, post on social media and speak to neighbors, because most lost pets live within one mile of where they are found, according to ACPS. Try to re-home the pet or become its foster if no owner can be found, to keep it out of the shelter.

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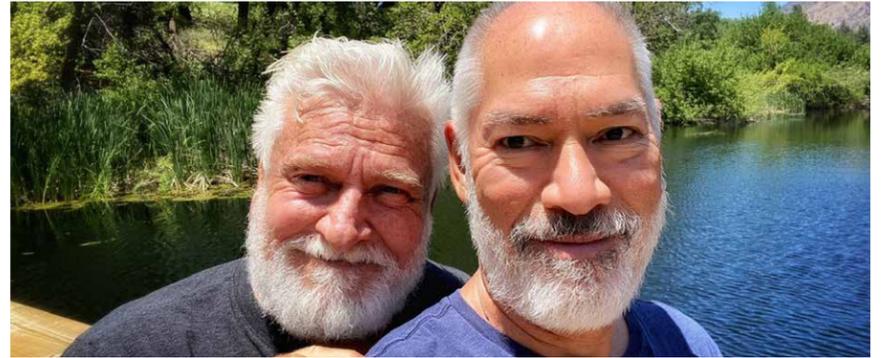
Age Your Way is the name and theme of a new five-part series of online workshops beginning this month for LGBTQ older adults. The educational series, sponsored by the LGBTQ Fund at the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, is presented by ElderSource and SAGE, a national advocacy and services group for LGBTQ elders.

The 90-minute workshops will be presented live using Zoom online meeting software. They are free, but advanced registration is required. Each of the five workshops will

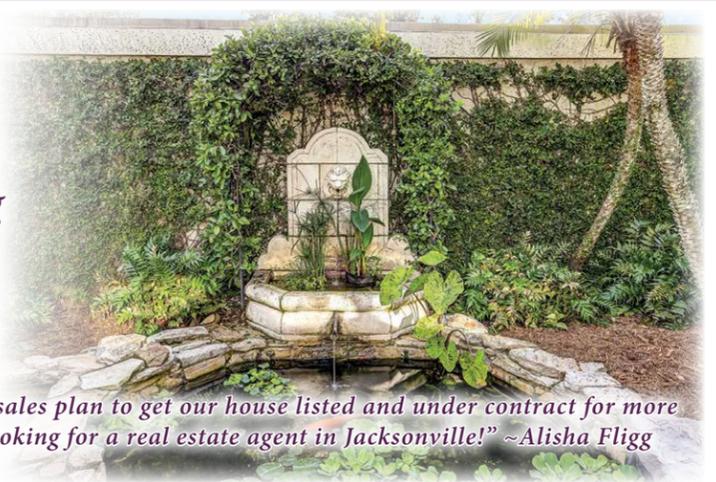
feature a panel of experts who will candidly discuss issues that older LGBTQ seniors face, along with a 30-minute live question and answer period.

Subject matter experts from organizations such as Lambda Legal, Consumer Voice, National Center on Elder Abuse and a Florida elder law attorney will discuss how to protect your assets, honoring your end-of-life wishes, and nursing home and housing rights.

For more information and to register, please visit MyElderSource.org/AgeYourWay.



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Local philanthropists honored in sign unveiling

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Jacksonville's River Garden Senior Services unveiled the new signage for its Nursing Administration Suite, honoring local businessman and philanthropist Jody Brandenburg alongside his wife Janne. The suite, located on River Garden's second floor, is henceforth known as the "Janne & Jody Brandenburg and Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes and Cemeteries Nursing Suite."

The suite was renamed in 2021 and its new sign displayed in its Annual Report, released last month.

"It was only fitting to name the Nursing Administration Suite in honor of Janne and Jody Brandenburg and Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes and Cemeteries, as they have been devoted supporters and friends of River Garden for almost 30 years," said River Garden CEO Mauri Mizrahi. "Their title sponsorship of the River Garden Classic is not only an investment in River Garden, but a commitment to healthy aging in our community. Janne and Jody understand the importance of educational training, and value the excellence of our clinical team. We're truly grateful for their generosity."

"It's a treasured tribute and we're both so pleased and honored, but humbled,"

Jody Brandenburg said. "River Garden is such a deserving senior care center that we have really promoted and supported them for many years. They have such a diverse campus and there is level of senior services for many different stations of life."

Jody Brandenburg is the president of the Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes and Cemeteries — a group of 11 funeral homes and five cemeteries across Duval and Clay counties.

Janne Brandenburg has worked in the nonprofit field for many years and serves on the committee for the River Garden Foundation Gala, which will celebrate its 30th anniversary this year. Janne has volunteered and led many initiatives over her years of service to the community and currently serves on the River Garden Foundation gala committee.

"The people had already committed to the gala...and nobody withdrew their money," Janne Brandenburg said. "It's a level of commitment I've never seen."

"The one year that [the events were] cancelled probably was our best fundraiser because we didn't have any expenses," Jody Brandenburg added with a laugh.

River Garden Senior Services is a nonprofit agency providing various nursing and care services for seniors within the Jacksonville community, ranging from in-patient rehabilitation to physical and occupational therapy to Alzheimer's/memory and Parkinson's specialty care.



Jody and Janne Brandenburg



Nurses stand in front of the new sign for River Garden Senior Services' Nursing Administration Suite, honoring Jody and Janne Brandenburg and Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes and Cemeteries. Photo courtesy of River Garden.

Ascension St. Vincent's enrolls Atrial Fibrillation patients in new global clinical trial

BY KAREN RIELEY
Resident Community News

Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside is one of the first three U.S. hospitals to enroll patients in a trial studying a new medical artificial intelligence software to treat cardiac arrhythmias. The software, called Volta VX1, is designed to help cardiologists identify cardiac abnormalities in patients undergoing ablation treatment for persistent, drug-resistant atrial fibrillation (AF).

AF, characterized by an irregular heartbeat, can lead to more serious health issues such as heart failure and stroke. During AF ablation, a specialized cardiologist known as an electrophysiologist inserts catheters through the blood vessels into the heart to burn or freeze the tissue causing abnormal electrical signals in the upper chamber, or atrium. The procedure creates scarring that restores a normal heartbeat.

The VX1 system analyzes electrical signals measured during the procedure and identifies

abnormalities in real-time. The international, randomized, controlled TAILORED-AF clinical trial will evaluate the outcomes of VX1-guided ablation versus standard ablation.

"This technology has already transformed how I treat patients with this type of atrial fibrillation," said Dr. Saumil Oza, cardiologist at Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside. "I've been able to treat patients who have previously not been helped by a standard ablation. It can also improve outcomes because we can precisely pinpoint the optimal ablation locations for each patient."

One of the hospital's first trial patients, Steven Preiss, age 67, says he's relieved after having the procedure.

"Now, I can walk around no problem. I'm not gasping for breath, my heart's not racing, and it's really good now," says Preiss. "I feel 100 percent better. This experience means the world to me."

Ascension St. Vincent's is actively recruiting patients from across northeast Florida and southeast Georgia for the TAILORED-AF trial. Potential patients may call (904) 308-5761 to learn more, see if they qualify and schedule an appointment.

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with Dr. Rich Turner, new Dean of the Kent Campus of FSCJ

BY WINDY TAYLOR
Resident Community News

Dr. Rich Turner has recently been named the Dean of the Kent Campus of Florida State College at Jacksonville. We sat down with Dr. Turner to learn more about him.

Where are you from originally? How long have you lived in Jacksonville?

I was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi and raised in Jackson. I enlisted in the Navy at 19 and spent the next 25 years all over. I last served in Hawaii with SEAL Delivery Team 1. My wife is a Nassau County girl, so when I left the Navy we came back here.

When did you become involved at FSCJ?

I retired from the Navy in 2008 and moved back to Florida. A year later I started with the college, and I've been with the college for 13 years. I started as a student experience associate in the welcome center, doing

If you had a friend visiting from out of town for one day, what one thing would you show them in Jacksonville, and where would you take them to lunch? I know how this sounds, but it would have to be one of our campuses. I just love them. For lunch, I would take them to Pine Grove Market. Everything there is good.

How do you feel about the relationship between FSCJ and the surrounding neighborhoods? Do you have ideas to encourage more interaction between campus and neighborhood?

There was something lost when we stopped having campus presidents, as far as relationships with the community. The President of FSCJ, Dr. John Avendano, hopes that the campus deans will build meaningful engagement with the community on a broad scale. I think they did away with campus presidents around 2015, and the closeness of the campus and neighborhoods really went down.

You served 25 years in the Navy before transitioning to higher education. What habits or philosophies made the transition with you?

The Navy was very different. I was coming out of an all-male environment, on submarines, with very direct communication. I came into higher ed, which is a much more collegial, more collaborative environment. You have to change how you communicate. There's this idea of community and collaboration. But I did bring all the leadership skills I honed during 25 years in the Navy.

phone advising. From there I became the Assessment and Certification Center Manager, then Dean of Enrollment Management, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management, Executive Director of Academic Operations, and Associate Vice President of Academic Operations. And now Dean of the campus. I've been on several different FSCJ campuses, but I was excited to come back to this one.

What do you feel are FSCJ's biggest strengths?

What's neat about this campus is the way (the buildings) are set up in a u-shape, you can generate a lot of student interaction in the courtyard. The campus is nestled right in this neighborhood, so in the surrounding areas we have great spaces to interact with our community members, students, and faculty.

We have lots of big spaces, theaters and auditoriums, and I'm hoping we can engage the community in meaningful ways. Not only inviting them to events, but leveraging their expertise to bring them in — local artists, business leaders, multi-tiered events.

What is your vision for the campus in five years?

We're going to demo a Community Speaker Series, and in five years I'd love to see two or three of those a month. I'd love to put together events with lots of layers — like an art show in our gallery at the same time as a hands-on demonstration in an art classroom at the same time as a theatrical showing about some aspect of the art. It would bring community members, students, and faculty together. I'd also love to see clubs back up and growing, and vibrant academic activities. Honestly, I would absolutely love to once again have a parking shortage. That's the goal.

How has Covid-19 impacted your students and the campus?

COVID brought drastic changes - it has been, absolutely, the biggest single event to impact the campus. When I left (Kent Campus for a job on another campus), it was vibrant. Students would be there (in the courtyard) interacting with each other, the parking lot was full. There were lots of activities and clubs and speaker series, business speakers, real-talk events. It was a hub of bustling academic activity. Students were lined up for advising. We've had an enrollment decline since Covid, starting in the summer of 2020. This summer is the first enrollment increase since Covid — we're up 4.5%. Hopefully we can keep increasing in the fall as well.

Explain the shift from "community college" to "state college."

The shift happened when we started offering bachelor's degrees (around 2009). If there's a point of failure on the continuum of the transition from a community college to a state college, it's that the message may have been lost that we're still the community's college. Part of what I'm here for is to remind the community that we're here. At the end of the day we're the community's college. We're a high-value, low-cost, number one option for the great majority of our students. We're here to serve their needs.

Favorite Jacksonville sports team?

Truth in advertising: I don't really like sports, except college football, and my team is Alabama. My dad took me to meet Bear Bryant when I was a kid. I'm an SEC fan. If Alabama's not playing, I'll cheer for the SEC team. But if Alabama's playing.....

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JUNIOR RESIDENTS

Thornton heads to Disney Tokyo



Annie Thornton fell in love with the art of dance at the age of three and has loved performing on stage since she was a child. Though it started with dance, she found a new love for theatre in high school, where she began dreaming of performing on Broadway.

Annie's dreams of performing on Broadway began to take shape during her junior year at Bishop Kenny. As the school was shut down as part of the lockdown protocol in response to COVID-19, Annie began a new dream of performing for Disney. Little did she know, this dream would come to fruition very soon.

In July of 2021, Annie began her Disney journey. After several rounds of auditions to perform abroad in Paris, Hong Kong, Japan, Shang-Hai, and domestic locations in Hollywood and Orlando, Annie received an in-person call-back from Tokyo. She shared, "I just kept my head down so as not to be distracted by my nerves and tendency to compare myself with others. I kept praying that whatever God wants will happen." It was more than a month before she heard back, and on December 16 she was invited to join the Disney crew as a face-character performer in Tokyo.

Annie left for Tokyo on Friday, April 1, and will spend the next three months in training and rehearsals before beginning her new role as a friend of the Disney princesses. She will remain in Tokyo for a full year while also completing her college courses at Santa Fe College. Annie plans to return home next April in time to watch her brother JP graduate from Bishop Kenny before deciding what the next leg of her journey will entail.

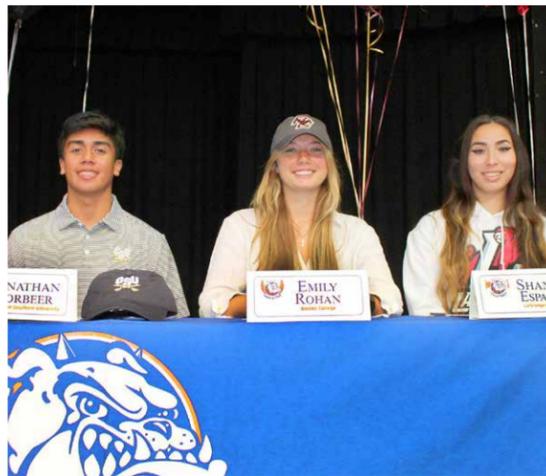
Nine Bolles Bulldogs sign athletic commitments



Louie Body and Ryan Anderson



Myles Johnson and Tanner Furyk



Jonathan Lorbeer, Emily Rohan, and Shania Espada



Courtney Smith and Hansel Englert

On April 13, an athletic commitment ceremony was held in McGehee Auditorium on the San Jose upper school campus of Bolles to honor nine Bulldogs, representing six different sports, as they signed their letters of intent. Family, friends, classmates, coaches, and faculty gathered to celebrate the achievements. Athletic Director Matt Morris welcomed everyone, and coaches introduced their respective athletes as follows:

Boys' Track & Field
 Ryan Anderson, University of Chicago
 Jonathan Lorbeer, Charleston Southern University

Girls' Track & Field
 Emily Rohan, Boston College

Football
 Hansen Englert, Wofford College
 Myles Johnson, Sewanee: The University of the South

Girls' Basketball
 Courtney Smith, Ave Maria University

Boys' Lacrosse
 Tanner Furyk, Sewanee: The University of the South

Boys' Swimming
 Louie Body, US Air Force Academy

Volleyball - Shania Espada, LaGrange College

Forty-two student-athletes were honored in prior ceremonies this school year, for a total of 51 college athletic commitments from Bolles in 2021-22. "Our students work just as hard in the classrooms as they do on our athletic fields. Bolles has a proud tradition of success in reaching a level of excellence through courage, integrity, and compassion. These are life lessons in character that will forever be with our students," said Morris.



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ES7 Fifth Grade explore Fundamentals of Physics



Episcopal fifth grade students had the opportunity to serve as leaders on the St. Mark's Campus by setting up and running "Force Exploration Stations" in kindergarten science class today. Kindergarten students learned about how the forces of pushes and pulls can make objects speed up, slow down, or change direction.

Students participated in water bottle bowling, explored how wind pushes objects by blowing through straws to push cotton balls, and pulled objects back and forth using a homemade pulley system. They also experimented with different tools to move objects and put marbles and toy cars on a ramp to knock down blocks.

"Fifth grade and kindergarten students were equally excited about this opportunity," said Brooks Gallagher, fourth and fifth grade math and kindergarten science instructor. "It was rewarding to watch kindergarten students apply what they have been learning in class to real life scenarios. As an added bonus, the stations served as a fun refresher before fifth grade students begin their own science unit about force."

Cum Laude Society inducts new members



Episcopal's chapter of the Cum Laude Society inducted 30 new members at a special ceremony on Tuesday in the Munnerlyn Center. Cate Sadler Anderson '05, who was inducted into the school's Cum Laude chapter in 2004 and now works as a Europe and Asia Policy Analyst for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, gave remarks to students about how the Cum Laude Society's values of Excellence, Honor, and Justice have served her in her career. Founded in 1906 and modeled after Phi Beta Kappa, the Cum Laude Society recognizes scholastic achievement in secondary schools. To be inducted as a junior, students must be in the top 10% of their class and have a GPA of 3.75 or higher. Qualifying seniors must have a GPA of 3.5 or higher and be in the top 20% of their class. Mike Brozowski, the school's chapter president, recognized current members who were inducted last year as juniors and inducted this year's new members from the junior and senior classes. The school's chapter also inducted science teacher Marion Zeiner, who was recognized for her years of scholarship and contribution to science research at Episcopal.

Students learn the connections between art and emotions



Riverside Presbyterian Day School's 6th Grade students took an adventure to visit the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens for their Language Arts class. During their visit to the Cummer, students were instructed to walk around the gallery and note which art piece they thought was the liveliest, the most thought provoking, and the saddest. Students spent time discussing why they chose certain pieces and what brought out certain thoughts and emotions. Before returning to school, each student was instructed to take a photo of the art piece that evoked the most emotion for them personally. Following their trip to the Cummer, the 6th Grade students wrote poems about their chosen art pieces and the emotions connected with the art piece they chose. RPDS is grateful to be located near abundant local resources like the Cummer Museum for the impactful learning experiences and memories for our students.

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ESJ rowing wins Scholastic State Championship



Early in April the Episcopal rowing team traveled to Sarasota for the FSRA state championships and came away with three titles. Leading the way for the Episcopal School of Jacksonville Eagles was Reilly Shapiro '22 — lightweight single overall and scholastic state champion; Allie Alton '22 and Bradlie Hicks '23 (varsity 2 boat) — second overall and scholastic state champions; and Nathaniel Raineault '25 (junior single) — third overall and scholastic state champion.

St. Paul's-Riverside and Sacred Heart team up for softball scrimmages



St. Paul's Ramblers and Sacred Heart Jaguars girls' softball teams



St. Paul's Ramblers and Sacred Heart Jaguars boys' softball teams

The St. Paul's Catholic School-Riverside Ramblers and the Sacred Heart School Jaguars hit the softball fields in two scrimmages held on the latter's campus on Blanding Boulevard. The back-to-back games offered the girls' and boys' teams from both schools preseason experience and promoted positive community partnership.

The two schools belong to different divisions and will not compete with each other during the season. "The athletic directors and coaches of each school thought it would be a great opportunity to help prepare their teams prior to the season with real game action, especially the newer players," said Casey Rogers, St. Paul's sports coordinator and school parent.

"The athletes were all very excited to get into real game situations, as well as to see their friends from each school. Many of the athletes have competed over the years against each other in various sports and have built nice friendships and a support system for each other," said Rogers.



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LOCAL FOLKS

Friends, Ginny and Ward

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Amid five decades of change, Ginny Stine Romano and R. Ward Lariscy have managed to maintain a consistent friendship. Living and working close by, shopping and socializing in the same circles, and even traveling together—sometimes a state or two away, and sometimes abroad. These two friends have been doing life side by side for the past 50 years.

They met as neighbors when they had bought houses at the same time in San Marco—Romano, a Jacksonville native, on Largo Road and Lariscy, from Savannah, Georgia, on Balis Place. They still reside in the same houses, only three doors apart.

The careers of Romano and Lariscy are what led them beyond neighbors to becoming friends. Both professional interior designers, Romano offered to introduce Lariscy to the city's resources when he was new in town. Their decorating takes different directions, and they have never been competitors. In fact, they are staunch supporters of each other's work, even sharing samples from their libraries. Though for years their businesses have coexisted on San Marco Boulevard, only four blocks apart, they've each maintained their own clientele. "That's why we could stay friends," Lariscy said as they both giggled. "When you're an interior designer, that pretty much is what you do, and everything

revolves around that," Romano said. So, much of her and Lariscy's activities are associated with their careers. Both specialists, they attend the same design events and conferences. Recently, they went together to an awards banquet for the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), a professional society.

Romano and Lariscy are collectors. Luckily, they have different passions so that they can search for items for each other when they're not searching together. They journey to Atlanta regularly to Scott Antique Markets. "We alert each other to interesting things," Romano said. She collects black forest memorabilia for her North Carolina mountain house, items like wood-carved bears and Bavarian trinkets. Lariscy has traveled several times to visit Romano and her husband there. For her Florida home, she has an eye for Limoges porcelain and Battersea boxes. Lariscy searches for Parian, a scarce white marble. He collects it for personal use and for design projects. Lariscy said, "That way we stay friendly because if we collected the same things—" Romano finished Lariscy's sentence, "Then we'd be fighting over them."

They're both creative in other ways, too. In addition to his business on San Marco Boulevard, Lariscy owns a gift shop in San Marco Square, The Wardroom Ltd. He handmakes greeting cards to sell there among a host of other novelties. And he carries a line of pin cushions, too, which Romano fashions from antique teacups.

Not only are they neighbors and friends, professionals without being competitors, but also Romano and Lariscy are both exemplary

residents. They have often worked together for the good of the community, attending zoning meetings and keeping their respective homes and yards in good repair. "It invites other people to come to the neighborhood because they want to be part of something that's quality," said Romano. She and Lariscy both volunteer in offering paint coloring advice to homeowners and businesses. If it impacts San Marco, they are involved.

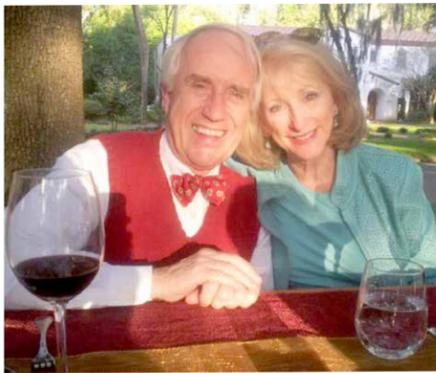
Giving to local nonprofits is another value these two friends share. Over the years, they have donated their time and talents to San Marco's playhouse, Theatre Jacksonville; Romano designed the lobby, and Lariscy decorated stage sets. Both are long-time supporters of the efforts of the San Marco Preservation Society. In fact, Romano had served on the Board for a decade. They've each chaired the annual Holiday Tour of Homes. Both have been participators in Luminaria, and they each cooked different dishes for Twelfth Night parties. Romano and Lariscy attend many of the same fundraising social events, like the annual Wolfson's Arts & Antiques Show.

When asked if they disagree on anything, considering how much they share, Romano said, "We have enough in common that we don't have to dredge up something that could be a disagreeable subject." Lariscy confirmed, "We don't talk politics."

Of her long-time friendship with Lariscy, Romano said, "It's enduring, no matter what has happened with time, with business, with neighborhood changes—and there have been many."



Ward Lariscy and Ginny Stine Romano, London Taxi, January 1985



Ward Lariscy and Ginny Stine Romano

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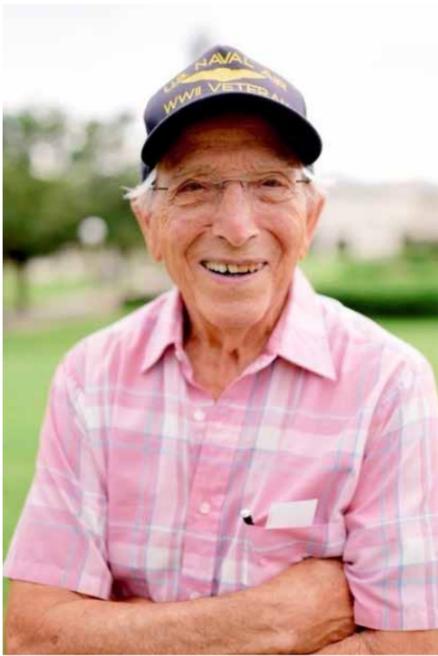
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IN MEMORIAM

Joseph James Bifano

SEPTEMBER 21, 1923 – APRIL 13, 2022



Joseph James Bifano moved peacefully in his sleep from his earthly home in Jacksonville, Florida, to heaven on April 13, 2022. He would have been 99 years old this upcoming September. His dear, loving wife of almost 72 years, Joan Rose Schnorr Bifano, otherwise known as Joni, survives him. The name Joseph means 'He shall add,' and Joseph truly fulfilled the meaning of his name by adding many to God's kingdom on this earth. Of those he added who survive him are his children: Joseph Bifano of Jacksonville, Florida; Jim Bifano of Appleton, Wisconsin (Shukwai Bifano) and grandchildren Sarah Stroy (Matt Stroy), Lisa Bifano, Nicholas Bifano (Jazzmin Genske) and Simon Bifano; Mary Bifano Dekker of Sheboygan, Wisconsin (Dave Dekker) and grandchildren Trenton Dekker (Denise Dekker), Davey Joe Dekker, and April Leffingwell (Jason Leffingwell); Chrissy Bifano Larson Leonhardt of Melrose, Florida (Larry Leonhardt) and grandchildren Jeremy Larson, James Larson (Angela Larson), Joanna Jones (Forrest Jones), Garrett Larson (Alondra Larson), and Lily Larson; Cathi Bifano Wilcox (Milt Wilcox) of Jacksonville, Florida; CeCe Bifano Cummings (Spencer Cummings) of Jacksonville, Florida and grandchildren Carter Cummings, Reese Cummings, and Audrey Cummings. Joseph was also proud of his 14 great-grandchildren and his nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Luigi Bifano and Angelina Soporito Bifano, one brother and five sisters, Mary, Lena, Rose, Millie, Peter (Biff), and Jenny, otherwise known as the Magnifico Seven. Joseph's family moved from Calabria, Italy,

and immigrated to the United States before little Joey was born. While the family was still finding a place to call home, Joseph James was born in Decatur, Illinois, on September 21, 1923. His family moved to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where Joe spent most of his childhood. Joe learned to play the drums at a very young age and was recognized for his talent early on. Many saw his gift, allowing him opportunities to play drums, which opened the doors for a lifetime musical career. He graduated from Central High School in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Class of 1942.

Joseph enlisted during WWII in the US Navy AirForce in 1942 and was chosen for his height to be trained as a belly gunner, going through numerous types of training. But when the Navy experienced his drum talent and band leadership, he was immediately recruited to lead the Navy Band for the First Officers Club in the Panama Canal Zone. The Navy valued Joe, and they honorably discharged him after WWII in 1945.

Joe met Joan Rose Schnorr from Kohler, Wisconsin, upon returning home from the war. After a whirlwind relationship, the couple tied the knot on October 14, 1950. They had six children and resided in the Sheboygan area, where Joe worked for JC Penney, Daley Vending Machine, Armour Leather, and Richardson Lumber Company until he retired. The remaining family moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, to play music full-time.

After raising their younger children, his wife Joni, a star vocalist, joined Joe in their musical career. They entertained as a group for weddings, parties, Bar Mitzvahs, nightclubs,

and TV performances. 'Joe and Joni Live' was the headliner for 17 years at Riverdale Country Club in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

But it was in Hawaii that Joe asked Jesus into his heart, changing his perspective of what was important. Joe moved most of the family back to the mainland, landing in Ft. Myers, then Jacksonville, Florida. He worked for Vistikon and used his musical talent for the Lord playing drums on various worship teams.

With each move came a new city and a new house or a home that needed renovating. Yes, this Joseph was also a carpenter. Jesus renovated Joe's heart, and Joe's deepest desire was that you know the power of this Jesus too.

Joe went by many names: Joseph, Joey, Joe, Dad, Papa, Brother, Uncle Joey, and Joe Banana. He especially LOVED his Joni and enjoyed matching their clothes. Joe couldn't get enough of the Italian family sauce, watermelon, and just a little piece of chocolate fudge. He loved entertaining, doing pantomimes, singing 'Happy Birthday,' playing with babies, dreaming, and listening to loud jazz!

He was welcoming, friendly, had a positive attitude, was very engaging, interested, and a good listener, remembering facts from the last time you spoke. He was non-judgmental and always treated everyone the same. He enjoyed helping people, doing the right thing, and had a smile that wouldn't quit.

When asked what the key to his longevity was, Joe would always answer, "The key is Jesus. He is the answer to a good life." And a good L-O-N-G life Joseph James Bifano lived!



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Butch Frazier retiring, closing Ortega jewelry store



Butch Frazier

Butch Frazier has announced that after 45 years in business, he will be retiring and closing his Ortega jewelry store at the end of this month. He is liquidating his entire selection.

Butch Frazier is a local through and through. He was born at St. Vincent's Hospital and grew up on San Juan Avenue before his family moved to Ortega Farms. He attended Fishweir Elementary and Lake Shore Junior High before graduating from Nathan B. Forrest High School in 1964.

Frazier's passion for fine jewelry began in 1963 at 17 years old when he landed his first job as a stock boy at Zales in Cedar Hills. This small endeavor sparked a lifelong career in the industry. After leaving Zales in 1971, Frazier joined W.L. Sutton Company, a jewelry wholesaler in Southside, where he continued mastering his skills and developing his craft. Six years afterwards, he and his late wife, Carol, decided

to venture out on their own. In 1977, they opened Frazier Jewelers in a small corner of Carter's Pharmacy.

It didn't take long for Frazier to develop a reputation of trust with customers. In time, he renovated the space, partitioning it off from the rest of the pharmacy. With the growth in business, came the need for more help. His sister, Gina, joined in sales and, eventually, held a management position. Frazier's daughter, Merry, joined her dad and aunt shortly after her

mom passed in October 2019. In addition to family members, the store has three long-term and loyal associates on staff. "I've had lots of help along the way," Frazier said.

For more than four decades, Frazier Jewelers has been an established local source for exquisite jewelry and unrivaled service, earning clients' confidence. One facet of having been a neighborhood store for so many years that Frazier particularly enjoys is that most of his customers know each other and many are related to each other. He has witnessed many a reunion at his store, particularly at holiday time, when natives return home from out of town to visit family. Times too numerous to count, Frazier has known what bracelet a wife would be getting for her anniversary or what pendant a daughter would receive for her graduation. "But we've never divulged such secrets," Frazier assured.

Upon his retirement, Frazier plans to tend to some touch-up projects on his house. More importantly, "I want to become versed in the kitchen," he said. He desires to learn healthy cooking habits as he deals with heart disease, and he has been taking classes for cardiac rehab.

Frazier appreciates that the community has made his business a proud Jacksonville tradition, and he is grateful for all the kind wishes he's received from the community as his retirement nears. "We cherish the friendships we have forged with our customers; it's been very gratifying. We would love to see you again before closing our doors forever," he said.

To commemorate the store's legacy, Frazier is holding a huge Going Out of Business sale. Expect up to 70% off engagement rings, wedding bands, pendants, bracelets, earrings, and timepieces. Included in the sale are high-quality pieces crafted with 18K gold and diamonds, designer jewelry from Simon G., estate jewelry, pre-owned merchandise, and a Rolex watch.

Pull Out Baseline Details: Explore more in the store on Monday through Friday 10-5:30, Saturday 10-4, or call 904-388-7788. Frazier Jewelers, family-owned and operated for 45 years at the same Ortega location, next to Carter's Pharmacy. 2925 Corinthian Avenue, Jacksonville, 32210.

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SENIORS HELPING SENIORS® ENABLES IN-HOME, EMPOWERED LIVING

Active seniors helping their less active peers age gracefully in place

That Ghandi said it has been disproved, but, nonetheless, the statement is still powerful – “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” Rita and Brian Sanders are living out that belief in their new endeavor, Seniors Helping Seniors®, which began helping Jacksonville seniors in April. Using a unique peer-to-peer model, their goal is to empower seniors to continue to live independent lives by taking care of day-to-day tasks that become challenging as people age.

“When my grandmother needed additional care at the end of her life, everyone in the family turned to me for where to get assistance, and I was at a loss to find help. Ever since then we have talked about how we can position ourselves to help seniors,” shared Brian. He grew up in Macclenny, lived in Avondale for many years, and became quite familiar with the nature of the area.

Especially in Jacksonville’s historic neighborhoods, many seniors have lived in their homes for decades, with a significant number of homes being owned generationally. Their greatest wish is to remain in the place where they have cherished memories, their personal belongings and a sense of pride, as well as security.

In Riverside, Avondale, Ortega and Murray Hill, roughly 14% of residents are 65+, based on U.S. zip codes.

Pennsylvania-based Seniors Helping Seniors’ peer-to-peer model matches active seniors with less-active seniors to provide in-home care. As its website states, it is based on two simple ideas: Seniors can help each other age more happily and gracefully, and seniors who give, and those who receive, benefit equally.

The President of the international organization is Namrata Yocom-Jan, whose mother, Kiran Yocom, worked with Mother Teresa for 14 years. Mother Teresa’s influence on Kiran was the inspiration behind Seniors Helping Seniors®, which she launched in 1998 and began franchising in 2006.

“Yocom realized that a caregiver closer to the client’s generation more easily developed a personal relationship and camaraderie that goes well beyond providing just basic care. Coming from a similar generation, they can identify with issues that the client is experiencing,” said Brian.

“Hiring active seniors to work with less-active seniors offers a lot of benefits,” he said. “A mature workforce offers a lot of advantages,” he said. “As our caregivers are doing this because they want to stay active and assist others, they tend to focus on the person’s needs, and they also understand the needs as they are aging themselves! Their work ethic and dedication to those they assist is unparalleled in the homecare industry!”

“We want to have a personal relationship with every client and family,” said Rita. “We give out our cell phone numbers to our clients and their families. We work to provide a highly individualized service.” Seniors Helping Seniors® provides care from three hours to 24 hours a day.

Sanders has worked in the mental health and social services field for 36 years, including more than eight years for the Northeast Florida State Hospital, the state psychiatric institution; and then working with The Arc Jacksonville that serves people with disabilities.

His wife, Rita, was an intensive-care nurse in her native Hungary and worked in Africa before moving to the United States. They met at Empowerment Programs Inc. led by Brian to help people with intellectual differences remain in their own homes. The couple will continue to operate Empowerment.

Seniors Helping Seniors’ cost to clients depends on services provided and the amount of hours needed. In most cases, however, the cost is privately paid. They are also becoming a provider for the Veterans Administration so that they can assist veterans who have been approved for services by the VA.

Services are tailored to each client’s specific needs and may include companionship, light housekeeping, meal preparation and shopping, assistance with personal care, pet care, light



handyman services and small repairs, yard work, and so much more.

Even simple chores like medication reminders, mailing letters and bills, safety and fall prevention can be handled. Seniors can also be escorted to appointments and events, have errands run and provide companionship for outings and trips. The services can also be tailored to provide reprieve for families handling dementia and Alzheimer’s responsibilities.

To inquire about services provided by Seniors Helping Seniors®, call 904-525-7236 or visit <https://seniorcarejax.com/>.



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THE WAY WE WERE

Clayton M. Spradley

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

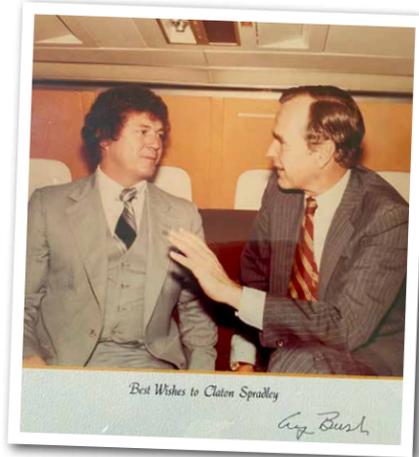
A man with Riverside roots. A former football star. A retired veteran with officer's rank. Over four decades in various areas of law enforcement. A published author. An 82-year-old mind that remembers the exact addresses of places he's lived, which he admits "is amazing!" This is Clayton M. Spradley of Orange Park.

Spradley was born at home in Lake City, Florida on October 10, 1939 and moved to Jacksonville as the youngest of three when he was a year old. His parents, Roy and Ethel, settled the family in Riverside on a dirt road at 612 Florence Street, a corner house with a bathroom on an outside porch and running water, but only cold. It was the early 40s, and they had an ice box in the kitchen. Twice weekly, the iceman would come on his buggy, pulled by Dixie the mule, to make a delivery. An indoor skating rink was built across the street where Spradley began working at 8 years old. His dad had been a prison guard and then worked in the dairy industry while attending night classes to learn welding as WWII raged on.



Clayton Spradley, low hurdles, Paxon High, circa 1957

Spradley attended Central Riverside Elementary School through most of the third grade. In 1949, his parents bought a home, one with hot running water, at 3107 Lowell Avenue in the Woodstock Park area; so, Spradley transferred to Annie R. Morgan Elementary School where he repeated the third grade due to what he suspects was likely undiagnosed dyslexia. There, he met one of several crushes, a chubby girl named Helen. At 11, he landed a job as a carryout boy at Jax Meat Market, a grocery store three miles from home.



Air Force Two, circa 1980

Spradley remained at Morgan through sixth grade before moving up to John Gorrie Junior High for the next three years. During that time, a fourth child was born to the family when Spradley had just turned 14. No longer the baby of the family, Spradley was a hard worker and an avid sportsman. "I played everything at Gorrie," he said.

Back then, Lackawanna Park with its swimming pool was the gathering spot for kids from the Riverside area and the developing Paxon area. "That was the meeting place," Spradley said.

There was also Green Street Park off King Street, which was commonly known as The Cow Pasture. "Every kid who ever grew up in that part of Riverside at that time went over



The Spradleys, 613 Florence Street, circa 1942, Roy, Ethel, Ivonne, Hathaway, and Clayton

there and played," Spradley said, referring to the wide range of unorganized sporting activities that went on. Later, Woodstock Park became the place for organized ball teams for youth. That's also the place where Spradley boxed for the first time; Wally Tanner beat him.

Spradley completed 10th through 12th grades at Paxon High, a new school at that time. He was a member of Paxon's second graduating class and dubbed Star Graduate. While in high school, Spradley achieved Eagle Scout rank, having been a scout since junior high. "I'm very proud of that," he said, and commented on what an accomplishment that was for a boy from "a tough neighborhood." His troop 122



Clayton Spradley, Eagle Scout

was sponsored by the Mormon Church located on the corner of Park and Copeland Streets in Riverside.

When he wasn't playing sports, Spradley was at Jacksonville Beach meeting girls. Other times, he was with Vernon Peterson, whose neighbor allowed him to drive a converted old, door-less car with a flatbed built onto the back of it with no tag. "We ran everywhere in that piece of junk truck," Spradley said. Leighton Boyette was usually with them, driving all around the west side of Jacksonville. Mrs. Boyette and Spradley's mom worked together at Armour and Company, a meat packaging business.

"I was a decent athlete," Spradley also said. He was Paxon's football captain. The coach was John Axton, whose wife, Mae, was like a second mom to Spradley and who was co-writer of "Heartbreak Hotel" made famous by Elvis Presley. One of the Axtons two sons, Hoyt, was known for having written "Joy to the World" made famous by the band Three Dog Night. Spradley still keeps in touch with football players from the rival teams of Landon, DuPont, Jackson, and Lee. In fact, most of Lee's players were Spradley's former classmates from Gorrie, including Carl Cochran and Dalton Bray. Monty Crook was Lee's captain, and he went on to coach professional teams as a career. To this day, a group of a dozen or so of the guys now in their 80s from Jacksonville's school classrooms and football fields meet for breakfast every Thursday morning.

Spradley was one of five Paxon graduates in his class who had earned a full football scholarship to Florida State University (FSU). There, he pursued a degree in criminology while on and off the field due to various injuries. While in college, he married and started a family. Before graduating, he had left for a time to enter the United States Coast Guard Reserve. He did six months of active duty and would remain in the Reserve for 30 years before retiring as Lieutenant Commander. Upon graduation from FSU, Spradley landed a spot as a classification officer by the Florida Department of Corrections.

In 1962, Spradley was employed with the Special Office of Naval Intelligence, currently known as Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). The nature of Spradley's work and the missions to which he had been assigned required him to move throughout and beyond Florida over the years, with a couple of stints at NAS Jax before and after serving in Vietnam from 1970-71. By this time, Spradley had four children who were living with his wife in Orange Park, even while he was stationed in Virginia when he returned to the States.

Not only did Spradley own a home in Orange Park but also co-owned Triple C Western Wear on Highway 17 in Orange Park, a business he had gotten into when one of his daughters decided that she liked horses. His partner was Dr. Tim Carter, OD, a respected Jacksonville optometrist who recently passed away.

Spradley's career highlights comprise a lengthy list. To name a couple, he spent two decades as a Special Agent with the United States Secret Service. He protected five different presidents: Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and G.H.W. Bush. Upon his retirement from the Secret Service, Spradley was employed by the governor of South Carolina to oversee and

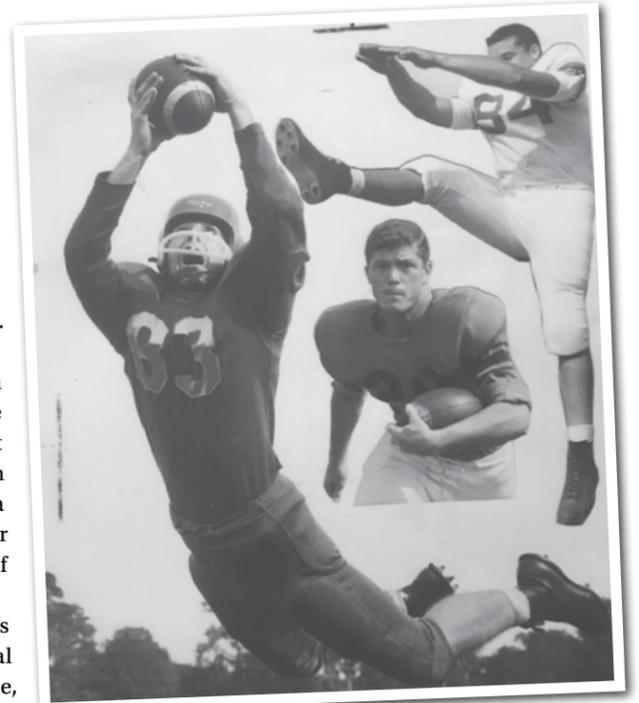


Diane and Clayton Spradley with Renegade and Bella

coordinate the FEMA efforts that followed Hurricane Hugo.

"I've been very fortunate and very blessed. At 82 years old, I've done an awful lot, gone to a lot of places, and had a lot of good things happen," Spradley said. He admits that he's experienced tragedy, too, that he's learned to deal with. In 2005, his first-born son died in a car accident at age 43. Spradley cared for his son's children for a time afterwards.

It was in South Carolina that Spradley met his present wife of 38 years, Diane. They reside



Carl Cochran #83 Lee, Clayton Spradley #20 Paxon, and Richard Scully #84 Landon

in Orange Park with two canine fur babies. From his four children, Spradley has 10 grandchildren and three greats. For them, he self-published an autobiography in 2012 entitled Exploits of a Federal Agent: My Story - My Life - My Way. It's available on Amazon.



Diane and Clayton Spradley at an FSU football game



Dr. Augustus Norman Sharp III

June 20, 1938 – April 6, 2022

Dr. Augustus Norman Sharp III was born on June 20, 1938 in Atlanta, Georgia to Augustus II and Mary Schane Sharp.

He was graduated from Alfred I. DuPont High School where he participated in the ROTC program. An honor student, Norman earned his undergraduate and dental degree from Emory University- being awarded the honor of "Emory Wheel" for being first in his dental class.

After serving in the US Army, Dr. Sharp practiced dentistry in Jacksonville for 50 years.

Norman and his soulmate Mary shared a love of adventure; they traveled the world, enjoying their 59 years of marriage.

For over 40 years, with his copilot Mary, he flew his Cessna on numerous trips to their island home in Hope Town, the Abacos where they enjoyed times with friends. Norman Sharp was gifted with a resourceful and creative mindset; he could accomplish almost anything. An excellent carpenter and designer, he was an expert sailor and navigator who raced locally in Jacksonville and cruised the Bahama Islands.

His survivors include: daughter Jane Synnstedt; grandchildren Alec, Garth (Summer) and Emma Synnstedt and great grandson Leo. A funeral service was held at the Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Legacy Lodge on Monday, April 11, 2022 with the Reverend Neely Towe officiating. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to The Parkinson's Foundation or Samaritan's Purse.



Edward Jaber Farhat, Sr. (Eddie)

November 17, 1937 – March 28, 2022

Edward Jaber Farhat, Sr., (Eddie), 84, passed away Monday, March 28, 2022. He was born on November 17, 1937, in Ramallah, Palestine, to the late Jaber and Miriam Michael Farhat. He immigrated with his parents in 1946 to Jacksonville, Florida. After graduating from Paxon High School in 1955, he went on to serve eight years in the National Guard.

In 1966, he married his loving wife of 56 years, Sandra Haddad Farhat, and they were blessed with three of the most

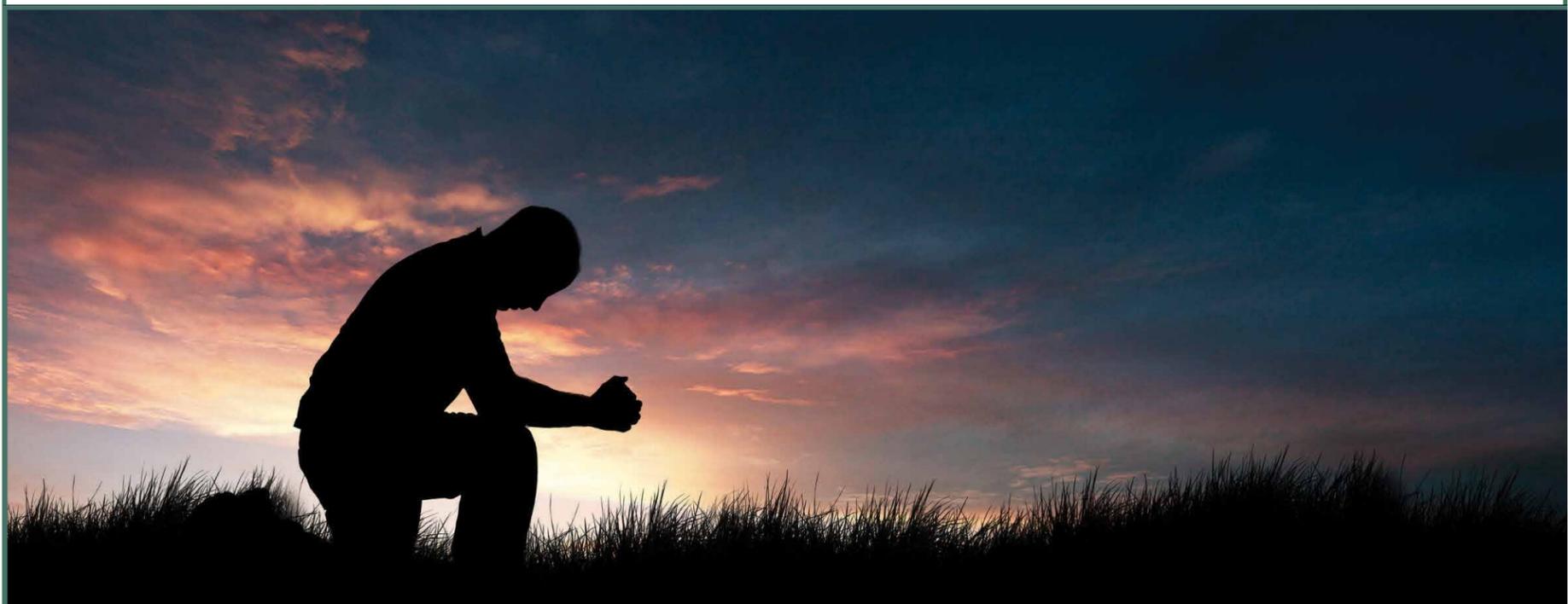
wonderful, loving, and kind children, Jay Farhat (Renee), Tammy Lee, and Michael Farhat (Melissa), and seven grandchildren, who were the light of his life: Davis, Sydnie, and Ava Lee; Justin and Colin Farhat; Kaley and Brayden Farhat. He is also survived by his sisters, Grace Abboud (Richard) and Kathy Rukab, and his brother, Johnny Farhat (Sandy), and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was in the wholesale paper business for over 49 years and owned and operated Pioneer Paper & Plastics until his

retirement. He was a member of Lakewood Presbyterian Church, Ramallah-American Club, Salaam Club, the Scottish Rite, Morocco Shrine, and Duval Lodge.

Funeral services were held on Friday, April 1, 2022, at Lakewood Presbyterian Church with burial at Oaklawn Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Lakewood Presbyterian Church or Wolfson Children's Hospital.



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3 BR / 2 BA / 1,100 sqft.



David White is a true advocate for Jacksonville's in-town neighborhoods and believes it is important to encourage urban renewal, historic home restoration and infill development. With more than 23 years of real estate experience, White specializes in the historic neighborhoods of Jacksonville where he works with buyers, sellers, property owners and tenants. He is also very familiar with all areas of Northeast Florida, from St. Augustine to Fernandina Beach.

White is a fifth-generation Jacksonville native and a graduate of the University of Florida where he earned his degree in forest resources and conservation. He worked as a district forester before moving to the nonprofit world where he managed the negotiation and acquisition of preservation land in northeast Florida for the Nature Conservancy, an international conservation organization. He made the move to residential real estate in 2004. White's professional designations include GRI (Graduate, Realtor Institute), AHWD (At Home with Diversity), as well as several relocation designations.

White is a resident of Riverside where he lives in a 1914 Craftsman home with his wife and two dogs.