

CRAZY FOR COWFORD

The Cowford Ball welcomed Jaren and Lauren Nelson and Alana Hassan to the party at the Glass Factory, Sept. 17. The traditional Western-themed gala drew a sold out crowd and continues to engage hundreds of donors for the fundraising goals of the American Cancer Society.

SEE MORE ON PAGE 24



FISHWEIR DREDGE FINALLY COMING TO FRUITION

After more than a decade of planning, engineering, and budgeting work, all parties are celebrating the \$8.2-million contract award by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

SEE MORE ON PAGE 6



CELEBRATING 30TH FOR FLORIDA FORUM

Patrons of and supporters of the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital welcomed Bill Browder to town, Sept. 20. Women's Board Members Natalie Rosenberg, Karla Newton and Leigh Smith were on hand at the private reception in Ortega following the Forum's first installment of the 30th season, sponsored by Wells Fargo.

SEE MORE ON PAGE 24

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Hannah Ripkey, Lori Boyer, Bobby West, Chris Winnen, Katherine Mosley, Cesar Ortiz, Steve Sealy, Kevin Powell and Paul Bertozzi participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for One Riverside on Thursday, Sept. 22. Photos by Michele Leivas.

Digging in, delivering a brighter future for downtown

The former site of the Florida Times Union is only a memory, as heli-pads, flagpoles and several buildings were recently razed. The daily newspaper once occupied the multi-acre site of a former newspaper empire. The shell of a building that housed the newspaper operations and other buildings housing print presses bit the dust over the last year and a half, paving way for a new development along the St. Johns River and its Northbank Riverwalk.

READ MORE ON PAGE 8



"A Dream Come True"

The opening and operations of USS Orleck DD-886 are official for the Jacksonville Naval Museum.

SEE MORE ON PAGE 10



A milestone celebrated for one special lady

Local mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Mary Love Strum, has reached her own centenary landmark, she is officially 100 years of age. Mary Love was surrounded by family and some of her best friends as she celebrated the day at the Timuquana Country Club, Sept. 10, 2022.



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your **OPINION**

Thanks for your article in the September issue. I've smelled this regularly for a long time. Noticed it this morning when I left for work. I typically smell it between 5 and 7:30 am outside my house at Myra and Stockton. It's concerning to me for the health of all area residents. I appreciate the information about sending complaints and will continue to do so. The COJ site is a bit of a maze so it might be helpful to give residents more details in future publications. Thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,
Matt Monroe

Thank you for including my household on your mailing list for the San Jose/San Marco/St. Nicholas edition of Resident Community News.

Since your newspaper first began arriving our mailbox some months ago, we have been consistently excited and impressed to be reading a real local newspaper full of interesting announcements, stories, profiles, letters, opinions, and yes, even advertisements.

Based on your track record I want you to know that we would even be willing to pay for a subscription to continue having Resident Community News delivered to our home (where we've resided for thirty-two years). Alternatively, since we've nothing to advertise, we would be glad to make a gift if you have (or later create) a donation/contribution/support portal for your grateful readers.

PS — In the September issue, pages 1, 2, 14, 19, and 25 are among those with one or more "real local newspaper" features that prompted me to send you this note.

Very Best Wishes,
Thomas J. Wiswell

JEA rate hikes leave customers stunned

Tough times due to inflationary economics, fuel costs

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

JEA customers saw a significant spike in their September utility bills and are now wondering what's in store for future bills.

JEA Manager of Media Relations Karen McAllister said customers can expect "fuel rates to remain at high level through the spring." It won't be until then, she said, that customers will start to see fuel charges "drop to normalize a bit."

McAllister said in the spirit of transparency, JEA recently began listing monthly fuel rates at jea.com/rates. The Monthly Fuel Rates Table lists September's fuel charge at \$83.46 (per 1,000 kilowatts per hour), the highest its been for the last year, at least. October's rate dropped, only slightly, to \$79.03.

"We will update that, I would say, by the third week of each month, customers will be able to see the next month's fuel rate," she said. "So again, that will help them in terms of budgeting, knowing what's coming, whether it will be dropping or going up and of course, as a community utility, for full transparency."

McAllister emphasized that many factors that impact fuel rates and, by extension, customers' monthly bills are "beyond our control." She cited geopolitical factors, the ongoing war in Ukraine and low natural gas inventories because of the extreme summer heat.

"Sanctions against Russian coal from the Russia-Ukraine conflict caused European countries to search for additional supplies and that caused a rise in price," she said. "Petroleum coke prices followed — the prices there dropped in the last several months in terms of petroleum coke. When natural gas prices rise, typically utilities which have the capabilities, such as JEA, will switch to burning coal to keep the cost down, but with delays in coal rail deliveries, utilities are choosing to conserve their coal inventories for the winter and continue to use natural gas, driving the cost up. So that's another factor."

McAllister also pointed out the monthly fuel rate is a "pass-through" charge for customers, meaning JEA does not profit from it.

While JEA says there is little it can do to control the factors impacting customers' bottom line, people are still reaching out to news organizations and social media to express their anger and frustration over spiking electric bills in the midst of historically high inflation and other factors affecting their monthly budgets.

"We know these are tough times for customers and we do all we can to help them manage their bills with payment arrangements and payment plans," she said. "We are hearing from a lot of customers. We know these are tough times in terms of inflationary pressures in many areas, with rent, with groceries and a number of different areas."

At a recent Board of Directors meeting, JEA also approved its Pay for Performance Plan for employee bonuses. The plan is not expected to exceed \$10 million. In an e-mail, McAllister confirmed this plan will not impact customer bills, however, adding "...the Pay-for-Performance plan is paid to JEA

“We know these are TOUGH TIMES for customers and we do all we can to HELP THEM MANAGE THEIR BILLS with payment arrangements and payment plans... We know these are tough times in terms of inflationary pressures in many areas, with rent, with groceries and a number of different areas.”

- Karen McAllister
JEA Manager of Media Relations

employees only if savings are achieved to fund the plan."

McAllister said regulating HVAC usage is a way for customers to see the biggest reduction of their bills. Adjusting the thermostat to 78 degrees when the house is empty is one way to help minimize energy consumption.

"There are a lot of things you can do around your home to conserve, but that is where you're going to have the most impact with your HVAC unit and managing your thermostat," she said.



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Market News

What's happening in our neighborhoods?

Demand remains robust as buyers are adjusting to higher mortgage rates and continuing their home searches. Listings remain scarce, and sellers who enter the market are often rewarded with a quick offer - if their home is priced accurately and staged to appeal to the broader tastes of today's buyers.

As conditions continue to shift toward a more balanced market, prospective home sellers should keep in mind three important points: realistic and accurate pricing, staging + beautification, and open mindedness toward negotiating with a qualified buyer.

Did you know?

Hearing music has been shown to make people want to spend more money than they would if no music were playing.

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SOURCE: Realtor.com



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Back-flow compliance tactics too heavy handed, residents say

BY JOEL ADDINGTON
Resident Community News

Russell Grooms, a real estate agent in Avondale and Ortega, has some advice for landlords or other residential property owners if they receive a warning letter from JEA regarding required back-flow preventer installations and maintenance.

Back-flow preventers are devices that are relatively cheap at a few hundred dollars that stop potable (drinking/bath) water and irrigation water from contaminating the public water supply.

You may be forced to comply by spending up to \$1,000 or more for installation or smaller sums for repairs, but you choose who does the work and where the back-flow preventer goes, he said.

The one he was required to place at his property is located behind a hedge and wrapped with green tape rather than near the sidewalk or other utility connections.

"They're not terribly ugly but they're ugly and it doesn't have to be where it's easiest for them," he said.

Mr. Grooms explained they've been required by law for "years and years" on commercial properties as they typically create more contamination hazards than residential properties.

But, he said, about a year ago JEA began notifying residential property owners about non-compliance, too.

"Three or four people just ignored it and to my knowledge, nobody followed up with them after a year," said Mr. Grooms.

"Not sure if you have to have an irrigation meter or not, but it's 90 days to comply or you face a penalty," recalled Mr. Grooms, who had an irrigation meter. "... I know there are others who've not done it, and nothing's happened."

He even questions whether the back-flow preventers are "absolutely scientifically important."

"If it is, everybody needs to do it [who] got that letter at the very least," said Mr. Grooms.

You may have noticed new back-flow prevention devices popping out of the ground around the historic neighborhoods.

They're required by Florida Statute 62-555.360, according to JEA's George Haynes of the publicly-owned utility's pollution prevention department.

It reads, in part, "cross-connections between a public water system and a wastewater system or reclaimed water system are prohibited (i.e. an air gap shall be maintained between any public water system and any wastewater or reclaimed water system)."

There is an exemption process available to customers.

JEA may exempt a particular property from the required prevention device but only after an application and inspection process to evaluate any potential risk of cross-contamination.

Mr. Haynes said commercial properties are eligible for an exemption if they were built before 1990 or JEA finds the property to be a low pollution risk after inspection.

He said back-flow preventers are required by state law for residential properties without exception if they have a pond, well or irrigation system "in the ground." About the only type of irrigation system he said could be exempt was a rain barrel completely disconnected from the city water system.

However, he also said, even if an irrigation system is not connected to the city water system, a back-flow preventer could be mandatory. Such matters are evaluated case-by-case.

Mr. Haynes estimated about 74 percent of the properties required to have back-flow preventers have them and it's the other 25 percent JEA has been attempting to bring into compliance by sending warning letters and directing property owners to private contractors for installation and maintenance work on the devices. Sometimes the contractors contact customers directly "on behalf of JEA," as one contractor Fire Sprinkler Services (FSS) likes to say when addressing JEA customers.

FSS has a contract with JEA to test non-compliant property owners' backflow preventers that are delinquent for 90 days or

more on annual inspections or initial installations required by JEA's cross connection control policy.

"If the backflow preventer fails, a quote will be given to repair or replace the device, but the customer can choose any vendor qualified to do backflow repair to complete the services to bring them compliance," said JEA via a public records portal.

The company is paid \$30 per test and \$22 per inspection, said Mr. Haynes. They're being paid between \$5000-\$10,000 per month this year, check records show.

Some property owners said they feel like JEA's methods and vendors like FSS are using a heavy-handed approach to compliance, and as a utility owned by the public, that's inappropriate. In addition, they say, it should be JEA's bill to prevent pollution from entering the city's water system, not that of property owners.

They say they understand the environmental benefits JEA is seeking through compliance, but some property owners appear to be non-compliant without such harassment.

"Back-flow preventers are being pushed onto JEA customers at their own expense," said Mike Barker, who owns many residential properties in the historic Riverside-Avondale area.

He said a licensed plumber told him the preventers were not required for residential buildings with supply lines smaller than 2 inches or built before 1990, which conflicts with Mr. Haynes' assertion that the size of the line doesn't matter.

"They [JEA and vendors] improperly lead people without knowledge of the exemptions to install devices they do not need," Mr. Barker argued.

"They require customers to apply for exemptions they're already entitled to; [yet] they have the exemption qualification information and should have already applied it to customer accounts, and they should have properly educated the customers as to their rights," he said.

He also said FSS quoted him nearly \$1500 for installing a preventer in the historic district on a structure built in 1945. A plumber quoted him \$400 for the same work.

The numbers just don't add up, residents say.

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Big Fishweir Creek restoration contract awarded to San Mateo firm

Dredge moves from plans to implementation

BY JOEL ADDINGTON
Resident Community News

A year-long delay in the procurement process to restore Big Fishweir Creek to a more navigable waterway for water sport enthusiasts and manatees alike is finally over.

And given it followed more than a decade of planning, engineering and budgeting work, all parties are celebrating the \$8.2-million contract award by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"The community is very excited about the project and what it will do for our creek," said John Moran, whose backyard touches the creek, on September 22. "No activity on the creek yet, but the Army Corps let us know that we will likely start seeing some movement at the end of November."

"Project mobilization is expected within 90 days," said a recent press release from the federal agency announcing the associated construction contract award in late August.

The contract calls for dredging portions of both the Big and Little fishweir creeks to make the waterways more friendly to boaters, paddlers, wildlife and anglers.

The Army Corps awarded the dredging contract on August 26 to Underwater Mechanix Services, LLC of the San Mateo neighborhood of Jacksonville, "to execute an aquatic ecosystem restoration project at Big Fishweir Creek."

The total cost of the project has risen by millions during the intervening years. In 2012, the cost estimate was \$3.8 million. In more recent years it was estimated at \$6.5 million.

The City of Jacksonville and the federal agency have agreed to split the costs 35 percent city and 65 percent federal, however.

Big Fishweir Creek is an urban tributary of the St. Johns River running south of downtown and enters the "big river" just north of the Ortega River.



One of the marine contractor Underwater Mechanix's project locations. Source: www.uwmechanix.com

"Dredged material from Little Fishweir Creek, the channel widener and the main channel will be transported by barge for placement at the Bartram Island Disposal Area," reads the Army Corps announcement. "Dredged material from the upper reaches of Big Fishweir Creek will be deposited either in an approved upland disposal facility or transported to Bartram Island."

The contract also includes standard turbidity monitoring, endangered species monitoring, vibration control monitoring, channel debris removal and related incidental work, the Army Corps said.

Jim Suggs, Jacksonville district small projects manager for the Army Corps, said the first step will be the issuance of a

notice to proceed within 30 days with the contractor to acknowledge receipt within 30 days. The next 30 days are earmarked for moving equipment and materials to the project site.

"That puts construction starting around the end of November. Construction will start at the mouth of the creek at the river and come inward..." he said by email to interested parties on August 29, when the contract award was announced.

Army Corps spokesman David Ruderman said more than a year ago the local office was eager to begin work, even scouting staging locations for equipment. At the time he hoped for a contract award by the end of September 2021.

"It could slip into a 2022 award," he accurately predicted in mid-September, 2021.

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Groundbreaking ceremony held for One Riverside

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

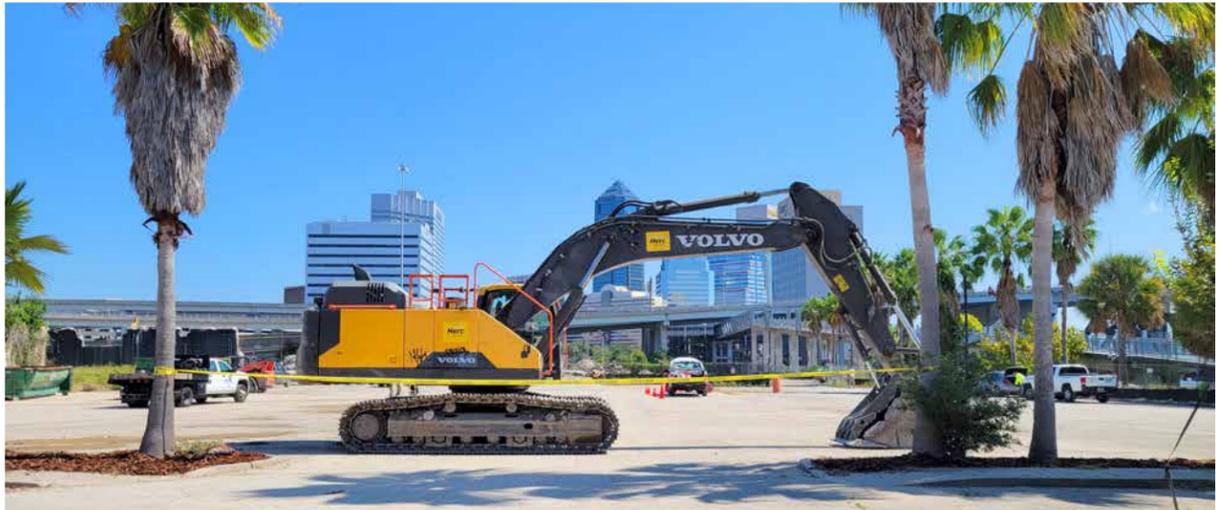
One Riverside, a much-anticipated mixed-use development at the Northbank's 1 Riverside Avenue, celebrated its groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday, Sept. 22.

Demolition of the Florida Times-Union building that once claimed that address began in May of this year and focus has shifted from what was to what will be.

Katherine Mosley, a partner with Atlanta-based developer TriBridgе Residential LLC spoke at the ceremony, explaining construction for this development will take place in phases. Phase one of construction will include 270 residential units and one restaurant while also enhancing connectivity and access to the Riverwalk.

"...I certainly look forward to the day that we're out here eating at the restaurant, shopping at the grocer, walking on the Riverwalk," she said. "I think it's going to be a very exciting project for Jacksonville and really enforce the sense of community that the city's done such a great job cultivating. There's been tons of development in recent years and I know that's planned to continue and we're excited to be a part of that."

The estimated \$250 million mixed-used project will cover 18.8 acres and will also include a new Whole Foods Market and retail space to be developed by Atlanta-based Fuqua Development. A city park is also planned for the project, also accessible off the Riverwalk.



The site of the former Florida Times-Union building has been cleared in preparation for phase one of construction on the One Riverside mixed-use development.

Mosley spoke of TriBridgе's "collaborative relationships" with Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) and the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB).

"I think they did a great job of not only looking out for the interest of our specific development, but really enhanced a lot of the benefits to the community," Mosley added. "They pushed us to do things like activate the Riverwalk with restaurant uses and retail. Obviously they're contributing the city park that will be accessed off of the Riverwalk and really enhance the connectivity amongst the Brooklyn community that's so well-established and vibrant, really bringing that across Riverside Avenue and connecting it to the Riverwalk."

Jacksonville-based Live Oak Contracting is the contractor for the project. President and CEO Paul Bertozzi, a Jacksonville native himself, spoke excitedly about what it means to have reached this milestone on the project and what the project itself will mean for Jacksonville.

"It's a great achievement to get it to this stage and now, as some of them say, the easy work is ahead of us," Bertozzi said after the ceremony. "The hard work of getting the development done and built and really bringing all the other teams that are gonna help support the development of the project, from

trade partners to the architects and engineers that will continually be working with us through the project as well as TriBridgе. It's a great feat to get here but we've got a lot of work still to get done....It's gonna be a great project here, but it's really a catalyst for everything else and all the other opportunities for Jacksonville."

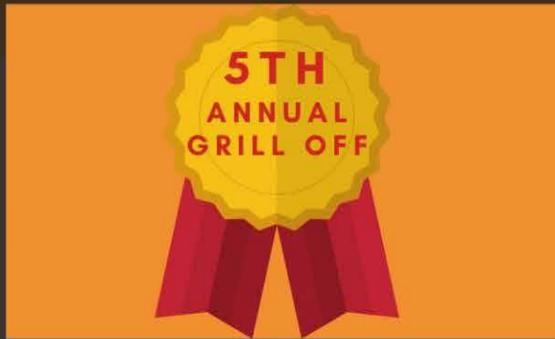
Also involved in the project are Prosser Inc., Dwell Design Studio, Banko Design and LandDesign.

“ I certainly LOOK FORWARD to the day that we're out here eating at the restaurant, shopping at the grocer, walking on the Riverwalk. I think it's going to be A VERY EXCITING PROJECT for Jacksonville...”

- Katherine Mosley



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USS Orleck opens to the public

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

“ We have been working 12 years for this day, for this moment. I would like to just say that **DREAMS DO COME TRUE.**”

- Daniel Bean
Jacksonville Naval Museum President

The USS Orleck DD-86 is now officially open to the public.

“...We have been working 12 years for this day, for this moment,” said Jacksonville Naval Museum President Daniel Bean at the opening ceremony on Friday, Sept. 23. “I would like to just say that dreams do come true.”

Bob Orleck, nephew to the ship's namesake — Lieutenant Joseph Orleck — and executive director of the USS Orleck DD-86 Association, attended the event and spoke both of his uncle and the ship itself.

“This is where she was meant to be,” Orleck said of the retired destroyer's new homeport.



City officials and community leaders pose before the USS Orleck at its opening ceremony on Sept. 23. Featured from left to right: Dana Karzan, Jim Webb, Brian Wolfburg, Bob Orleck, Dan Oakey, Lisa Cochran, Daniel Bean, Diane Fears and Dr. Charles E Moreland. Photo by Michele Leivas.

“This is only possible because of the hard work of a great number of volunteers,” said Vystar Credit Union President and CEO Brian Wolfburg during the ceremony. “Those are volunteers who are committed to our community, to our downtown and to our military and that brings together everything Vystar stands for.”

City of Jacksonville Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Charles E. Moreland spoke at the ceremony as well, stating, “This is history.”

“...We're grateful for our partnerships all over the City to make this a reality here today,” he added. “One of the things the mayor mentioned, he was going to transform the skyline of Jacksonville. Well, Mayor? I believe you've done that.”

The USS Orleck is the most decorated U.S. Navy warship post-World War II. Commissioned on Sept. 15, 1945, the ship served in the Cold War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. During the Korean War, she began what became known as the “Train Buster Club” after successfully eliminating two military transport trains, first destroying the tracks ahead of and behind the trains and then the trains themselves.

After 37 years of service, the USS Orleck was decommissioned on Oct. 1, 1982 and was transferred to the Turkish Navy.

The Orleck first arrived in Jacksonville in March of this year and is temporarily moored at the Jacksonville Riverwalk, but will ultimately be moved to her final location at the anticipated Shipyards West Park on Bay Street. According

to Downtown Jacksonville, the park “will be a world-class riverfront park inclusive of complimentary amenities that will provide the missing link between Riverfront Plaza and Metropolitan Park.” Design of the park is expected to be complete by early 2023. The USS Orleck “will be part of the activation of that park,” explained Jacksonville Naval Museum Executive Director Jim Webb.

Vystar employees and members received early access to the USS Orleck on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 24 and 25, while the ship officially opened to the public on Wednesday, Sept. 28. Its hours are Wednesdays thru Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

It is currently located at 114 E. Coastline Drive.

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Mayoral race heats up as Davis enters the fray

BY SAMANTHA FLOM
Resident Community News

With Jacksonville's first mayoral election just five months out, some candidates have begun ramping up their campaigns while others are just getting started.

On Sept. 8, Republican Daniel Davis formally kicked off his campaign with a Sept. 8 rally at Tom Nehl Trucking Company that was attended by both current Mayor Lenny Curry and former Mayor John Peyton.

The announcement followed months of speculation that the Jax Chamber president and CEO would run, during which his associated political action committee, Building a Better Economy, raked in more than \$4 million — the most of any candidate to date.

But with three other Republicans to split the GOP vote and Democrats surging in the polls, the question remains as to whether those funds will be enough to boost the former state representative to victory.

A CROWDED REPUBLICAN FIELD

Prior to Davis entering the race, an Aug. 17 survey conducted by the University of North Florida Public Opinion Research Lab showed the former City Council president holding a narrow lead among the Republican candidates with 11 percent of the vote, followed by City Council members Al Ferraro and LeAnna Cumber at 8 and 7 percent, respectively, and Frank Keasler Jr. at less than 1 percent.

While Davis' campaign did not respond to multiple requests for comment, Ferraro, for his part, was not overly concerned by the poll's results, noting the 5.9 percent margin of error.

"That poll is the definition of a statistical tie," he noted. "With that in mind, our city deserves a mayor who operates with integrity. Unlike Daniel Davis, who actively promoted the sale of JEA — which was a blatantly obvious rip-off of the taxpayers that has resulted in federal indictments — I opposed this raw deal. Jacksonville deserves a mayor who will act on behalf of the hardworking families across Jacksonville and not just the select few lobbyists and members of the 'good old boy' system that have profited off of government dollars for too long."

Unapologetic in his criticism of Davis, the two-term District 2 councilman touted his reputation as a "straight shooter," adding that he intends to "restore honesty and accountability" to the mayor's office.



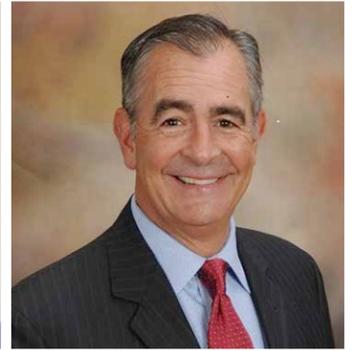
LeAnna Cumber



Al Ferraro



Audrey Gibson



Frank Keasler Jr.

"I invite voters to examine my voting record on the City Council," he said. "I stood strong on the principles I espoused during my prior campaigns. As mayor, I will do the same and not surprise my voters by failing to do as I promised. I will focus on our core functions like ensuring public safety, restoring our infrastructure and keeping government hands out of taxpayer pockets. We have a great city and it's time that we put Jacksonville families first."

Cumber, like Ferraro, said that she felt the city required a change in leadership that the other candidates could not provide.

"I'm the only candidate out there that is the 'change candidate,'" the District 5 councilwoman contended. "All the other candidates, it's more of the same, and if you continue to do more of the same, you get the same results."

Noting her work on the City Council to create the city's Public Nuisance Abatement Board and crack down on drug and sex trafficking, Cumber described herself as a champion of Jacksonville families.

"This city really needs a fighter, and someone who's going to fight for the future of the city and for its kids and grandkids," she said. "We have a 9- and 11-year-old, so I look at things through their eyes, and I want them to want to come back and for them to grow up in the safest, best city in the country. And we can absolutely be that."

Even though Cumber placed fifth overall in the UNF survey, she is second in fundraising, having raised more than \$3 million with the help of her JAX First political action committee. She has also secured endorsements from District 14 Councilwoman Randy DeFoor and local faith leaders like Rev. Fred Newbill; Bishop Terry L. Hill Jr.; Pastors Robert LeCount, Terrance Pickett and Terrance Brisbane; and Elder Terrance Ray.

Keasler, meanwhile, is a former attorney who had his license permanently revoked in 2014 over allegations of a conflict of interest.

Stating that he was just glad to be "in by the skin of [his] chin," Keasler attributed the

launch of his mayoral campaign to the breakdown of race relations following the controversial death of George Floyd.

"I saw the beginning of the 2020 'summer of love' and politicians on both sides of the aisle once again rushing to get TV time," he recalled, holding that during that period, the Black community was being "placated, patronized and pandered" to by those in power as a means of control.

"When Mayor Curry took down [Andrew] Jackson's statue in Hemming Park under the [cover] of darkness, I said, 'Dear God what have we become?'" Keasler continued. "And from such compulsion I have heeded the call to stand for our city and 'We the People.'"

DEMOCRATS IN CONTENTION

Like most Republicans in the race, the leading Democrat hopefuls have positioned themselves as "change candidates." But while the Republicans largely identified crime as the No. 1 issue currently plaguing the city, Democrat frontrunner Donna Deegan — who received the most support in the UNF survey with 31 percent of the vote — does not include crime as a key issue on her campaign website. Instead, her "#ChangeForGood" platform homes in on infrastructure, health and the economy.

Though Deegan's campaign did not respond to requests for comment, her primary competition for the Democrat vote, State Sen. Audrey Gibson, agreed with Republicans that curtailing crime should be the top priority for Jacksonville's next mayor.

Stating that her plan to address crime would combine "old-fashioned policing" methods with technological advancements, Gibson said she would work with the sheriff's office to boost public safety.

"We must have a strong multidisciplinary crime and safety commission that is data-driven beyond program review and sprinkle funding," she said. "More partnerships among and between community organizations focused on prevention, intervention and mental health is how we get to our community

feeling safer. My experience in criminology and serving for years on criminal and juvenile justice committees makes me the best candidate to communicate with the sheriff on the issues of crime prevention and public safety."

After Gibson entered the race in June, rumors floated among Democrats that she might have done so to siphon votes from Deegan. And whether true or false, the state senator's candidacy may have done just that, as Deegan's poll numbers have dropped 10 points since February, when a previous UNF survey indicated she had the support of 41 percent of likely voters.

Meanwhile, in the August poll, Gibson drew 10 percent of the vote.

Gibson, addressing the speculation, stated: "I am running for mayor because I believe it is time that we had a mayor who puts the needs of the residents first and actually brings the community together. A mayor who gets it that we all want a good quality of life including housing affordability, safe neighborhoods, healthier families, a good business environment and a future that embraces 'Promises made, promises kept.' And a budget that works for all. I have years of experience in budgeting."

The final three candidates, Democrat Theresa Ann Richardson, independent Darcy G. Richardson and non-party affiliated candidate Omega Allen, were unreachable for comment.

Altogether, they accounted for less than 4 percent of the vote, yet it is also worth noting that 20 percent of the survey's respondents either had yet to decide on a candidate or chose not to answer the question. And with several months left to campaign, there is still time to make an impact.

Jacksonville's first mayoral election will take place Tuesday, March 21, 2023. If no candidate receives an outright majority, the top two finishers will go head-to-head in a runoff. In the meantime, Resident Community News will continue to follow the race and provide updates as the election draws near.

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New zoning 'win-win' for tenants, neighbors and new owner of former Miller Electric HQ

BY JOEL ADDINGTON
Resident Community News



Councilwoman Randy DeFoor during an early September meeting with neighbors and the new property owner's consultant, Taylor Mejia

electrical company founder Paul E. Mayberry for \$5.85 million last May, the latter sought to consolidate the land use and zoning among the parcels.

He purchased the property as an investment with no immediate plans to make changes, said consultant Taylor Mejia with The Southern Group on behalf of the owner, beyond linking four parcels under like land use and zoning designations with terms outlined in a planned unit development (PUD) agreement with the city.

Neighbors, meanwhile, were very concerned about the potential for added traffic, self-storage facilities and expansion of manufacturing or industrial activity at the property. They joined outgoing city councilwoman Randy DeFoor, whose district includes the property, during two community meetings with Ms. Mejia, most recently in early September ahead of city rezoning hearings.

They won some concessions on fencing and signage and councilwoman DeFoor pledged to fund speed bumps on Gilmore Street to slow down drivers using \$4500 her office has available for local projects. Nearly all the neighbors indicated that drivers speed through the area with many pedestrians in the mornings and evenings.

"... I'll find the money," she said during the community meeting in early September.

Among the terms of the new PUD zoning is a 35-foot height limit to freestanding signage on three of the four parcels involved. The fourth has two existing billboard signs facing the interstate today that the new owner wanted to be grandfathered into the new land use and zoning restrictions. That parcel must

comply with city signage regulations for commercial general zoning under the compromise passed by the city council.

The 30-plus-foot sign height roiled neighbors, however.

"That will affect property values. That's important," said Councilwoman DeFoor, echoing neighbors' sentiments.

Outdoor storage of equipment and the like must have an 8-foot fence or wall no less than 95 percent opaque.

Robin Lumb, a nearby resident, former city councilman and retired city consultant, followed the rezoning closely as the property abuts a residential road in Gilmore Street and is close to Central Riverside Elementary and the proposed Emerald Trail route.

"Oddly, the height of stored materials is allowed to exceed the height of the 8-foot fence by 2 feet?" wrote Mr. Lumb in an email update after the city council approval. Stored materials may be as high as 10 feet.

Miller Electric initially and then Mr. Mayberry worked through consultants with Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP), councilwoman DeFoor and nearby residents to establish compromises aimed at keeping the residential character of the surrounding area intact moving forward but allowing the existing property uses to continue.

The property lies within the historic Riverside Avondale Preservation District zoning overlay that requires the area's residential character to be encouraged over commercial development.

Residents voiced objections during the latter public meetings that the new zoning would enshrine that the new owner won't have to comply with the same rules they do under the

historic overlay, which the property was technically violating prior to the rezoning.

Still, councilwoman DeFoor dubbed the final PUD ordinance a "win-win for the applicant and the community ..."

While not typically permitted on the property with business park land use designations, single and multi-family residential dwellings will be allowed under terms of the compromise reached with the neighborhood, Ms. Mejia said during a Land Use and Zoning (LUZ) Committee hearing in mid-September.

Despite pressure from residents, RAP and councilwoman DeFoor to eliminate self-storage facilities as a permitted use, the compromise was to allow personal property storage only by exception, meaning a public hearing and notices to neighbors will be required before the special use is permitted.

To allow existing light manufacturing uses to continue on the property that today violate city zoning and land use requirements, the new PUD zoning will permit "electrical contractor or similar trades to include but not limited to plumbing, HVAC, mechanical, or general contractor including office, light fabricating, light manufacturing, packaging, and processing, all of which must be conducted indoors," a planning department report noted.

Mr. Lumb said the city's certificate of appropriateness process will apply to the property if the buildings are changed or razed and new structures built.

"The applicant also previously removed 'parcel processing and delivery services,' as a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 ...

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- Bharatsinh M. Gharia, MD**
Assistant Professor
Hematology and Oncology
- Sarah Khan, MS, CGC**
Certified Genetic Counselor
Hematology and Oncology
- Shahla Masood, MD**
Professor and Chair
Pathology
- Nancy P. Mendenhall, MD**
Professor and Chief
Radiation Oncology
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potential use which means we won't have to worry about Amazon creating a mini-hub on Rosselle Street," he said.

"While I continue to believe the rezoning was unnecessary and not in the best interest of preserving the residential character of our neighborhood, we did get certain concessions," he continued. "Ultimately, I don't believe this rezoning will have a significant negative impact on our neighborhood. With Miller Electric gone as well as Century Ambulance, I expect vehicle traffic up and down Gilmore to be significantly reduced in volume despite the rezoning."

Nonetheless, Mr. Lumb feels the city's rezoning process favors developers more than residents.

"The rezoning process is stacked against neighborhood groups like ours," he said. "The planning commission is a virtual rubber stamp for well-financed developers and many city council members are not sympathetic with the special status of the Riverside Avondale Historic District. Those city council members tend to see the district as more of a nuisance than an asset."

He recalls before Miller Electric bought the property for its headquarters that has since moved to the Southside when homes on Rosselle Street were demolished or moved to make way for new commercial development. Rosselle Street was made a one-way entrance onto the interstate, which forced truck traffic onto the adjacent residential streets.

"While the entire application is an intensification of land use, we have worked with the applicant to address specific changes based on feedback from the residents and our support for the zoning overlay," said Mr. Lumb after the LUZ committee hearing. "We have requested that industrial activities and any use that could bring noise, odor, or increased large truck traffic to the area be eliminated from the application, successfully..."

"Now is the time to fight," said resident Maria Shea of Gilmore Street, concerning self-storage facilities at the second community meeting in September, following another last Spring.

"Murray Hill didn't raise heck ... And they [the developer and city] went right through [with a self-storage facility]," she said.

Moderation in the housing market shows a shift toward affordability

SUBMITTED BY MARCIA HODGSON
Communications Director, NEFAR

In most areas of Northeast Florida the August housing market reflected a slight drop in median prices while the number of days homes sat on the market has gradually continued to climb. Buyers can relish the good news that, for single-family homes, the percent closed-over list price went down 27.7% as did the average list price, 1%, indicating a small tick up in affordability throughout the region. As far as affordability goes, the market still has a way to go to get back to the point where homes are affordable for people making the median family income. However, there are many indications that it is finally moving in the right direction. For instance, the region's Home Affordability Index inched up 2.9% to 70 for single-family homes. The index measures housing affordability by measuring whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income, and median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability.

"Moving into fall 2022 we continue to see the residential real estate market, which includes single-family homes, condos, and townhomes, continue to moderate and normalize," said NEFAR 2022 President Mark Rosener. "While still an 18% increase year over year, the median price in our six-county market has shown mild fluctuations month to month of between \$350,000 and \$365,000 since March. This indicates that the dramatic increases that were seen during the pandemic are coming to an end. Closed and pending sales have leveled off in the 2,300 to 2,500 range over the past several months and are now well below the 3,000 to 3,500 peak a little more than a

year ago. Median days on the market have continued to increase to 31 days with only 19.1% of homes selling over list price and the sale-to-list price ratio settling into a more normal 98.6%," he continued. "New listings are hitting the market and active inventory has stabilized, with 3,200 new listings and 6,348 active listings. The combination of fewer unit sales and our current active inventory has increased the region's months of supply to 2.7 months, which has been stable over the past couple of months."

As far as single-family homes go, \$393,900 was the median price for the region in August, a scant 1.5% decline. As seen in the combined market of single-family, condos, and townhomes, the median days on the market for single-family residences hiked up 34.8%. Still, inventory remains historically low, with a 2.7-month supply and an active inventory of 5,323 single-family homes.

As the market levels off into its new normal, sellers and buyers may need to adjust their mindsets, said Rosener. "Sellers will need to price their homes in line with current comparable sold and active listings," he said. "The tried-and-true factors of location and condition for a home have become as important as ever and are specific to each neighborhood. The advice and counsel of a trusted REALTOR® are very important for homeowners looking to sell their homes in today's market," he said, noting that NEFAR members have access to specific market conditions and are trained to help homeowners price their homes to meet their specific needs.

Meanwhile, for buyers, the additional inventory now on the market is good news, Rosener said. "It allows for more selection and perhaps a less competitive frenzy of activity for each listing. Multiple offers on properties are still a reality in many areas of the market but not as much of a factor as it was at the peak. REALTOR'S® guidance can give each customer the information they need to make a sound buying decision," Rosener said.

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Boone Tennis Complex undergoing renovations



BY LAURA MEEHAN
Resident Community News

Renovations are underway at Avondale's Boone Park Tennis Complex.

New lighting has already been installed for all 16 tennis courts. Tennis Facilities Manager for these and many other city-owned tennis complexes Harrell Thomas explained the next phase of renovations will include installing new nets and resurfacing the 14 clay courts.

Boone Park's first tennis courts date back to the 1940s. The tennis clubhouse was built in 1950 and, according to

Riverside Avondale Preservation, "the Park hosted the City's both competitive and public tennis tournaments for decades."

Today, the complex hosts various leagues from the Jacksonville area. Practices, team clinics, and junior workshops are held on weekday evenings. League play takes place on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings and on weekends. There are men and women's leagues as well as mixed doubles.

Boone Park Tennis Complex offers summer camps for Juniors and after school programming is available through the Fall based on age and skill level, however certain enrollment must be reached before a program is established.

According to Thomas, the City wishes to provide low-cost recreation for the community with an on-site tennis pro available for instruction as well as afford families access to clean, wholesome activities through the tennis facilities.

The Boone Park Tennis Complex is located at 3700 Park Street. The hard courts are available Monday thru Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; clay courts are available Monday thru Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 3 to 9 p.m. and on weekends, 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The facilities are open to the general public around league play, by reservation and walk-up. Reservations are encouraged.

Annual fees run Oct. 1 to Sept. 30 and are pro-rated monthly. The fees are: Family \$175; Adult (ages 18-59) \$100; Senior (ages 60+) \$75; and Junior (under 18) \$24. Daily play is available for \$2.52 per 90-minute play; however, these fees are waived for annual members.

For more information about membership, leagues or complex hours, contact Devin Reddick, Boone Park Tennis Complex Pro at (904)-255-6919 or via email at DReddick@coj.net.

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Charlie & Mark Fetzler

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We're confident Trek Bicycle will immediately become a central support network for all cyclists in our community. While there will be some changes, we hope you find them as exciting as we do and know we are leaving you in good hands. The store will be closed briefly in Mid-November for the transition to occur, but we hope you stop in before that to take advantage of all the great deals we have in store.
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Sharing vision for the future

Rotary Club of Jacksonville hosts visiting ophthalmologists in Williams Visionary Scholars Project

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Doctors Jean Claude Niyonzima of Burundi and Duke Mataka of Tonga spoke of their countries, cultures and experiences in ophthalmology at the Sept. 26 meeting of the Rotary Club of Jacksonville.

Niyonzima and Mataka spent just over a week in Jacksonville, visiting and observing the latest techniques in ophthalmology with local practices and clinics before attending AAO 2022, the annual American Academy of Ophthalmology conference, this year held in Chicago.

All this is possible through the Rotary Club of Jacksonville and the Williams Visionary Scholars Project. As Rotary member Dr. William Knauer III explained at the meeting, this project is part of the Rotary Club Host Project, a national and international collaboration between Rotary International and the AAO to bring visiting scholars from developing countries to learn and observe cases and methods with local ophthalmologists.

“This is a good opportunity for me,” said Niyonzima before the meeting began. “One because, for me particularly, it has been the first time coming to the US and the second thing is, during my stay, I’ve been able to visit several clinics and kind of benchmarking what is happening in the developed world

and what can we learn from them, what can we do back home and I’m really happy.”

In Burundi, located in East Central Africa, Niyonzima is one of two ophthalmologists at the rural hospital where he works, which completes 2,500 surgeries a year.

Traveling nearly 40 hours to reach Jacksonville from the South Pacific, Mataka said this experience has been like the “Disney World of ophthalmology.”

“I want to go and make some changes in the way I practice on the other side of the world, especially getting everyone involved,” he added. “I’ve seen how efficient a patient is looked after here because everyone is acting as a team and it makes things easier.”

A nation of 171 islands — with only 45 inhabited — Mataka said his country didn’t have an ophthalmologist for more than a decade. Patients either had to wait for visiting doctors or were sent abroad for treatment.

“We do ophthalmology a little bit different there,” he said. “Ophthalmology practice depends on what instrument and medication is available, but you get to see it here done properly and with a lot of technology — it’s done efficiently.”

Rotary Club Secretary Chris Michalakis serves as the project’s chair. As a retired fighter pilot and international airline pilot, he explained, healthy vision meant the difference between life and death for him.

“Of course it [good vision] is important to everyone, but to me, my life depended on it,” he said. “I’ve had the great gift of great vision for so long. If we could just make one

more person’s life better by being able to see, what a great gift that is.”

Since the program began, the Rotary Club of Jacksonville has hosted doctors from all over the world, including Africa, India, the Philippines and Vietnam. It is an annual program, despite a two-year suspension because of the COVID-19 pandemic, that typically hosts two doctors each year.

It costs \$16,000 for each doctor to participate in the program, Michalakis said.

“The American Academy of Ophthalmology contributes \$8,000 per doctor and invoices our club \$8,000 for each doctor,” he explained in an e-mail. “The Edna Sproull Williams Foundation matches the Rotary Club of Jacksonville’s contributions up to \$4,000. Our membership contributions amount to \$4,000 per doctor.”

While in Jacksonville, the doctors visited with several local clinics and practices — Mayo Clinic-Jacksonville, Nemours Children Health, Jacksonville and Vision is Priceless, among others.

“What distinguishes our club’s international project is truly the global reach and the enduring impact we have for providing the gift of sight to underserved communities,” said Michalakis. “A lot of rotary clubs have international projects, but I think our is, by far-reaching around the world to grab these opportunities for the gift of vision. I think that’s pretty special.”

The Rotary Club of Jacksonville was founded in 1912. It was Florida’s first rotary club.



Rotary Club of Jacksonville President Jim Agee poses with visiting ophthalmologists Drs. Jean Claude Niyonzima of Burundi and Duke Mataka of Tonga. Photo by Michele Leivas.



Dr. Jean Claude Niyonzima speaks at the Sept. 26 meeting for the Rotary Club of Jacksonville. Photo by Michele Leivas.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Jordan joins Baptist Health's Familial Brain Aneurysm Study to help others, ends up saving her own life

Threat discovered during state-funded research screening to assess the hereditary probability of brain aneurysms in families.

Pamela Jordan, 61, wasn't having any symptoms, exercised three days a week and lived a healthy lifestyle; but, because of her family history of aneurysm and stroke, she agreed to participate in Baptist Health's Familial Brain Aneurysm Study. Backed by \$750,000 in grants from the State of Florida, the study allowed Jordan to receive a magnetic resonance angiographic (MRA) scan that provided images of her arteries. Ricardo Hanel, MD, PhD, neurosurgeon and co-medical director of Baptist Stroke & Cerebrovascular Center, evaluated the scan for abnormalities and found a 6mm unruptured aneurysm behind Jordan's right eye.



Pamela Jordan, left, with Dr. Ricardo Hanel

"I wasn't thinking I'd have a problem, but if I can do something to help others, I'm all for it," Jordan said. "I was surprised when they actually found something!"

Dr. Hanel inserted a cylindrical pipeline device to slow the flow of blood into the aneurysm and allow the vessel to heal, making Jordan the first family member to be treated for an aneurysm found during the study.

"Today, we know that if you have two first-degree relatives (mother, father, siblings) with a brain aneurysm, your risk of having an aneurysm increases from 4% to 8%," said Dr. Hanel, the principal investigator of the study. "Discovering Mrs. Jordan's aneurysm in the course of the study is gratifying because we helped prevent a possible emergency situation, and it's further evidence that heredity may play a role in predicting the likelihood of aneurysm in a family line."

Drs. Barron and Islam Join Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons



Dr. Christopher Barron



Dr. Yasmin Islam

Dr. Christopher Barron, cornea specialist, and Dr. Yasmin Islam, glaucoma specialist, have joined the 15-physician group at Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons.

Dr. Barron received his medical degree from, and completed his internship and residency at the University of South Florida College of Medicine. He joined Clay Eye after finishing his cornea and external disease fellowship at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, PA.

"Dr. Barron is a welcomed addition to our team," said Dr. Donald Downer, Clay Eye ophthalmologist and cornea specialist. "He will provide a full complement to the existing care of patients with corneal disease."

Dr. Islam received her medical degree from the University of Florida, and completed her ophthalmology residency there. She completed her internal medicine internship at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and her glaucoma fellowship at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

"As a fellowship-trained glaucoma surgeon, her knowledge and expertise in glaucoma will be invaluable. We have a significant population of glaucoma patients, and with the addition of Dr. Islam, we have now expanded our resources to care for them," said Dr. David Hayes, Clay Eye ophthalmologist and glaucoma specialist.

Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons currently has offices in Orange Park, Fleming Island, Mandarin, Riverside and Middleburg.

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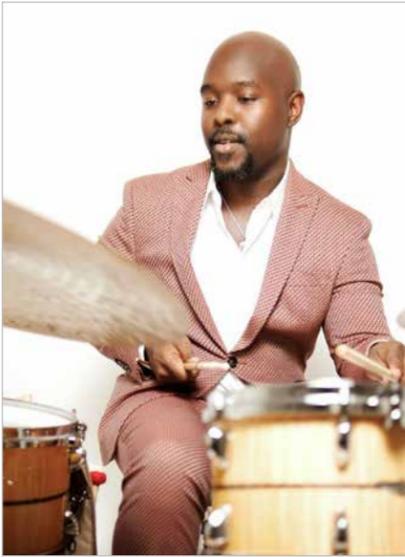
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Ulysses Owens, Jr. Selected for the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award

Grammy award-winning performer, producer and educator uses music to empower Jacksonville youth



Ulysses Owens, Jr. Photo Courtesy of Felicia Bass

Grammy Award-winning jazz percussionist, producer and educator Ulysses Owens Jr. was recently named the 2022 Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award recipient by The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. The award, bestowed annually, recognizes a gifted local artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida. The award is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker and includes a \$10,000 unrestricted grant for the recipient.

A graduate of Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and the Juilliard School of Music, and a Jacksonville native, Owens was called “a drummer who takes a back seat to no one,” by the New York Times. Owens’ artistic command of percussion has earned him positions in some of the most successful jazz ensembles in the world. His accolades are numerous, including being named a Rising Star by DownBeat Magazine five times in a row; the Gold Medal winner in the 2014 Global Music Awards; and a 2015 Jazz at Lincoln Center Awards Honoree. His most notable accomplishments are performances on the 2021 Grammy Award-winning album Dedicated to You, and the 2021 Grammy Award-winning Big Band album, The Good Feeling.

Alongside his international touring schedule, Owens is deeply invested in Jacksonville. In 2008, he was inspired to create a nonprofit organization, Don’t Miss A Beat, with his family as an antidote to the level of high school dropouts and murder rates among young Black people in the community. The program began with the singular objective of helping suspended youth stay in school so they wouldn’t “miss a beat.” Today, Don’t Miss A Beat blends music, art, academic achievement and civic engagement to

enhance the lives of children, teens and their parents in the Riverside, Brooklyn and Woodstock communities of Jacksonville. The organization uses the performing arts to facilitate youth development, cultivate talent, provide academic support, and enhance educational achievement and graduation rates.

“Ulysses’ superior artistry has brought a singular distinction to Northeast Florida. It is this type of dedication to craft Ann McDonald Baker sought to recognize in her lifetime through Art Ventures,” according to Amy Crane, senior program director at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and coordinator of the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award selection process.

“Just as remarkable, through Don’t Miss A Beat, Ulysses has impacted the lives of thousands of young people and their families in Jacksonville. Students have stayed in school, graduated, and received scholarships to colleges. His passion for cultivating young artists by investing in their education has profoundly benefitted our entire community.”

Owens was introduced as the 2022 Ann McDonald Baker Award winner at the Don’t Miss A Beat Summer Camp finale and the Broadway Production of Dreamgirls held last month in Jacksonville.

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Junior Achievement of North Florida adds seven new board members



Nadar Farhat Patty Keenan Jennifer Kirouac Mike Knox Shenani Ranadewa Trish Skoglund Shatara Troy

Junior Achievement (JA) of North Florida has named seven new members to its board of directors:

Nadar Farhat is the managing partner of the Jacksonville office for PwC.

Patty Keenan is the chief learning officer for Miller Electric Company and founder of an executive coaching firm.

Jennifer Kirouac has more than 25 years' banking experience and is currently the vice president, senior business banking relationship manager for First Horizon.

Mike Knox is the senior vice president, relationship manager for PNC Financial Services.

Shehani Ranadewa is an AVP with Deutsche Bank who has helped coordinate several JA fundraisers.

Trish Skoglund is the director of mergers and acquisitions with Crowley and is looking forward to being part of an organization that provides resources for young people regardless of their socio-economic background.

Shatara Troy is a JA alumna who serves as COO of Harbor View Advisors and managing director of the firm's consulting practice area.

These new members are now part of a board made up of 36 community leaders

who volunteer their time and are dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy—three sets of critical life skills that are not always taught in schools.

"[They] reflect the communities we serve and can help to drive our strategic initiatives related to growth and impact," said Meg Rose, Board Chair.

"We welcome everyone to the board and look forward to working together to achieve our mission of inspiring and preparing young people to succeed," said Shannon Italia, President of the organization.

Hooshang Oriental Rugs reaches another milestone



The oldest continuously running business in Avondale celebrated its 45th year in business, as it steadily moves into its 46th year of operation. The shop, owned and curated by Mr. Hooshang Harvesf Ph.D. has been in Historic Avondale through thick and thin in the economy and has always maintained its presence.

"I am truly blessed," said Harvesf, of his longevity as a shop owner and rug importer. "The neighborhood is the best, the people are friendly, and I've always had a special fondness for Avondale." Some have dubbed him the "Mayor of Avondale" for his tenure in business and presence on the Board for the local merchant association, on which he has played every role - from treasurer to president - and is a member emeritus of the group.

By importing, selling and cleaning rugs from all over the world, the shop has always been known as a top resource for discovering the finest hand-knit rugs from the major weaving centers of the world. Homes throughout Northeast Florida and other parts of the country, and the world, are adorned with rugs curated and collected by Harvesf.

Resident Proclamation Thanks Police Officers



Jacksonville residents publicly expressed their gratitude to past and present police officers by endorsing a banner of appreciation. The large proclamation banner, circulated by the We Can Be Heroes Foundation, was presented at the Jacksonville Police Memorial Building on Sept. 15. The proclamation salutes past and present law enforcement officers for selflessly risking their lives to protect individuals, families, neighborhoods and property against crime.

"Sometimes, in the wake of recent tragedies, police officers have not received the gratitude and thanks they deserve," said Beth Heath, president of the We Can Be Heroes Foundation. "This banner reminds law enforcement their service is respected by countless thousands of grateful people in, or passing through, this city."

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A legacy continued: St. Johns Jewelry

A legacy of jewelers continues in the Ortega neighborhood with St. Johns Jewelry. After Frazier Jewelers, a beloved neighborhood institution, closed its doors after nearly 50 years of business, daughter-mother team Sarah St. John Flores and Sonja St. John picked up the jeweled baton by opening St. Johns Jewelry in July of this year at that same location.

“One of our main goals is not just to sell the jewelry, but when someone comes in, we start a conversation with them, we get their names and just kind of continue that relationship,” St. John Flores explained. “We’re very relationship-based, so it’s nice that it’s me and my mom here.”

With a combined 15 years of experience in the jewelry industry, according to its website, the female-owned St. Johns Jewelry team offers appraisals, custom jewelry, jewelry and watch repairs, engravings and pearl stringing.

The store is located at 2925 Corinthian Avenue; its hours are Tuesday thru Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., closed Sunday and Monday.



Sarah St. John Flores and her mother, Sonja St. John, opened St. Johns Jewelry in July of this year, continuing the legacy of jewelry at 2925 Corinthian Avenue, home of former Frazier Jewelers.

Family Promise celebrates milestone anniversary and new Family Resource Center



(Front) From Ortega United Methodist Church: Tony Nasrallah, Sally Tate, Karen Snook, Vicky Yong; (middle) from St. Johns Presbyterian Church: Allison Stanly and Christine Hughes; from Ortega United Methodist Church: Bob and Melodie Brunson, Frank Yong, Sage Peterson, Kathy Story, Kathy Nipper; and (back) from Ortega United Methodist Church: Drew Story, Bill Nipper

More than 200 volunteers, supporters and donors toured the new Family Resource Center for Family Promise of Jacksonville during two open houses on Sept. 18 and 21, 2022. The center is located at 431 University Boulevard North, 32211, in Arlington Congregation Church.

Due to COVID, Family Promise did not have a 15th anniversary celebration in 2020. It combined an 15+1 (16) year celebration with the Open House. Activities included a self-guided tour of the Family Resource Center and a program including a family served by Family Promise as well as speakers on the community need and Family Promise’s vision for the future.

“To better respond to our community’s needs, we needed to increase our capacity. This move allowed Family Promise to expand services and be in the position to serve more families,” said Mark Landschoot, executive director and Lakeshore resident.

Among Family Promise host congregations for its Temporary Shelter program are Lakewood United Methodist Church, Ortega United Methodist, Church, Riverside Park United Methodist, St. John Presbyterian Church and St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Family Promise of Jacksonville is a nonprofit organization with the goal of helping families experiencing or at-risk homelessness to return to stability. It offers three programs focusing on diversion, prevention and temporary shelter. Family Promise collaborates with 15 local congregations, multiple social service organizations and 800 volunteers. The families served have an 80 percent success rate.

Family Promise provides intensive case management focusing on affordable housing, gainful employment, financial awareness, medical needs, childcare and education and other social services needs.

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Barnard To Head Educational Division at Hope Haven



Nancy Barnard

Nancy Barnard, formerly noted for her tutoring business Educational Development Services, is parlaying her 20 years of tutoring and educational experience into a role as head of a new

educational division at Hope Haven. As the Educational Program Director in the Center for Cognitive and Educational Intervention, Barnard will have the opportunity to reach more children and families community.

“I have only addressed the tip of an iceberg that continues to be a barrier to so many children and their educational success,” said Barnard. “I am excited about the opportunity to serve more dyslexic students in Jacksonville. Hope Haven has a history of serving children in Jacksonville that need special services.”

Barnard indicated that an estimated 20% of the population, 25,000 students in Duval County Public Schools, and up to 80% of incarcerated persons are living with dyslexia, and that the pipeline to prison for many of these children begins in the third grade.

She will work closely with neuropsychologist Dr. Allison Cato-Jackson to provide the intervention education that students with dyslexia and other learning challenges need to be successful, as well as offer SAT and ACT support. New goals for the program are to raise awareness of dyslexia in our community, educate teachers on recognizing dyslexia, and train teachers in methods of instruction that best address this pervasive learning disability.

Jessica Finch Joins St. Johns Riverkeeper



Jessica Finch, Photo Courtesy of St. Johns Riverkeeper

Jessica Finch has joined St. Johns Riverkeeper as the Community Engagement Coordinator for Putnam County. She is responsible for raising awareness, engaging residents and leaders, and building support in Putnam County for St. Johns Riverkeeper’s advocacy priorities.

“Rivers have always been a huge part of my life, having spent most of my life living on one. Growing up on the Suwannee gave me an appreciation of the natural beauty and recreational opportunities that are unique to river communities,” she said.

Finch has a keen understanding of the importance of clean and healthy rivers to the economy and quality of life of the local community. One primary focus of her new role will be the restoration of the natural flow of the Ocklawaha River to reunite Silver Springs, the Ocklawaha and the St. Johns.

“The health and vitality of the St. Johns is of utmost importance to the residents of Putnam County. I know that we share the same vision for the river, and I am proud to be a part of the team.”

North Florida Green Chamber names Jessica Tittl as new Executive Director



Jessica Tittl

The North Florida Green Chamber of Commerce (NFGCC) has announced that Jessica Tittl will serve as the new executive director for the four-year old organization.

“We are happy to welcome Jessica Tittl as our executive director,” said Dolly Penland, chair of the North Florida Green Chamber. “Her

impressive professional and educational background, along with her knowledge and passion for sustainability in the corporate environment make her an excellent addition to our team.”

The Green Chamber is a regional organization for all sizes of businesses in Northeast Florida whose mission is to promote the region’s economy by helping businesses thrive with a focus on people, planet, and prosperity for generations to come.

Tittl’s energy and focus are on helping forward-thinking businesses that want to do the right thing and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

“As executive director, I will provide high quality speakers and education and a multitude of networking opportunities for our members, so they have the tools and connections they need to make the best possible decisions regarding sustainability and their business model,” she said. “With the right tools, knowledge, and inspiration our members can make an enormous impact.”

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Celebrating 100 Years of Serving Seniors

The Florida Christian Center will celebrate its 100th Anniversary the week of October 10th, 2022. Activities for residents will include a resident talent show on Monday evening, a Fall Festival on Wednesday, and a dance party on Friday night.

The culmination of the centennial celebrations is open to the community and will take place on Sunday, October 16th from 2-4pm at 1115 Edgewood Avenue South. Games and activities for all ages will start at 2pm on the lawn with a silent auction indoors. The program at 3pm will include live music, recognition of special guests, and a memorable video presentation followed by a cake and punch reception.

Since 1922 when an abandoned military academy on Edgewood Avenue was purchased and turned into The Florida Christian Home of the Aged, the Florida Christian Center - a ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - has been serving senior and disabled adults on this campus. The Florida Christian Center currently serves the more than 300 residents of the subsidized senior housing community of the Florida Christian Apartments and Sundale Manor Apartments by providing a full-time Chaplain/Executive Director and part-time Activity Coordinator to offer activities, spiritual support, educational workshops, exercise classes, art and more to nurture the body, mind, and spirit.

While FCC is a ministry with a history in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the FCC does not discriminate in any way regarding religious background, affiliation, or faith.

City Rescue Mission celebrates dedication



Paul Stasi

City Rescue Mission (CRM) presented their dedication to the Cross of Hope and Garden on the McDuff Campus September 22, 2022.

The Cross of Hope is a symbol of rededication that not only represents CRM's faith in God but gives hope to guests; students and residents that are ready to transition back into society with a new outlook on life because of God's grace. "I believe that seeing this cross every morning on the way to work or school, or on the way home after a tough day, could make the difference and give hope," said Paul Stasi, CRM Executive Director.

A time capsule was also placed into the ground in the garden alongside the Cross-containing a Bible, newsletters, and other memorabilia meant for future generations. The capsule commemorates CRM's Mission and Vision.

Cultural Council and Jacksonville Jaguars partner to bring public art to Miller Electric Center

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville announced a partnership with the Jacksonville Jaguars to infuse public art into the exterior spaces of the Miller Electric Center, the new home of the team's football operations that is currently under construction adjacent to TIAA Bank Field. Public art plans for the space include two freestanding sculptural works on the main plaza, four exterior murals and two sculptural bike racks.

"At the heart of the Miller Electric Center is the Jaguars' firm commitment to the revitalization of Downtown Jacksonville," said Jaguars Owner Shad Khan. "I love art, in all of its forms. I truly believe public art will be essential to ensuring our neighborhood has a unique cultural identity that reflects the pride of our fans, the pursuit of excellence by our football team and the soul of our city. I look forward to seeing how artists from Northeast Florida and beyond are inspired by this challenge."

The 125,000-square-foot Miller Electric Center represents a \$120 million partnership between the City of Jacksonville and the Jaguars. In addition to team facilities such as practice fields, weight rooms and locker rooms, the space will also include enhanced fan amenities such as shaded viewing stands, concessions, and a retail store. The addition of public art to the Miller Electric Center will be fully funded by the Jaguars.

"Together, the arts and athletics have the power to elevate our entire region's quality of life. We commend the Jacksonville Jaguars for opening their Miller Electric Center plans to artists in Northeast Florida and beyond. Their innovative commitment to public art will create positive momentum throughout our creative economy. We seek to inspire other NFL teams and artists to consider new ways to collaborate, both on and off the field, through this partnership," said Diana Donovan, executive director of the Cultural Council.

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville is managing the procurement process, including overseeing the CTAs, reviewing artists submissions, recommending selections for final approval, and managing and administering contracts between the artists and the Jaguars. Installation for the public art projects is anticipated to be complete before the 2023 Jaguars football season begins, which is in alignment with the Miller Electric Center construction timeline.






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HAVE WE MET: A BOUTIQUE SINGLES SOCIAL CLUB



Sandy Bennett

In a society where technology has made everything and everyone available with the tap of a finger, Sandy Bennett wanted to create something that swiping across a screen didn't (always) provide: connection.

After spending much of her time focused on moving to Jacksonville and launching her own business, Bennett found herself with enough free time to consider the singles scene and wasn't thrilled with her options. So she created another option where single professionals could meet and mingle in a casual, safe and pressure-free setting — Have We Met?

Geared specifically for single professionals ages 35 and up, Have We Met? is a "boutique social club curated to spark great relationships." Bennett launched it last year with a beta group of singles at Seasons 52 and is now preparing to host her first official event at the beach this fall on Nov. 3.

"I fall neatly in between online dating and matchmakers," Bennett said, pointing out that other opportunities and venues for singles to meet people — online dating, professional matchmaking or spending an evening out at a bar require time, effort and money people may not be willing to spend.

"I'm gearing it to professionals," she explained. "People who work nine to five or nine to six and they have a lot of commitment and they don't have time to go hang out at bars or those kinds of things. This is a way for professionals to gather and you may meet somebody you like, you may meet somebody that will be a good business connection for you or if you're new

in town, you may make a friend, somebody you can hang with."

Those interested in participating in the Nov. 3 event are encouraged to sign up through the website — www.hwmclub.com. Bennett will contact everyone who signed up once tickets are available for purchase.

The event costs \$40 per person and will include beer, wine and refreshments. Bennett said her beta group held last year was met with high praise. Participants are seated in groups at tables with conversation starters and Bennett was thrilled to see everyone participate and have fun!

Over time, as interest in the club grows, Bennett plans to host various events broken down by age groups, adding "I know there are those people out there who prefer older/younger people and I'll allow for that as well."

Bennett is excited for the potential she believes her club possesses.

"Just the thought that I can bring people together and have some fun," she said. "It's so hard — especially after the pandemic — it is so hard for singles to meet other singles...It's bringing us back to people not being on their cell phones all the time and come in, sit down [and] have conversations."

"If what you are currently doing to meet potential singles isn't working, why not give us a try!"

Visit www.hwmclub.com or call 904-878-5728 to learn more about the social club or to sign up for the Nov. 3 event.

Stars to realign for 2nd annual Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS tournament

BY SAMANTHA FLOM
Resident Community News

Excitement builds as the start date for the second annual Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS tournament is just days away. The tournament begins Monday, Oct. 3 and will run until the 9th. Last year's inaugural tournament raised more than \$1.17 million for local charities and brought golf greats and fans alike to Jacksonville's west side.

"The second annual Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS presented by Circle K will once again feature the top PGA TOUR Champions golfers competing for a \$2 million purse along with a number of unique experiences for attendees," Tournament Director Adam Renfroe advised.

Golfers comprising the tournament's 78-player field include inaugural winner Phil Mickelson and former THE PLAYERS Championship winners Davis Love III and Fred Couples, to name a few. To be held once again at Timuquana Country Club, the event will offer fans an immersive experience with on-site destinations like the Circle K ParTee Porch, Publix Tailgate Village, VyStar Patriots Outpost and FIS First Tee, as well as food and beverage offerings from local vendors and a celebrity golf challenge for charity.

According to Greg Sheara, general manager of Timuquana Country Club, updates have also been made to the course since last fall.

"The club received great feedback from the professionals last year," he said. "And following the completion of the golf course restoration project the last eight months, the club is excited to showcase the course to the Jacksonville community."

Founded by the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation, the tournament aims to raise

funds and awareness for North Florida programs supporting the education, health care, nutrition and safety of children and families in need. Charities selected to benefit from this year's event include Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida, Wolfson Children's Hospital's Family Links program, The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services, the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation, North Florida School of Special Education, the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund and the First Coast YMCA.

Noting that Timuquana members played an instrumental role in securing volunteers and sponsors for the event, Sheara added, "The tournament is a great weekend of fun and camaraderie with our fellow members, but being able to play a small part in supporting the growing charitable programs of the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation means the most."

While the tournament's three rounds of play will take place Oct. 7-9, the week's events will also include Pro-Ams on Oct. 3 and Oct. 5-6, as well as an Oct. 4 military appreciation concert at Daily's Place featuring country music artists Jake Owen and Jordan Davis.

Although the tournament will be broadcast live on the Golf Channel, those who wish to attend can still purchase tickets. General admission starts at \$25, though kids ages 17 and under can attend for free with a ticketed adult.

Courtesy of Vystar Credit Union, complimentary tickets are also available for active duty and retired military, military reserves, National Guard members, veterans and dependents with valid IDs.

Tickets for the Furyk Foundation Concert start at \$39.99, though a limited number of complimentary military tickets are available for that event as well.

For tickets and additional information, visit the tournament website at ConstellationFurykAndFriends.com.



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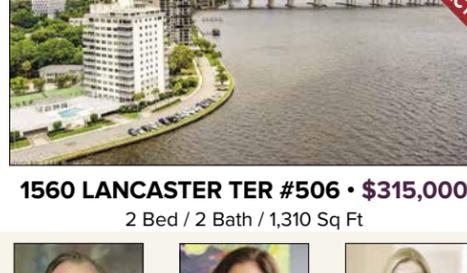
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Florida Forum celebrates 30th Season for Women's Board

Speaker's relevance to Ukraine War, Russian corruption on display

Conspiracy. Crime. Corruption. The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital kicked off the Florida Forum's season with Bill Browder, Sept. 20, with stories that seem stranger than fiction. Mr. Browder entertained the crowd at the Jacksonville Performing Arts Center, his timely talks of corruption painted an interesting picture of Vladimir Putin, his cohorts, and the oligarchs running the county.

As the largest foreign investor in Russia in the early 2000s, he was deemed a 'threat to national security' by Russian officials after unearthing corruption. Alongside his trusted attorney, Sergei Magnitsky, the pair discovered financial crimes against Hermitage Capital Group, Browder's fund, by officials and oligarchs within the Russian state. He lost his friend and attorney Magnitsky, who testified about a massive U.S. \$230 million dollar fraud and was subsequently murdered while imprisoned for his role in unearthing the actors involved. Since 2005, Browder has been on Vladimir Putin's hit list.

Browder has gone on to publish two books about the experiences he has lived. In addition to Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice, in Feb. 2015, and his second book, Freezing Order: A True Story of Money Laundering, Murder, and Surviving Vladimir Putin's Wrath, was recently released in April 2022; Browder continues to fight for policy he's helped to craft regarding visa bans and freezing of assets for human rights abusers around the world. Passage of the Sergei Magnitsky Accountability Act in 2012, as well as the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act of 2016 have been pursued passionately by Browder, who's deep fondness for his friend fuels the fire for further legislative action across the globe.



Beverley Brooke with Avery Williams



Scott Wooten and Grace Martin Wooten



Syd and Deborah Gervin with Mark Hutto



Sue Stepp with Robin Albaneze and Deena Wallace



Jenniver Lavis with Gary Willets, Caroline Nimnicht and Ralston Brooke

Cowford Ball a smash, tickets sold out

This year's Cowford Ball was special, it was sold out early and the crowd was enthused to grow the notoriety amongst a new, energized group of volunteers. The event committee was largely made up of folks that had never attended a Cowford Ball in the past.

The show of support from both businesses, volunteers and participation from donors helped to make this year's event one to remember. With the theme of Life is a Highway, the crowd enjoyed the mechanical bull, some amazing auction items and a mystery box giveaway by Diamonds Direct.

The Chair of the event, Sarah Allen Foster, had a personal connection to the mission of the American Cancer Society after having fought her own battle with childhood cancer. Twenty years later, she welcomed her longtime physician and his spouse, Honorary Chairs Dr. Eric and Marcy Sandler, to join in celebrating fundraising for a Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative. Dr. Sandler was her physician and met her at the tender age of 7, he helped her remain confident in remission and monitored side effects after her battle with High-Risk Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

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Cowford Ball Chair Sarah Foster with Keely Kennedy of ACS

20 Years Celebrated at Delicious Destinations

After a two-year hiatus, Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation once again hosted Delicious Destinations in-person – just in time for the event's 20th anniversary. This year's premier food and wine event, presented by Miller Electric, raised \$298,000 in critical funds for the organization's community outreach programs, which connect those in need with quality, compassionate healthcare. The event was held Sept. 9 and 10 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, where some of the city's most celebrated chefs guided attendees on a culinary voyage across the historic Spice Route via dishes inspired by regions that stretch from Japan and Indonesia to India and the Mediterranean.



Dick Morales & Marcia Morales pose with daughter Marcia Morales Howard and son-in-law Laurence Howard at Delicious Destinations 2022



Aaron Bean, Mark Scruby, Virginia Hall, Abby Bean, and Randy Goodwin enjoy Delicious Destinations 2022



Chefs from Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation's 20th Annual Delicious Destinations receive kudos from the crowd



Delicious Destinations Committee Members pause for a quick picture to celebrate the success of the 20th annual event



Katherine and Nate Sherman



Nicole Lewis with Will Courtney and Mallory Hendrix



Debi Kopp with Jessica Wynne, Keely Kopp, Ryan Day and Nina Sloan



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Community Foundation launches A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity & Impact Fund

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

On Aug. 19, the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida launched the A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity and Impact Fund, a new collective giving fund “to attract and deploy assets in the community to ignite transformational change in Jacksonville’s Black communities.”

Conversations surrounding the fund first began in 2020 with community leaders to explore what could be done to resolve “the issues that plague the Black community,” explained Wanda Willis, Community Foundation vice president of civic leadership.

Those discussions and subsequent research helped identify the fund’s three focus areas: economic development, education and healthcare.

The online brochure about the A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity and Impact Fund explained while these three factors are “key determinants of human wellbeing...Black communities in Jacksonville experience significant disadvantages and challenges in each area. Investing in solutions that drive the elimination of these inequities will support the strengthening of Black communities and the organizations that serve them.”

The fund is named for Jacksonville’s renowned Black philanthropist. In 1901, he helped found the Afro-American Life Insurance Co. Later, in 1935, Lewis co-founded American Beach. According to the A.L. Lewis Museum, American Beach was “an oceanfront resort where African Americans could



Some members of the A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity & Impact Fund Founder’s Circle. Photo courtesy of The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida (Photographer: laird).

enjoy ‘recreation and relaxation without humiliation’ during the Jim Crow era.”

The fund was officially launched at the Community Foundation’s Aug. 19 donors’ forum to focus on “the impact and legacy of Black philanthropy,” Willis explained.

Dr. Johnetta Betsch Cole, the great-granddaughter of A.L. Lewis — who allowed the fund to use her great-grandfather’s name and likeness — is a founding member of the fund and an honorary member of the its Founders’ Circle.

“It was quite special to have her as part of this initiative,” Willis said. “She was certainly part of some of the earlier conversations in pulling together this fund and it was just so befitting with her great-grandfather having been one of the first Black philanthropists in the state of Florida to lend his name in support of this fund.”

Cole said when the Community Foundation first approached her about this, her reaction was one of “gratitude and pride.” “Gratitude that my great-grandfather’s name will be associated with a philanthropic effort that just seems to be so connected to who he was, what he did and what he hoped would be,” Cole recalled. “[and] pride that the town that I grew up in — and those were not good days from my perspective, those were days of just unceasing racial discrimination and legal

segregation — and so how proud I am that the city that I grew up in is now at a point where it acknowledges not only the great work of a man named A.L. Lewis but the need for those of us who have been blessed to remember our responsibility to give back.”

A grant-making process is expected to launch in early 2023, Willis explained. Once the grant applications are available, a committee will help determine how and where the funds will be distributed.

As a collective giving fund, this initiative is comprised of funds given by many donors rather than a single person.

Those interested in helping can visit www.jaxcf.org/black-philanthropy for more information or to make a gift. The Community Foundation also accepts “legacy gifts” where donors designate a portion of their estate to the fund.

Cole said witnessing this fund come to be has filled her with “amazement and joy” and stands in testament to the lesson her great-grandfather passed on to his family and “anyone who would listen.”

“His lesson was there must be a ratio between what you have and what you give,” she said. “...Everybody can give something. Those of us who have been fortunate must give the most.”



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What happens if you die without a Will in Florida?



KATHERINE SCHNAUSS NAUGLE

Your estate plan addresses issues beyond those merely contained in a final Will. A proper estate plan is a collection of documents dealing with potential issues of mental infirmities and impending death (your financial and healthcare powers of attorney), as well as detailing how your assets get distributed (your Will or living trust).

While a proper estate plan is more than just your Last Will and Testament (or perhaps Living Trust), in this article, I focus on what happens to your estate if you pass away without one of these instruments.

First, I want to emphasize that the need for a Will is not limited to wealthy families. You may hear the word “estate” and immediately think of mansions and sprawling grounds, but you don’t have to be wealthy to have an estate. From a legal standpoint, an estate is simply the collection of property you either own or have some other legal interest in at the time of your death. Therefore, your estate includes any real estate, physical personal property, bank accounts, intellectual property, business interests, or other assets that have value. If you die without the appropriate document in place, the State of Florida decides who gets these assets for you.

The Florida Probate Code lays out the legal framework for how a Court determines your assets’ allocation. This allocation can be complex depending on your specific circumstances. For instance, cases of subsequent marriages with children from prior relationships are particularly complex, and often represent the most acrimonious cases.

After you die, if you have assets in your name individually that do not name beneficiaries, your next of kin (or some other responsible individual) will open probate in the county in which you resided at death. If there is no Will, the probate court will appoint a Personal Representative (not of your choosing, but pursuant to Florida Statutes) to gather your assets, pay any outstanding estate debts, in line to inherit, and distribute the assets under the terms of Florida Statutes. The Personal Representative is entitled to be paid from your estate for this work.

You may avoid probate for some assets through the use of beneficiary designations. These assets include retirement accounts, insurance policies, and real estate titled a specific way. However, your general financial accounts without named beneficiaries or

joint owners go through probate. If you have an asset with a named beneficiary, and that named beneficiary is not living at the time of your death, then that asset will need to go through probate if the beneficiary has predeceased you.

The Florida Probate Code, specifically sections 732.101 to 732.111, dictates asset distribution as follows:

- 1) A surviving spouse gets everything if:
 - a. You have no surviving children, grandchildren, or other descendants; or,
 - b. All your children are your spouse’s children.
- 2) If you have children, grandchildren, or other descendants that are not descendants of your spouse, your surviving spouse gets one-half the estate, and your descendants share the other half of the estate, “per stirpes.”
 - a. Under a “per stirpes” distribution, each descendant gets an equal share. If a descendent predeceases you, their share is divided equally to their descendants.
- 3) If you have no spouse, your children will inherit your assets, again per stirpes. (I should note that if you die while in the process of divorce, your separated spouse continues to be eligible to inherit until the divorce is final.)
- 4) If you have no spouse or descendants, your estate passes upward to parents and grandparents.
- 5) If no parent/grandparent survives to inherit your estate, then the estate passes to siblings and their children, per stirpes.
- 6) The Personal Representative will need to expand the search to cousins, second cousins, etc.; if no one can inherit under one of the above rules.
- 7) If, after a reasonable and extensive search, the Personal Representative cannot locate any family, the State of Florida will take possession of your estate. The property is said to “escheat” to the State.

Once the Personal Representative establishes the familial relationships, the Court has no leeway in distributing the assets (except in the extreme case that one of those inheriting caused your death). For example, in the scenario where your estate goes to your siblings, your wealthy brother, to whom you

have not spoken to in fifty years, gets the same share as your medically fragile sister with whom you had weekly dinners.

Even if you are comfortable with the ultimate distribution of your assets under the probate code, you may not want the recipient to gain immediate access to those assets. Florida statutes require a guardianship to be established to oversee the minor child’s financial interests if they inherit more than \$15,000.00 in assets. A guardianship is a Court supervised proceeding where the funds are protected for the child. However, the guardianship ends when the child turn 18 years old. Therefore, your child gains unrestricted access at that point. Additionally, a guardianship is expensive and time consuming and can be avoided with proper estate planning.

It may not be advisable for that child to immediately be able to access significant assets. After all, what could possibly go wrong with giving an eighteen-year-old a significant lump sum of money? (insert laugh here). A properly written Will can provide delayed access to the assets, perhaps providing access on a graduated schedule or tied to life events such as college graduation or marriage.

In addition to the financial issues, a properly drafted Will addresses non-financial issues such as who should care for your children if both parents are deceased. While this is not a “probate” issue per se, the State’s family court will often default to the closest suitable relative without such provisions. Such a decision may be appropriate, but sometimes the closest suitable relative is not the best choice. As a parent, it would be better if you made the choice rather than the court.

For a host of reasons, it is advisable to have a proper estate plan in place. Some of the most complicated probates we handle are dealing with estates where the person passed away without a Will (intestate). Please feel free to call us if we can assist you in preparing estate planning documents at (904)366-2703 or visit our website at knaugle@jaxlawteam.com.



Chairs rally support for opening of Florida Forum

Committees, leadership gathered to raise a toast

The home of Beth and Billy Morris welcomed leadership and committee members of the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital's Florida Forum to a kickoff party, Sept. 7. The lineup for the season's festivities was toasted by Chairs Beverley Brooke and Sharon Pentaleri, alongside President Robin Albanese, as the ladies discussed the fundraising goals that ultimately aid children of the community in need of world-class healthcare.

The first installment was the timely visit from Bill Browder, Sept. 20, and the next installments of visiting speakers for the Forum's 30th Season are Jenna Bush, best-selling author and daughter of former President, George H.W. Bush, slated for Nov. 8; and Allyson Felix, an Olympic track and field gold medalist (seven), who is set to appear Jan. 8, 2023.

The special reception reflected upon the hostess' Chairing of the first Florida Forum, as Beth Morris presided over the initial kickoff that welcomed an all-star lineup of Charles Kuralt, Lou Holtz and Margaret Thatcher to Jacksonville thirty years ago.



Katherine Forrester with Kelly Kunz



Mary Jane Allegro with Curry Cozzi, Mary Shaffer Sealey, Caroline Nimnicht and Ann Miller



Beverley Brooke with Robin Albanese and Sharon Pentaleri



Ashley Howard with Kendra McCrary, Heather Moseley and Miles Scheuthv



Beth Morris with her daughter Mary Jane Allegro

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Freed to Run draws big rivalries for Legal Aid

Marathon from Tallahassee to Jacksonville endows medical legal partnership

Members of the Jacksonville Bar Association (JBA) representing Big Law, alternative dispute resolution and solo/small firms are entering into an epic battle to see who can garner the most support for Freed to Run 6.0, which is expected to fully fund an endowment for Jacksonville Area Legal Aid's Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership (NFMLP) this November.

In this three-way showdown, teams called Too Big to Fail (Big Law), Neutrals Never Quit (JBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Practitioners committee) and Too Small to Fall (Solo and Small-Firm committee) will use sheer will and persuasion to determine who can:

- sign up the most JBA members,
- run the most aggregate miles, and
- raise the most money for JALA's NFMLP.

Each group will field a relay team to run in the last of the six Freed to Run marathons, which will be run on Saturday, Nov. 19. Freed to Run will provide buses to transport runners from the Duval County Courthouse to the start at the Baker County Courthouse in MacClenny, and to pick up and drop off relay participants along the route.

The NFMLP provides civil legal aid to pediatric patients and their families to help the children overcome barriers to their wellness, including landlord-tenant, health coverage, family law, and other issues.

Gunster shareholder Asghar Syed, captain of Too Big to Fail, said he thinks Big Law is going to crush it.

"As we all know, 'Size matters,'" Syed said. "And we're out to prove it yet again. But in the end, this is all for the kids, so whether we win or lose, the kids win."

Robert Travieso of The Travieso Law Firm, captain of Too Small to Fall, agreed.

"We are having a lot of fun with the rivalry, but only to draw attention to this very important issue," Travieso said. "Children who are already dealing with health issues



Michael Freed, of the Gunster Law firm, founder and namesake of the Freed to Run marathon fundraiser for Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, poses for a photo front of a sponsor lineup.

shouldn't have to worry about things like being denied insurance coverage or substandard housing conditions that are making their health matters worse. By permanently funding the NFMLP, we are ensuring they'll have a lawyer in their corner."

Jennifer Grippa of Miles Mediation and Arbitration, co-captain of Neutrals Never Quit along with Penny Schmidt of Jax Mediation Center, said she's happy to be part of a truly "healthy" competition.

"Of course, I never take sides, so it's nice that all of our teams are in total agreement here," Grippa said. "We all have the

same goal in our sights, which is to put the NFMLP endowment over the top."

All donations go to endow the NFMLP and are matched at 125% by Baptist Health up to \$1.25 million. With the match, the six-year fundraising total is expected to reach the goal of \$2.25 million to fully fund the endowment by the end of the year.

To register with or support one of the teams, visit:
 Too Big to Fail | www.jaxlegalaid.org/toobig
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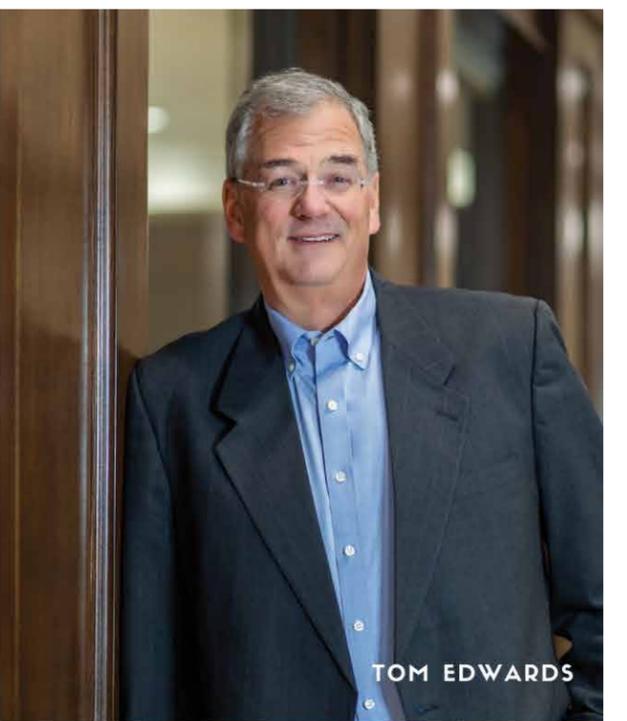
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ERIC RAGATZ

Community First Igloo promises to be 'the coolest place in Jacksonville'

BY KAREN RIELEY
Resident Community News

The promise of Jacksonville becoming a world-class destination for ice sports will soon be realized with the anticipated opening of the Community First Igloo in the Fall, according to Jacksonville Icemen President Bob Ohrablo. The Prescott Group, owners of the 38-acre property known as San Marco East Plaza (SMEP) sold the Jacksonville Ice & Sportsplex at I-95 and Emerson St. to an affiliate of the Jacksonville Icemen hockey team in March 2021.

In August 2021, Community First announced that it agreed to a 10-year naming rights agreement. Community First members will benefit through a complete discount and engagement package just for them. The credit union signed up as a season sponsor during the team's inaugural year in 2017 and expanded its support and engagement with the team during the last five years.

"With the city's investment, the Icemen's investment and now our partnership, while this facility will serve as the HQ for the Icemen along with the team's practice facility, we're most excited about doubling up the commitment to ice sports for everyone in our community," said John Hirabayashi, CEO and president of Community First. "This is the only ice facility



Community First Igloo Exterior



Community First Igloo Front Entrance

in our city, and we're thrilled to play a part in bringing ice sports to all generations, especially underserved youth here in Jacksonville."

Community First Igloo will become the official practice home of the Jacksonville Icemen, with the Icemen games continuing to be played at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena.

The renovation project is being developed and managed by Icemen Igloo, LLC, a Zawyer Sports company, which also owns the Jacksonville Icemen. The expanded facility, with two sheets of ice, will provide a variety of benefits including youth sports, tournaments and increased opportunities for hockey and figure skating, while still providing public skate sessions and learn to skate programs.

The original rink remained opened while the newly constructed one was built. Once the new sheet of ice was ready, all events were moved there and the original side was closed for renovations of locker rooms, construction of the Icemen locker room and a complete rebuild of the ice rink itself.

"It's going to be one of the premier skating centers in the Southeast," said Bob Ohrablo, Jacksonville Icemen president. "It will be a family entertainment center - the coolest place in Jacksonville."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29...

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Jacksonville Icemen Locker Room

“It’s also going to attract people from out of town who will fill hotels and restaurants. They are used to driving past Jacksonville to south Florida for hockey and skating tournaments, so now we’ll save them time and offer them a new facility,” he said.

“This facility will be a destination, and we think it will be the best ice complex across the Southeast,” said Hirabayashi. “With the expansion of this facility to two ice sheets we’re catching up with other cities in Florida. We hope this world-class facility encourages more growth and investment in the San Marco East area.”

“There’s so much great momentum in the area with new apartments being built, ALDI grocery store opening and now the Icemen Igloo opening soon,” said Bryan Croft, a current San Marco East Business Association board member and CEO of HC Brands, which

is located off St. Augustine Road in San Marco East. “We’re so excited to have Andy and the team come to San Marco East. They bring new energy around hockey and youth hockey, and the restaurant will be a new gathering space that we haven’t had in the area in a long time.”

Once completed, the facility will include two NHL/ECHL regulation-size ice rinks, a sports bar, a pro shop for hockey equipment and Icemen merchandise, an E-center sports arena, meeting rooms for corporate and private use, and the Jacksonville Sports Hall of Fame. The sports bar will have floor-to-ceiling windows to enable guests to eat and drink while viewing the rinks.

The Jacksonville Hall of Fame will be named for the Nimnicht family. Brothers Billie and Lee Nimnicht are part owners of the Icemen.



The Community First Igloo will include two ice rinks. The second ice rink was built first so that people could continue to skate at the facility during renovations.

“Our grandfather and father installed a sense of community in us. We have always been involved in a lot of sports sponsorships and in Jacksonville University,” Billie Nimnicht said. “My grandfather in 1953 and father in 1983 were both past chairman of the Gator Bowl, and my mother became the first woman to be chairman of The Players Championship in 1997. Lee will be the TPC chairman in 2023. It’s a passion and a joy, not an obligation or just an advertising opportunity, to support the Icemen Igloo and team.”

“With the completion of the Community First Igloo, we’re moving closer to realizing our vision of a place where commerce and community come together in an amazing environment,” said Frank Cofer, Prescott Group managing director.

“The Community First Igloo will bring a presence of diverse and fun amenities for the employees at San Marco East Plaza never before seen, thereby enhancing the work/life balance for everyone,” said Tammy Jones, sales associate for Meek, the property managers of SMEP.

The Team Store and Pro Shop are now open, though hours of operation vary by day and week. Please visit the Community First Igloo for more details. The venue’s bar and grill is expected to open later this year. According to Ohrablo, the second ice sheet will be in mid-October.

“The whole thing including the administrative offices should be completed by the beginning of November,” he added.

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LOCAL FOLKS

Evan Tucker



Evan Tucker

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Evan Tucker is a Lakeshore man who works throughout Jacksonville as a tangible asset manager of estate properties, boats, and airplanes. In fact, he's an aviation expert, serving as a private pilot and an aircraft mechanic. He is also co-founder of the nonprofit Cowford Conservation, which represents sportsmen in the Jacksonville area. The mission is to preserve Old Florida's outdoor heritage with a main focus on improving the river. His free time is spent toward those efforts.

"I'm a big family man, too," Tucker said. He's been married for 16 years to Carolyn, a Jacksonville girl who was raised on the west side of the river. They have two sons: three-year-old Elijah and four-month-old Ripley. "I'm very proud of what we've created," he said.

Evan Tucker, even as husband and father, is an outdoorsman through and through. He has spent his whole life on the water in and around Jacksonville and beyond. While growing up in East Arlington, he often went fishing with his dad. His family had always abided by the rules set forth by the government; if it were legal to do so, they kept and ate what they caught.

But as he grew, Tucker began to notice rapid changes on the St. Johns River. The number of fish decreased as the water quality diminished. He became more aware. The more he learned, the more he researched, and the more intimate he became with the natural resources surrounding us.

Tucker is 40 now, and he knows that when his parents were his age, the river was very different from what it is today. There were so many more fish swimming

around. Tucker knows that if harvesting continues, there will be nothing left. He decided, "Just because something is allowed or legal doesn't mean it's right."

Today, Tucker still fishes on the St. Johns and the Intracoastal. He targets redfish, his favorite species locally, and he likes tarpon, too, when they are in season. But today, he mostly catches and releases them. Rarely does he harvest anymore, as he has learned the damage that too much of it does. He prefers to practice sustainable fishing. He's careful about their handling. Tucker feels that, if done correctly, the catch and release method offers a very high success rate of survival. "There's plenty of science behind it," he said. Periodically, he does keep the fish he catches; he's not opposed to others doing so too. "I just don't think that every one you catch you should keep," he said.

Tucker didn't hunt with his dad the way they used to fish together, but his natural love for the outdoors expanded into hunting as he got older. As the local region is too developed and populated for hunting, Tucker travels to Clay County for that or even farther to Hawthorne in Alachua County. Seasonally, he likes to hunt deer, pigs, and turkeys.

The fact that Tucker is a nonprofit conservationist and at the same time a hunter is a stigma he carries, one that he is quick to dispel. "Hunters and fishermen are the largest conservationists in the world," he said. He claims to know more about the species he chases than anyone who doesn't. He knows their habitat and their reproductive rates. He respects animals and cares deeply about their survival. "Harvesting them doesn't mean obliterating them. Hunting is actually the inverse. There

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35...

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The Tuckers

has to be a sustainable harvest for the species to thrive," Tucker said. If not, overpopulation leads to habitat issues, and the species could die out from starvation and disease.

So, Tucker is protecting life as he hunts, just as he does with his catch-and-release fishing, but in a different way. Tucker said that the fish live in a changing environment with out-of-control pollution declining water quality that is dramatically reducing the habitat, so the fish here are a lot more delicate than the land animals.

"I like to fish and hunt. A lot. But I love my family more. And I spend as much time with them as I possibly can," Tucker said. Together, they spend time on and in water. Of course, they have their own boat. Often, they climb aboard and head to Timuquana Country Club, where they are members, and spend time at the pool there. At other times, they spend time fishing together. Tucker is already teaching Elijah to fish. In fact, he recently took him shrimping. Someday soon enough, Ripley's turn will come.

Friends of James Weldon Johnson Park rolls out strategic plan for oldest city park

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The Friends of James Weldon Johnson Park (FOJWJP) rolled out its strategic plan for the park at an August board meeting.

The plan spans the next three years and is a four-pronged comprehensive guide covering funding, awareness, identity and a park redesign.

The plan was approved unanimously.

James Weldon Johnson Park is the oldest and most historic city park in Jacksonville. It was re-named after "native son, civil rights leader, poet, educator, lawyer and diplomat" James Weldon Johnson in 2020 after going through several different names since its creation in 1866.

FOJWJP Executive Director Liz McCoy said part of the organization's mission is to make sure the park "represents our ideals and our values, which one of them is to make sure the park is welcoming."

To that end, McCoy explained, an update to the park's aesthetics and design is in order to replace some of the park's outdated and out-of-fashion features from its last design in 1977. While there are no design proposals currently drawn up, McCoy said, this plan "formalizes our intent to work with the city on a design for the future and the city and FOJWJP will work together on funding, of course appealing to City Hall and council members to fund the process."

The organization plans to launch a capital campaign to provide some of the funds required

for the redesign as well, she added. James Weldon Johnson Park is a city park, so McCoy stressed the importance of meeting the city's timelines for the park as well as FOJWJP's.

When FOJWJP was first founded in 2014, the park was in a "pretty dire" state, McCoy said. The organization's first mission was to make the park a safe, welcoming and clean space. Now that that's been achieved, she said, "now it's time to take it to this next level. So that's why we created the strategic plan in the first place."

In a press release on FOJWJP's website announcing the strategic plan, the organization explained that its strategic plan committee was comprised of community leaders "representing a cross-section of civic and cultural stakeholders." The companies and organizations included Visit Jacksonville, the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, Build Up Downtown, Jacksonville Urban League Young Professionals, City of Jacksonville's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, MOCA Jacksonville, Heritage Capital, The Jessie and the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. A downtown Jacksonville resident also sat on the strategic planning committee, as well as various representatives from FOJWJP itself.

"Our team is very excited to continue the partnership, to work with them to reach their goals and energize the downtown area," said Amber Sesnick, director of communications and marketing for MOCA Jacksonville as well as the MOCA liaison for FOJWJP. "...Bringing more people to downtown and energizing this space can do nothing but good things for the downtown area."



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BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA
Resident Community News

The canine and officer explosives detection teams that graduate from the Transportation Security Administration's \$12 million Canine Training Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas protect people and transportation hubs by detecting and locating explosives. Among those graduates are Jacksonville's TSA-trained bomb-sniffing canines and the officers who handle them. These local, expert TSA canine explosives

detection teams protect and patrol Jacksonville International Airport, Jaxport, Duval County Courthouse, attend major local events and respond to threats.

With the mission to protect citizens and the nation's transportation system from explosives, TSA canine teams work to ensure safe travel to and from destinations whenever passengers in Jacksonville or elsewhere in the U.S. board an airplane, bus, train, ship, ferry, or subway. Approximately 100 TSA teams are assigned to U.S. airports, mass transit, and maritime sites. At any given time, more than 1,000 TSA canine teams are on active duty throughout the country.

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Training Officer & Canine at TSA Canine Training Center

NFL playoffs, or a Super Bowl, celebrate the nationally televised July Fourth celebration from the U.S. Capitol, crowd sidewalks at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or New Year's Eve Countdowns, TSA canine explosives detection teams are present to patrol and protect. The teams also serve as a visible deterrent to terrorism, acts of violence, criminal activity and support other security missions when needed.

About forty percent of those officers who graduate from the TSA Canine Training Center are TSA inspectors. Approximately sixty percent of the graduates are local or state law enforcement officers from police departments across the country who travel to the center to be trained and paired with a TSA explosives detection canine. After the first week in the program, officers are assessed by trainers who pair them with compatible canines.

Most canine handlers accepted into the TSA Canine Training Program are already TSA officers with some canine or military experience. Other applicants must have law enforcement, military or canine experience to be considered for acceptance by the program.

Once the TSA national canine training center partners with a police department, that relationship continues past a team's graduation, according to Patricia Mancha, TSA Spokesperson-San Antonio. She described it as a partnership to maximize and further extend the capabilities of trained teams and TSA's commitment to protecting the nation. She said that locations with no TSA canine explosives detection teams at smaller airports would be an example. The local police department would deploy their TSA canine team to that airport in response to any threat and vice versa.

TSA's canine training center is the second largest such program in the U.S., second only

to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-Department of Defense canine unit, according to Mancha. The center hires professional actors of all ages, appearances, and ethnicities, complete with actual luggage, to serve as passengers. Every effort is made to duplicate a typical airport's activity, sights, sounds, and smells.

The training center has seventeen indoor venues that look like full-scale transportation sites. There is an airport terminal, gate area, cargo loading, checkpoint areas, baggage claim, full-size airplanes, interiors, and cargo belly. There is a vehicle parking lot, a light rail station and railcars, an air cargo facility, two mock terminals, and open area search venues for air scent detection training.

The scope of the TSA program increases the graduates' capacity for rapid response, deployment, and successful explosives detection anywhere there is a threat to citizens or the U.S. transportation system. The teams also



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continuous training and require annual re-certification.

The annual on-site TSA Canine Team Re-certifications that are required continually assess and ensure that both canines and handlers demonstrate proficiency in their home environment. Four key elements are evaluated: the canine's ability to recognize explosives odors, the handler's ability to interpret the canine's change of behavior, the handler's ability to conduct logical and systematic searches and the team's ability to locate the explosives odor source.

Only seven dog breeds qualify for the TSA Canine Training Program. They are purchased from specialized U.S. and European breeders who adhere to strict TSA requirements. Both male and female dogs are eligible: German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, German Short-haired Pointers, Wirehaired Pointers, Vizslas, Belgian Malinois, and Golden Retrievers.

TSA trainers choose canines specifically bred for their size, intelligence, scent detection ability, athleticism, endurance, energy level, work ethic, focus, and trainability. The trainers travel to evaluate potential dogs in a lengthy process of screening and tests before final selection.

Because of the stringent selection criteria and testing, only a low percentage of selected dogs fail to graduate from the program. After dogs and officers are evaluated and matched as a team based on trainer assessment, they begin the training program. The program consists of work with various explosives based on intelligence data and emerging threats in cooperation with the FBI.

Conventional explosives detection canines and handlers undergo an eleven-week training program costing approximately \$33,000. Passenger screening canines and handlers

complete a sixteen-week training program costing roughly \$46,000.

The teams graduate from the TSA Canine Training Program after demonstrating proficiency in multiple transportation environments: airport, terminal, freight, cargo, baggage, vehicle, bus, ferry, and rail. After teams graduate, they return to their assigned duty station at a TSA site or a police department to acclimate and familiarize the canine with their operational environment and duties.

TSA explosives detection canines are much like elite athletes. Their daily schedule is closely monitored to enable them to perform their duties at peak ability for maximum longevity. They are fed specific diets for optimal health and performance. They are weighed daily, with monthly veterinarian check-ups, and maintain structured work and rest schedules.

Before its administration by the TSA - which was created in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks — the first federal explosives detection canines program was part of the Federal Aviation Authority by order of President Richard Nixon. In 1972 he called for a national project to protect civil aviation — an FAA Explosives Detection Canine Team Program - after a bomb-sniffing dog prevented a near-catastrophic event on board a U.S. commercial airplane during flight.

On March 9, 1972, that flight on Trans World Airlines took off from JFK International Airport in New York. Moments into the flight, the airline received an anonymous phone call warning that a bomb was set to explode onboard. The aircraft returned to JFK, passengers evacuated, and a bomb-sniffing dog named Brandy rushed to search the plane. Brandy found the explosive device just twelve minutes before it was set to detonate.



Jacksonville TSA canine team

utilize a variety of training venues in and around the San Antonio metropolitan area, including the San Antonio International Airport, local shopping malls, the ATT Center, and the VIA Bus Terminal. Through such extensive and comprehensive training, the TSA canine teams offer one of the most effective means of detecting explosives threats, according to Sari Koshetz, TSA Spokesperson-Florida.

Koshetz emphasized that TSA canines can efficiently screen large numbers of passengers in numerous transportation facility types and locations, under all conditions, including terminals, vessels, vehicles, buildings, baggage, and cargo. Each TSA canine's extraordinary sense of smell is fine-tuned through intense, specific training they receive at the center. The canines and officers also complete

TSA would like the public to know that while TSA canines live and work with their officer handlers and enjoy a healthy life/work balance, treats are never handed to them. The dogs work to earn rewards or a chew toy after the successful completion of their jobs. Because of their strict diet and training, TSA representatives respectfully request that the public restrain children and never approach, touch, pet, feed, or distract working TSA explosives detection canines. A request for a photo is acceptable, but please honor the officer's response as these teams focus on their critical jobs protecting the public.



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JUNIOR RESIDENTS

St. Johns Celebrates 69 Years



Thank you to the many supporters who helped make the Ron Angie Bare Playground a reality!



Lane Courtney and William Courtney wait anxiously for the playground to open



George Friedline (far right) with first grader and fellow Seniors Emerson Cooper and Andrew Hightower



Owene Weber hugs Head of School Valorie Baker



Kirkwood Weber takes a turn down the slide

Students, parents, alumni, faculty and friends of the St. Johns Country Day School gathered on Sept. 14 in celebration of Founders Day, which was highlighted by a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the highly anticipated new play space.

"Today we recognize traditions, and enjoy a new beginning while celebrating 69 years of St. Johns Country Day School," said Head of School Valorie Baker.

"The new Ron & Angie Bare Playground is a beautiful, functional space that provides areas for free play, individual exercise, and team sports," said Baker, as Board President Gene Nichols joined her to thank the many supporters who made the new space possible.

In its 69 years, St. Johns has come a long way from its original home on the second floor of a public building at the corner of Park Avenue and Kingsley. Founded by Dr. Edwin P. Heinrich and Mrs. Dorothea Heinrich on Sept. 14, 1953, St. Johns started with 26 students. It now serves students as young as three through grade 12, and is ranked the #1 College Prep Private High School in Jacksonville.

Chace Caven named 2023 National Merit Semifinalist



Chace Caven

High school senior Chace Caven has been named a 2023 National Merit Semifinalist. He is one of over 16,000 semifinalists in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, and will vie for 7,250 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million that will be offered next spring. Semifinalist

honorees represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, including the highest-scoring entrants in each state.

Caven started high school at Stanton College Preparatory School before switching to home school his junior year. His score on his junior-year Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test enabled his entry to the 68th annual program.

The program was established in 1955 to honor the nation's scholastic champions, and encourage the pursuit of academic excellence. To become a finalist, consideration will be given to Caven's academic record, school and community involvement, leadership abilities, employment and awards received. He must also have high SAT or ACT scores, write an essay and be recommended by a high school official. National Merit Scholarship winners will be announced April-July 2023.

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Brianna Kilcullen A Champion For Sustainability

Bishop Kenny Alumna Develops Environmentally-friendly Hemp Towel



Brianna Kilcullen

Brianna Kilcullen, 2007 graduate of Bishop Kenny High School, is driving textile sustainability through her actions, and her hemp towel company, Anact. After graduating George Washington University with an International Business degree, Kilcullen worked to increase sustainability in production and supply chains for large clothing manufacturers like

Under Armour and prAna. While on a work trip to China, she was introduced to the bacteria-resistant properties of hemp and began researching the viability of a hemp towel. Having grown up in Florida's hot and muggy environment, the fiber appeared to be a better alternative to help towels dry properly.

Thus, Anact was established in 2019, and is currently the only company to offer exclusively hemp towels. It was featured on Good Morning America in 2021 and now offers towels and totes developed from sustainable, quick-dry hemp fibers, which Kilcullen helped get legalized in Florida in 2019.

When asked how the name came about, she said that Anact is short for "an act," like an act of kindness, an act of goodwill, or simply creating an impact. Her goal of Anact is to create a socially responsible product that spurs a movement to solve problems and make things better. Kilcullen credits her faith in God for guiding her through this journey. Her love of the environment and creating a more sustainable world has shaped her drive to focus on the responsibilities of the textile industry and its impact on the world today.

West Riverside Elementary School Brings Its "A" Game



Photo courtesy of West Riverside Elementary School

West Riverside Elementary School (WRES), Florida's oldest operating elementary school, entered this 2022-2023 school year as an A-rated school. Located in the heart of the historic district, on Herschel Street, WRES is a Dual Language Magnet School with a neighborhood general education tract. Talya Taylor, the school principal, asserted that the factors that led to the A achievement were intentional scheduling, a focus on state standards, parental involvement, and talented teachers and staff.

"West Riverside is a special place for students to feel included, learn, take risks and find a family," said Taylor. For the 2022-2023 school year, Taylor would like to embrace the new state standards with hands-on, project-based learning for the students.

The use of school grades provides an easily understandable metric to measure the performance of a school. Parents and the general public can use the school grade and its associated components to understand how well each school is serving its students. With a student population just under 300 students, WRES has an average student-teacher ratio of 20:1, better than most public schools in Duval County. It has a diverse student and family population, and hosts a strong Parent Teacher Association.

Junior Achievement receives \$800,000 from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott

Junior Achievement of North Florida announced that it has received a gift of \$800,000 from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. It is part of a total of \$38.8 million donated to Junior Achievement USA and JA operations in 26 communities across the country. This is the largest gift from a single donor in the organization's 103-year history.

"We greatly appreciate the incredible generosity of MacKenzie Scott for this amazing gift to our organization," said Shannon Italia, president of Junior Achievement of North Florida. "We see this investment as a recognition of all the great work taking place in our community because of the passion and commitment of the business leaders, educators, volunteers, and other partners who support Junior Achievement locally. This donation will allow us to make even better use of other community investments to positively impact the lives of the young people we serve."

Junior Achievement of North Florida will be using its portion of the gift to scale its impact in the region and accelerate the timeline for launching an integrated program model that provides young people with a pathway to work readiness and financial literacy.

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Isabella Farhat Receives UF Scholarship



Isabella Farhat

Bishop Kenny High School (BKHS) senior Isabella Farhat was offered a scholarship to the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences for 2023-2024, where she plans to major in agriculture with hopes of pursuing an environmental law degree. She recently participated in the Florida Youth Institute's residential summer program which introduces students to college majors and career opportunities pertaining to agriculture, natural resources and the environment, while exploring global food security.

"I went into this program thinking that everybody was going to impress me," Farhat said. "We met tons of experts and tons of farmers, but when actually meeting these people, they more than exceeded my expectations. [That] week has probably been the best week of my life, by far. I've learned so much and met some amazing people."

Farhat takes advanced placement courses at BKHS, is a member of the English, Latin, Mu Alpha Theta, Rho Kappa, and National Honor Societies. She is also involved with St. Vincent de Paul Society, BK Ambassadors, is an Extraordinary Ministry of Holy Communion, and a member of the cross country and track teams.

RPDS Sixth-graders Reflect on Service During Southwind Trip



Sixth-graders at Riverside Presbyterian Day School (RPDS) kicked off their capstone year with the school's annual overnight trip, Southwind, which prepares them for a year of service both on- and off-campus. The school's eldest students will serve throughout the year by leading full school assemblies and flag raising ceremonies, acting as morning safety patrol, gathering recycling around campus, and serving the surrounding community.

"The entire sixth-grade year at RPDS is built around leadership and the understanding that, in order to be a good leader, one must take individual responsibility," said RPDS sixth-grade teacher Suzanne Byerly Taylor. "They work on developing their own sense of self as they set goals and reflect on their strengths. Empathy and compassion are reinforced as students learn to help

others, even when the help that is needed is not always the kind of help we want to give."

In preparation for their Southwind trip, students were asked to reflect on what being a leader within the school means to them.

"I've been waiting to be a sixth-grader for nine years, and I remember in Kindergarten, when I thought the sixth-graders were so big and cool. Now I go to a Kindergarten class every morning, and it makes me feel like a leader," said Charlotte Herford.

"It means having integrity," said Lila Jimerson. "It means setting an example for the younger students. But, most of all, it means being responsible even when it is hard. It matters what we do, because all the lower grades look up to us. We should do our part so future students can do theirs."



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Bishop Kenney Students Honored by National Merit Scholarship Program



Front row: Cooper Howe, Alyssa Malacaman, Doria Wright, Mikaela Georgi, Anabel Macchi, Joslyn Rill, Aidan Phillips; Back row: Alex Yalch, Alexander Bernich, Ian Kirsch, William Wallace, Emily Wilson; (Not pictured – Emily Malzahn)



Alex Yalch

Alex Yalch, Bishop Kenny High School Class of 2023, has been named a National Merit Semifinalist in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Program finalists will be confirmed in March 2023.

Yalch has a 4.5 GPA, and is a member of the English, Mu Alpha Theta, Rho Kappa, Science, Thespian and National Honor Societies. He is an active member of the BK Student Ambassadors, History, Science and Theatre Clubs, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Yalch has

over 310 service hours, is a member of Thespian Troupe 2411, and will play the Tin Man in the school's fall production of the Wizard of Oz.

"I like that BK has given me an opportunity to be involved in so many extracurricular activities. I truly felt welcome to try new things and was given the chance to embrace academics and the arts," said Yalch, who would like to attend the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and major in environmental science.

Fellow seniors Alexander Bernich, Mikaela Georgi, Cooper Howe, Ian Kirsch, Anabel Macchi, Alyssa Malacaman, Emily Malzahn, Aidan Phillips, Joslyn Rill, William Wallace, Emily Wilson and Doria Wright, were also recognized as Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Program, based upon their outstanding PSAT scores.

Tradition continues for Senior Buddies



Cookie Myers, left, with her first grader and fellow seniors Antonio Holmberg and Ally Desguin



George Friedline (far right) with first grader and fellow Seniors Emerson Cooper and Andrew Hightower



Meg Fackler and Annie Boatright with first grader and fellow senior Nessa Ali



William Courtney, center, with his seniors

St. Johns Country Day School students gathered around the Quad on Sept. 14 for the annual tradition of matching senior-year students with their first-grade buddies. As each first grader's name was called, they walked with their Senior Buddies to toss a coin into the Wishing Fountain together.

A longtime favorite tradition for both students and alumni, the Senior-Grade 1 Buddy Program matches each first grader with one or more senior buddies for a year of fun and friendship. Students enjoy lunches together, have special holiday parties,

and take a trip to the Jacksonville Zoo in the spring. They stand together at flag raising each morning, and the first graders often join their seniors in celebrating college acceptances, or cheering them on at sporting events. Even long after graduation, some former seniors stop by St. Johns Country Day School for lunch with their younger buddy.

"The relationships built through this program provide continued support and friendship beyond the years at St. Johns," said Head of School Valorie Baker.



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New gymnasium and performing arts center opens



Episcopal School of Jacksonville, Beaches Campus officially opened its new gym and performing arts center, and state of the art library and learning center, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, September 9, led by The Rev. Adam Greene, Head of School at Episcopal School of Jacksonville, and Jennifer Ketchum, Head of Beaches Campus. Episcopal broke ground on the projection November 12, 2021.

The Episcopal drumline, Talon the Eagle mascot, Varsity cheerleaders, and the Upper School and Lower School basketball teams all welcomed guests to the event in the gym. Christine Hoffman, Mayor of Jacksonville Beach; Beaches Campus students in grades Pre-K 3 through fifth grade; Episcopal faculty and staff; and parents, and friends of the school attended the ceremony.

“This new gym and performing arts facility, and the new Cordell Library and Innovation Center, will allow our students to fully participate in and benefit from our Four Pillars - Academics, Fine Arts and Athletics, and Spiritual Life,” said Rev. Greene. “The campus also now has a larger, whole school meeting space and facility for gathering, important to building our community and strengthening our Episcopal family. Many donors gave generously to this campaign, and I especially

thank the Petway family for sharing our vision for this facility from the very beginning. I also give special thanks to Jennifer Ketchum for her leadership; and thanks to our construction partners, Summit Construction, for the hard work in bringing this vision into reality.”

The new gym and performing arts center features a varsity sized court and two half courts, retractable basketball goals and bleachers, a performance stage and dressing rooms, curtains and chairs, and theatre lighting system. As part of the expansion, the school created a new library and media and innovation center named for the Cordell family in thanks for their generosity. The campus’s playground was moved to the site of the current outdoor basketball court and a school-owned building on an adjacent lot was razed to provide additional parking.

“We know the children sitting here today and the children who are not yet enrolled will benefit from this space for years and years,” said Rev. Greene. “It is not often a community is involved in an intergenerational project, but this new gym and performing arts facility and library and innovation center will be a part of our school for generations to come. We are so grateful to so many in our Episcopal community who have made these new facilities possible.”

First Responders Visit Ortega Playschool



Children at Ortega Playschool celebrated the school’s Community Helper Week with a visit from Jacksonville Fire and Rescue and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office.

On Sept. 20, two firefighters and a lieutenant from Station 23 brought their firetruck and spoke to the children about fire safety. The children also had the opportunity to sit in the driver’s seat and operate the fire hose. The following day, Sept. 21, Officers Davis and Dickson from the sheriff’s office spoke with the children, sounded the sirens in their patrol cars, and distributed deputy stickers.

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The latest sports craze has a name just as crazy

What's the dill with pickleball?



BY KERRY SPECKMAN
Resident Community News

What do Bill Gates, a seventh grader from Murray Hill, the Kardashians and a San Marco business owner with bad knees have in common?

Pickleball.

At this point you're probably thinking one of two things: Who cares about the Kardashians or what in the heck is pickleball? Assuming the first question is rhetorical, the answer is: a sport. But pickleball's not just any sport: It's the fastest growing sport in the country with an estimated 4.8 million players in 2021.

To those unfamiliar with pickleball, it's a mashup of badminton, ping-pong and tennis. It's played on a flat, hard surface the size of a badminton court, and players use solid

paddles, similar to those in ping-pong to hit a ball over a net like tennis. Pickleball can be played by two or four people, and a typical game lasts 15 minutes. The game itself is fairly simple and can be picked up quickly, which is part of its appeal. The fact that it requires no athletic experience and is suitable for all ages and fitness levels makes it more accessible than the vast majority of sports, hence its popularity.

Andy Zarka was thrilled to discover pickleball in 2019, having given up running and cycling because of his bad knees. "Pickleball is perfect because it keeps me active and feeds my competitive spirit," said the former Wolfson High School basketball standout and lifelong sports fan. It also fulfills the sense of camaraderie he felt being on a team and playing pick up basketball in college. "The social aspect of pickleball is appealing to a lot of people," Zarka added. "The majority of

pickleball players are very friendly and helpful, and they are passionate growing the sport they love so much."

Zarka is such a fan he became certified by the USA Pickleball Association as an instructor and hosts free clinics for beginners (paddles and balls included). And as the ultimate expression of his obsession, he opened an entire shop dedicated to pickleball in San Marco called Jax Pickleball Store.

Dylan Walters' introduction to pickleball was more like divine intervention.

"Me and my friend were bored one day. We found [his parents'] paddles in the garage and started hitting the balls around," Walters said. "His dad heard us and came out and asked if we wanted to learn how to play."

The 12-year-old was a natural and has since gotten his own paddle but had to find a new partner, he said, since his friend would rather play video games. "I like it because you can get out your frustrations and run around but not get too tired," he said. "It's cool that kids have an activity that they can do with adults." He's currently trying to convert his dad, an avid tennis player.

Fortunately for Walters, youth pickleball in Jacksonville has gotten a big boost with the launch of the First Dink Foundation. Similar to First Tee, the non-profit organization, which held its first clinic in August, teaches kids how to play the game while also encouraging socialization and building important skills like communication, teamwork, responsibility, patience and respect.

Executive Director Sam Veal, who first learned of pickleball four years ago while in

Maryland for a wedding (and was immediately "hooked"), started First Dink in October 2021 because he saw the potential and felt "the community needed it." (FYI, a dink is a type of shot in pickleball.)

"Kids need to get away from the screens [computers, phones, TVs] and get outside and find other ways to occupy their brains," he said. "Pickleball is a fast-paced, healthy activity ... [and] teaches life skills for kids to grow and develop and become productive and responsible members of society."

Another sign pickleball is booming locally is the appearance of pickleball courts, especially in the historic neighborhoods. Thanks to campaigning by addicts like Zarka, the City of Jacksonville has converted tennis courts at Southside Tennis Complex in San Marco and Boone Park in Avondale into pickleball courts and installed six new courts at Ringhaver Park across from NAS Jacksonville.

For those who prefer to play in a temperature-controlled environment, indoor courts are available at the Ortega Life Center at Ortega Methodist Church (for a nominal fee) and Winston Family YMCA in Riverside (gym membership required). And there's always the option of creating a pop-up pickleball court in a parking lot, driveway or even a patio with a portable net and tape to mark the lines.

Whether it's for exercise, socializing or just trying something different, playing pickleball can be a real life changer. Just be warned, it can be highly addictive and may lead to bad puns. That said, get out there and "relish pickleball."



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BY SUSANNA P. BARTON
Resident Community News

This month, I'm going to talk trash with you about a special kind of gratitude — the big, stinky, overflowing bins of gratitude for miracle-workers who make our waste and clutter (poof!) disappear from the neighborhoods week in and week out. These angels are garbage collectors and the charitable folks who accept our purged items for the greater good — the people who stop us from becoming some gross version of poet Shel Silverstein's poor Sarah Cynthia Silvia Stout. Without them, "Hoarders: Buried Alive" producers and city code enforcement officers would be our only friends.

Garbage and stuff collectors have a special place in heaven — with "seats near the dessert table," as writer Anne Lamott describes. And I am certain they get to scoot a little closer each time they roar up to the Bartons' weekly curbside offerings.

Our waste collection used to be Thursday. That was always easy to remember because Thursday is the only weekday whose letters spell TRASH. You can't spell TRASH with letters from any other day of the week, this was an unflinching reminder. Then COVID came, then the schedule changed and now I can barely remember that trash day is now Wednesday, I think.

Barton bins have historically been full of the most loathsome loot. Yes, we're the jerks who don't always flatten our Amazon boxes — we are "those people" who stuff eroding plastic chairs and planters, broken grills and various household items the geri-dogs have destroyed into (OK, often next to) the can. Just last month, I tire-rolled a giant, once-expensive rug out the backdoor and to the side of the street with the intention of a donation pick-up, yet those garbage angels hauled it away like a hawk might a rat. Our bins are full of single sock collections, bacon grease, shopping bags from secret retail sessions, rotting Halloween pumpkins, Christmas trees, deer and fish carcasses from driveway taxidermy

renderings, children's artwork and yes, on occasion there may or may not have been a dead hamster corpse tossed in for good measure. And, shamefully, I haven't even begun to describe the beverage vessels that usually clink and clank around in there. Before our recycling program started back up this spring, during the COVID, we would wake sleeping babies with our weekly wine bottle and beer can deposit. We are trashy people, loud and proud!

Speaking of recycling — I can hardly go there. True facts: My husband is an ardent recycler, but I don't enjoy the process one bit. I am keen on getting stinky recycle garbage out of the house as quickly as possible, including the driving crushed beer can collection, the stank milk jugs no one rinsed and the empty cans of green beans that our geri-dogs enjoy for some suppers. And now with all the confusion about what to recycle and how to do it, I just leave that up to David and try to remember that recycling day is now THURSDAY, actually every OTHER Thursday, which I will never remember because you can't spell RECYCLING out of the letters in Thursday. It's all just too much.

Many years ago, I started putting cold soft drinks on top of our garbage can as a "thank you for putting up with our disgusting BS" to our collectors. It was a love habit I picked up from everyone's favorite neighborhood queen, Suzanne Honeycutt, who is a font of all good and loving ideas. I have enjoyed a beautiful return on this small investment — nine times out of 10, our wonderful crud collectors roll our can right back up to its dirty crevice by the garage. Imagine that.

I am equally grateful for all the neighborhood organizations that whisk away the superfluous possessions in my home that attract dust and goad me toward severe mental distress. I love that - in a moment of complete closet disgust — I can pluck unworn clothing off the hangers, stuff them in bags and deliver them to neighborhood groups up that will make good use of my fashion mistakes. Goodwill is fabulous, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Same with Salvation Army, the Hubbard House Thrift Store, City Rescue Mission, St. Vincent

dePaul Thrift Store and yes, even THE Thrift Store on Emerson Street. And if you've ever wondered who goes to these stores and benefits from the purging of your stuff collection, it's worth a visit to see most of the shoppers are people just like you. I for one, have been obsessed with thrifting at these stores thanks to my adulting daughter — though, shopping there only triples my de-stuffing efforts on the homefront. It matters not. I am now so taken with the notion that I can barely stand to buy clothes that DON'T come from the thrift store! Once you've paid \$3 for a shirt someone else paid \$300 for, it's hard to go back. I am grateful we live so close to all these stores and collection points — proximity makes the process of purging and thrifting an easy task.

Another gratitude shout-out goes to that awesome Buy Nothing 32207 Facebook group — maybe there are ones for 32205, or 32210, too, who knows. It's the best idea ever. Basically, it gives people a platform for giving their stuff away to people nearby who can use it, or for getting something needed for free. Here's how the concept is described on their website: The Buy Nothing Project's mission is "to build community by connecting people through hyperlocal gifting and reducing our impact on the environment." People are really giving away their excess stuff here with great vigor! I've seen everything from offers of unwanted bras, to popular spices that didn't hit someone's spot, plants, bumper crops of limes, diapers, sectional sofas and footrests for a wheelchair. It really is randomly beautiful.

Speaking of random and all things purging, I have surely done my share of that in this month's column. But gosh it feels restoring to demonstrate gratitude for these wonderful people who make us tidier, less junky neighbors! Thanks to them, we will never live in a world like Sarah Cynthia Silvia Stout, who never took the garbage out and paid dearly for it. In case you aren't familiar with the classic children's poem, I'll conclude with Sarah Cynthia Silvia Stout's tragic fate, the one that will never be ours thanks to our steadfast, angel-winged garbage and stuff collectors:

Susanna Barton is usually not this messy. She has lived in a house on Granada Park with her husband David, their children Ben (The Bolles School '18, Washington & Lee University '22) and Marley (The Bolles School '20, Sewanee The University of the South '24), and their super annoying geri-dogs for 25-plus years. She has written for The Jacksonville Business Journal, The Resident, Jacksonville University and The Bolles School during her professional life in Jacksonville and is now exploring the realms of early retirement. She really enjoys embarrassing-mom-walk exercising later in the morning, napping, reading and catching some rays when she's not watching terrible reality television, particularly Dr. Pimple Popper. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.

COURTESY OF WHERE THE SIDEWALK ENDS; POEMS AND DRAWINGS, BY SHEL SILVERSTEIN



"At last the garbage reached so high
That finally it touched the sky,
And none of her friends would come to play,
And all of her neighbors moved away;
And finally, Sarah Cynthia Stout,
Said, "Okay, I'll take the garbage out!"
But then, of course it was too late,
The garbage reached across the state
From New York to the Golden Gate;
And there in the garbage she did hate
Poor Sarah met an awful fate
That I cannot right now relate
Because the hour is much too late
But children, remember Sarah Stout,
And always take the garbage out!"



— Shel Silverstein

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THE WAY WE WERE

Connie Toney Andry

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Connie Toney Andry was born on May 1, 1952, the fourth in line of six. “Two boys, two girls, two boys,” she said. Her paternal grandparents, Tom and Mary Toney, had owned several commercial and residential properties along San Marco Boulevard. Her family lived in one of the apartments above Gene’s Barbershop that is now Hollingsworth Showroom.

Within a short time, Connie’s family moved next door to the upper part of a duplex that faced Cedar Street, another home her grandmother owned and lived in the lower half of. That house has since been torn down along with the huge fig tree that was in the yard. When not picking its fruit, one of Connie’s favorite things to do as a little girl was to walk across the street to Clark’s Super Market. “If we were super good, my grandmother would buy us bottled Cokes and creamsicles,” she said.



St. Vincent’s Hospital School of Nursing, Connie Toney circled, May 12, 1973

When she was four years old, Connie and her family moved to a place of their own at 2527 Hendricks Avenue. “I made some of my lifetime friends there,” Connie said. There was Billy Meide, and his three siblings, who lived around the corner from her. They had a cousin, Kathy Bonano, who visited often. Interestingly, Billy now lives across the street from Connie. And Kathy, whose married name is Williams, now lives around the corner from her. The Toney and the Meide families liked that all their children played together because they had come from the same Arabic culture and shared the same values.

“We played outside all the time,” Connie said. They’d ride bikes along River Road. They’d walk to San Marco Shopping Center. With her eldest brother as chaperone, they’d attend the Saturday children’s matinee at San Marco Theatre; RC Cola bottle caps covered their admission. Mims Bakery was another huge treat, as was a trip to Peterson’s Five & Dime. “My personal favorite was White’s bookstore because I was a reader. I loved Nancy Drew!” Connie said. She and her friends invented The Spy Club. Every time a new book was released in the series, Connie would be the first in line at White’s to get it. “I have the fondest memories of that,” she said.

At Assumption Catholic School, Connie’s favorite grade was 1st with Sister Melissa Anne. “She loved me and nurtured me,” said Connie, who was a shy child and often quite ill. She spent a lot of time in and out of Baptist Hospital. Seeing that Connie needed extra encouragement, Sister Melissa would send Connie to one of her older brother’s classrooms to report on her 1st grade accomplishments, like a special art project, for example. Her brother’s teacher, another nun, happened to be a distant cousin of the Toney family.

After 8th grade graduation in 1966, Connie went on to Bishop Kenny High, where she met her best friend for life, Debbie Warren, who eventually married her high school sweetheart, Mike Reilly, who is now deceased. “Bishop Kenny was just great,” Connie said of her time there. She still faithfully attends reunions.

Following 1970 graduation, Connie attended a three-year-long program at St. Vincent’s Hospital School of Nursing. She worked on the hospital floors and was trained by doctors and chemists. “It was the best education,” Connie said. She lived in the dormitory on

Barrs Street at the river. She is still friends today with her roommate, Pat Warwick from Daytona, who eventually married Chuck Parliament, another Bishop Kenny boy. “It shows how intertwined our lives are,” Connie said. She and Pat were in St. Vincent’s last nursing class. After their 1973 graduation, the program closed, as nursing education changed from hospital-based training to 4-year college degrees at universities. Upon graduation,

Connie secured employment at St. Vincent’s as a pediatric nurse. She worked there until she married Paul Andry from Texas in January 1975.

Connie had met Paul in Miami two years prior at a Lebanese American Club convention. It was summer. They were on a double date. But not with each other. Paul’s date was his fiancé. Connie’s date was Paul’s best friend. On their drive back from south Florida to



Connie and Paul Andry, January 19, 1975



The Andry Family, December 24, 2017

Texas after the convention, the boys stopped by St. Vincent’s to see Connie. “I just fell head over heels in love with Paul,” Connie said, even though it was his best friend whom she had gone on that double date with. When the boys drove away, heading back to Texas, Connie told her mom of Paul, “I’m going to marry him.” They had met only twice.

Following that second meeting in Jacksonville, Paul invited Connie to a party in Texas the following year, in May 1974, even though his best friend still liked Connie. In January 1975, Paul and Connie married at Immaculate Conception in Jacksonville. They went on to have three children.

While raising her children, Connie worked minimal hours outside the home as a PRN nurse, on an as needed basis only. “My primary role was wife and mother, which I just loved,” she said. She was active at the children’s schools—St. Joseph’s in Mandarin, Bishop Kenny, and University Christian—before they went off to college—University of North Florida and Florida State.

As a PRN, Connie began working for Baptist in 1988. She became the first nurse manager for the children’s emergency center at Wolfson. She moved up to director of all emergency services at Baptist and Wolfson downtown, serving the same hospital where she had spent so many stints as a child. Before leaving Baptist, Connie had dropped down to part time and became their first informatics nurse, taking her clinical knowledge and integrating it into the electronic world. After Baptist, Connie did consulting work for St. Vincent’s, helping them transition from paper to electronic documentation. She did the same for a group of Ascension hospitals in Michigan. In 2016, Connie retired after more than four decades in nursing, more than half of them at Baptist.

Over the course of her long career, Connie even moved to Texas for a few years and took part in opening one of the first pediatric emergency departments at a hospital in San Antonio. Paul, of course, was by her side, back in his hometown. “Honestly, I love nursing,” she said. So much so that when COVID hit, Connie felt a need to contribute and worked remotely from home for a

year-and-a-half doing administrative tasks through a Baptist program.

Despite two knee replacements, Connie still plays tennis three times per week. She started playing at 45 at San Jose Country Club.



Paul and Connie Andry with their grandchildren, 2022

Now she plays at the Williams Family YMCA. When not on court, she and Paul volunteer at San Jose Catholic Church and at Sulzbacher.

Now grandparents of seven, Connie and Paul live in Old San Jose on the River in a single-family house built on the same land where, as a young couple with their first two children, they had lived in the River Reach Apartments before the complex was torn down. “We almost live in the exact spot,” Connie said. Their three grown children and six grandchildren live nearby.

The closeness of the Andry family doesn’t stop them from teasing Connie about her upbeat attitude that just won’t let up. Everything, to her, is more than half full, never near empty.

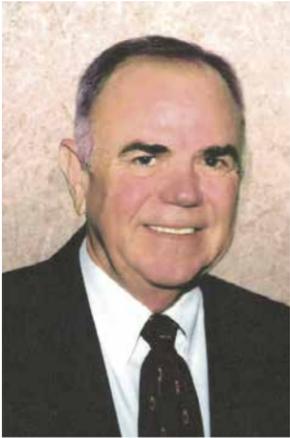
“My tagline is CTBH - choose to be happy!” she said.



Paul and Connie Andry, Quebec City, October 8, 2019

Charles Warren Turner

JUNE 26, 1933 – AUGUST 21, 2022



Charles Warren Turner passed away on Sunday August 21 at 89. He was born June 26, 1933 in Shreveport, Louisiana to Charles Warren Turner Senior and Hallie Rae Mayer. Charlie grew up in Poplar Bluff, Missouri where he was the smallest player on the football team, with the biggest personality. His nickname was "Bulldog," for his tenacity and unstoppable work ethic. You just have to read his high school yearbook to know how well he was liked.

In his civilian life, Charlie owned and ran Wilkerson and Company, an office furniture, interior design, and space planning business with locations in Jacksonville, Tampa and Orlando. Wilkerson was one of the top Herman Miller retailers in the state until he sold the company and retired in 2000.

Outside of the office, he was on the boards of the American Cancer Society, the YMCA and the downtown Rotary club and remained active in them for many years. He played a mean game of tennis before his knees decided they were finished with the sport. That's when he became an avid boater and loved spending time on the water on Turn'r Loose. He was also just as content to sit on his dock or porch watching the sun set and planes do touch-and-go's.

Charlie attended Penn State, pledging Beta Theta Pi and participating in ROTC. He grew a foot in his first year, his height finally matching his stature. He received a BS in business which he put to good use later in life. After graduation, he worked as a lineman on the railroad while waiting to join the Navy. After that job, he said, basic training was a breeze. He went on to become a fighter pilot, flying Douglas A-1 Skyraiders, the last propeller fighter plane in the Navy.

Anyone who knew Charlie was a friend. The man never met a stranger and was quick to smile and ask about your day. He was a loyal friend and a loving family man who gave excellent advice and was a rock to people who loved him.

Charlie is survived by his wife, Connie, brother George Mayer, his son, Charles (Chuck) Warren Turner Jr., his daughters Anne Buchanon, Elizabeth (Liz) Moyer and Emily Turner Bowen, grandchildren Alex and Meghan Tilger, Madeiline Strickland, Elizabeth Turner, Charles and Marshal Raison, Turner Bowen, and great grandchildren Elroy, Rex and Randall Tilger.

The Navy brought him to NAS Jax where he settled down and started a family. Charlie transitioned to the Reserves before retiring as a Lieutenant Commander after 20 years of service. The flying days were special for Charlie and he loved telling tales of rum running and competitions with jet pilots in the years after.

Memorial services were held at the Oaklawn Cemetery Lodge Chapel, with a reception and celebration of life that followed at San Jose Country Club.



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