



Voter Information for Upcoming Runoff Elections

Jacksonville's next mayor, property appraiser and several city council representatives will be decided during the May 16 election.

Daniel Davis (REP) and Donna Deegan (DEM) are the candidates who advanced to the mayoral runoff election following the Duval County First Unitary Election in March. Joining them in their own respective runoff elections, specific to The Resident readership are:



Property Appraiser:
Jason Fischer (REP)
AND
Joyce Morgan (DEM)

City Council At-Large Group 5:
Charles Garrison (DEM)
AND
Chris Miller (REP)

City Council District 7:
Joseph Hogan (REP)
AND
Jimmy Peluso (DEM)

City Council District 9:
Mike Muldoon (REP)
AND
Tyrone Clark-Murray (DEM)

Runoff elections will also be held for city council seats in districts 2, 8, 11 and 14.

Early voting begins May 1 thru May 14. During this period, registered voters can visit any of the early voting sites to cast their ballots. A list of early voting sites and operating hours is available at the Supervisor of Elections (SOE) website (www.duval elections.gov).

On May 16, voters must visit their designated precincts. Voting precincts are listed on voter information cards; those unsure of their precinct can look it up on the SOE website as well by selecting "Precinct Finder" under "Voter Information."

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Brittany Glenos, Charlotte Gaffett, Eric Fein and Ashlee Fein

Exuberance at ExZOOberations

Guests enjoyed French cuisine and beverages at the 26th annual ExZOOberation.

It was an evening of mystique and wonder at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' 26th annual ExZOOberation. The fundraising event offered "Cirque de Zooleil"-themed entertainment, food and garden displays, as well as live and silent auctions.

[READ MORE ON PAGE 24](#)



Raymond Reid, Jim Daniel, Shaun Van Rensburg and Steve Pajcic

Fundraising 'Fore'a Cause

Golfers and friends brought their best clubs and top game to join in the friendly competition that was the annual Yard Course and Back Nine charity fundraiser event hosted by The Law Firm of Pajcic & Pajcic in Avondale on Saturday, April 1. The yearly golf event is held to benefit the Jacksonville Area Legal Aid and offered various elements including celebrity shoot-outs and closest-to-the-pin competitions.

[READ MORE ON PAGE 31](#)



Friends Marsha and Randy George and Troy and Michele Harris took advantage of the beautiful weather to bike from one home to the next.

A DAY OF HISTORY AND DESIGN

Riverside and Avondale neighbors and visitors walked, biked and drove throughout the community to visit the homes and points of interest on the map for the 49th annual Home Tour, hosted by Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP).

[READ MORE ON PAGE 28](#)



Bernice Parker, Duzanne Perritt and Gloria Thomas

CELEBRATING SPRING

Spring is in bloom and the Garden Club of Jacksonville celebrated by holding its 2023 Blooms Galore and More Preview Party. This exclusive, ticketed event was held on Friday, April 7, giving guests a sneak peek at and best selection of the plants from the following day's Blooms Galore and More event, while enjoying beverages and live music.

[READ MORE ON PAGE 33](#)



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letters TO THE EDITOR

I so loved seeing the front cover photo of the March issue!

I enjoyed reading about the Fun & Flair Fashion Show event from Dillard's at NFSSE's 12th annual Heart of the Runway fashion show. Your covering and highlighting the special people and families in our community was awesome. My twin was born with Down Syndrome and it made my heart smile as he's no longer here.

I travel a lot for my work. I'm so glad I have your newspaper to read on the plane on Riverside/Avondale/ Ortega/ Murray Hill to keep me informed on our beautiful city. Simply had to let you know I (we) appreciate you!

Noreen Young -Makeup Artist and Educator



May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Have you had a brain check lately? We faithfully schedule appointments for our physical, visual and dental well-being —but when was the last time you did an emotional and psychological assessment? In the current climate of discord how could anyone NOT experience depression, anxiety, and a feeling of hopelessness- the cumulative stress of everyday living? Add a diagnosed (or undiagnosed) mental illness into the mix and the oppressive emotional responses can be overpowering.

The NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI) states that suicide is the second leading cause of death for children ages 10 – 14 in the U.S. and the third cause of death for ages 15-24. One in 5 adults are diagnosed with a mental illness each year. Staggering statistics. But YOU ARE NOT ALONE! NAMI Jacksonville offers help for those with mental illnesses and their families and caretakers.

EDUCATION- ADVOCACY -SUPPORT ! That is NAMI Jacksonville! Just reach out for help. DO NOT SUFFER IN SILENCE. NAMI Jacksonville has many resources, workshops, classes, educational presentations, and support groups for those with mental illness or disorders and their families — free, confidential and led by NAMI volunteers — with more programming coming to address the needs of our community. Support groups for families are available in-person or via Zoom. For a full listing go to namijacksonville.org/programs. Helpline@namijax.org or Call : 904-323-4723 or 904-724-7782. Suicide Hotline: 988 Make EVERY month mental health awareness month. END THE SILENCE and stigma attached to mental health.

Peggy Harrell Jennings -Mental Health Advocate

Ortega River Run Clarification
In our April edition, in the story “Ortega River Run Success for St. Mark’s,” the total amount of proceeds from the event should have been reported as \$84,000. We incorrectly listed it as \$22,000, which was the donation from the title sponsor, Ascension St. Vincents. We apologize for the error.



— GOT NEWS? —
EMAIL US AT
editor@residentnews.net

Phone: (904) 388-8839
Fax: (904) 423-1183
1650-302 Margaret St. #310
Jacksonville, FL 32204

PUBLISHERS
Seth Williams
Pamela B. Williams

DIRECTOR OF SALES
Debra McGregor

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Alligator Spotted at Willowbranch Park

Resident reader Rick Pariani shared photos of an alligator spotted at Riverside's Willowbranch Park on April 13. The alligator was an estimated six-and-a-half feet in length. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, alligators are readily found throughout Florida while crocodiles can be spotted in south Florida.

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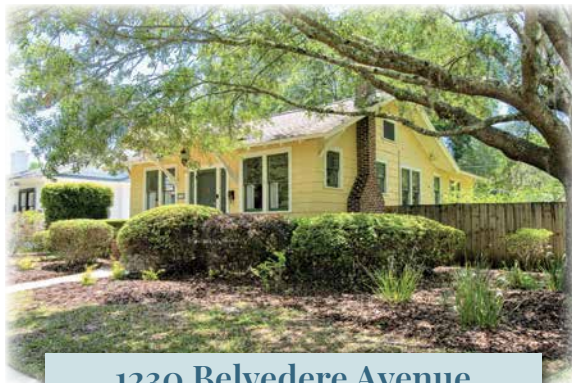
The Bungalow

The bungalow is having a moment! This classic style is well represented in our historic neighborhoods. Right size, right price, and full of charming details, these homes are all-time favorites for good reason.



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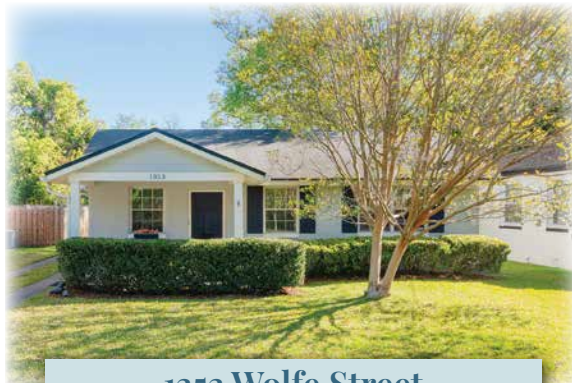
1504 Pershing Road

Avondale
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\$315,000



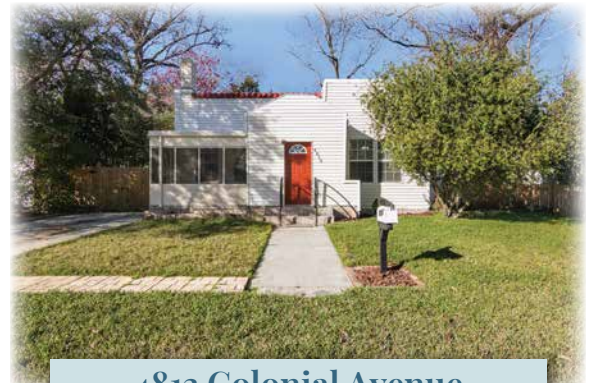
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‘What’s Up on The SUP?’

San Marco and Riverside communities celebrate the new Fuller Warren Shared-Use Path



After a decade of anticipation, the Riverside, Avondale and San Marco communities celebrated the opening of the Fuller Warren Shared-Use Path, affectionately dubbed “The SUP” by neighborhood and community leaders.

The Florida Department of Transportation held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, April 6 to mark the bridge’s grand opening; a few days later, on Saturday, the 8th, Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) and San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) held their own celebrations.

“This represents Jacksonville,” said District 14 Council Member Randy DeFoor. “It represents connectivity. It represents the fact that we are no longer just one neighborhood after one neighborhood after one neighborhood, we are one city. It represents a beacon of hope of our future.”

“I want to give a huge thank you not just to the men and women in hard hats that actually built this bridge and got it safe and ready for us to travel on today but to the neighborhood advocates — the Riverside Avondale Preservation staff, the Riverside Arts Market staff that preceded me — that 10 years ago showed up to the FDOT community meetings and said if you’re gonna expand the Fuller Warren Bridge, you absolutely must accommodate bicycles and pedestrians as a part of that project,” said RAP Executive Director Shannon Blankinship. “That wasn’t an easy sell, but when we stick together as neighborhoods and residents and fight for safer neighborhoods, it works. So thanks to everyone for being here today but thanks to everyone who was here 10 years ago and made this day possible.”

Led by the Ronan School of Music marching band, Blankinship, DeFoor, Jacksonville historian Dr. Wayne Wood and St. Johns Riverkeeper Lisa Rinaman headed a procession of Riverside community members to the midpoint on the bridge, where they waited for their San Marco neighbors to join them.

“I think it’s great, I mean look around... Everyone’s been waiting on it. It makes it more of a livable city.”

– STEVE LONG
Riverside Resident



San Marco and Riverside community leaders and representatives gathered at the midpoint of the Fuller Warren SUP alongside community members to celebrate this pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly connection between the two historic neighborhoods.

The San Marco side of the procession was led by SMPS President Lauren Carlucci, SMPS Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Chair Brittany Hegi and District 5 Council Member LeAnna Cumber and her aid, Debbi Pataky.

Participants waved signs and carried banners bearing “The SUP” logo designed by Wingard. While not an official, FDOT-sponsored design, the branding was created in collaboration with RAP at the end of last year in anticipation of the opening of the bridge.

“Much like RAM is the name we give to the Riverside Arts Market, henceforth and forever this is going to be The SUP,” said Wood.

By the time Saturday’s community event arrived, Riverside resident Steve Long said he’d already crossed the bridge a few times since its grand opening a few days prior.

“I think it’s great, I mean look around,” he said. “Everyone’s been waiting on it. It makes it more of a livable city.”

Once united on the bridge, the group posed for drone photographs and video footage done by photographer Mark Krancer.

“I think the Shared-Use Path is more than just a bridge connecting two sides of a river, two things,” said Carlucci. “It really connects us as people because a lot of times, in Jacksonville, we drive places but to have the opportunity to walk and see your neighbors and wave hello and have impromptu conversations really creates a greater sense of community. We have that in San Marco and we have that in Riverside and now that we have this Shared-Use Path, we can have that together.”

“It’s great. It’s really exciting and it just shows that when you have a plan — and a good plan that the community’s behind — the community will carry it forward,” said Cumber. “I’m just so excited to have the two sides connected and I look forward to what we can do under the bridge to make it really family friendly and just a really amazing part of the city.”

According to an FDOT press release, the Fuller Warren Shared-Use Path was part of “the \$126 million operational improvements project at I-10 and I-95.” The bridge consists of two six-foot lanes for east/west travel across the St. Johns River. It is 4,654 feet long. Pedestrians or cyclists trying to cross it can access it from Riverside Avenue, across from the Riverside Arts Market or, alternately, Palm Avenue or the riverfront sidewalk behind Nemours Children’s Hospital in San Marco.

The opening of the Fuller Warren Shared-Use Path marks the beginning of Jacksonville’s transformation into a more interconnected, pedestrian-friendly city. Additional projects like the Emerald Trail, the Riverside Avondale Cultural Trail and the activation of the Riverwalk on both sides of the St. Johns River are currently underway, all in different stages of design and/or construction.



Pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the Fuller Warren SUP.

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A Q&A

City Council
District 7 Candidate
Jimmy Peluso
(DEM)



City Council
District 7 Candidate
Joseph Hogan
(REP)



with District 7 Candidates

Voters will return to the ballot boxes on May 16 to decide the runoff elections for several city seats, including the mayor, property appraiser and city council representative for seven districts (2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14 and At-Large Group 5)

Specific to The Resident’s readership is the runoff election is District 7 and its candidates, Joseph Hogan (REP) and Jimmy Peluso (DEM). Ahead of the upcoming election, The Resident reached out to these candidates for a Q&A on various issues and topics pertaining to Jacksonville as a whole.

Note: The responses below are sorted alphabetically and presented as submitted by the candidates, without any editing by The Resident staff.

Q1: WHAT QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE MAKES YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE TO REPRESENT DISTRICT 7?

HOGAN: I have been around local politics since I was a kid. I understand how the system works and how relationships are key to getting things accomplished. I intend to develop a healthy working relationship with every council member and the Mayors office to ensure we have the best chances to direct our city on a positive path. Partisan politics and games are detrimental to the overall success of our city. As a builder I have over a decade of experience in planing and executing detailed projects. This skill set will be an asset as we consider and vote on large scale development projects around the city. My time in the military has given me the ability to work with people from all walks of life and the structure to remain focused on the task at hand with the attention to detail necessary to ensure desired outcomes.

PELUSO: I served on active duty in the Navy for 8 years, leading Sailors from diverse backgrounds to complete the mission. Alongside my service in the Navy, my experience in Government Affairs has allowed me to learn the best practices for navigating the bureaucracy that Government so frequently comes with. I want to leverage my skills in this arena with my knowledge built up on various boards- including RAP, Changing Homelessness, and the NE Florida Literacy Alliance- to improve living conditions for all aspects of District 7.

Q2: IF ELECTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL, WHAT IS THE TOP ISSUE YOU PLAN TO ADDRESS AND BE A LEADER ON?

HOGAN: Jacksonville has an aging infrastructure. We are going to be required to repair and replace major systems over the next several decades. We need to be proactive and establish a comprehensive plan to pay for and update our systems in every neighborhood. I intend to work with the council and the Mayors office to create a plan that will ensure our infrastructure is world-class and continues to remain functional and accessible to the citizens of Jacksonville.

PELUSO: Parks, infrastructure, uplifting neighborhoods, improving transportation, and addressing homeless. Ambitious as it is, there has to be more voices on City Council that are trying to address these issues. District 7 has a unique opportunity to be a leader on all of these fronts.

Q3: DO YOU THINK THAT THE BOUNDARIES THAT WERE REDRAWN FOR DISTRICT 7 (AND OTHERS) ARE HELPFUL, OR DETRIMENTAL TO THE CURRENT STATE OF CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION?

HOGAN: I think the process for selecting the new district lines was quite flawed and poorly timed. I do not think the end result created more representation for certain demographics on the council as was the stated intention. If there was an argument for gerrymandering in the original maps, I would argue that it still exists. If anything, we should probably except less black representation on the overall council makeup under the new lines. However, as the saying goes, it is what it is. I am trying my best to be elected to District 7 and will work hard each day to represent every community and individual in the district.

PELUSO: The purpose of the redistricting was to ensure there was more voting power for minority communities. By packing African-American voters into four out of fourteen seats, it nearly ensured black and brown voters wouldn’t have a large scale impact on district elections, despite being over 30% of the population. On top of the demographics, I am highly critical of elected officials being so involved in creating a map that benefits their incumbency. These new maps have the ability to provide more engagement and hopefully break the log-jam of candidates who are from a political legacy.

Q4: WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON HISTORIC STRUCTURES? DO WE SACRIFICE LOSING STRUCTURES FOR GROWTH....OR DO YOU BELIEVE IN REPURPOSING AND PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND TAKING A STAND ALONG THESE LINES?

HOGAN: This will be a hard question to answer in brevity as it is a topic I am very interested in. I love historic buildings. I have worked on projects to restore and update older buildings. I also feel strongly about the inherent rights of a property owner to do as they please with their time and resources, think “pursuit of happiness”. We need to have a mindset that is not intent on destroying the past and replacing it with the latest and greatest objects of our time while also being intentional about innovation and excellence in our craft. Just because a building is old doesn’t mean it is great and at one point that building was new and on the cutting edge of best building practices. There is a healthy balance to maintain and property owners should be aware of any limitations or restrictions to their plans prior to obtaining ownership. I think it is important to remain flexible and work to ensure that people with varying means are treated with respect and given every means possible to live their version of life. I also think it is important to develop and maintain the character and charm that we have in so many of our historic neighborhoods.

PELUSO: Preserving our historic structures provides so much more character and investment in our city and we should be protecting these assets where we can. Some of the homes in District 7 especially are over a hundred years old and we should actively work toward their preservation; the repurposing of buildings such as where the Glass Factory currently occupies helps provide new life and interesting spaces for local growth and community building.

Q5: IF YOU WERE TO WIN THE ELECTION, WHAT IS THE FIRST PIECE OF LEGISLATION YOU PLAN TO FILE?

The answer to our last question can be found online at residentnews.net



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Mosh Genesis Gains Land and Funds for New Northbank Facility

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Last month saw plans progress for the new Museum of Science and History (MOSH) Genesis along Jacksonville's Northbank.

At an April 11 city council meeting, the council voted 15-to-1 to approve Ordinance 2023-0184, which outlines, among other agreements, a 40-year ground lease agreement between the City of Jacksonville, the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) and MOSH to lease approximately 2.5 acres of city-owned land to the museum for its new facility at \$1 per year.

Council Member LeAnna Cumber was the only vote against the legislation. At the city council meeting, she expressed her opposition of using public funds for the new museum.

"We've got to stop expecting the taxpayers to pay for everything," she said.

Ordinance 2023-0184 also details plans to build a city-owned park covering just over four acres, "...of which 1.5 acres will be a joint-use park located adjacent to the ground lease parcel to be maintained by MOSH." According to the bill summary, MOSH must meet a Dec. 31, 2023 deadline to raise a required \$40 million of "non-City funds" in order to maintain the agreement or risk termination. It also sets a construction deadline of Dec. 31, 2027 for the new Northbank site, at which point the current Southbank property will be returned to the city, once vacated.

An April press release from MOSH announcing the ground lease agreement



A rendering of the future MOSH Genesis facility on the Northbank. At an April meeting, the city council approved a 40-year ground lease agreement between the City of Jacksonville and MOSH for the land upon which the new facility will be built. Rendering courtesy of MOSH.

stated the project is expected to take 18 months to complete once ground is broken.

"Museums are the mark of a sophisticated community," said MOSH Board of Trustees Chair Christian Harden in the release. "We are so thankful for the unwavering support from our public officials and outpouring of support from our community. Hundreds of Northeast Florida residents sent letters of support to the City Council to elevate our vision for MOSH's future — reinforcing the

widespread interest in bringing this incredible project to reality."

Helping the MOSH Genesis Capital Campaign reach that \$40 million threshold is a recent \$1 million donation by the Neviaser Foundation.

The new location will feature 100,000 square feet across three floors.

"The Neviaser Foundation is extremely excited to join many others in the MOSH Genesis campaign to make the Museum a beacon on the Northbank and a continuing fixture of our community," said Nancy Neviaser Baker in another April press release, this one detailing the donation. "My family and our foundation are proud to continue our history of supporting children and families in Northeast Florida, and we think this opportunity to get behind MOSH Genesis is fantastic. We encourage everyone in Northeast Florida to join us to support this effort."

Originally known as Jacksonville Children's Museum, the museum was first based in Riverside before moving to its current Southbank location in 1969. In the interim years, the facility has expanded from its initial 33,000 square feet. The MOSH Genesis capital campaign — initially called MOSH 2.0 — was announced in March 2019.

"The Neviaser family's experiences at MOSH symbolize what makes a museum like ours so important to the community, and we are honored to have their support as we plan for the future," said MOSH CEO Bruce Fafard in the press release. "This generous donation will help us bring more complex, modern exhibits to Northeast Florida. It's an honor to welcome the Neviaser Foundation as our naming rights partner for one of our exhibition spaces planned for the new Museum."



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GEICO INSURANCE COMPANY

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(VERDICT, 8/5/2022)

PERSONAL INJURY: CAR ACCIDENT

**Names changed to protect client privacy*

JOHN AND DEBRA SMITH* V.
LOCAL GLASS COMPANY,
OUT-OF-STATE GLASS COMPANY*

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DDRB Grants Resounding Approval for Block Nine Development in Brooklyn

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

A new Brooklyn-based mixed-use development by the Trevato Development Group was brought before the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) last month for conceptual approval.

The proposed project — Block Nine — will fill the entire block bordered by Jackson, Stonewall, Park and Chelsea streets in Brooklyn and will feature 293 multi-family units with 7,000 square feet of ground floor retail space and 5,000 square feet of live-work lofts as well as on-site parking. Exterior areas will provide outdoor dining for restaurant use.

Given that this project will take up the entire block, attorney Cyndy Trimmer emphasized deliberate efforts to create a “different moments” in the design to avoid a “monotonous structure.”

“With the architecture in this project, recognizing it is a unified block, we worked very hard for a long time on the assemblage,” Trimmer explained during her presentation on behalf of the applicant. “But with that large, long building we wanted to create different moments, celebrate the industrial heritage of the Brooklyn area, but then also work so that we don’t have a very monotonous structure as we’re going around. So with those you have very distinct moments along the frontage.”

The primary retail space along the ground floor will be concentrated along Park Street while the Stonewall Street frontage will see the co-work space or work-live units, “depending on what market dictates will go there,” Trimmer explained.

“But our belief is that with the change in work structure that there is an incredible hole in the market for that type of product,” she added.



Trevato Group’s Block Nine mixed-use development will be bordered by Jackson, Stonewall, Park and Chelsea streets. Rendering courtesy of DDRB application package.

A staff report read and provided for the DDRB recommended conceptual approval with conditions and following a very brief round of questions for the applicant, the board echoed its support for the project as well.

“More of this please,” said Board Member Gary Monahan. “This is exactly what we’re looking for for multi-family residential downtown. Your efforts to really, truly activate the street are phenomenal and [we] certainly appreciate that.”

“You guys hit all the marks here with this one,” added Board Member Joanna Berling.

DDRB voted unanimously in favor of conceptual approval with the conditions detailed in the staff report.

The design team includes Atlanta-based Dynamik Design as the architect and England-Thims Miller, Inc. as landscape architect and engineer. According to the Trevato website, the project is estimated to cost in the “\$100 million range.”



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BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

City of Jacksonville Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Charles Moreland during an April 24 media presentation.

At the presentation, held at Baptist Health, BZP Jacksonville released Gallup data collected via mail survey between Nov. 30, 2022 and Jan. 17, 2023 revealing areas of

Gulfport-Biloxi-Pascagoula MSA: Rank of 156th out of 156 MSAs in database; WBI Score of 57.4
Jacksonville MSA: Rank 40th out of 156 MSAs in database; WBI Score of 62.0

	U.S. Total	East JAX	Northside	Westside	Rest of Jacksonville	Jacksonville Total
Well-Being Index	61.2	57.3	57.7	57.2	59.2	58.7
Career	58.6	59.0	60.3	58.1	58.5	58.6
Social	59.1	55.4	57.1	56.9	59.2	58.6
Financial	62.8	50.8	52.3	52.8	58.9	57.3
Physical	61.4	57.7	57.9	58.3	58.3	58.3
Community	61.7	54.1	52.3	52.5	59.7	58.0

Note: Blue and orange shading indicates statistically better or worse than the U.S. ($p < .05$)
U.S. Source: Gallup, August-Sept. 2020

Gallup data collected reveals several areas and opportunities for improved well-being in the four focus areas of Northside, Westside and East Jacksonville for the Blue Zones Project Jacksonville. Image courtesy of BZP Jacksonville.

Kristin Murray, Blue Zones Project engagement and marketing lead - Jacksonville explained the Jacksonville project will focus on “typically and historically underserved” Jacksonville neighborhoods in Westside, Northside and East Jacksonville as well as Jacksonville as a whole.

These focus areas fall in the zip codes 32206, 32208, 32209, 32210 and 32244.

“By focusing on historically vulnerable and underserved communities in our city, we can take an equitable approach to foster well-being and ensure that every citizen and every zip code has the same access to opportunities, resources and support,” said

concern for Jacksonville residents and opportunities to improve their well-being through the Blue Zones Project Jacksonville.

Collected in various categories, the data created a baseline for the focus neighborhoods as well as Jacksonville as a whole. According to the data, Jacksonville as a city scored statistically lower than the U.S. in the five elemental scores of career, social, financial, physical and community. The data also reflects, however, the “desire to live and age in community slightly outweighs desire to leave.”

“The overall data shows that we have an opportunity in these specific areas, but what I like to see is there’s hope, there’s people that care about the community and there’s a oneness in these zip codes about family and that’s where it really starts,” said Baptist Health President and CEO Dr. Michael Mayo following the presentation. “So I’m excited. The numbers were small, but they were telling in what we can target our work at.”

United Way of Northeast Florida CEO Melanie Patz said the data reflects areas of improvement that were previously unrecognized in the community.

“The data from Gallup is very, very helpful because it’s asking questions we haven’t asked before in our community so we just didn’t know the answers, and categorizing it in ways that help us to actually do things to make improvements,” she said.

With its community blueprint completed, BZP Jacksonville is finalizing and reviewing its strategic plan with the community organization partners. All this information will then be shared at a community kick-off party at the Jacksonville Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 3 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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Fishweir Creek Project Nearing Substantial Completion

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

The end is in sight for the ongoing project at Big Fishweir and Little Fishweir creeks.

According to US Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District Small Projects Program Manager Jim Suggs, the construction currently underway at the creeks could reach substantial completion sometime in August, barring unforeseen setbacks or discoveries.

“It’s kind of right around the corner,” he said. “The contractor’s been making good progress.”

Suggs explained that the area he calls the overreach, between U.S. 17 and the bridge traversing Herschel Street, is completed. Additionally, the staging area for the necessary construction equipment for that portion of the project, created in coordination with the City of Jacksonville, has been fully restored.

“The city has done the walk-thru with my construction guy, so we’re done up there,” he added.

Dredging is currently underway in both Big Fishweir and Little Fishweir creeks.

While the construction is underway, Suggs said several residents have inquired about the possibility of having the

contractor dredge around their own private docks, which Suggs said would be doable once the contractor’s fulfilled its obligation to this project and the residents follow proper channels and obtain necessary permits to do so.

“As long as they don’t impede on the federal project, it’s simply up around those docks, they’re good,” he said.

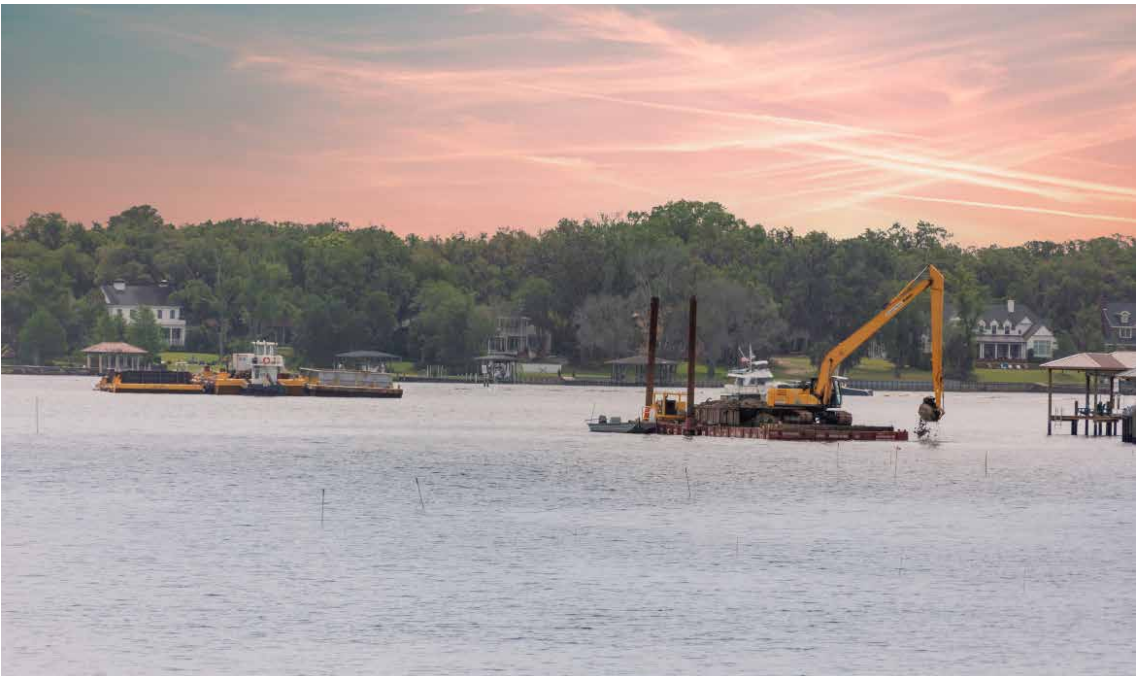
“The contractor’s been making good progress.”
— JIM SUGGS

The contractor for the project is Underwater Mechanix Services, LLC, who was awarded the contract last August. What began as an estimated \$3.8 million project first increased to approximately \$6.5 million in the interim years before recent inflation caused the cost to surpass \$8 million, which the Army Corps and the City of Jacksonville is splitting 65% and 35% respectively.

While there are no plans to replant vegetation or native plants, Suggs explained a monitoring period will begin

following construction to ensure the creeks’ aquatic ecosystem is naturally regenerating and its vegetation and habitat is returning. This monitoring will be a joint effort between the City and the Army Corps.

“As far as planting of any type of vegetation, any of that type stuff, that will not happen because the system



Dredging continues in Big Fishweir and Little Fishweir creeks with substantial completion expected in the fall. Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District.

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Legislative Services Improving Integration for Access to Bills, Meetings

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BY JENNIFER JENSEN
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

In an effort to educate the public, the Jacksonville City Council Legislative Services Division held its first public-facing PegTalk on Thursday, April 20 to show ways to access its updated Legislative Gateway platform at jaxcityc.legistar.com. The goal was to teach users how to access Jacksonville City Council meetings in progress, current or past legislation, find a bill that a council member introduced or get a copy of the vote for a certain bill.

Chief of Legislative Services Merriane Lahmeur said the idea was for this platform to be a “one-stop shop for all your legislative processing needs.” New features and tabs have been added to allow more transparency in a clear, efficient and effective way, she added.

They have also included linked archived materials — items prior to July of 2019 — and the city’s online code and charter.

Jacksonville City Council Director/Council Secretary Margaret M. “Peggy” Sidman said this is the first step to getting the message about the upgraded system out to the public. The hope is to continue to do outreach and help residents learn to navigate the system on their own.

“We’ve also really tried to make this as interactive as possible,” Sidman said.

For those looking to access agendas for upcoming city council meetings, a raw version will appear on Legislative Gateway under the “Agenda” tab, which was previously called “Calendars” on Thursday afternoon, with the marked

agenda posted Friday by 1 p.m. before the council meeting on Tuesday.

One of the biggest changes to the platform is the added addendum and proposed amends and subs tabs. If there are any amendments or addendums, those will be posted by noon on the Tuesday of the city council meeting.

For committee meetings, those items are posted by 1 p.m. the Friday before committee meetings.

Under the “Welcome” page, users can find a place for announcements or to see if anything has been delayed or rescheduled.

One of the key functions of the Legislative Gateway is the legislative bill search. Under the “Legislation” tab, users can find legislative bills and corresponding exhibits back to July 2019. Under each bill, an effective date and final action date, which is when the council acted, were added. Final documents have also been added under this section. Videos have been added as well and are timestamped to jump to the exact moment when the item is being discussed.

“The system is really meant to be integrated,” Lahmeur said.

Sidman hoped there will be an opportunity for additional training material and education opportunities that will be publicly shared. This particular PegTalk on Legislative Gateway will be recorded and posted on the city council webpage.



Marie Claire Dorcely, chief administrative officer for Fonkose, an international nonprofit that helps Haiti’s poor



Rachel Pierre-Champagne, education program director for Fonkose

Riverside Presbyterian Church Raises Funds to Help Haitian Women and Children

BY: KAREN RIELEY
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Riverside Presbyterian Church (RPC) offers two opportunities to learn more about the church’s efforts to help women in rural Haiti feed, clothe and support their families.

Two representatives from Fonkose, an international nonprofit created more than 28 years ago to bring financial inclusion and development services to Haiti’s poor, will visit Jacksonville May 19-21 to share information about how it is supporting the efforts of women with business skills training, education and health services. Fonkose is Haiti’s leading microfinance organization, providing seed money for Haitians to pull themselves out of poverty.

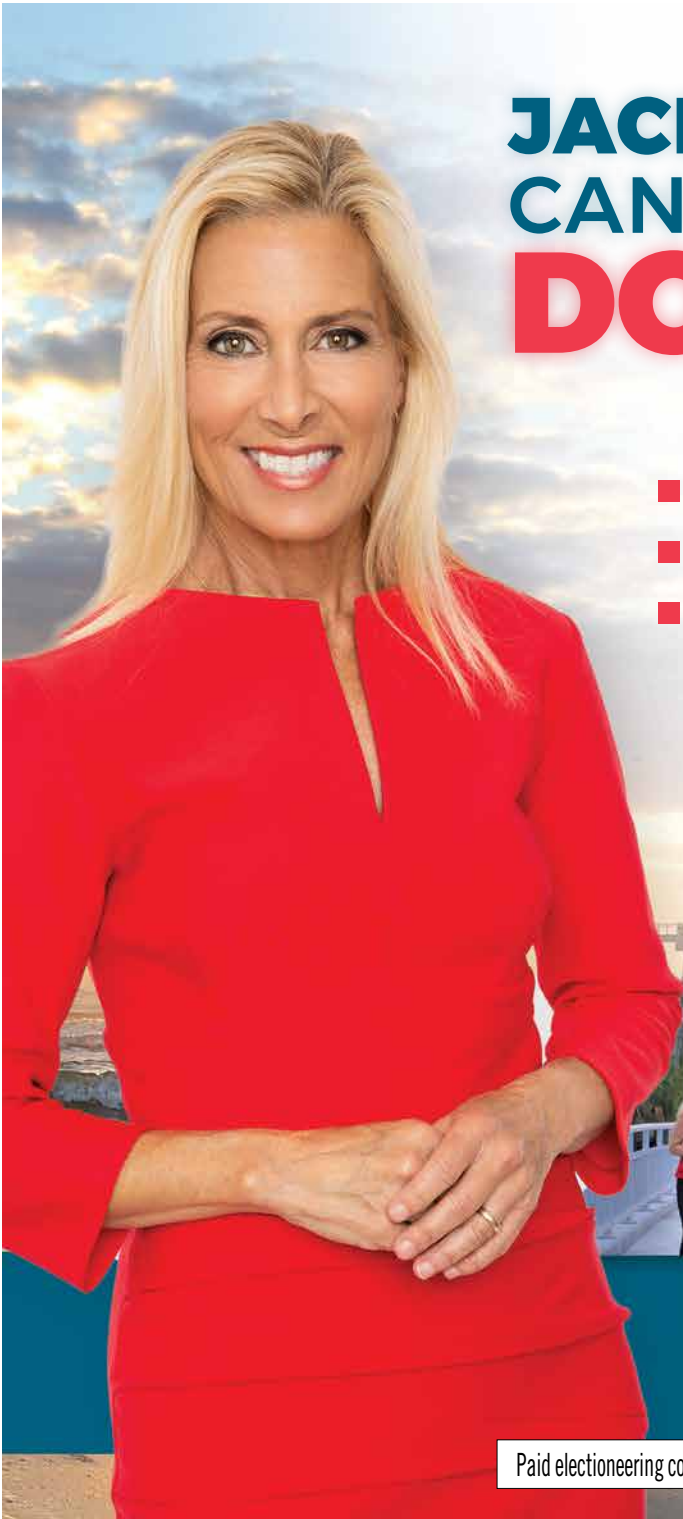
Marie Claire Dorcely, chief administrative officer of Fonkose Financial Services, was born in Haiti and then attended high school and college in the United States. After college she moved back to Haiti to help women succeed. Rachel Pierre-Champagne is the education program director of Fonkose Foundation. While her family is from Haiti, she was born and educated in the United States.

Both representatives will speak during the church’s fund-raising reception on Saturday evening, May 20, and during the church’s Sunday School classes on Sunday morning, 9:30 a.m., May 21, 849 Park St. 32204

“Haiti is the poorest country in this Hemisphere and among the poorest countries in the world. Most Haitians live in rural areas,” said Susan Humes, chair of RPC’s Haiti Subcommittee of the Peacemaking Outreach Committee, which is chaired by Mary Elizabeth Ballentine. “The government remains unstable and there is much gang and civil unrest and violence.”

“Michael Fisher originally encouraged the church to become involved in Fonkose,” Humes said. Other key volunteers are Carol Proctor and Arden Brugger.

RPC has a goal of raising \$12,500 for Fonkose to meet Haiti’s most critical needs that will be matched one-to-one by a Jacksonville foundation, for a total of \$25,000. The informal outdoor reception is open to the public from 6-7:30 p.m., May 20, at the home of Mary Elizabeth Nathan Ballentine, in Springfield, 133 W. Third St., 32206.




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Dedalus Wine Bar and Shop will replace the former Liddy Machine Shop on Dora Street in Brooklyn. Rendering courtesy of

Adaptive Reuse Ahead for Liddy’s Machine Shop

Dedalus Wine Bar planned for Brooklyn

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Plans are in motion to bring a new wine bar and shop to the Brooklyn community. Jacksonville’s Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) granted conceptual approval to the proposed Dedalus Wine Bar project at an April 13 meeting.

The DDRB application details the adaptive reuse of the former Liddy’s Machine Shop at 825 Dora Street, transforming the approximately 10,000-square-foot space into a wine bar, cheese and charcuterie market and wine retail space occupying 7,000 square feet while the remaining 3,000 square feet “will be divided into two compatible tenant spaces.” Outdoor areas will be redeveloped to feature outdoor dining and lawn space as well as parking.

The project was met with unanimous and resounding approval — with conditions — from board members, with DDRB Chair Matt Brockelman stating, “You had me at wine bar.”

“I love seeing adaptive reuse, so thank you for this project,” added Board Member Linzee Ott.

“I think this is an incredible project,” said Board Member Gary Monahan. “...Just what downtown needs.”

According to county records, Dedalus Re Jax LLC purchased the property last August for \$440,000. Dedalus Wine has locations in Vermont and Colorado. This will be its first location in Florida.

Thomas Duke Architect is the project’s architect; the engineer is Lowe Structures, Inc. and the contractor is Lay Duckworth Construction Co.

“We’re excited to see this project come forward. It’s a very attractive addition to the fast-growing Brooklyn district, and is a creative idea for an adaptive re-use of this property,” wrote Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) CEO Lori Boyer in an e-mail. “We appreciate the developers’ interest in Downtown Jacksonville, and we applaud them for originating a proposal that will add vibrancy to the community consistent with our Downtown master plan for redevelopment.”

DCPS Headquarters Sale Update

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Site visits have been completed and the negotiation team is still processing information gathered before issuing a recommendation in the potential sale and relocation of the Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) administrative building at 1701 Prudential Drive.

Last year The Resident reported that DCPS had hoped to have all site visits completed by early November. DCPS Director of Purchasing Services Terrence Wright explained that the process experienced a “hiccup” pertaining to compliance with Florida Sunshine Laws.

“We had initially scheduled for the entire negotiation team to visit the sites as a group but then we were advised by General Counsel’s office that would be a violation of the Florida Sunshine Law so we had to not take those site visits as a group; we had to have the individual committee members go out and visit them individually, so that threw us off our schedule if you will, in order to make that happen,” he said.

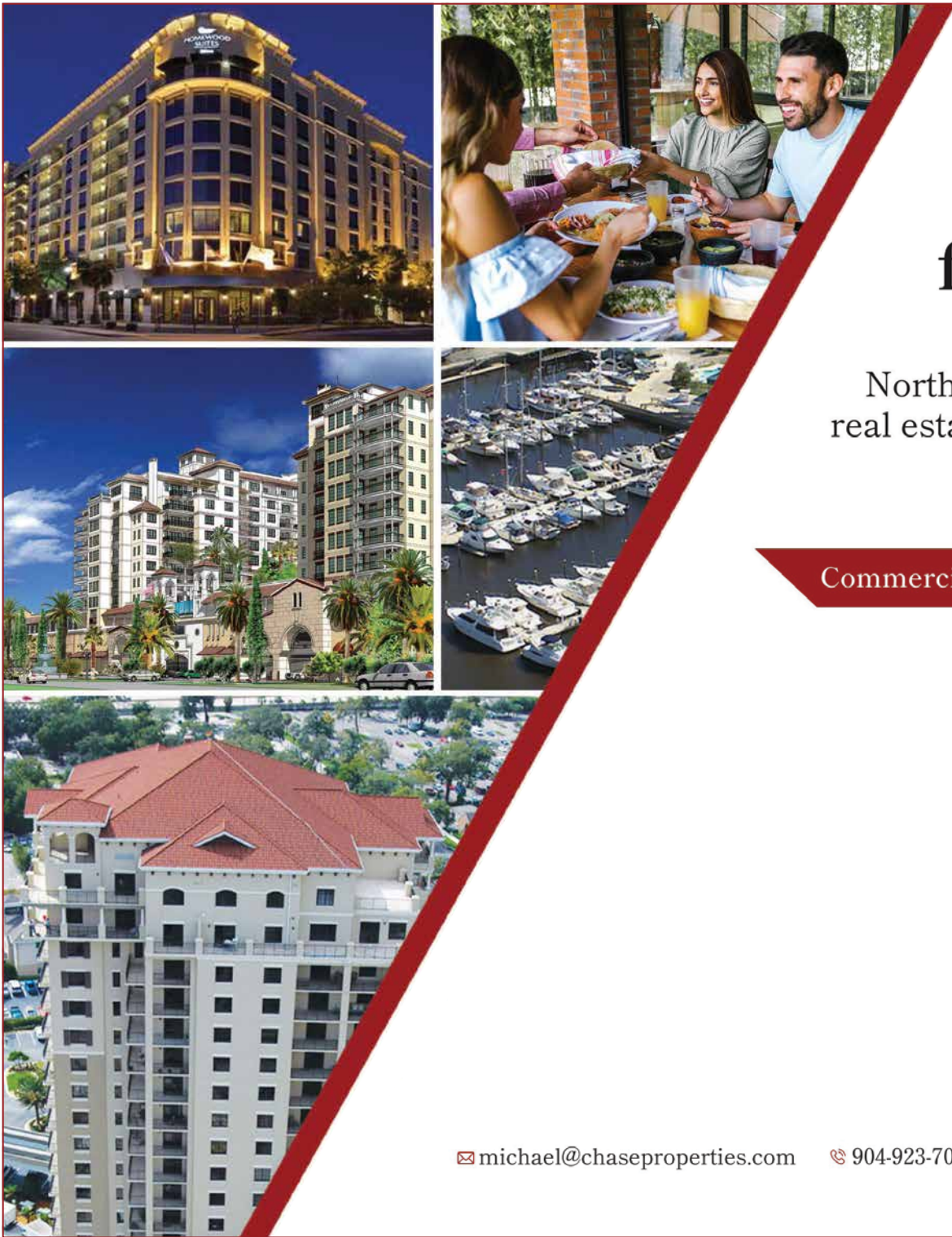
Details surrounding the six locations the negotiation team visited, including addresses and locations, are still unavailable for public review at this point. Wright said there is no set timeline in place for next steps, but added this is because DCPS is working closely with the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to ensure the process is handled properly.

“I understand the interest in this from the public’s perspective and this has been quite a process — a learning process as well... But the main thing is we wanna make sure that the process is done correctly so that’s been a lot of — the time that it’s taken is because almost every step of the way, we wanna make sure we have the guidance to make sure everything is being done correctly.”

DCPS first issued an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) in December 2021 allowing bids for the relocation of the DCPS headquarters, the purchase of its five-story building at its current location as well as the purchase of several other DPCS buildings throughout the county. After receiving 16 bids, DCPS assembled a six-person evaluation committee to independently review and score each bid before creating a short list of proposers to move on to the next stage of the process, which was led by the negotiation team.

In addition to the sale and relocation of the Prudential Drive administrative building, DCPS only received bids for a DCPS building on Philips Highway.

“ I understand the interest in this from the public’s perspective and this has been quite a process — a learning process as well... ”
— TERRENCE WRIGHT



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New Designs for RD River City Brewery Mixed-Use Gain Conceptual Approval from DDRB

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS



The original designs submitted in 2022 for the RD River City Brewery development. Courtesy of the 2022 Downtown Development Review Board Final Approval Packet.

The new designs for the RD River City Brewery Mixed-Use include the original eight-story residential complex with a new 24-story residential tower along with a restaurant and outdoor seating. Courtesy of Downtown Development Review Board Agenda Packet.

The Related Group has submitted new design plans for the site of the former River City Brewing Company. In March, The Resident reported that Jacksonville’s Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) terminated its development agreement with the Miami-based developer. In the March article, DIA CEO Lori Boyer explained the agreement ended because of the developer’s failure to “meet performance schedule deadlines in the contract and all extensions allowed under the contract had been provided.” Though that agreement and its incentives was terminated, The Related Group still plans to develop the property, which was cleared last summer in anticipation of incoming construction. Its new plans were presented at an April 13 Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) meeting for conceptual approval. The original designs featured an eight-story residential complex with 333 units, an attached parking garage and an on-site restaurant adjacent to the St. Johns River Park and Friendship Fountain. According to the April 13 DDRB agenda packet, the new designs propose 410 multi-family units. It still includes an eight-story residential building, abutting Museum Circle, but also proposes a riverfront residential tower of approximately

24 stories “with a parking deck interior and wrapped by the complex.” It outlines an estimated 4,559 square feet for a riverfront restaurant along with outdoor seating and a “pool/courtyard area.” The Related Group declined to comment on these new designs. In an e-mail, Boyer wrote, “We’re pleased that Related Group remains committed to Downtown Jacksonville and has come back with this upscaled and redesigned plan. While the change in design has delayed completion of the project, it provides both greater density on a smaller parcel and a larger waterfront restaurant – both highly desirable changes consistent with our Downtown master plan. As the project enters the approval process, we’re hopeful that it will prove to be mutually beneficial for Related, Downtown Jacksonville and the entire community, and that we will see construction begin quickly on the site.” The DDRB unanimously granted conceptual approval for the new designs at the April 13 meeting. The project’s design team includes MSA Architects, Carlos Ott Architect and landscape architect and engineer GAI Consultants.

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REALTOR



New Light Signal Proposed at Riverside and Margaret

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

In February, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) held a public meeting to discuss its SR 211 (from San Juan Avenue to I-95) Resurfacing Project and collect community feedback on the proposed components of the project.

As it stands currently, the project plans include milling and resurfacing of SR 211 (Riverside Avenue) as well as “bike lanes, shared use lane markings, sidewalk upgrades, and signage, signal and lighting updates.”

The proposed signal updates include replacing a mast arm signal at the intersection of Riverside Avenue and Margaret Street, which currently stands on the southeast corner near an entrance to Memorial Park, with a new

single mast arm signal on the northeast corner across from the park entrance, “extending southwest over the intersection,” wrote FDOT Community Outreach Specialist Nathan Pick in an e-mail.

That light signal had been replaced in summer 2021 as part of a previous project, which included “installation of a new signal controller, high visibility crosswalks, and mast arms to replace the existing concrete poles and span wire” at a cost of \$448,482.75.

“FDOT received community concerns about the new location of the signal supports (impacting the entrance to Memorial Park),” wrote Pick. “Based on this community

feedback and with the opportunity to make signal adjustments with the upcoming resurfacing project; FDOT decided to replace the signal supports to eliminate the park entrance impacts.”

Riverside resident Spencer Fletcher raised concerns over this particular component of the proposed SR 211 project at the Feb. 15 meeting, given the signal at that intersection had so recently been replaced.

“I think first and foremost, it’s just a huge waste of taxpayer money to just change the signal out,” he later commented. “It was a significant upgrade to change the light signal out from the original string pole that was there...It’s pretty concerning for me just because that money could have been utilized for another signal, which there are hundreds in the city that FDOT is responsible for that need to be upgraded, but instead we’re pushing these funds to an affluent area, a nice area when there’s signals less than a mile away that are decrepit and not in very good shape and need to be replaced.”

Pick did emphasize in his e-mail that the SR211 resurfacing project is in its early planning stages and nothing is finalized as FDOT is still soliciting community feedback regarding the project’s proposed components.

“This feedback continues to be considered and evaluated by the project team,” he added.

The Resident reached out to Memorial Park Association to see if it had received community complaints/feedback

“FDOT received community concerns about the new location of the signal supports...”

– NATHAN PICK
FDOT Community Outreach Specialist

regarding the light signal in question, but did not receive a response to inquiries at press time.

The cost of the SR211 resurfacing project is currently estimated at \$10.1 million, with Pick adding, “The mast arm relocation should be viewed in the context of the entire estimate as there is scalable value in addressing the improvement during a larger project.”

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Memorial Park Adds to Board

The Memorial Park Association added five new community leaders to its board of directors: Brooks Dame, executive assistant to Council Member Randy DeFoor; Cheryl Paganucci, retired systems analyst; Katie Quackenbush, marketing manager at Heritage Capital Group; Bill Shannon, retired Navy Rear Admiral; and David Wingard, chief creative officer of Wingard.

These leaders, with backgrounds in city government, project management, strategic management, marketing and design, join the current board of 14 in furthering the association's mission of enhancing, promoting and preserving the park for the greater Jacksonville area. Their terms will run through 2025.

"It's been wonderful to be able to work with the Memorial Park Association on the marketing end," said Wingard. I hope

to be able to help bring a recognizable voice to the park that the whole community can engage with."

"This park has always held a special place in my heart. It's a true gem in Jacksonville, and I'm excited to be a part of its legacy and the upcoming centennial celebration," said Quackenbush.

Paganucci, who had volunteered with the park for several years, credited Memorial Park as one of the reasons she moved from New England to Jacksonville, and Dame called the iconic park a "masterpiece of landscape architecture."

"I love the strong sense of community in the Riverside and Avondale neighborhoods and I believe that Memorial Park is one of the main anchors that help maintain that sense of community," said Shannon.



May Concerts and Art

Mother's Day Family Concert First Coast Wind Symphony

Sunday, May 14 • 5 p.m.

Artist Reception LAIRD: Nature Transformed

Immediately following the concert

The photography exhibition is open to the public through May 26. All photos are framed and for sale through the St. John's Cathedral Bookstore & Gift Shop

Vocal Recital Rebecca Andrews and Jonathan Spencer

Sunday, May 21 • 5 p.m.



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Our Baptismal Tree

St. Johns Cathedral Unveils Collaborative Artwork Celebrating Baptisms

Artists Brighton Hakimian and Laura Johnson worked together to create a mixed media work of art celebrating the newly baptized members of St. John's Cathedral.

The artists completed their piece, titled "Our Baptismal Tree," last month on April 16. It will be installed and on display in the cathedral's narthex. George Booth, a parishioner of St. John's Cathedral, worked behind the scenes to prepare for the artwork's installation, both preparing and clearing the space and creating its framework. Hakimian, a mixed media artist painted the tree in the artwork, Johnson created the white blooms framing the faces of those recently baptized at the cathedral.

This is the third artwork Hakimian, a Jacksonville native, has donated to St. John's Cathedral. In addition to "Our Baptismal Tree," she has completed two murals in the Hakimian Nursery. Johnson is "best known for her kiln-formed vibrant glass poppy bowls and her touchable fall and winter aspen scenes," although she also enjoys participating in "monumental community pieces." Her recent work includes her contributions to a reconstruction of the Grove structure in Boise, Idaho.



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Rivers Joins the Community Foundation



Socrates Rivers

Socrates Rivers is the new director of development for The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. As an experienced fundraising professional with more than 17 years in development, finance and business, Rivers will lead the cultivation, solicitation and stewardship of new funds and fundholders at the foundation.

"The Community Foundation has distinguished itself through world-class donor service, and I'm thrilled that Socrates will help us continue that tradition," said John Zell, vice president of development. "He brings a wealth of expertise that will help us in our work to connect people who care with causes that matter."

Rivers will help fund holders open new funds, facilitate the planned giving, and provide ongoing relationship management and philanthropic service. Along his own line of philanthropy, Rivers serves on the boards of the United Community Outreach Ministry and the First Coast Tiger Bay Club of Jacksonville.



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A River of Excellence Award

River Garden receives Governor's Gold Seal



Dr. Lawrence Goldberg and Kimberly R. Smoak

River Garden Hebrew Home has again been awarded the Governor's Gold Seal Award for Excellence in Long-Term Care – for the 10th time since the award was created in 2002. The award, bestowed by Florida State Legislature, recognizes Florida's premier nursing homes that have exceptionally high standards and display excellence in quality of care. The award was presented by Kimberly R. Smoak, Deputy Secretary of Health Quality Assurance at the Agency for Health Care Administration, to Dr. Lawrence Goldberg, River Garden Hebrew Home board president, during the River Garden Senior Services annual meeting on Sunday, March 26.

"River Garden has long-been a recipient of awards for excellence, and we appreciate every acknowledgement," says Mauri Mizrahi, River Garden CEO. "Our staff dedicates themselves every day to being the best and they deserve a round of applause for this success."

Currently, there are more than 700 nursing homes in the state of Florida, and only 10 are recognized with the Governor's Gold Seal Award for Excellence in Long-Term Care. River Garden and one other facility have maintained the multi-year recognition since its inception in 2002.

Sorna Named Professional of the Year

Betty Sorna, CFO and Senior Associate Administrator at River Garden Senior Services, was named the Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS) Professional of the Year on Tuesday, March 21, during the 2023 AJAS Annual Conference. This award is given to honor and recognize an outstanding AJAS professional who reflects the highest standards of knowledge and expertise, has shown exceptional leadership and is highly respected by the staff, residents and families served.

"Betty Sorna is a colleague who can be counted upon, all of the time. Over the last 27 years, Betty has worked with three of the four CEOs of River Garden and led the agency through multiple complex financing projects. Betty has always stayed laser-focused on River Garden and its mission, and she has guided our financial and operational programs with a steady hand," said Mauri Mizrahi, River Garden CEO.

As CFO, Sorna is responsible for development and implementation of annual budgets in excess of \$30 million, and oversees a staff of more than 300. During her tenure, River Garden has successfully opened an adult day program, The Coves at River Garden senior living facility, River Garden Home Health, and The Albert Z. Fleet Geriatric Training Center.



Betty Sorna

Egan Joins Wolfson Children's Board

Board-certified pediatrician Anne Egan, MD, has joined Wolfson Children's Hospital's board of directors for a three-year term starting April 2023. Egan has been with the Carithers Pediatric Group since October 2003, and currently serves on the boards of the University of North Florida and the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens.

"As a pediatrician in the greater Jacksonville area 20 years, Dr. Egan has faithfully cared for local children and families and advocated for their physical and mental health well-being as a healthcare provider and volunteer. As a physician leader and a mother of four, she is uniquely qualified to serve in this governance role at Wolfson Children's Hospital as we plan for the future of pediatric health care in our region," said Allegra Jaros, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital.



Anne Egan

Ascension St. Vincent's Opens Weight-Loss Center



Jody Young and Dr. Paul Bailey with James Machado

Ascension St. Vincent's Southside opened its new Weight-Loss Services center, which offers comprehensive care for individuals struggling with obesity. The center serves patients both pre- and post-surgery, and features dedicated weight-loss facilities and equipment, including two patient education and support classrooms. Services include a range of surgical options, including gastric bypass, gastric sleeve and adjustable gastric banding. Patients also have access to a team of experienced bariatric surgeons, dietitians and exercise physiologists.

"Our goal is to provide patients with the highest level of care and support throughout their weight-loss journey," said Dr. Estrellita Redmon, Chief Clinical Officer for Ascension Florida and Gulf Coast. "By offering minimally-invasive surgical options, pre-surgery and post-surgery care, and personalized weight-loss support, we can help patients achieve long-term success."

Ascension St. Vincent's is a Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Improvement Program and is a designated Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence.

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Hannah Wells



Rebecca Winters

Stiltner Joins NAI Hallmark



Eugene Stiltner

NAI Hallmark, a commercial real estate brokerage and property management firm in Jacksonville, announced an expansion of its brokerage team with the appointment of Eugene Stiltner as vice president, specializing in land leasing and sales, along with tenant representation. Stiltner has extensive experience in commercial real estate, marketing and retail, and has clients throughout Northeast Florida. He has worked on a wide range of projects, from large-scale multifamily developments to individual retail spaces.

“I’m excited to be joining NAI Hallmark and to have the opportunity to work with such a talented group of professionals,” said Stiltner. “I look forward to leveraging my experience and expertise to help clients achieve their real estate goals.”

“We are thrilled to have Eugene join our team,” said NAI Hallmark Managing Partner Christian Harden. “His extensive knowledge of the land market in Northeast Florida, combined with his commitment to providing exceptional service to his clients, make him an ideal fit for our team.”

Chase Properties Hits the Big 3-0

Chase Properties, one of Northeast Florida’s premier full-service real estate and land development companies, is celebrating its 30th year in business. Founded by Michael Balanky in 1993, the firm has developed award-winning commercial, residential and mixed-use projects with an emphasis on high-profile urban infill developments. Chase Properties will celebrate the milestone by rolling out a refreshed corporate brand, enhancing its corporate offices, and hosting internal and external appreciation events for clients and team members.

“We launched our company with a vision of working with our partners and stakeholders to help shape the future of Northeast Florida,” said Balanky. “Over the past three decades, we’ve grown by consistently creating high-quality, sustainable developments...while creating real value for the community. Throughout it all, we have remained committed to continuous evolution and innovation while staying true to our core values of quality, integrity and service.”

Chase Properties’ portfolio consists of notable projects like The District, Deerwood Lake, San Marco Place, Parkland Preserve and King’s Avenue Station.

“For me, it is incredible to not only reflect on all of the exceptional projects we’ve completed over the years, but to consider that – at a company I named for my son – I now get to enjoy the opportunity of working alongside him and Michael McGowan as my VP’s of Development Operations. It is a living testament to Chase Properties’ enduring success across generations. It is what I always hoped that we could achieve,” said Balanky.



Elijah Daniels

Daniels Joins The Windsor Ortega

Elijah Daniels joins The Windsor Ortega as the new Community Liaison. From his career roots in the skilled nursing field, Daniels said he is thrilled to be back in the ALF/Memory Care branch of healthcare.

“When you work in skilled nursing care, you’re able to help others; but, after two weeks, they go back home. In this field, you are the resource for someone, and then you have the opportunity to see their lives drastically change for the better on a long-term scale. There’s something profoundly rewarding about that,” said Daniels.

In his previous role as the North Florida Regional Director of Business Development, Daniels was responsible for 10 buildings and over 2,000 beds. He has also served as a board member for the Baker County Council on Aging for the last nine years.



Kent Honored for Arts Advocacy

Jamie Kent, programming manager of Theatreworks at the Florida Theatre, was selected by Florida Alliance for Arts Education as the winner of its 2023 Excellence in Arts Education Award. The award recognizes individuals for their leadership in advocating for the importance of arts education. Jamie was selected from a pool of nominees from across the state of Florida, and was honored for his efforts to improve, promote and enhance arts education in Duval County. Jamie has been with Theatreworks since 2004.



Jamie Kent receiving his 2023 Excellence in Arts Education Award.

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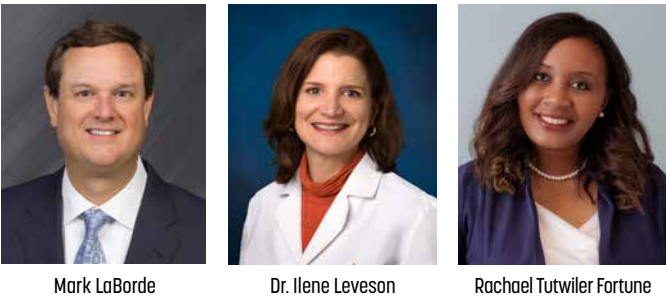
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Three Join Baptist Health Board

Baptist Health appointed three new members to its board of directors for the health system: Mark LaBorde, Ilene Levenson and Rachael Tutwiler Fortune. The Board plays a key leadership role in advancing the mission of the not-for-profit, locally owned, locally governed health system.

“We are fortunate to add each of these individuals’ diverse perspective and experience expertise to the board of directors,” said Michael A. Mayo, DHA, FACHE, president and CEO at Baptist Health. “Their volunteer role in the health system is a key differentiator – decisions about Baptist Health and its role in the Jacksonville community are made by respected, local leaders.”

Mark LaBorde, is a Certified Employee Benefit Specialist with more than 30 years of health care management experience. He retired as senior vice president and head of enterprise sales, product and marketing at Aetna, Inc. in 2017, and joined the Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville board of directors in 2019.

Ilene Levenson, MD, served as a board-certified internal medicine physician in Jacksonville for nearly 35 years before retiring from Baptist Primary Care - Baymeadows in January 2023. She also served as the board chair of Baptist Physician Partners, the Baptist Physician Partners Clinical Transformation Council and the Baptist Physician Partners Accountable Care Organizations Board.

Rachael Tutwiler Fortune is the president of Jacksonville Public Education Fund and also serves as an adjunct instructor in Leadership at the University of North Florida. She was recognized by Jacksonville Business Journal as one of the First Coast’s 40 under 40 in 2020 and is a member of Leadership Jacksonville’s Class of 2022.

Moody Wins Dr. Low Klechak Award



Ron Moody

Ron Moody, former board member and chairman of the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA), has been named the 2023 recipient of DIA’s annual Dr. Low Klechak Award. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions in advancing the development of downtown Jacksonville.

“Ron Moody has been a true champion of downtown redevelopment, both in his service with the DIA board and as a longtime resident and business owner in downtown,” said Lori Boyer, DIA CEO. “With his first-hand experience and positive attitude about downtown, he’s been an unwavering supporter of efforts to transform and revitalize downtown Jacksonville.”

Moody is the CEO of the Moody Williams Appraisal, has served as president of the East Florida Chapter of the Appraisal Institute, and spent seven years on the DIA board. During his time as board chairman, the DIA attracted \$170 million in private capital investment within downtown.

“I am incredibly thankful for this award, but I think the true recognition should go to the entire Downtown Investment Authority organization, including the leadership, staff and dedicated board members,” Moody said. “History will look back and realize that the 10-year period from 2015 to 2025 was one of the most impactful times for the rediscovery of our beloved downtown Jacksonville and the many benefits it has to offer.”

Board Changes for Scenic Jacksonville

Scenic Jacksonville announced its new 2023 board president, officers and two new board members. Michael Kirwan was named president; Bill Hoff Jr., vice president; Susan Caven, immediate past president; Laura D’Alisera, secretary; and Tom Larson, treasurer. New board members Melinda B. Powers and Rebecca Williams have joined for the 2023 term.



Michael Kirwan, Melinda B. Powers and Rebecca Williams

Kirwan is a partner with the international law firm of Foley & Lardner, and has been with Scenic Jacksonville for 10 years, leading the Underground Committee and the Great Cities Symposium. He replaces the two-term Caven, who has been a longstanding civic advocate for trees, billboard removal, historic preservation and scenic beauty.

“I have always valued stewardship,” said Powers, founder and manager of Intentional Professionals, LLC. “I think that it is all our responsibility to keep the uniqueness of the city intact without compromising it, and that takes effort.”

“I believe Scenic Jacksonville’s impact will not only lead to more beautiful communities, but to healthier families, less economically burdened households, and ultimately shift the mindsets of residents. We must love what we see when we step out of our homes and commute throughout our city,” said Williams, founder and CEO of Fruit of Barren Trees, LLC, a neighborhood revitalization firm.

“We are very fortunate to have such talented community leaders joining Scenic Jacksonville’s Board,” said Kirwan. “These new directors bring energy and enthusiasm to our already active and passionate board and will help us continue our mission of preserving, protecting and enhancing the scenic character of our city.”

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Chuck Rebhan, Patti Howell, Susan Arnold, Bobbie Howell and Debbie Rebhan

ExZooberation Returns with Wonder

The Jacksonville Zoo's premier annual fundraiser, ExZooberation, returned Saturday, April 1, from 6-10 p.m. under a tent of wonder and intrigue. The 26th celebration of ExZooberation was themed Cirque Du Zooleil, where supporters immersed themselves in a world of beauty with larger-than-life gardens, interactive Cirque-style entertainment, traditional French cuisine, and a live and silent auction. Proceeds from the event benefit the care and feeding of the zoo animals, maintenance of the lush botanical gardens, educational programs, and conservation initiatives, both local and international.



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MORE INFORMATION

Charity Takes Flight at Jacksonville Executive at Craig Airport

The hangars were cleared out for a very special evening of camaraderie, compassion and shared stories about the impact Gabriel House of Care has upon the recovery of cancer and transplant patients. Guests in attendance were treated to a first class, front row seat to hear testimonials while celebrating the nonprofit with honorary host, Leslie Bacardi and friends on Saturday, April 15.

Patrons were welcomed by aviation surroundings, unique cocktails, vintage cars and airplanes while encouraged in invitations to don their best aviation-themed attire. Aviator hats, sunglasses and other unique outfits helped to deliver a fun evening for the organization and its programs. Gabriel House's mission is to promote a "community of healing" environment by providing affordable, temporary lodging for adult organ transplant and cancer patients as well as their caregivers who come to Jacksonville for medical treatment.

Funds raised will help to sustain and grow programming that fund and fuel the mission for excellence for those in their care to recover and take flight for a brighter, healthier future. To learn more visit gabrielhouseofcare.org.



Eric Oliver, Chad Munsey and Nathaniel Herring



Brian and Sarah Small with Jodie Miller, Jim Furyk, Jeremy Miller, Ed and Megan Denk

Sponsors, Friends and Golf Enthusiasts Gather in Ponte Vedra Beach

Star power raised funds for charity

It was a night to celebrate celebrities of the golf world as 17-time PGA TOUR winner Jim Furyk and 7-time LPGA Tour winner Michelle McGann took on 2014 FedEx Cup Champion Billy Horschel and 2-time Korn Ferry Tour winner Luke Guthrie for some friendly competition at The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach, March 30.



Erin and Cody O'Steen

Billy Horschel and Luke Guthrie won the match, with \$10,000 going to Feeding Northeast Florida and \$10,000 went to The Michelle McGann Fund following the match.

The event highlights sponsor benefits and gathers supporters of the Furyk and Friends presented by Circle K tournament in town, which is in its third year in 2023.

The event is slated for October 2-8 in Jacksonville at the Timuquana Country Club. Tickets and related packages for the tournament are now on sale and can be purchased by visiting constellationfurykandfriends.com/tickets.

The event kicked off with live music by Danielle Todd and Grady James, as guests enjoyed the facilities while dining on Bearded Pig, Estrella Cocina and 3 Palms Grille, not to mention, an open bar full of unique libations, wine and beer.

The evening wasn't complete until the golfers wrapped up the three-hole competition around the "Beer Loop" under the lights with comical commentary by ESPN's Michael Collins, cracking up the competitors and guests along the way.



Michelle and Jarret Dreicer with Allegra Jaros, Rick Tresmond and Laura Collins



Luke Guthrie with Michael Collins, David Miller and Billy Horschel

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The interior of Aura Plant Studio is a tropical plant paradise.



The side of the building at Aura Plant Studio is an ideal location for self-portraits.



This historic charmer is on Oak Street.

RAP Garden Tour Preview

What started as a pandemic work-around now has a life of its own.

BY WINDY TAYLOR
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

They say that April flowers bring May showers, but for Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP), the April Home Tour brings the May Garden Tour, which will take place on May 13 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

The Garden Tour, which is in its third year, began during the COVID-19 pandemic when the Home Tour was suspended. It was so popular that RAP decided to continue it, even after the Home Tour resumed in 2022.

“The biggest difference [between the Home Tour and the Garden Tour] is that, because it’s only one day, we really try to curate the back yards to create spaces where people just want to chill,” said Shannon Blankinship, executive director of RAP. “We want to make each stop fun. With the home tour, you make your own fun. With the garden tour, we’re able to program it so that there’s more to do at each location, like hired musicians.”

This year, the tour will feature 10 locations, with a mix of residential, commercial and public spaces showcasing a variety of gardening styles.

One of the residential spaces, on Pine Street, will display before-and-after photos of its total transformation. Wacca Pilatka, a local landscaping company, took a standard suburban turf lawn and created a Florida-friendly yard using almost exclusively native plants. Signs will be placed throughout identifying the various plants used, for information and inspiration.

Another home, on Fitch Street, uses color to create atmosphere. “We call it the Cottage Kaleidoscope,” Blankinship said. “[The homeowners] have planted flowers around stone pathways in a whole range of colors. We didn’t program anything extra at that house because it’s so peaceful and calming. People will be able to sit and relax and really enjoy the space.”

Three of the sites will have artists working en plein air, or outdoors, and three will feature live musicians. A home on Riverside Avenue will have students from the Darren Ronan School of Music providing a soundtrack to an urban farm. The homeowner “has taken a very small side yard and is growing fantastic vegetables,” said Blankinship. “He has on-site compost and teaches about using leaves and food scraps to grow more food.”

Aura Plant Studio is a commercial space featured on the tour this year. The shop, which opened in June 2022, is located on McDuff Avenue at the north boundary of the neighborhood, behind the fire station. “It’s a little plant shop that focuses on indoor tropical plants, with an outdoor space perfect for events. They’ll have a workshop on how to grow and maintain tropical plants indoors,” said Blankinship.

Near the other end of McDuff Avenue, the Friends of the Peace Park Labyrinth will paint a full-scale rendering of their proposed installation on the ground at the Peace

Memorial Rose Garden Park across from the Willowbranch Library. During the 2022 Garden Tour, the group announced their intention to revitalize the park by installing an 11-circuit labyrinth, which will be wheelchair-accessible. Food and drink will be available at the park, and the Friends of the Peace Park Labyrinth will be on hand to answer questions.

For those looking to improve their own gardening skills, the Garden Club on Riverside Avenue will have workshops running through the day on gardening and landscape design.

Like the Home Tour, visitors can plot their own route to each of the gardens, but guided tours are available through local vendors. Pre-sale tickets are \$25 each, and the price increases to \$30 on May 13. Tickets can be purchased online at 904TIX or on the Riverside Avondale Preservation website. “This is Mother’s Day weekend,” Blankinship pointed out, “and the garden tour is a great thing to do with your mom instead of buying her another candle.”

Even those with black thumbs can find something to appreciate on the Garden Tour. “Thinking about the neighborhood, it’s not just about the homes, it’s the landscapes too. We’re doing the work of showing people that your flowers, your shrubs, your trees – they’re all part of the neighborhood, too. The yards and gardens benefit everyone. This is just a different way to approach loving this neighborhood,” Blankinship said.

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Dee Loop, Susan Britt Macon, Mary Jane Evans and Ann Carey



Tori Seay, Barrienne Green

A Sold-Out Vision

A Vision for Art kicked off its 2023 event with a sold-out opening night celebration on Friday, April 21. Presented by Joan and Preston Haskell, the five-day art event showcased and sold works from more than 40 established and emerging artists from Jacksonville and beyond, in support of community arts and the mission of Episcopal School of Jacksonville. It was held at the school's St. Mark's Campus.

Susan Britt Macon, a multi-year participating artist, was chosen as the 2023 Featured Artist. The Artist Selection Committee consisted of: Ann Evans, Dustin Harewood, Preston Haskell, Jennie Hugo, Elizabeth Rodrigues and Ryan Schwarz. Event committee members included: Kristin Bulgin, CeeCee Cassidy, Sharlene Herrera-Diocares, Brittany Jones, Karthik Krishnamurthy, Matt McCullough, Rebecca Sale, Claire Smith and Callie Sprague. A Vision for Art was founded in 2018, attracting both avid art collectors and casual buyers.



3404 St. Johns Avenue, owned by Michael and Lynn Israel, was the featured home for the 49th annual RAP Home Tour.



Glenn Jones

Home Tour Offers Inspiration, Treasures to be Discovered in the Historic District

BY: MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) hosted its 49th annual Home Tour on April 15 and 16, allowing residents and visitors to enjoy beautiful homes and other points of interest in the Riverside and Avondale communities.

Ten homes, a church and a local business participated in this year's tour. The featured home was the nearly-100-year-old mediterranean revival residence at 3404 St. Johns Avenue, owned by Michael and Lynn Israel.

Michael's mother, Judith Israel, was a first-time volunteer for this year's RAP Home Tour and said she was very proud of the home her son and his family have created within the walls of the historic structure — from converting the basement into an apartment for their adult son to transforming the pool house into an in-law suite for Lynn's mother — while remaining true to its historic nature,

"I'm very proud that they were able to do this and keep true to this home," Judith said. "It's a beautiful home and it is their home, so the house is lived in. It's not a showcase; it's a home. So that's really important to me."



The Home Tour is a yearly tradition for Patti Voght, Breanna Pierce, Hannah Pierce and Jeannie Pierce, who travel up from Palatka for the inspiration these homes provide.

Volunteer and realtor Jill Islava has been volunteering with the Home Tour for seven years.

"I think especially in Avondale, because there's so many homes that are 100 years old or older, I think we're really proud about our neighborhood and keeping it historic," she said. "I think it's important for people to see that. Yeah you drive by and that looks nice, but you come inside and there's a lot going on here."

Homeowners Glenn Jones and Ronald Episcopo have been volunteers in other people's homes in previous home tours, but this was the first year they opened the doors of their historic and completely renovated home — built in 1911 — on Osceola Avenue and Jones said he really enjoyed it.

"I do love people coming into the house — like when we have dinner parties and things like that — and seeing the house because I swear almost every person comes in and says, 'I've looked at this house from the outside but I never would have thought it looks like this on the inside,'" he said. "People just seem to be very surprised by the inside after looking at the outside of the house."

Home Tour participants Jeannie, Hannah and Breanna Pierce and Patti Voght travel to Jacksonville every year specifically for the RAP Home Tour, this year rolling it into a birthday celebration for Jeannie. As owners of older homes themselves, they said they attend the tour every year for inspiration and appreciation.

"Homeowners gained a new sense of pride in their property; volunteers helped convey the history and architectural details of incredible local landmarks; neighbors from near and far had a great time walking and biking the neighborhood, enjoying great food and drinks from our local businesses along the way," wrote RAP Executive Director Shannon Blankinship in an e-mail the week after the event. "It was a great weekend for everyone, and we are thrilled with the outcome."



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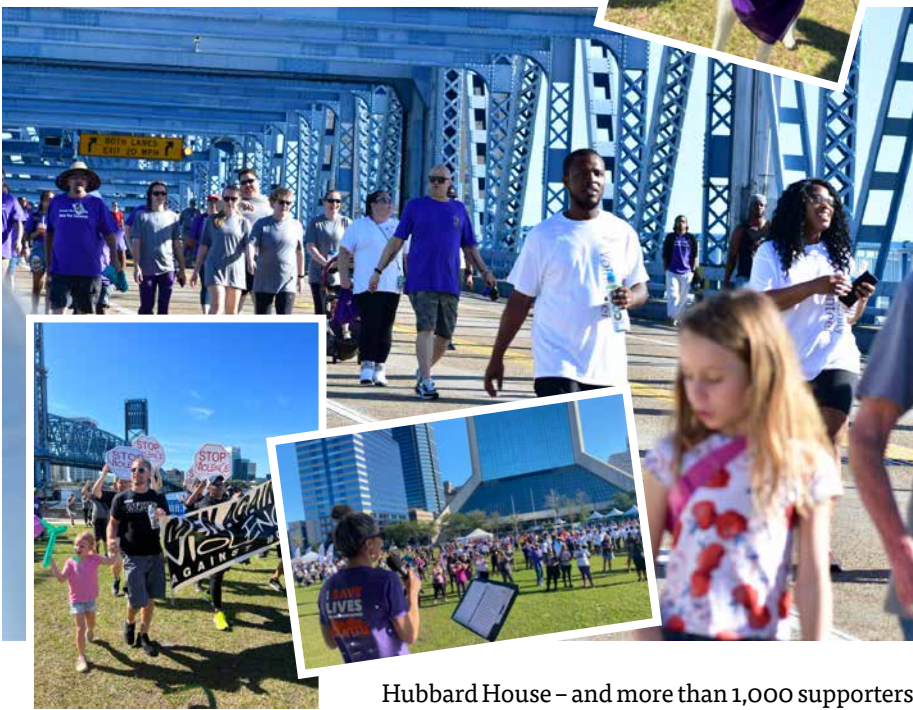
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Hubbard House Walks the Walk



Hubbard House – and more than 1,000 supporters – came together for the organization’s 14th Annual Stand Up & Stride Domestic Violence Awareness Walk, presented by Pajcic & Pajcic, on Saturday, April 15, at 8 a.m. at the Riverfront Plaza. The family-friendly event featured games and activities for children, a newly added enrichment zone for dogs, guest appearances and energizing music along the one-mile route. The event exceeded its \$100,000 fundraising goal to support local survivors of domestic violence and their families.

“Leaving an abusive relationship is never easy, but Hubbard House gives survivors that chance. It is not just a shelter. Hubbard House literally saves lives,” said Hubbard House Board President Janeen Mira.

Hubbard House serves Duval and Baker counties through emergency shelter and support services like counseling and job coaching.

“It is so important for survivors of domestic violence to know they are not alone. Hubbard House is here for you. And events like this show our community is here for you too,” said Hubbard House Chief Development & Administration Officer Kristi Brandon.

The Return of San Marco Beer Fest



The San Marco Beer Fest returned for the second installment of the now-annual event. The 2nd Annual San Marco Beer Fest was held Saturday, April 1, from 1-5 p.m. at Balis Park. The event, hosted by the San Marco Merchant Association and Aardwolf Brewing Co., featured craft beer from more than 25 local breweries and live music from String Theory and the John Lumpkin Institute. Food vendors and San Marco’s restaurants were open and available for food. For family-friendly entertainment, the organizers brought axe throwing, a selfie bar and traditional outdoor yard games. The community event was free for those not participating in the tastings.



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Committee Prepares for 2023 Cowford Ball

It was a gathering of like-minds that brought some of North Florida’s most active members of the American Cancer Society’s fundraising arms together. Members of the 2023 Cowford Ball committee kicked off the announcement of the date, the chairs and the event facility that will play host to the newly-minted title of 2023 Cowford Ball – Cattle Baron’s Ball of Duval County.



Cowford Ball 2023 Co-Chairs Laura Edgecombe and Sarah Allen Foster



Jill Bechtold with Mat Larson, Kimberly Patterson and Keely Kennedy

Following brief remarks by Keely Kennedy, senior development manager for the Southeast region, Co-Chairs Laura Edgecombe and Sarah Allen Foster welcomed their constituents and rallied the team for its upcoming boot scootin’ good times ahead, as they plan the annual ball that makes its debut the evening of Nov. 4, at Deerwood Castle.

During the outing, stories were shared about lifelong connections to cancer, the treatment of it and the loss of loved ones



Regina Allen with Sandy Kelly, Sue Stepp, Donna Zaccour and Lori Gibbs

that inspired those in attendance to participate. Aside from fundraising for the gala, many of the most passionate supporters also lobby and work hard to help increase funding for research, increase early detection and prevention and lead efforts to engage sponsors and donor advocacy. The committee held its kickoff at Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club April 11, and had already confirmed \$77,500 as of the meeting.



Joe and Dawn Nackashi with Frances and Anthony Jabbour

CAP’s Hold Record-Breaking Event

Inspiration abounded at the 18th annual Spring for the Arts, held Friday, April 21, at Epping Forest Yacht Club, as the event raised a record-breaking nearly \$800,000 for Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) and its mission to elevate arts education. This year, the CAP’s signature fundraiser honored Amy and Gary Norcross as its 2023 Guardians of the Arts.

“One of the great joys of my tenure has been getting to know people like our honorees, Amy and Gary Norcross, who consistently look out for the interests of others, especially our community’s children. It’s people like the Norcrosses, and all our supporters, who have made it possible over the past 30 years for CAP to provide the kind of education that empowers every child’s creative spirit and encourages them to share it with the world,” said Kimberly L. Hyatt, CAP president and CEO.



Angela Spurling and Dominique Moore

More than 300 attended the event, which has generated more than \$7 million since its inception, and become one of the most visible organizations for arts education in Northeast Florida. Stephanie and Tim Cost served as honorary chairs, Kristine Cherek and Kirk Larsen served as event chairs, and Darnell Smith was the evening’s emcee. Spring for the Arts featured an auction, entertainment from Bold City Classics and décor from Harlow James Floral. Spirits were donated by Foley Family Wines and Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits.



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Taking it to the Yard “Fore” Charity

The Law Firm of Pajcic & Pajcic hosted its annual yard golf and lawn party, The Yard Course & Back 9, on Saturday, April 1, raising over \$150,000 for Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA), which provides cost-free civil legal services for those in need. The cornerstone of the event is the 18-hole course played at two Avondale homes on the river, which includes celebrity shoot-outs, closest-to-the-pin competitions and its own 6th-hole “island green.”



The NFL Contingent

Local celebrities, and category winners, in attendance this year were Josh Scobee, Artis Gilmore, Mark McCumber and Steve Melnyk. Each winner’s charity of choice was awarded \$6,000, of which the Pajcics matched all donations and prizes dollar-for-dollar to JALA.





Grace Lewis, Chris Sutton and Caroline Balcita



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Dames Night Out: A fundraising gala for the Veterans Oral History Project

BY: MICHELE LEIVAS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS



Louise Ropp and Barbara Harrell Dames

It was an evening of history, fun and food for The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Florida (NSCDA-FL) on Saturday, April 1 at their All Hands on Deck Gala.

The evening kicked off with a tour of the USS Orleck Naval Museum and continued with dinner, dancing and silent and live auctions at the River Club in downtown Jacksonville. This was the first gala the organization has hosted, though NSCDA-FL President Jane Arnold said she expects another will follow in future years.

“The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Florida had a wonderful event [All Hands on Deck] on the USS Orleck and at the River Club,” she wrote in a text message. “This event enabled us to promote and raise funds for our Veterans Oral History Project, spearheaded by the Library of Congress to interview and record the stories and experiences of our veterans and preserve them at the Library of Congress and now on the USS Orleck. We thank all our sponsors and friends who helped fund this and other Dames projects.”



Ellen Stark, Allison Crisp and Jo Adamson

As of April 20, Arnold advised the organization was still collecting all the figures relating to the event and did not have a final number for funds raised.

In addition to raising awareness for and promoting the Veterans Oral History Project, NSCDA-FL oversees other projects, including sending holiday cards to veterans in assisted living facilities. Arnold explained the organization's mission is to promote "an appreciation of our national heritage through historic preservation, patriotic service and educational projects."




Billie Haynes with Jorge and Margie Morales, Zoie and Michael Morales

Residential Renos for Daniel Digs

Housing improvements will help improve the odds for kids in our community

The Daniel 1884 Giving Society, the philanthropic arm of Florida's oldest child-service agency, celebrated the renovation of its residential treatment facility for children in a special ceremony on the Daniel campus on April 20. The organization officially dedicated and renamed the cottage "Morales Cottage" in honor of Zoie and Michael Morales, who have championed the campaign to renovate the on-campus children's cottages.

Morales Cottage will house and serve up to 16 children with mental health issues co-existing with mild-to-moderate developmental differences. It is located on Daniel's 10-acre campus and features several bedrooms and bathrooms, a large activity area, a kitchen and an indoor dining area. It will also accommodate treatments with a therapy office, nurse's station and reflecting room, as well as an outdoor courtyard. The cottage is slated to open the end of July.



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Spring has Sprung at Garden Club of Jacksonville

The Garden Club of Jacksonville, which has been in Jacksonville for nearly 100 years, had everything coming up roses...and irises, and lilies, and daisies...for flower lovers in Northeast Florida. Recently, the Garden Club hosted two large events at its Riverside Avenue location.

In late March, the Late Bloomers Garden Club (LBGC) presented its Garden Club of America Flower Show, titled "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever." The two-day show featured hundreds of flowers and plants, all grown and exhibited by garden club floral designers from Florida, Georgia and beyond. Submissions were judged by experts in their fields in four divisions: floral design, horticulture, photography and education, with the striking creations reflecting current trends in floral artistic design.

The Garden Club also hosted its own signature event the second weekend of April, the 2023 Blooms Galore & More, with a sprout sale, vendors, kid zone and food trucks. Blooms Galore & More kicked off with a preview party on April 7, which offered guests early shopping admission to the event, as well as live music, beverages, and a container display competition, with bidding on the competition entries.

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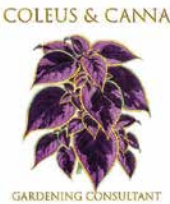
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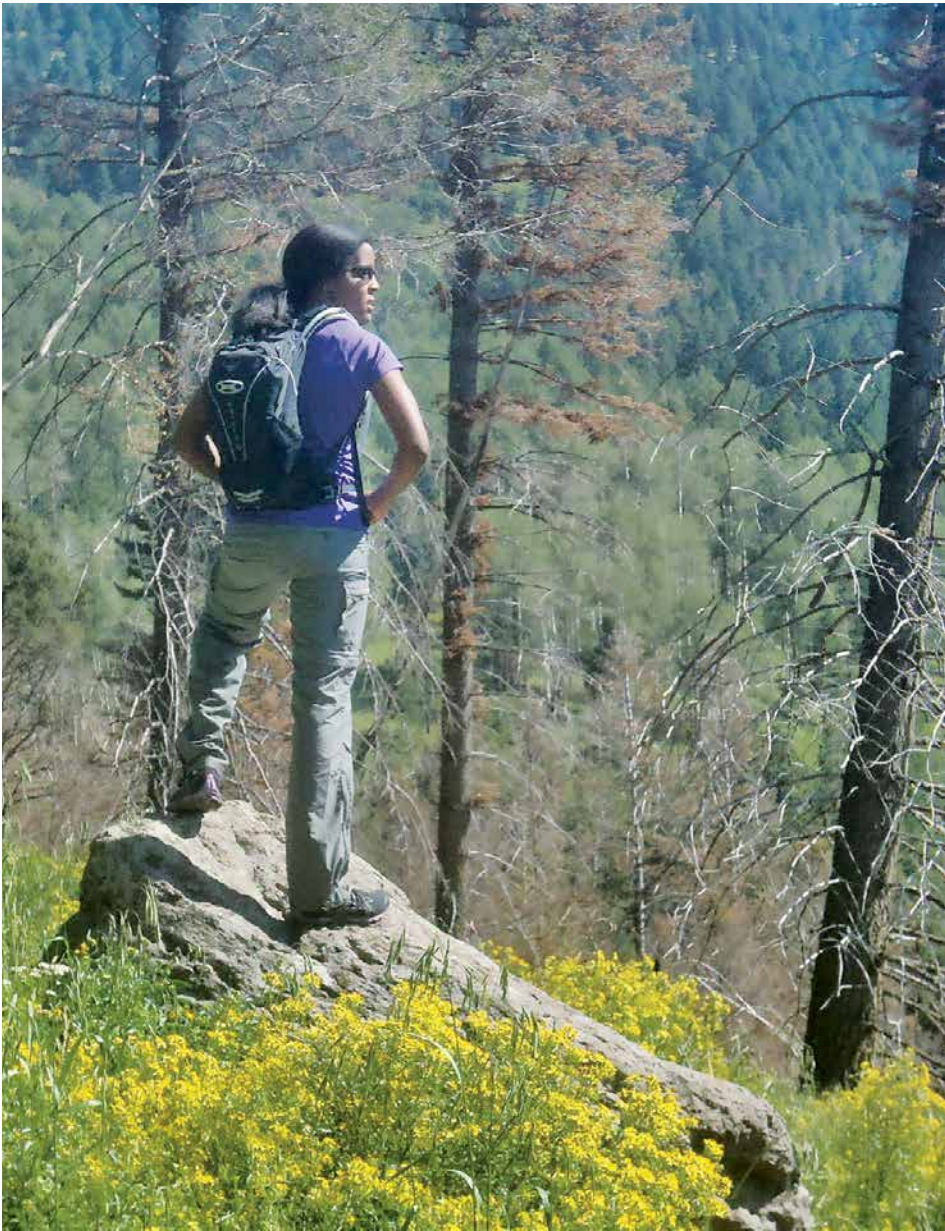
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Artwork by Teresa Cook



SCAN ME

LOCAL FOLKS



Khoranhalai J. Washington hiking the Valles Caldera, Los Alamos, New Mexico, 2019

Local Folks: Khoranhalai J. Washington

BY MARY WANSE
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Khoranhalai J. Washington’s first name is Hawaiian, though she is a native of Durham, North Carolina and still has 144 cousins there. Six years ago, she married a Navy man from Tallahassee, Florida, Dean Washington. For four years, the Washingtons lived on the NAS JAX base near Ortega, while Dean was stationed there. “We would spend all of our dates during the week in the Riverside-Avondale area,” Khoranhalai said.

She is a full-time student who is pursuing a degree at the University of North Florida (UNF), majoring in history, minoring in computer science. She is working on publishing one of her papers on Jacksonville’s sewer systems in correlation with consolidation. “I tackled the sewer systems and the historical problems that Jacksonville and Duval County were going to merge. I dove into why that was a problem and why they weren’t able to complete it,” Khoranhalai said. In 2022, when Khoranhalai was a junior, Jacksonville’s chapter of DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) presented her with an American History Scholarship based on that paper.

DAR has opened up many local opportunities for Khoranhalai. “Anywhere I go that has any historical connection, they know them,” she said. Just the mention of her affiliation with DAR, however loose, opens up suggestions of topics to research and places to visit. “I have a whole list, including the underground tunnels I didn’t know Jacksonville had,” she said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 35



Dean and Khoranhalai Washington, Grand Canyon, 2022

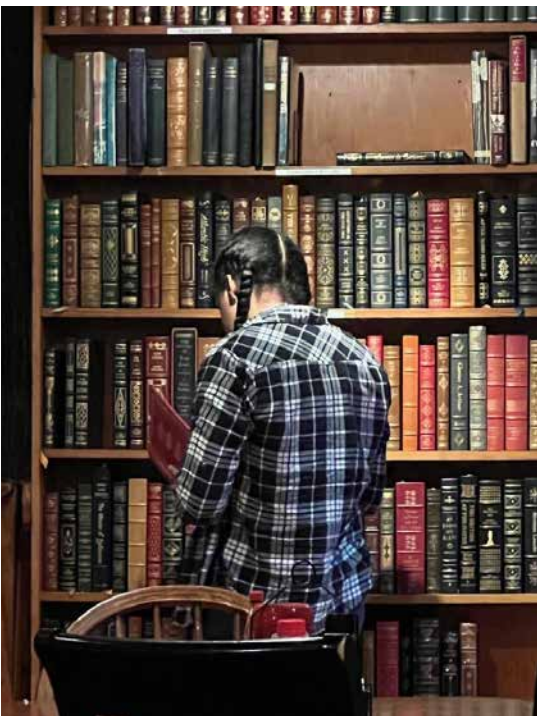
Currently, Khoranhalai is wrapping up research that will confirm her eligibility to join DAR. She found that her great-great-great-grandfather served in the Civil War. He was nicknamed Hell Billy Lee.

Khoranhalai interns at the Jacksonville Historical Society, helping clean up the archives for easy access. She sorts through boxes, re-organizes shelves, and catalogs information so that it is more accessible to people who want to do research there.

Coming from a mountainous state, Khoranhalai is a hiker by hobby. She and her dog, Dot, cover all of the greenspaces of Jacksonville. “She needs a good three-hour hike before she’s finally done and calm,” Khoranhalai said of the whippet terrier mix.

Riverside Park is a preferred place to roam. “It’s not much of a hike, but it’s really beautiful!” Khoranhalai said. She and Dot jump over park benches to compensate for the flat land and are captivated by sunrises there, which Khoranhalai described as “absolutely gorgeous,” even though she’s not a morning person.

“I love the really old feel of Riverside and Avondale,” Khoranhalai said. She appreciates that they are both close-knit communities with friendly people who are



Khoranhalai J. Washington at The Yearling Restaurant, February 2023

traveling via old routeways rather than major highways. Last summer, Dean was re-stationed to California. Khoranhalai drove him to his new base, traveling along Route 40, the Main Street of America, and stopping at the historic Route 66 attractions along the Mother Road. “I like to go slow,” she said.

always willing to carry on a conversation with her on the sidewalk. That’s something she missed about the small town she had grown up in. “And you can walk everywhere in those small sections,” she added

Khoranhalai finds the Cummer Museum appealing because of the history tied to it. She likes browsing the collection of antique items at 5 Points Vintage. She relishes the tree canopy of St. Johns Avenue. And the coconut ramen draws her to Hawkers Asian Street Food.

“I love looking at old Florida,” she said. So, for her birthday earlier this year, she visited The Yearling Restaurant in Cross Creek, which is named for the work by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and her state park nearby.

“I love going to old places,” Khoranhalai said. And she prefers traveling via old routeways rather than major highways. Last summer, Dean was re-stationed to California. Khoranhalai drove him to his new base, traveling along Route 40, the Main Street of America, and stopping at the historic Route 66 attractions along the Mother Road. “I like to go slow,” she said. “He had been overseas a

lot. But he had never seen what we have [in America].”

Khoranhalai made that long, slow drive back to Jacksonville. Her mom met up with her to keep her company on the trip. Now that Dean is living far away, Khoranhalai decided to move into UNF campus housing in Southside while she finishes up her degree. Dot is temporarily living in Tallahassee with Dean’s family. Khoranhalai visits her on weekends to hike through greenspaces and jump over park benches.

“ I love the really old feel of Riverside and Avondale. ”

— KHORANHALAI J. WASHINGTON

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Capital campaign for Hunger Fight underway

Organization feeds hungry children, enhances literacy throughout the region

After 10 years, local nonprofit Hunger Fight is moving to a new space to accommodate the ever-growing problem of food insecurity and hunger in our community. The move comes as part of its capital campaign, which will help to mitigate the nearly 1 in 4 children who do not have access to enough food outside of school across the US.

Sherri Porter and her husband Dean realized how alarming these statistics were, felt there was an incredible need and founded Hunger Fight to address the issue. Over time, while honing the mission, they created three programs: 'Feed the Backpacks' to provide weekend nutrition to children who are enrolled in the Federal Free and Reduced Meal Plan at school; 'Feed the Need to Read', which delivers free books to preschool children each month; and #iDREAM Campaign, a hybrid of the two which asks for a monthly contribution of \$18 dollars to both feed and educate local children.

To date, the nonprofit has packed 17.6 million meals to fight childhood hunger in 16 counties in northeast Florida, three counties in the panhandle and one county in South Georgia. "With our growth, our building is a must," said Dean, vice president of operations. "We're at capacity."

Dean and Sherri started Hunger Fight back in 2012 and it has seen substantial growth year after year. It is currently bursting at the seams at its current facility. This year alone, Hunger Fight will pack 7 million meals. "It's been a crazy year," Executive Director Sherri said. "We're blessed to be a part of it."

In January, Hunger Fight broke ground at its future facility off St. Johns Bluff Road, which will house its headquarters and a 15,000-square-foot warehouse. The hope is to move into the facility in November.



On Jan. 20, 2023, Hunger Fight's top supporters were captured tossing the dirt at the site of the new headquarters on the corner of St. Johns Bluff and Airport Terrace Drive.

Currently, Hunger Fight is able to feed a little more than 13,500 children per week on average, and Dean said with the expansion, there is the potential to feed 40,000 per week.

All of this is only possible through its partners and those who have donated to its three-year Capital Campaign, especially LandSouth

Construction, North Florida Pediatrics, Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) and Riverside Homes.

The goal is to raise \$7.5 million. Nine months

On a yearly basis, Hunger Fight partners with 420 businesses who either join their annual packing event or host their own event.

"We can be their feel-good, humanitarian activity to give back," Dean said. "We can be that vehicle for them because we are a turnkey. We will come to you. We will bring everything."

They raise funds year-round and purchase raw ingredients from local farmers across the country. Then they package raw ingredients at the 60 to 65 different events held throughout the year. They partner with other local institutions who distribute the meals. Local partners include Food for Kids, Micah's Backpacks, Lutheran Social Services, Mandarin Food Bank, Catholic Charities, Overflow, Challenge Enterprises and Food Bank of Green Cove Springs.

"Everything we do then blesses other backpack programs, food pantries and food banks in the community," Dean said. "Any time somebody partners with us, they're not just partnering with us, they're partnering with other local institutions that end up being the beneficiaries of the meals."

Currently, they serve 13,500 title 1 elementary students on a weekly basis, but there are 160,000 title 1 students in the counties they serve.

"Although we are doing a good job, there's still so much more to do," Dean said.

Hunger Fight survives on cash donations and one easy way to donate is through its #iDream Campaign. It stands for "I donate regularly \$18 a month." "You can change the lives of five children on a local basis—three can get meals every weekend and two get an age-appropriate book," Dean said.

For those looking for more information about the programs, ways to give your time or donations, visit hungerfight.org. Or, if you are seeking a way to make an impact on the capital campaign, click on the donate link and choose – capital campaign.

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Covington to represent U.S. at the Golf Croquet World Championship

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Jacksonville native Helen Covington is slated to represent the U.S. in the 2023 Golf Croquet World Championship against 56 formidable competitors in West Sussex, England, this summer, where she will also carry the flag in the opening ceremony. Honored as the 2022 Female Player of the Year by the United States Croquet Association, Covington

remains humble about her status. Since retiring as a social studies teacher from Mandarin High School, Covington has shifted her dedication to croquet, which she calls her “Silver Sport.”

“I wouldn’t be able to play at this level unless I retired. I hated to leave teaching, but COVID changed everything, and after retirement I got to play more, travel to tournaments and compete. I never thought I would achieve this level with a sport that I took up at age 60,” said Covington.

Covington started her croquet journey at the Florida Yacht Club, mainly out of curiosity, when U.S. Croquet Association Hall of Fame member John Curington came to teach. She continued every Saturday, starting in 2015. By July 2019, she had won her first singles tournament, and by July 2021 she was ranked the #1 woman.

“I knew my tennis days were done because of my knees but croquet is something you can do even if you’re older,” she said. “Never in my life did I think I’d be playing a sport in an international competition.”

Her dedication to practice at the Ponte Vedra Croquet Club has paid off in championship wins, being photographed for Croquet News Magazine, giving demonstrations to various croquet clubs and being featured on First Coast Connect.

In golf croquet There is a 1/32 or 1/16 clearance to get the ball through the wicket. Like billiards, players can jump their ball over someone else’s to get through the wicket. Covington’s longest jump ball is a whopping 12 feet. She remarked that it’s much “easier said than done.” In addition to perfecting that jump ball, Covington has been focusing on stamina leading up to the tournament, since there are no time limits in the game, and matches can last 6 to 7 hours or more.



Covington encourages people to give golf croquet a try. “It is a fast-growing sport, and although many of the courses are in gated communities or private clubs, more and more public courses are becoming available,” she said.



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More Murray Hill Murals

BY JENNIFER JENSEN
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

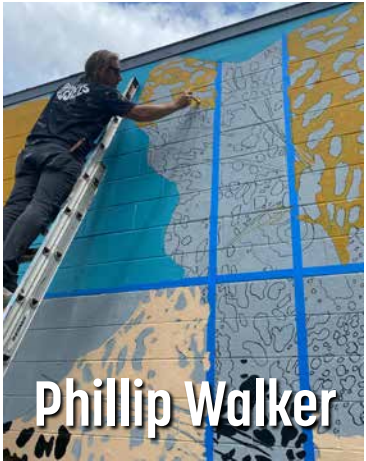
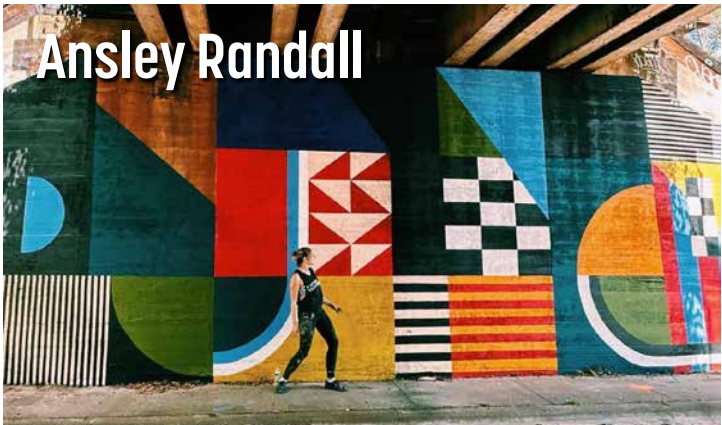
Murray Hill is quickly becoming the go-to place for murals and public art in Jacksonville. Local artist Jason Tetlak and the Murray Hill Preservation Association (MHPA) have invited a number of artists to help add new, colorful artwork to the growing collection of murals already in the neighborhood.

“With the help of some funding from MHPA, we were able to get six new pieces created,” said Tetlak. “We lost a couple of murals recently to property owners renovating their buildings, so I thought it was important to put up a few new pieces to keep things heading in the right direction.”

Four new murals now adorn the garage doors of the Left Lane Jax auto shop, across from Dreamette on Post Street. The new murals were painted by Halsey, Kbmer, Chris Sweeney and Brenda Kato, who is the artist responsible for the large sunflower mural that many Murray Hill residents are already familiar with. A large jaguar mural by Atlantic Beach artist Phillip Walker was painted on the side of Frank’s Industrial on Lenox Avenue. The sixth mural was an abstract, painted by Ansley Randall on the Park Street underpass at Roosevelt Boulevard, with permission from CSX.

Tetlak himself is working on a new mural near Riverside High School that he hopes will be inspirational for school photos.

“I have been looking for a place to paint this Riverside design ever since they first announced the school’s name change,” he said. “I wanted to make sure there was a place where current students could show off their school spirit.”



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JUNIOR RESIDENTS

50 Years of Military Success Bishop Kenny’s Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps celebrates



Cadet Sean Limbaga standing next to a historical NJROTC timeline poster.

Cadet Brian Charpiat maneuvers a drone to simulate a carrier deck landing.

Bishop Kenny High School celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) program on March 28. The evening included multiple team demonstrations, and highlighted the program’s new Multi-purpose Training Facility, which houses a state-of-the-art marksmanship range, and offers cadets an Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Unmanned Aerial Systems course aimed at earning the FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot certificate.

“Bishop Kenny’s NJROTC has been a distinguished unit for 14 years running, and I am proud to be part of that history. The cadets in the program are the ones who make that success possible, maintaining a high level of excellence while preparing themselves for college and for life,” said Commander Brian Morrill, USN (Ret.), Senior Naval Science Instructor.



Fun Comes in Rows on River Day

Third graders from the Bolles Lower School’s Ponte Vedra Beach Campus and Whitehurst Campus joined up on March 29 for Grade 3 River Day on the St. Johns River. The students kayaked, fished, and rotated between four hands-on, learning stations throughout the morning.

On land, upper school teacher Kathryn Fletcher led a marine science activity that educated students about the different animals that call Northeast Florida home, including alligators, dolphins, bass and turtles. Bolles Director of Rowing Christopher Register also taught students about crew and allowed them to sit in an eight-person shell in the Peyton Boathouse & Rice Family Crew Complex.



Landon Chess Takes 3rd at State Champs

Julia Landon College Prep chess team finished 3rd of 43 middle school teams at the 2023 State Scholastic Chess Championship held in Orlando in March. Pictured: Sponsor Keith Smith, Advait Gadre, Aanya Kumar, Arjun Singh, Bavi Whale, Sidhant Uniyal and Lucas Berkov with Coach George Foote.



Episcopal Science Students Shine at State

Honors Science Seminar students at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville won second, third and fourth place awards, honorable mentions, special awards, and a college scholarship at the State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida. A total of 800 students from public and independent schools presented their projects to judges from industry, academia and professional organizations. The Episcopal winners are: Nia Atcherson, Tom Commander, Sofia Davila, Claire Huang, Ryan Napoleon, Parthiv Reddy, William Rosenberg and Matt Salek. William Rosenberg will represent the region at the International Science Fair, May 14-19, in Dallas, Texas. He will be competing with approximately 1,700 students from 75 different countries.

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Finley Webb loved to run with his teddy bear.

FINLEY’S FAST FEET

Local Family Honors Son Through Adv♥cacy

BY WINDY TAYLOR
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Almost everyone remembers March 2020 as a difficult month, but one Jacksonville family was dealt an unimaginable tragedy just as the world seemed like it was falling apart. Emily and Charles Webb lost their middle child, Finley, and they are still looking for answers.

“March 15, 2020, was a Sunday,” said Finley’s mom, Emily Webb. “The country started learning about COVID that Friday before he passed away. I remember being at Publix that Saturday, stocking up on food, hearing that Duval County schools were extending their spring break. It was a wild time.”

That next day started out like a normal north Florida Sunday. Emily Webb took her children to Neptune Beach, where they played in the tidepools and had a picnic. “On the way home, Finley fell asleep in the car seat, which was very typical,” she said. “We got home, and I picked him up and asked if he wanted to finish his lunch or lay back down, he said he wanted to lay back down. At 1:00, I checked on him, he was fine, he was sleeping.”

When she checked on him at 2:00, Finley was not breathing.

“We called 911, [my husband] Charles performed CPR but we could not resuscitate him. At that point the ambulance came, they also had lots of questions while they tried to resuscitate him. They took him to Wolfson [Children’s Hospital], but they were unable to get a heartbeat.”



Emily and Charles Webb with Baton (9), Madeline (5) and Sawyer (18 mo.)

The medical examiner who performed Finley’s autopsy could find no cause of death. In fact, Finley’s death remains unexplained to this day. Without a clear cause of death, cases like Finley’s are categorized as Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood, or SUDC. Unlike the more-familiar SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), SUDC affects children between 1 and 18.

“It can happen to all children,” Webb said. “A healthy child falls asleep, or is taking a nap, sometimes a child sort of passes out, they become unresponsive and cannot be rehabilitated.”

The medical examiner was familiar with this condition, and helped the Webbs connect with the SUDC Foundation. According to the foundation’s website, SUDC affected around 450 children in the U.S. in 2021.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41

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Finley's Fast Feet 5k drew nearly 100 people in March 2023.

The mission of the SUDC Foundation is threefold: they collect data on families who have experienced SUDC, they fund research on potential causes of SUDC, and they provide support at no cost to families in the form of weekly counseling, annual retreats, and group therapy opportunities.

"You get to navigate it together, with someone who understands exactly what you're going through," Webb said. "All loss is hard, but when it's unexpected and a child, people don't know how to react. That's why we advocate; we want families to be aware, but we want this foundation to get as much money as they can to provide these services to families."

“It means so much to hear people say his name.”
- EMILY WEBB

The Webbs have given samples of Finley's blood and tissue to the SUDC Foundation, as well as donated their own genetic information for testing.

Madeline Webb participates in the Finley's Fast Feet 5k. ▶

The first months after Finley's death were a fog of grief, but eventually the Webbs decided to use their time and energy to help families in similar circumstances.

"I'm a pretty active runner and he loved running with me," Webb said of Finley. "He would run with his teddy bear. We thought Finley's Fast Feet would be the perfect name." In March 2022, they held the first Finley's Fast Feet 5k to raise money for the SUDC Foundation, and around 60 people participated. This March, the number increased to 100, and \$4,000 was raised. The 5k starts at the Webbs' home and retraces Finley's favorite neighborhood spots.

In addition to the 5k, the Webbs also purchased 350 new books and donated them to local schools, like St. John's Presbyterian Preschool, where Finley was a student, and Fishweir Elementary, where he would currently be enrolled. Each book has an SUDC sticker on the inside with Finley's name on it. The family has also planted a tree in Boone Park, as well as inscribed a brick in the park with Finley's name.

"He loved going there and playing," Webb said. "It makes us feel good to see people admiring his trees, and saying his name. It means so much to hear people say his name."



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The parent-led Friends of Stockton nonprofit organization raised the money for new playground equipment for the students of John Stockton Elementary School to enjoy, which they celebrated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Monday, April 3.

Stockton Elementary Students Celebrate New Playground

Families and faculty at Ortega Forest’s John Stockton Elementary School celebrated a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Monday, April 3 for new playground equipment provided by the Friends of Stockton (FOS).

The parent-led nonprofit organization raised a “record high of nearly \$70,000” during the 2021-22 school year, explained FOS President Ellen Wilson in an e-mail. With these funds, FOS was able to acquire and install the new playground equipment along with several other projects for the school, “including a renovation of the teachers’ lounge, teacher grants, purchasing STEM assets for the school, hosting a school beautification day, hosting a schoolwide magic show, sponsoring the Stockton Robotics Team, and providing yard signs for graduating fifth graders and incoming kindergarteners.”

FOS worked closely with the school’s administration to identify fundraising goals, Wilson added, and the need for additional playground equipment was brought up by John Stockton Elementary School Principal Stephanie Brannan as the existing playground equipment had been “insufficient for the number of kids using the playground equipment during recess.”

“I am so excited for the new addition to our playground,” wrote Brannan in an e-mail. “The students are so excited and are thoroughly enjoying it. Since I joined the Stockton family 7 years ago, Friends of Stockton have worked diligently conducting fundraisers and fostering business partners in order to provide our students with technology upgrades, such as interactive monitors, iPads, and a new audiovisual system. They have also provided new soccer goals, funded the robotics team and the Jr. Riverkeepers Team. FOS members also work hard to keep our campus beautiful by planting flowers, building benches and painting the sensory path on the back playground. We are so fortunate to have the support of the Stockton community.”



Aerial view of the Keith Doles playground mural at West Rivside Elementary School.

A Labyrinth of Love

A beautiful playground art mural was recently completed at West Riverside Elementary School (WRES) in March. Created by artists Keith Doles, of the Bridge Muralists, and Tiffany Manning, the mural depicts a colorful, stone labyrinth with inspirational quotes from various leaders like Maya Angelou and Isabel Allende. The quotes are written in both Spanish and English to reflect the school’s diversity. Funded through the PTA’s Fall Festival, the mural spans the width of the 65- by 45-foot concrete pad and surrounds the preexisting school logo. It is the third in the area by Doles.

“It was a pleasure working with the school, the PTA, and Tiffany on this interactive art project. During the last couple of days painting, some first graders and their teacher came out to see the labyrinth. They thought it was ‘so cool,’ and that was the approval I wanted at the end of this. My late mother was a DCPS teacher at Mamie Agnes Jones Elementary and encouraged my pursuit in becoming an artist,” said Doles.



Sawyer Deacon and Scout Deacon

Diagram of a H.E.R.O.

Sixth grade students Sawyer Deacon and Scout Deacon represented St. Paul’s Catholic School-Riverside at the recent Sidewalk Chalk Contest, spearheaded by the Riverside Engagement Committee. Sawyer and Scout’s illustration featured at the St. Vincent’s Riverfront, depicted “Operation H.E.R.O.,” an ongoing partnership between the school and Ascension St. Vincent’s Hospital. Operation H.E.R.O. (Health, Education, Resources and Opportunities) brings high-quality academics, healthcare and mentoring to middle school students at St. Paul’s by allowing doctors to teach hands-on classes in classrooms and the hospital’s auditorium and Family Medicine Residency Program labs.

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Marco Chua, Viktoriia Galushchak and Joshua Inocencio after the SSEF awards ceremonies on April 6 in Lakeland.

Science Success for St. Paul’s

Three St. Paul’s Catholic School-Riverside students earned top places at the State Science and Engineering Fair (SSEF) of Florida held in Lakeland on April 4-6. Marco Chua, with his project “Wave Force Dissipation: Year Two,” won first place in the Junior Earth and Environmental Sciences category. Viktoriia Galushchak, whose project was entitled “How Can People Who Don’t Know Sign Language Communicate with People Who Use It?,” won third place in the Junior Intelligent Machines, Robotics and Systems Software category. Joshua Inocencio, with his project “Could a Statement Being Positive or Negative Impact Its Credibility?,” won the Recognition Award in the Junior Behavioral and Social Sciences category. Chua and Galushchak will go on to compete in the Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge (formerly Broadcom MASTERS) national science fair this summer.

Anderson Honored for Juvenile Justice

Eric Anderson, Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) Manager at Youth Crisis Center (YCC), received the FJJA Service Excellence Award from the Florida Juvenile Justice Association and Department of Juvenile Justice at their Annual Legislative Reception on March 29, 2023. Anderson was honored for his outstanding contributions and achievements to the juvenile justice system, including his commitment to providing high-quality care and support to young people in crisis. He, along with two others in the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services, were recognized at the reception. “We are thrilled to see these three inspiring individuals recognized for their achievements. [Their] dedication makes a huge difference in hundreds of families,” said Stacy Gromatski, president and CEO of the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services. “They are each heroes to me, and their examples inspire us all.”



Eric Anderson with fellow honoree Ashle Jennings.



Coach Yolanda Bronston and Taliah Scott

Scott Named Miss Basketball

Taliah Scott, senior at St. Johns Country Day School, has been named the 2023 Florida Dairy Farmers Miss Basketball. The Florida Dairy Farmers High School Sports Awards are the longest-running program recognizing excellence in high school athletics, and the award is voted on by a statewide panel of high school coaches and media representatives. Scott, who plays guard, has signed to play collegiate ball at the University of Arkansas. She averaged 36.2 points, 9.2 rebounds, 4.7 assists, and 2.9 steals per game. She was named FHSAA Division 2A Player of the Year, 2022-23 Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Player of the Year, and to the McDonald’s All American Team roster. She was in Houston, playing in the McDonald’s All American game, when she heard the news of her award. “I am so very proud of Taliah and all of the hard work that she has put in to reach this level in her career,” said her Girls Varsity Basketball Coach Yolanda Bronston. “She is an excellent representative of our team and our school.”



Episcopal varsity girls lacrosse team with their district championship trophy. Photo credit: Joe Kohla

Eagles Lacrosse Soars through Semifinals

The girls varsity lacrosse team at Episcopal School of Jacksonville is running on a string of victories as they advance toward regionals. They won the district championship on April 13, defeating Bolles 16-4. “As a program, we are so excited to clinch another district championship and head into regional play ranked sixth in the state for 1A. The Eagles reached the final four last year for the first time in program history and hope to make another appearance in the 2023 season,” said head coach Krista Grabher. The Eagles then hosted the regional quarterfinal on April 20, where Episcopal again was victorious, defeating Toco Creek 14-3 to advance to the regional semifinal on April 25. Episcopal won again on their home turf, emerging with an 11-3 win over St. Augustine to go to regionals. The regional meet was held on Friday, April 28, but results were not available by press time. In addition to Grabher, the team is led by coaches Shannon Gilfedder, Jordan Leake and Jordan Smith.



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Of these seniors, five of them started during the school's inaugural year and remained all 14 years, preschool – 12th Grade. These scholars, along with their families and churches, were instrumental in the development of their school. The others who joined along the way were welcomed additions. Well done, Warriors. Well done. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. -Numbers 6:24-26

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Ten Commitments Strong for Bolles

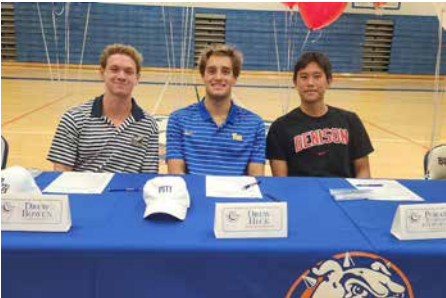


Bolles students commit to college athletics April 12

Ten more Bolles student-athletes were honored April 12 for committing to a particular college or university to continue their athletic and academic careers. Family, friends, classmates, coaches and faculty gathered in Davis Gym on the San Jose Campus to celebrate. This is the third college commitment ceremony at Bolles this school year to recognize student-athletes as they commit to colleges. An additional 34 students were honored at ceremonies in November and February.

The following Bolles student-athletes were honored in their respective sport: Matthew Berry, football, DePauw University; Madison Balaskiewicz, golf, Daytona State College; Ella Neskora, track and field, University of Pennsylvania; and Vivian Stovall, track and field, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Six of the committed athletes will be joining their college's swimming and diving team: Lachlan Andrew, United States Naval Academy; Drew Bowen, LaSalle University; Drew Heck, University of Pittsburgh; Porawat Rommaneekochchakorn, Denison University; Sophie Benkusky, East Carolina University; and Katie Ford, University of Wyoming.



Drew Bowen, Drew Heck and Porawat Rommaneekochchakorn



Sophie Benkusky, Katie Ford, Ella Neskora and Vivian Stovall



Matthew Berry, Madison Balaskiewicz and Lachlan Andrew

Playing It Fair Riverside Presbyterian students produce a health and wellness fair

Riverside Presbyterian Day School (RPDS) sixth grade students hosted a Health and Wellness Fair in the school's Kissling Hall in April, as part of an interdisciplinary unit regarding health and wellness. This student-led fair included booths and activities that showcased the eight different facets taught in their health unit: education, social, spiritual, emotional, financial, physical and intellectual health and well-being. The students invited parents and other students to visit the stations and learn from the sixth graders about different ways to pursue healthier and happier lives.



Abi Britton, Quinn Indelicato and Duncan McArthur presenting at the Health and Wellness Fair.



Jage Jennings and Gage Gerisch manning their smoothie station at the Wellness Fair.

Adams Named Academic All-State



Kate Adams

Kate Adams, a senior at Episcopal School of Jacksonville (ESJ), has been named to the 29th Annual Florida Dairy Farmers Academic All-State Team. The Florida High School Athletic Association announced the all-state team last week, which honors 24 graduating student-athletes who excel in both athletics and academics. Scholarship nominees are evaluated by a committee on their athletic participation, academic record, extracurricular activities, community service and essay. She will be recognized at a banquet on Monday, June 5, where she will receive a \$1,700 scholarship and a commemorative medallion.

Adams is a National Merit Semifinalist, Advanced Placement Scholar, and received two Silver Keys at the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. She has participated in four varsity sports: volleyball, lacrosse, basketball and beach volleyball, served as class president and Eagle Ambassador for the past three years, and has accumulated over 200 volunteer service hours. Adams is the fifth academic all-state student recognition ESJ has received since 2018, the most of any school in Northeast Florida.

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THE WAY WE WERE

The Way We Were: Bill and Barbara Ketchum

BY MARY WANSE
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

This month marks the 62nd wedding anniversary of Bill and Barbara Ketchum of Ortega. Although they love being in large groups at clubs and dinners, they have quiet plans this year with friends and family. Included in those plans is time set aside to read this article in The Resident, a paper they consider a community asset.

As for their 61 previous anniversaries, Barbara said, “We’ve had some of them in great places. That’s the wonderful thing about doing as much as we’ve done. We don’t feel a strong need to do a lot more.”

As a marriage and family counselor for many years, Barbara is aware of how lucky she and her husband are. “We have had an unusually and remarkably happy marriage,” she said. She attributes that good fortune to their differences. They each bring aspects to the relationship that the other doesn’t.

“She’s an extrovert and leads us in our nighttime social life, lining up dinners with people,” Bill said of his wife.

“I talk about ten times as much as he does. And I don’t like dealing with numbers, but that’s all he did in his career and for our family. He took care of anything that had to do with numbers,” said Barbara.

In addition to their differences, Barbara credits their long and successful marriage to Bill being “such a nice person,” describing him as “quiet and supportive.” Their shared values and enjoyment of travel have counted as well. “We’ve traveled all over this world. I’m happy we did it when we did it, because we’re too old to hassle with it anymore,” she said.

Despite their wanderlust, the Ketchums are deeply rooted in Jacksonville. Born in Avondale, Bill grew up on Pine Street. He went to Fishweir Elementary and Lake Shore Middle School. He graduated in 1950 from Riverside High, formerly Robert E. Lee, and played halfback for their football team when they won the 1949 state championship.

“I never left here, except for the military and for college,” Bill said. That’s only twice in his 91 years that Bill ever moved away from Jacksonville – once to serve the country in the Counterintelligence Corps of the U.S. Army, and before that, for his education at the University of Florida in Gainesville prior to grad school at The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. And in over nine decades, Bill has resided in only three different Jacksonville houses.

Barbara will turn 88 next month. She was born to American parents in Havana, Cuba, and was raised there until Fidel Castro came to power. Barbara’s family fled the country in the late 1950s. She began her higher education at 16 at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. Upon graduation, she moved to Jacksonville and lived with her friend Mason Darby in Mrs. Lane’s garage apartment on Richmond Street in Avondale, the property that came to be known as the Lane-Towers House.

Barbara and Mason traveled together on a seven-week grand tour of Europe. When they returned in the summer of 1956, Mason hosted a party on Mrs. Lane’s front lawn. Bill, home on break from Wharton where he was working toward earning an MBA, was invited. He first met Barbara at that party.

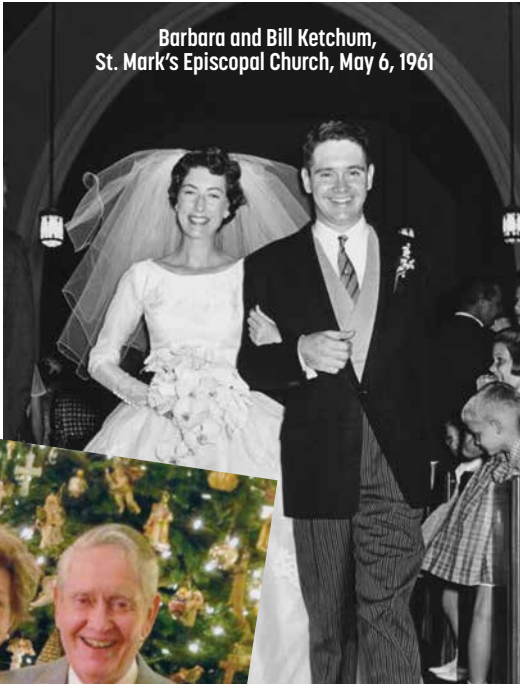
It wasn’t until spring of 1960 when Bill and Barbara had their first date. He invited her to a Friars party. The Friars was a single men’s group that Bill had belonged to for years. The girls had a similar club called The Spinsters, of which Barbara was a member. For the Fourth of July that year, Bill invited Barbara to another party with friends in the mountains. “That’s when we really started focusing on each other,” Barbara said.



The Ketchums, Ponte Vedra, August 1970

On May 6, 1961, Bill and Barbara walked down the aisle of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church. It’s where they’d later attend on a regular basis as a family with their three children, and where they remain active members to this day. Bill still participates in weekly Sunday school classes, and Barbara still provides some premarital counseling sessions.

Upon their marriage, the couple moved to Huntington Road in Ortega. There, the Ketchums grew into a family of five. When their children were 9, 7 and 5 years old, Bill and Barbara moved the family to Apache



Barbara and Bill Ketchum, 1961



Barbara and Bill Ketchum, 2019

Avenue in Ortega Terrace. “It’s a wonderful neighborhood to raise children,” Barbara said.

That was back in 1971, and Bill and Barbara still live there today, 52 years later. “When we moved to where we are now, we were the youngest persons in the area, and now we’re by far the oldest,” Bill said.

While reflecting on their Jacksonville life, Bill shared that he had held a career in the mortgage business while Barbara cared for their children at home. For 21 years, Bill was with Florida Title and Mortgage Company; he spent an additional 18 with Barnett Bank of Florida, which eventually became Bank of America.

When not at the office, Bill often could be found on a tennis court at the Florida Yacht Club. He played on men’s teams, Barbara on ladies’. “And later on, I played a lot of golf,” Bill said. “All around town, at 10 or 15 different courses. All I do now is walk with a grocery cart at Publix.” But that’s not really all. Bill exercises at the Club’s gym three or four times per week. He attributes his health and longevity to the genes he inherited from his mother, who lived to 93.

“We have observed a healthy lifestyle. We didn’t eat fat stuff when everybody else was. And Bill is very disciplined,” Barbara said.

As a family, the Ketchums took a lot of trips. One of note was when the children were 10, 8 and 6. They drove for six weeks in their brown Mercedes sedan to visit Yellowstone National Park, stopping at significant sites along the way. “It was a tight fit, but we did it, with three children squeezed into the back seat, fighting the whole way,” Barbara said.

When not traveling, while the children were in school and Bill at work, Barbara volunteered for a full decade on a part-time basis as a counselor in jails and prisons. When the three were grown and in college, Barbara, at age 50, pursued a graduate degree at the University of North Florida and earned a master’s in counseling psychology.

As a part-time career, Barbara worked as a counselor for more than 30 years, the first 10 at Psychiatric Association of Orange Park and over 20 at Grace House Counseling Center in Fleming Island. By the time Barbara retired, she was already in her 80s and still quite active. “I always worked part-time because I’ve been very involved in the community,” she said, referring to her dedication to volunteer service.

Barbara was on the governor’s task force for prison reform in the 1980s. In 2010, she was presented with a golden apple trophy, the EVE Award for Volunteer Service, honoring her work with St. Johns Riverkeeper, an organization that will always be close to her heart. “More recently, I’ve been very involved in the downtown waterfront,”

she said. Barbara is on the steering committee for the Riverfront Parks Now coalition. “Imagine a waterfront that you want to go down to all the time,” she said. That’s Barbara’s vision for Jacksonville.

“The big thing in my retirement life has been duplicate bridge,” Bill said.

“It’s very serious bridge, organized games with 10 to 15 tables,” according to Barbara. Bill had been playing for at least 25 years, but had to cut back last year because of vision impairment. Now, he plays social bridge with Barbara and the girls.

Bill has also delighted in luncheons

with the Billy Boys, a group of close friends he’s known since high school from classes of ’49, ’50 and ’51. They used to faithfully meet once per month until COVID demanded they disband. Now, he has three or four different lunch groups he meets with once or twice per month. One of the groups is called The Lee Geezers, made up of six guys who had graduated from Lee from a variety of classes. “There are not many people exactly my age still living, so I’ve branched out to slightly different ages,” Bill said.

“He has more of a social life than I do,” Barbara admitted.

The Ketchums feel privileged to be part of such a wide circle of shared friendships, yet nothing tops their time with family. “Family is the best thing in the whole world,” Barbara said. She and Bill use the words “wonderful, loving and caring” when they speak of their adult children.

Their elder daughter lives in Atlanta. Their younger daughter and only son live nearby in Jacksonville. They have two grandchildren; one attends The University of North Carolina and the other works for a company that helps with government contracts in Washington, DC. “They are perfect grandchildren,” said their grandmother.

There’s not much more the Ketchum couple could ask for from life, and they know it. “We’re extraordinarily blessed,” Barbara said. And to be living all of this in the city they’re so fond of is a bonus.

“I love Jacksonville!” Bill said.

“I do, too,” Barbara agreed. “It’s what everybody calls a hidden gem that’s not so hidden anymore.”

Joseph Price Perry Jr.

OCTOBER 29, 1927 – APRIL 17, 2023

JP Perry Jr. passed away April 17th, 2023 in the care of Community Hospice at Baptist South Hospital in Jacksonville Florida. He was 95 years old and lived in a period that saw a transformation in almost every facet of life. He was a member of what has been called the “Greatest Generation”.

JP was born in a farmhouse in Columbia County, just outside of Lake City, Florida on October 29th in 1927. The family were Florida pioneers that had moved to the area from Georgia in the mid-1800s. They had no electricity, no phone, no indoor plumbing, no tractor.....in other words life was pretty much as it had been for several hundred years!

JP knew how to plow a field with mules and make lye soap, pick cotton, and cure tobacco, milk cows and slaughter hogs. That self-sufficient farm life got them through the Great Depression and gave JP an appreciation and respect for hard work no matter what kind of work it was. He was an exceptional student and was a member of the National Honor Society when he graduated from Columbia County High School in 1945. He had won a public speaking competition and had earned a State of Florida scholarship to The University of Florida to be a teacher. In his first semester JP got a draft notice and was inducted into the U.S. Army.

WWII had just ended and after basic training he was sent to Milan, Italy to serve in the occupation forces. Because he had interned at the local bank during High School summer vacation, JP ended up in the Finance Corps. He quickly rose to the rank of Sargent and at age 19 was put

in charge of the Milan office that changed currencies for the soldiers coming and going between Switzerland, Italy, and France. After his tour of duty, he returned to Florida and with the GI bill, pursued the study of law. He earned his law degree from the University of Florida in 1951 and went to work for the Travelers Insurance Company in Jacksonville.

JP married Carol Dow from Jacksonville on February 5th, 1951, and they were married for 61 years until her death in 2012.

In 1954, he founded JP Perry Insurance which has grown into one of Jacksonville’s leading family-owned independent insurance agencies. JP spent his working life building the business and remained a mentor and cheerleader to the next generation. Today, the culture of JP Perry Insurance reflects his personality, appreciation of hard work and focus on doing his best for the customer.

JP loved all the Florida Gator sports teams, especially the football program and had many memorable championship road trips with family and friends. In their early years together JP and Carol also enjoyed family trips around Florida and to the North Carolina mountains. As they became more established their travels extended overseas to enjoy much of Europe and many cruises together. JP’s spiritual life was nurtured in a small Methodist church that was the 2nd oldest in Florida and shared a Pastor with 3 other small churches. After he and Carol were married, they joined Springfield Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville where Carol’s family was long established.



He was later a member of Lakewood Presbyterian Church and then Mandarin Presbyterian Church. JP is survived by his son, Joseph P Perry III and beloved daughter in law Janet Jurovaty Perry, his two granddaughters that were his pride and joy, Kathryn Perry Cooper and Morgan Joanne Perry, grandson in law Rick Cooper, and nieces Laurie Dow and Kathleen Painter.



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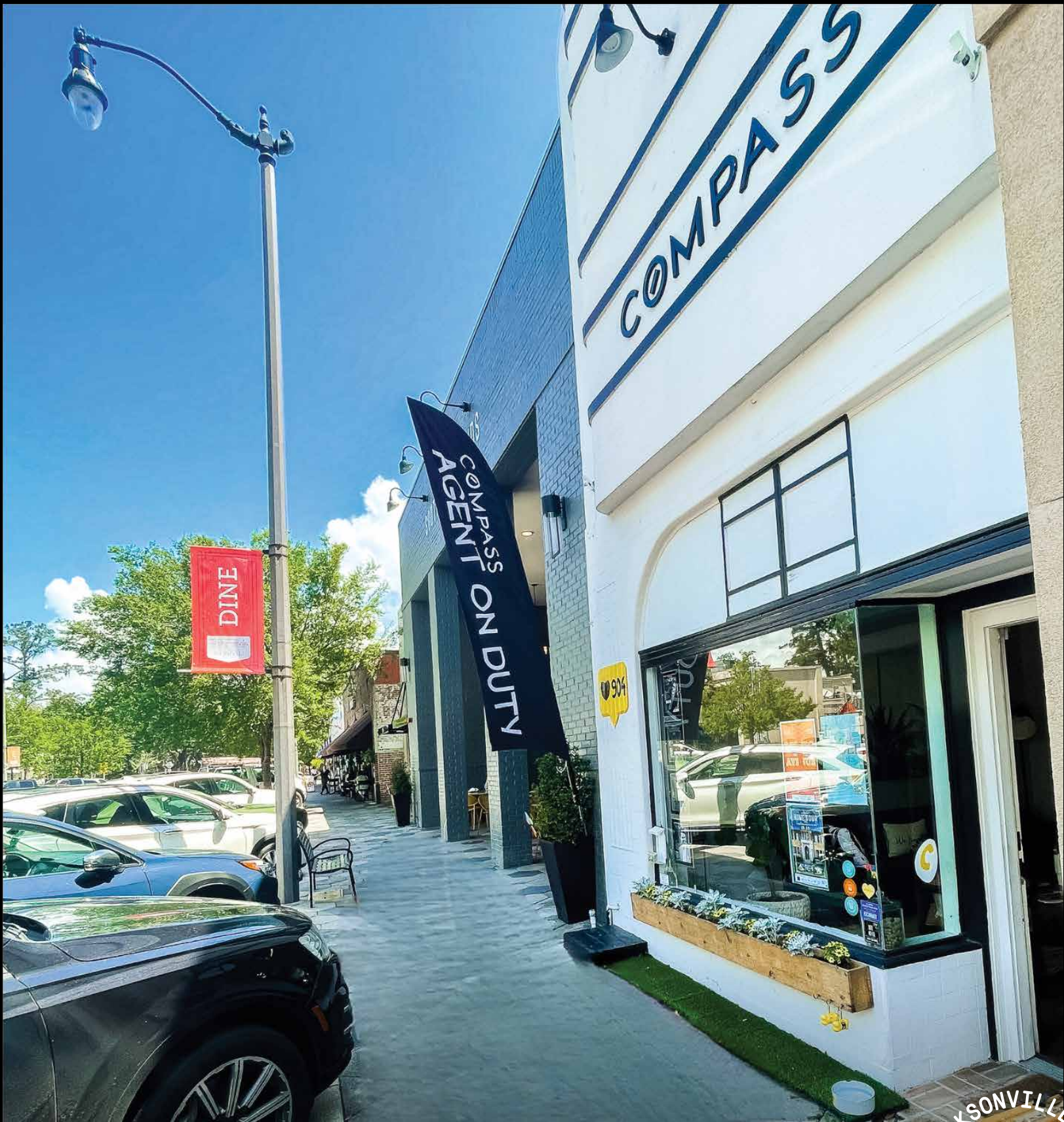
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Nick Salter
nick.salter@compass.com
954.670.4252



Missy Cady-Kampmeyer
missy@cadyjax.com
904.610.9217



Erin King
erin.king@compass.com
904.999.1780