



Award winners as follows (l to r) Keith Doles, artist and muralist on behalf of "Emergence" and Bridge Muralists; Danielle Currie on behalf of One Bridal and 1901 Contracting for 1712 Hendricks Avenue; Sonja Sorenson on behalf of Worth Turner and 1917 Hendricks Avenue home to Foliahome; Erich Geisler of Corner Lot Development representing Industry West for 1001 Kings Avenue; Nate Labaugh, partner and principal for Jaycox Architects and Associates for Matthew's Restaurant; Lauren Carlucci for her role as president and residential beautification of 1551 Alexandria Place; Mack Volk for his role as treasurer; Brian Kirtz of FDOT for the Shared Use Path or SUP; Kat Wright, public art director, on behalf of the Cultural Council and Ansley Randall mural; Dr. Gary Webber on behalf of ASPIRE Church and public art "Emergence"; Bill Ware and Leigh Gunn, of The Hendricks and Group 4 Design partnership; and Luz Hegi on behalf of her daughter Brittany Hegi (not pictured) on behalf of 1820 Farragut Place.

# SAN MARCO STAKEHOLDERS HANDED AWARDS, *praised for progress*

It was an evening of camaraderie and congratulations as leaders of San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) rolled out the annual meeting and beautification awards Tuesday, May 9 at Preservation Hall. Following a light wine and cheese social, Lauren Carlucci, outgoing SMPS president, kicked off the awards and talked through some of the changes and challenges of leading the charge in the neighborhood.

The awards spanned the gamut from residential to commercial properties, as there was much progress to be reported on since the last annual meeting. The Terraces at San Marco are now out of the ground, The Hendricks is readying for tenants and Publix, Foxtail Coffee Company, Orange Theory Fitness, St. Johns Eye Associates and Crumbl Cookie have all opened their doors since the last outing.

Not to be left out was talk of the newly opened SUP, or Shared Use Path, which connects the neighborhoods of San Marco, to Riverside,

opening up new travel paths and convenience for traversing the St. Johns River.

Honoring investors and local homeowners, Carlucci thanked those who have put blood, sweat and tears into local renovations and projects; all while starting the meeting by thanking one of their own. Carlucci recognizing Katie Kennedy, the new preservation hall coordinator who has managed to grow the events and increase revenue by using technology to leverage growth, new docusign implementation and a digital calendar for bookings. "Katie has revolutionized the way we book this place," said Carlucci.

**SMPS ADVOCACY — THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY**

Carlucci took time to remind those in attendance about the work being done to advocate for projects, by requesting more consideration for design aesthetics on The Terraces at San Marco, a Toll Brothers townhome project; advocating for the Alford Place Corridor improvements; standing up to the self-storage facility request

for zoning and PUD alterations on Home Street; and updating the zoning overlay to reflect the will of the people when it comes to navigation of zoning and land use, not to mention; where and when to compromise with developers in the years ahead.

Carlucci brought up the importance of joining the group to counter proposals for a self-storage facility that's hanging in the balance, as the San Marco Preservation Society has been vocal about its opposition on many fronts, those being: incompatible use, not meeting redevelopment goals and the setting of a precedent for future use/s outside of the rules of the Downtown Overlay.

At issue currently is the end-around PUD or Planned Unit Development making its way through City Council's TEU committee, as a request for closure of an alley as part of the process is heading for a final vote. She made sure to announce the importance of the next public hearing for June 6, with a final vote on June 13, and encouraged attendance and advocacy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



## CANNON BLASTS, CONGRATS FOR COMMODORES

Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club celebrated thirty-five years of leadership at its annual Change of Command Ceremony and Dinner, May 19. The command pennant was hoisted for one, while the other was drawn down as Immediate Past Commodore, H. Phil Littlefield, took time to congratulate newly installed Commodore, Jody Brandenburg.

READ MORE ON PAGE 23



Ambur Finley with Emi Chavez-Miller and Lindsey Finnegan

## NACHO AVERAGE FUNDRAISER

Olé! Assumption Catholic School's annual Nacho Average Knight Out, held May 5, hit record-setting fundraising levels to construct a new playground, beginning this summer.

READ MORE ON PAGE 34



## TWIRLING ON THE RUNWAY

Dillard's at the St. Johns Town Center welcomed Clarke School students, families and donors to a Spring and Summer fashion showcase, May 6.

Audrey Dinu spun and twirled her way through the final runway appearance with her mother Alba and sister Liliana by her side.

READ MORE ON PAGE 34

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# letters TO THE EDITOR

## Florida-Friendly Lawns vs. Homeowners Associations

(Not the “Rumble in the Jungle” some think)

Last year, our next-door neighbor, a former board chair of the Riverside Avondale Preservation Society told us, upon seeing us transform our sod and shrubbery property to an all-native plant landscape, “You’re going to be in the Garden Tour next year,” we did exactly that. Truth be told, there were other reasons to be in the show other than the invitation. Our home was the “Conservation Home” on Pine Street in Avondale right behind the Casbah.

After returning to Jacksonville from a 15-year odyssey that led us through Arkansas, Illinois, and finally Massachusetts, one goal was to reduce our carbon footprint. We installed solar panels, retractable clothes lines, and changed over the electric stove to gas, which reduced our electric bill by more than 40%. The sod lawn was using thousands of gallons of water every month. When we first lit in June 2018 monthly consumption was north of 15,000 gallons. Further tweaking reduced it to a little over 9,000 gallons. After jumping off the “sod” cliff, less than 2,000 gallons.

The tour was a great success. Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., north of 400 people toured the property. Steely Dan was playing in the back yard (...on hidden speakers). People loved the Florida-friendly front and side yard, and the backyard as well with its outdoor “living area,” that was bracketed by herb and vegetable gardens.

People were inspired by what they saw. However, more than a few were circumspect. These individuals most often felt totally or partially hampered by the fact that they lived in subdivisions that had Homeowners Associations and indicated that native planting was “totally forbidden.”

At the time, I commiserated with these poor souls. I have lived in HOA communities across the country. In Illinois, it was a 36-house neighborhood, nine of which housed attorneys, of which four were litigators, and the paperwork certainly flowed until they discovered



the transfer of oversight from the developer to the neighborhood was not handled properly. Suddenly, there was no HOA and the litigators found themselves all dressed up with nowhere to go. A sublime outcome if ever I have seen one. Ironically, in Massachusetts, the so-called Nanny state, the HOA simply charged an annual fee that was used to maintain common areas. Beyond that, nothing else was a problem. In Arkansas, HOAs were unheard of. If you asked, I wouldn’t be at all surprised if the response was something like, “I do believe they have a booth right next to the 4-H stall at the county fair in the fall.”

My point is there are HOAs, and then there are HOAs, and I didn’t realize this until everyone had left. The fact is, in Florida, there is an actual law against forbidding native plants in your yard. This doesn’t mean you can show Suzanne, your HOA chair, a finger near your thumb the next time she sees you planting drift roses in the front yard. That’s no way to perpetuate any kind of warm and fuzzy feelings in any event. I looked on the internet, and, as we all know, everything is there, and I found out about the Florida law and much more. By searching for “Florida friendly lawns hoo” you will find everything you need to know about the...wait for it... process you should follow to get your plans approved. You will find that most HOAs and frankly, and surprisingly, the State of Florida are as concerned about conserving water as you are.

One of the main goals of any HOA is to preserve the community’s value. Chief among the ways to maintain value is with curb appeal. The best way to successfully achieve your goal of changing your sod yard into a Florida friendly property is to include the HOA in the process from the very beginning, explain what your goals are, show them your plans (produced by professionals), and be prepared to negotiate. As you search through the cavernous areas of the net you will see many examples of native lawns that would absolutely fit in even the most exclusive communities in Jacksonville, all surely governed by Homeowner Associations. Remember, little patience goes a long way.

So, get busy. The clock is ticking. People are moving in. We don’t have an infinite supply of fresh water. The more of us that change over, the more water can be used to fill the increasing need from the influx of new Floridians. And, if you’re in the Riverside Avondale area near the Casbah, or even next door to us, hurry up, so you can put your property on the tour next year. We’re exhausted.

- CHRIS HILDRETH

# FLORIDA GEORGIA

rivalry game to stay  
in Jacksonville



The Florida Gators and Georgia Bulldogs announced that the schools have exercised the option to play their annual rivalry game in Jacksonville during the 2024 and 2025 seasons.

The most recent game agreement, which secured the matchup in Jacksonville through the 2023 season, outlined an option to extend the rivalry game in the neutral site the following two seasons as long as the two schools notified the City of Jacksonville prior to June 30, 2023.

“The City of Jacksonville has been an historic host for one of the greatest rivalry games in all of college football,” Florida Athletics Director Scott Stricklin said. “We are excited to have the game in Jacksonville for another two seasons.”

“We are pleased with the decision to exercise the option that will keep the game in Jacksonville for 2024 and 2025,” said UGA J. Reid Parker Director of Athletics Josh Brooks. “We look forward to discussions that I’m sure will continue over the next couple years exploring all the options for 2026 and beyond. We continue to be appreciative of the working relationship we have with the University of Florida and the City of Jacksonville.”

“Jacksonville has been the proud home of the Georgia-Florida game since 1933,” Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said. “We are excited to welcome back the thousands of Dawgs and Gators to Jacksonville in 2024 and 2025. I want to thank the University of Georgia and University of Florida for their continued faith and investment in our city.”

A staple October tradition, the Florida-Georgia game has been played in Jacksonville since 1933 except for the 1994 and 1995 seasons during the construction of TIAA Bank Field. The Gators and the Bulldogs are currently slated to meet on Oct. 28 for this year’s matchup.

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# Donna Deegan elected next mayor of Jacksonville, announces transition team co-chairs

BY MICHELE LEIVAS  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS



Mayor-elect Donna Deegan with the Co-Chairs of her Transition Leadership Team. Left to right: Kevin Gay, Nat Glover, David Miller, Donna Deegan, Lakesha Burton, Darnell Smith. Photo courtesy of Mayor-elect Deegan team.

Democrat Donna Deegan has been elected the next mayor of Jacksonville and the first woman to hold the title in city history.

Deegan emerged the victor in a runoff election against Republican Daniel Davis on May 16 with 52.08% of the 217,392 votes cast.

Deegan took to Twitter the evening of the election to celebrate her victory stating, “Love won tonight, and we made history. We have a new day in Jacksonville because people chose unity over division—creating a broad coalition of people across the political spectrum that want a unified city.”

She continued: “Together, we will bring change for good to Jacksonville by making good on the decades-long broken promises on infrastructure, building an economy that works for everyone and improving access to healthcare. We will break down the wall between City Hall and bring all the people in to create a city that works for everyone.”

In his concession speech, Davis expressed his support of the mayor elect and his continued support for the City of Jacksonville.

“I just want to let you know I’m going to do everything I can to make sure Mayor Elect Deegan’ is successful in making Jacksonville the best Jacksonville it can be,” he said. “I love my city. I will never stop loving my city.”

On Thursday, May 25, Deegan held her first news conference at City Hall, announcing the co-chairs of her Transition Leadership Team.

“Today, I am excited to announce our Transition Team Co-Chairs. They are a brilliant group of leaders who collectively embody our guiding values, the culture we strive to create,” she said. “They come from across the political spectrum and all work with relentless optimism to lift our city, to bring this beautiful mosaic we call Jacksonville together for its greatest good. I couldn’t be more grateful to have them by my side as we prepare our administration. They have and will continue to serve as wise counsel for me.”

The co-chairs of the transition team, a representation of “Jacksonville’s political diversity,” include former candidate for Jacksonville sheriff and retired Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office Assistant Chief Lakesha Burton, former Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney, Operation New Hope Founder Kevin Gay, former Jacksonville Sheriff Nat Glover, Brightway Insurance Co-Founder and Executive Chairman David Miller and Florida Blue North Florida Market President Darnell Smith.

“Our administration will be guided by the principle that every person should have a voice in City Hall and a seat at the table,” Deegan continued. “Transparency, accountability and innovation will be at the center of all of our decisions as we build a bridge to the next generation and industries of the future.”

# HISTORIC ST. NICHOLAS CEMETERY MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY DRAWS A CROWD



Knights members Mike Sissine, Don Burkhart, Jim Williams, Mike Montenero, Mike Hernandez and Andrew Bass

The Knights of Columbus Assembly 3242 and the St. Nicholas Area Preservation (SNAP) held its annual Memorial Day Ceremony honoring those Veterans interred in the Historic St. Nicholas Cemetery, by placing flags at Veterans gravesites.

The Ceremony began with the Invocation by Fr. Jason Trull of Assumption Church followed by a flag retirement ceremony from Boy Scout Troop 106 and the raising of the new flag by the Bishop Kenny High School NROTC Corp.

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# Historical society shares annual Endangered Properties list

BY MICHELE LEIVAS  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

The Jacksonville Historical Society (JHS) has released its annual list of endangered buildings.

The list, “Jacksonville’s Endangered Historic Properties 2023,” is an annual compilation of historic sites and properties currently facing the threat of demolition. This year’s list features more than 20 properties, including religious structures, dwellings, public buildings, businesses and schools, as well as a special category of historic and architecturally significant Duval County Public School buildings currently slated for demolition.

“Historic sites and properties matter to Jacksonville’s people,” said JHS CEO Dr. Alan Bliss. “When historic buildings, such as the 99-year-old Ford Motor Assembly Plant building, are demolished, we erase another part of the culture, history and life stories that form our Jacksonville. Historic places lend authenticity to their surroundings, making us all more invested as citizens. In addition, data proves that historic preservation adds value by strengthening economic development. Recognizing this, the Jacksonville Historical Society advocates for preservation through its annual Endangered Historic Properties list.”

Featured on the list are many familiar historical buildings in Jacksonville’s urban core, including the Laura Street Trio at the corner of Laura and Forsyth streets. These



Mount Olive A.M.E. Church in 1973, from the Collections at the Jacksonville Historical Society.

three buildings — the Florida Life Building, the Bisbee Building and the Old Florida National Bank (also known as the Marble Bank) — date back to the early 1900s in the first years following the Great Fire of 1901.

“As a city, we cannot let these buildings remain the way they are because they’re vacant and certainly a detriment to trying to achieve downtown redevelopment, and yet, they’re too historically and architecturally significant to tear them down,” said Jacksonville historian Dr. Wayne Wood.

While there is currently a developer interested in restoring and reviving these historic buildings, Wood added the trio will remain on the endangered buildings list until construction work actually begins.

“The fact is that the economy and [cost of] construction has risen so great that there’s still not a certainty that these buildings will be saved,” he said.

Mount Olive A.M.E. Church on Franklin Street was built in 1922 and was designed by Jacksonville’s first Black architect, Richard L. Brown, after A.L. Lewis, the church’s building committee chairman, selected his plans for a new building to replace the congregation’s original one, which dated back to 1887. JHS noted in the list that “a declining congregation, infrastructure issues and developer encroachment are threats to the future viability of this historic old church.”

Additional religious buildings on the list include Laura Street’s Snyder Memorial Methodist Church, built in 1902-03, and Mount Cavalry Baptist Church on Spruce Street, built in 1949.

Not all historic buildings are in danger of demolition, though, as adaptive reuse and renovations are underway for several historic and architecturally significant buildings throughout the city.

In April, The Resident reported on plans to convert the historic Independent Life Building, built in 1955, into a mixed-use development featuring commercial tenants, residential units, dining options and a grocery store. Work on the building continues. Since then, several permits have been filed with the city for plumbing work on several of the building’s higher floors.

The article reported that the developer on this project is Augustine Development Group; the contractor on this project is DFI General Contractors LLC. Its total cost is estimated at \$23.3 million.

Wood also cited the transformation of the former Florida Baptist Convention

Building. Designed by famed architect Henry J. Klutho and constructed in 1924, the building “was in deplorable shape and was in danger of almost collapsing,” he said. The building, according to the Downtown Jacksonville website, was abandoned for more than 40 years and is now transformed into a mixed-use facility comprised of two future mercantile suites, future restaurant spaces, and 24 studio and 1-bedroom apartments

“Every old building should not be saved just because it’s old, but those buildings that are of architectural and historic significance deserve to be part of our city’s effort to preserve our heritage,” Wood said.



A 1927 photo of the Laura Street Trio, from the Collections at the Jacksonville Historical Society.

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REALTOR



# City breaks ground on LaSalle Street Pump Station

BY MICHELLE LEIVAS  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Jacksonville city leaders joined representatives from Haskell and A&E Engineering in a ground breaking ceremony for the much-anticipated LaSalle Street pump station in San Marco on Wednesday, May 17.

“This Lasalle pump station will be an important tool in addressing the chronic flooding in this community and protecting these citizens and their property,” said City of Jacksonville Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Charles Moreland during the ceremony.

Once complete, the pump station will actively pump flood water in the area back out to the St. Johns River.

Funding for the pump station was provided in part by a \$20 million grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protections Resilient Florida Grant Program and another \$20 million matched by the



Jacksonville city officials with representatives from Haskell and A&E Engineering at the May 17 ground breaking ceremony for the LaSalle Street pump station.

City of Jacksonville. Moreland said the funds provided by the city derived from revenues from the local gas tax option and the Jobs for Jax program.

The duplex that once stood at 936 LaSalle Street has since been demolished after a February city council meeting approved the \$900,000 right-of-way acquisition of the property in preparation for the pump station.

According to Haskell Water Division Leader Bryan Bedell, final pricing is currently under review for final approval by city

council. This would be the overall project’s “guaranteed maximum price.” Once that is complete, the Haskell team will mobilize to begin excavation for the pump station, which will be built roughly 25 feet into the ground.

“The team will...[be] making sure we’re good neighbors to the adjacent property owners and try to work during working hours to make sure that’s not an impact to their lives,” he added.

The project is expected to take 18 months. With hurricane season approaching, Bedell

added that steps are being taken to prepare the area as best as possible before the pump station is functional, including inspecting and clearing out sand and other debris and aggregate from the existing stormwater pipes.

The City issued a press release following the ceremony, stating the LaSalle Street pump station “will significantly reduce adverse flood impacts, which will result in cost-savings and allow residents and businesses within the basin to bounce back more quickly after storm events.”

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# Residential real estate update

## Historic districts remain insular despite market shifts, uptick in rates

BY **MARY WANSER**  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

In this Part 1 of a 3-part real estate series, we look at residential sales throughout the historic districts of Jacksonville as seen through the eyes of local real estate professionals. A panel of six experts weighed in.

### PANEL EXPERTS



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### LOCAL MARKET

**Q: Is the current real estate market in the historic districts of Jacksonville a favorable one?**

**VINING AND COHEN:** Absolutely favorable. The median sales price has been creeping up over the last few months since inventory of homes for sale has been decreasing. It's still a strong sellers' market. Buyers can still find the perfect home; they just need to move fast and rely on their REALTOR® to guide them carefully. In some cases, they need to make a very strong offer. We are seeing great numbers at open houses and multiple offers on properties.

**SALTER:** The real estate market for historic homes in Jacksonville remains dynamic, with a limited supply and a steady stream of buyers eager to invest in the timeless allure of the city's architectural treasures.

**KING:** Overall, Jacksonville is slated to outperform most other metro areas of Florida for the foreseeable future. Jacksonville is positioned well for massive growth (+20%).

**SINGLETON:** The current real estate market is fantastic in the historic area. We have really strong demand that seems to be driven by the addition of well-paying positions in the Jacksonville job market.

**SIMONETTA:** Historic districts are often highly sought-after areas for buyers due to their unique charm, character and sense of history. Historic districts typically have a well-established sense of community with amenities such as local shops, restaurants and parks.

While there may be fluctuations in the real estate market in any area, historic districts often tend to hold their value well over time and can even appreciate more quickly than other areas. In part, this is because there are typically strict guidelines in place to ensure that historic properties are preserved, which can help maintain the area's overall character and desirability.

### INTEREST RATES

**Q: Are current interest rates affecting the real estate market here?**

**SALTER:** While interest rates may have a number of buyers waiting on the sidelines, I'd say the historic market has recently seen a surge of growing interest.

**KING:** Yes, interest rates are a big worry for buyers, especially those who have become accustomed to below-market-value interest rates of the pandemic. The reality is that the 40-year average for mortgage rates is 7.71%. Even as I write this, rates hover at or below 7%. Buyers can sigh relief as we expect interest rates to begin declining in the coming months. Down payment programs, like Hometown Heroes and others, are making getting into a home much easier. How much depends on the overall economy, but we are confident that we have seen the ceiling and can look forward to lower rates as time progresses.

**SIMONETTA:** Yes, current interest rates can have a significant impact on the real estate market. When interest rates are low, it can make borrowing money to purchase a property more affordable for potential homebuyers, which can increase demand and lead to higher prices. Conversely, when interest rates are high, borrowing money to purchase a property becomes more expensive, which can decrease demand and lead to lower prices.

Low interest rates can also lead to an increase in refinancing activity, as homeowners may look to take advantage of lower rates to lower their monthly mortgage payments or shorten the term of their loan. This can also lead to an

increase in demand for housing, as homeowners who refinance may use their savings to invest in additional properties or upgrade to a larger or more expensive home.

Overall, interest rates are just one factor that can influence the real estate market, but they can play a significant role in shaping supply and demand dynamics and, ultimately, affect property prices.

**VINING:** To some degree, yes. Some borrowers are in a vulnerable position, and when rates change, their debt-to-income ratios change. This can impact the borrower's affordability and the type of home for which they qualify.

### IN COMPARISON

**Q: How are sales here in the historic districts as compared to those throughout the rest of Jacksonville?**

**KING:** Sales in our area are a bit slower this year than in the last several years, but stable. Homes are selling, we just do not have enough inventory to meet demand. This can be attributed to overall market conditions and sellers' unwillingness to put their homes on the market for various reasons. We can look forward to the market loosening up a bit as we progress through the fall of '23. Homes are still selling faster than they did pre-pandemic, especially homes that have been well-kept and updated. The sellers having the most issues are overpriced and/or need to make repairs to justify their lofty prices.

**SINGLETON:** While some other areas seem to slow down, we are continuing to see multiple offers and homes selling above asking price.

**SIMONETTA:** Like any real estate market, the market in Jacksonville's historic districts can be affected by a variety of factors, such as the overall state of the economy, changes in zoning laws or building codes, and fluctuations in supply and demand. It's also worth noting that property values can vary greatly depending on the specific neighborhood and type of property you're considering. In my opinion, the historical districts tend to be the last impacted in a declining market due to the public's demand to invest their cash in a recessionary market.

**VINING:** The historic homes are not as plentiful as homes that are newer construction or in other neighborhoods. With limited inventory, demand continues to be high.

Real estate is local. While other markets may be seeing a slowdown, Jacksonville has been seeing a tremendous influx since Covid. With the wonderful quality of life we offer, what's not to love? By comparison to other cities in Florida, Jacksonville's price points remain a bargain.

**SALTER:** Jacksonville boasts a rich history and a diverse array of well-preserved historic properties, attracting both local residents and out-of-state buyers. These homes, often characterized by unique architectural styles and captivating stories, hold immense appeal for those seeking a blend of charm, character and timeless beauty.

As the market continues to experience demand due to a major lack in inventory, prices for homes in Riverside and Avondale, specifically, have steadily increased, reflecting their desirability and scarcity. Buyers are drawn to the distinctive features such as original hardwood floors, intricate moldings and ornate façades, which contribute to the allure of owning a piece of our city's past but are also shopping for homes that are more "move-in ready"

and well-maintained versus ones that may be more of a project.

Additionally, the city's ongoing efforts to preserve its historical heritage and revitalize historic districts have further fueled the interest. The real estate market for historic homes in Jacksonville remains dynamic, with a limited supply and a steady stream of buyers eager to invest in the timeless allure of the city's architectural treasures.

### SCHOOL TREND

**Q: With the school term coming to a close, are you seeing/expecting more movement in local real estate, as is the usual trend?**

**SIMONETTA:** Historically, the end of a school term can be a time of increased real estate activity, particularly for families with school-aged children who may be looking to move before the start of the next school year. This can create a surge in demand for homes in certain areas, which may lead to increased buying and selling activity.

However, it's important to note that real estate activity can be influenced by a wide range of factors, including economic conditions, interest rates, housing inventory and local market dynamics, among others. Therefore, the level of real estate activity at the end of the school term may vary depending on these and other factors.

This year, due to the higher interest rates and home prices, which have not adjusted as fast, I expect to see a slower pace than the usual trend. You also must remember that many homeowners have current mortgages on their existing homes under 3%. It would take something special for them to sell and purchase a property at a rate easily doubling their current mortgage.

**VINING:** It's always busy. Northeast Florida is in a major growth mode, and we continue to attract businesses and great jobs. There are always a few extra moves when kids are out of school. Competition rises slightly, but it's already a competitive market. We just keep moving forward, creating the best experience for clients.

**KING:** We are currently in the middle of our hot spring market. Before the middle of June, we see sellers earn the best returns of the calendar year, and this year is no exception, especially while demand and supply are offset in sellers' favor.

### THE FUTURE

**Q: What is your best guess as to what we can expect in the near future? Distant future?**

**KING:** We can expect to see interest rates stabilize and begin declining very soon and throughout the remainder of the year. In the near term, we expect to see interest rates come down while prices stabilize and probably inch back up. Today, we are still at half or less of the number of homes available for sale in Northeast Florida compared to before the pandemic. In the future, Jacksonville is positioned to become the power player it has always strived to be.

Jacksonville is the largest land mass city in the U.S. We have excellent rail and road transportation systems, we have a top-five freshwater port, and an international airport. We have multiple military installations, not including the Coast Guard, and let's toss in a roughly 30-minute or less drive to the beaches. We have all the pieces, and now, all of those pieces appear to be falling into place.



**VINING:** As long as people continue to relocate to our area, demand will be high. Currently, many in the local market would like to move, but with rising prices and outside demand, it is hard for locals, as there aren't as many choices or opportunities to move up or down in their communities.

**SIMONETTA:** The bottom line is: We are in unprecedented times. Throughout history, one thing is for sure. No matter what the rates or prices were, deals have always been done. The key is to produce a fair deal for all parties no matter what the circumstances are.

IMPENDING SLOWDOWN?

**Q: Do you see a slowdown coming?**

**COHEN:** I believe Northeast Florida really has that special sauce. We have the largest urban park system in the country, beautiful beaches, a high quality of life with excellent healthcare facilities, schools and a low cost of living. All that, combined with our diverse economy, makes Jacksonville an attractive place for business and job opportunities. Markets have ups and downs; the best REALTORS® and brokers thrive in any market condition.

**VINING:** The first quarter [of] 2023 has been very strong in Jacksonville. As more locals find desirable places to move within the city, and their homes sell, our market will keep moving upward.

**SALTER:** I do not foresee a downturn in the market. I think Florida as a whole is still very hot. And Jacksonville remains affordable as compared to other major cities in our state, so we are seeing people flock from more expensive and populated markets within Florida and make the move as well as transplants from across the country. I've heard so often that our historic neighborhoods remind northerners of where they live, and I think finding that relatability has made our area so appealing to people shopping for a place to move here.

**KING:** I do not see much of a real estate slowdown from here. I see sales numbers stabilizing and reminiscing of 2018-2019 regarding volume, with our current prices sticking and even slight increases in pricing as interest rate pressures decline.

AVAILABLE INVENTORY

**Q: What type of inventory and in what quantity is available in the historic districts now?**

**VINING:** In Avondale and Riverside, there are currently 84 single-family homes for sale. Of the 84 for sale, 53 are currently under contract. There are 31 active listings, ranging in price from \$159,900 to \$2.9 million.

**KING:** Our current inventory levels are still well below where they were pre-pandemic, while buyer demand is much higher. Average days on the market pre-pandemic were over 100 days, and today they're around 47. So, the limited numbers of homes on the market are moving quite well. Again, buyers are forced to be a bit more conservative in their home choices.

**COHEN:** The latest NEFAR market statistics show 2.6 months of supply. That's low and evidence of a super sellers' market. The median sales price is up 13% month over month. Year-over-year stats shows prices are down; low supply is driving prices back up. Transactional dynamics

have moderated, and sellers are more likely to negotiate and make repairs. With such low supply, sellers considering putting their homes on the market should act fast. Competition gets thicker in the summer months.

CHOOSING AN AGENT

**Q: Our readers expressed that they have chosen or will choose agents they see advertised in "The Resident." What other criteria should people look for in an agent?**

**VINING:** An experienced REALTOR® who has knowledge of the market in which the buyer is seeking a home. Also, an established real estate company offering up-to-date technology. With our current fast-paced market, an experienced REALTOR® should be able to provide creative suggestions for making an offer.

For someone selling a home, an experienced and successful REALTOR® who knows how to market and price a property and has the ability to spend marketing dollars to reach the seller's true target market.

**COHEN:** Trust, integrity, longevity and respect. Your REALTOR® should be knowledgeable and dynamic in their marketing efforts. Does the REALTOR® apply social media, video, print marketing and continuous networking with other agents and brokers? Make sure your REALTOR® has support and is involved in the business culture. The collective group they are part of is important.

**KING:** Picking your agent, above all else, should not be out of nepotism. Interview an agent just like you would any potential new hire. Yes, it is important to have a good relationship with your agent. Still, at the end of the day, our job is to market your home aggressively, provide the customer/client with excellent advice (even if they do not want to hear it), and to be a consummate professional. Your agent should have a good track record of closings and be very well-versed in selling historic properties. 100-year-old homes are a very different world than newer homes.

**SIMONETTA:** In addition to experience and knowledge of the local market, there are several other criteria to consider when choosing a real estate agent.

Communication skills: An excellent real estate agent should have good communication skills, which include listening actively, being responsive and explaining things clearly.

Professionalism: It's important to work with an agent who is professional, courteous and respectful. A professional agent should always keep their promises, meet deadlines and keep their clients informed throughout the buying or selling process.

Trustworthiness: Look for an agent who is honest and transparent with you. You want to work with someone who has your best interests in mind and is committed to helping you achieve your goals.

Marketing strategies: An effective agent should have a strong marketing strategy to help you sell your home quickly and at the best possible price. Ask the agent about their marketing plan, including their online presence, advertising and open house events.

Negotiation skills: A skilled agent should be able to negotiate on your behalf to get you the best possible deal. Look for an agent who has experience negotiating with other agents, buyers and sellers.

Availability: You want an agent who is available when you need them, whether it's during the day, evening or on weekends. Make sure the agent you choose is willing

to work around your schedule and is responsive to your needs.

Network: A good agent should have a strong network of industry professionals, including lenders, home inspectors and contractors. This can help make the buying or selling process smoother and more efficient.

By considering these factors when choosing a real estate agent, you can ensure that you find someone who is knowledgeable, professional and committed to helping you achieve your real estate goals.

LISTING ADVICE

**Q: What are your top tips for listing a home?**

**SINGLETON:** The most important advice for sellers is using professional marketing and pricing the home accurately. We continue to see some listings languish because they're simply not presented in the best manner.

**SALTER:** When listing a home in today's market, you must understand the current buyer's mindset. People are definitely more hesitant because of the financial markets, and buyers now want to feel like the home they buy is worth the money they are spending because home prices accelerated

so quickly over the last few years. We aren't just making offers on anything anymore. A listing needs to have a strong pricing strategy combined with professional marketing. If you feel like your home needs some touchups before going on the market, it likely does. Don't wait until the buyer does an inspection to figure it out. Be proactive.

**VINING:** Decluttering is at the top of the list. Less is best. Depersonalizing the home so buyers can visualize themselves in the property versus seeing family photos, trophies, degrees and/or personal items.

**COHEN:** Curb appeal is critical: laying fresh mulch, landscaping, pressure washing hardscapes. Sprucing up the landscaping and outside improves curb appeal and the potential buyer's first impression. Also important are decluttering and depersonalizing the home so buyers can visualize themselves in the property and take emotional possession of the space.

**KING:** Work closely with your agent and try hard not to pre-decide what your home is worth before consulting your licensed and experienced REALTOR®. Consider performing a pre-market home inspection and address needed repairs before you list.

COMING SOON

Stay tuned for the July issue of "The Resident," where we'll report on the current state of the local commercial and residential rental market in Part 2 of a 3-part real estate series.

Have something to contribute? Contact Pamela at [Editor@residentnews.net](mailto:Editor@residentnews.net)



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# City Council approves settlement agreement in redistricting lawsuit

BY MICHELE LEIVAS  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

At a May 9 meeting, the Jacksonville City Council voted 15-to-3 to approve a settlement to end the ongoing litigation regarding the redistricting of the city council and school board district map.

The three dissenting votes were from Council Members LeAnna Cumber, Brenda Priestly Jackson and Reggie Gaffney, Jr.

In May 2022, the Jacksonville branch of the NAACP, Northside Coalition of Jacksonville, Inc., Florida Rising Together, Inc. and the ACLU of Florida Northeast Chapter — along with 10 citizens — filed a lawsuit against the City of Jacksonville claiming the district map in use at the time was unconstitutional.

In a February article, The Resident reported on the remedial map to be implemented for the recent city council elections as well as the 2024 school board elections until, according to a December court order, “entry of a final judgement in this case.” This map — the P3 map — was one of three submitted by the plaintiffs.

With the approval of 2023-0281 at the May 9 meeting, the entry of a final judgement

may be drawing nearer, though City of Jacksonville General Counsel Jason Teal explained to council members that the settlement agreement will still need to go before the judge for evaluation before a final judgement is issued.

At a Rules Committee meeting the week prior, Teal explained in greater detail what the settlement agreement includes, which, he said, was the adoption of the plaintiff’s P3 map until the next redistricting takes places following the 2030 census and an award of \$100,000 to the plaintiffs for attorneys’ fees.

Council Member Nick Howland was among the council members expressing reluctant support for the settlement agreement at the Rules Committee meeting.

“I’m grudgingly going to support this settlement agreement,” he said. “I begrudgingly do it because...I support it because of the unforeseen cost that we’ll incur if we continue moving forward and because we’re about to elect a whole new city council with these maps.”

Before voting on the proposed settlement agreement at the May 9 city council meeting, Council Member Brenda Priestly Jackson also expressed her reluctant support.

“This is an agreement I will live with but I am not comfortable living with,” she said.

Priestly Jackson argued not only does new map fail to “address the issues alleged by the plaintiffs,” but it also pitted four sitting women council members against one another in the spring elections by drawing them into two districts.

“Further, the same new redistricting maps didn’t draw any male council members into the same council districts, thereby further marginalizing and othering the ladies on the city council and potentially significantly diminishing the female representation on the city council,” she said.

Northside Coalition of Jacksonville President Ben Frazier stated the settlement agreement was “a step in the right direction.”

“I think it was unfortunate that the city decided to cost taxpayers all of this money to fight the inevitable,” he said. “They in fact were hard-nosed, hard-boiled and hard-headed, and it ended up costing the taxpayers a lot of money. So now, it is time to move forward in what I refer to as the sunlight of a brand-new day. Let’s work closer together. That is what this is about. This is about collaboration between all the parties involved: the private sector, the public sector, the community. We simply have got to learn how to work better together. We must all learn how to collaborate. Why? Because none of us is as smart as all of us.”

Frazier said this provides Black voters the opportunity to “elect a preferred candidate of choice in District 7” in the May election. In District 7, he added, “if the candidate who is selected...will operate with the best of interest, cares and concerns of all the voters, then that will be just fine.”

“What we want there to be is fair representation so that our cares and interests will in fact be addressed.”

— Ben Frazier, Northside Coalition of Jacksonville President

“What we want there to be is fair representation so that our cares and interests — meaning the cares and interests of the underserved community, meaning District 7 — will in fact be addressed,” he said. “We want our best interests to be addressed, and quite frankly speaking, I don’t care who’s addressing it, whether they’re Black or white.”

There is currently no set date for when the court will render a final judgement in the case.

# DIA approves amendments to RiversEdge redevelopment agreement

BY MICHELE LEIVAS  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Jacksonville’s Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) recently approved a second amendment to its redevelopment agreement with Dallas-based developer Preston Hollow Community Capital, LLC regarding the Southbank’s RiversEdge: Life on the St. Johns project.

At a May 17 meeting, DIA CEO Lori Boyer discussed the proposed amended redevelopment agreement, which detailed several modifications, including, among others, adding more land parcels to the project, an increased grant amount and extending completion deadlines.

The completion date for Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) infrastructure improvements has been extended from June 14, 2024 to Dec. 31, 2024. The April 5, 2025 deadline for Community Development District (CDD) infrastructure improvements has been extended to Dec. 31, 2025.

In an e-mailed statement provided to The Resident, Boyer explained the modifications in greater detail:

“As everyone knows, rents and construction costs have increased sharply in recent years, which means the projected tax revenue that RiversEdge will generate for the City of Jacksonville is substantially higher today than it was in 2018 when the original agreement was finalized,” she wrote. “The increased grant amount is based on a percentage of the property’s tax value, and in this case the percentage

remains exactly the same in the amendment as it was five years ago – 75%.”

In addition, the Recaptured Enhanced Value grant expiration date is consistent with the updated Downtown redevelopment plan adopted by City Council in 2022. The completion dates for the parks and road are extended by several months, but all parks, the Riverwalk, boardwalk and amenities as well as access roads for those public spaces, will be completed by the end of 2024. Vertical construction on private development is expected to get underway this year. We are excited to see this long-awaited development moving forward and shifting from work on underground infrastructure to truly visible improvements.”

Ground broke on the Southbank mixed-use development in May 2021. The highly-anticipated, 32-acre project will feature 134,000 square feet of retail space, 200,000 square feet of office space, 147 hotel rooms, 950 residential units and a 125-slip marina along with four public parks.

In a February article, Preston Hollow Community Capital Managing Director Ramiro Albarran told The Resident the project was, at the time, “about halfway through the infrastructure development cycle.”

Vertical construction will commence once all infrastructural work is completed.

Preston Hollow Community Capital declined to comment on the amended redevelopment agreement, which will now go before the city council for approval.



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(VERDICT, 8/5/2022)

PERSONAL INJURY: CAR ACCIDENT

*\*Names changed to protect client privacy*

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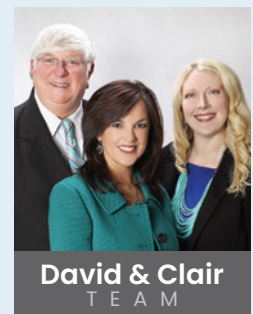


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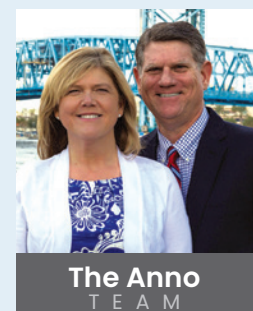


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# Financial literacy now required for high schoolers

*FLDOE is finalizing standards and curriculum for a new financial literacy class*

BY JENNIFER JENSEN  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

In March 2022, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill to require high school students to take a financial literacy class prior to graduation. Thanks to Senate Bill 1054, titled the Dorothy L. Hukill Financial Literacy Act, students will learn how to make smart decisions with their money prior to taking the giant leap into adulthood. This new requirement applies to students entering high school in the 2023-2024 school year.

“The Dorothy L. Hukill Financial Literacy Act will help prepare students for the future by providing them with the knowledge to achieve financial stability and independence,” Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Press Secretary Cassandra Palelis said. “In addition, the standards will ensure students have the tools to make educated financial decisions and empower them to thrive in our economy, no matter what path they choose after high school.”

Sen. Dorothy Hukill, who died in 2018, and for whom the legislation is named, had a career-long dedication to expanding opportunities for students to learn about financial literacy in high school. She was a former classroom teacher and understood firsthand just how important these skills are to successful employment and economic independence in adulthood.

In 2019, DeSantis signed legislation that required schools to offer the course as an elective, but many in the community continued to push for a more aggressive approach. The Rotary Club of Jacksonville was one such group. They pushed for legislation to be written to require the financial literary course to graduate, rather than having it be just an elective students could choose or not.

“When they turn 18 and are legally adults, they’re empowered to sign legal contracts — student loans, credit card agreements — and that affects their financial wellbeing for forever,” The Rotary Club of Jacksonville President Jim Agee said. “It’ll give them some tools. If the parents get involved, it might teach the parents something too, but it requires a big investment by the parents to teach their kids financial responsibility, cash flow and building net worth.”

Agee said it goes beyond just one semester of learning about financial responsibility. It is about building intergenerational wealth. “How are you going to break this cycle of poverty and underdevelopment, both in education and social skills? You’re not going to break that cycle until you can get a generation educated on this,” Agee added.

And today, living in such a digital age with everything at one’s fingertips, it can be easy to make quick decisions that might

not be the best financial one. Don’t want to drive to the gas station for a soda? Just order one through one of the many food delivery services — for a significant upcharge. Scroll through TikTok and there’s an ad to buy something instantly. There is such an ease in getting something nowadays without truly knowing how much it should cost.

Erin Conklin, Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) Director of K-12 Social Studies, said these types of things will be incorporated into the curriculum. “Teachers will have resources that teach students about digital spending and other digital components,” she said.

The course curriculum must touch on several other aspects as well, including:

- Types of bank accounts;
- Opening and managing a bank account;
- Assessing the quality of a depository institution’s services;
- Balancing a checkbook;
- Basic principles of money management;
- Loan applications;
- Receiving an inheritance;
- Basic principles of personal insurance policies;
- Federal income taxes and local tax assessments;
- Interest rates;
- Contracts;
- Billing statements;
- Savings and investments; and
- Laws concerning finance.

The FLDOE released proposed standards for the course on April 6 for public review. FLDOE convened a workgroup to review the previous financial literacy courses, as well as propose new financial literacy standards and courses that align with the financial principles defined in SB 1054. The State Board of Education (SBOE) was anticipated to take action on these standards at their meeting on May 24.

Financial literacy courses aligned with the new standards are currently in development and are expected to go before the SBOE in July. Once SBOE gives its approval, the courses will be available for the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. Workgroups will develop resources for financial literacy immediately following the adoption of the new courses, according to Palelis.

Conklin has been working with those at the FLDOE to be ready for implementation in the upcoming school year. Once it is approved by SBOE and DCPS has a course code from FLDOE, it will be added to the pupil progression plan and the Duval County School Board agenda. The board will then have to approve the course and standards prior to its implementation, which, she indicated, could be as late as August or September.

The new course will also require professional development for teachers. The school district will need to adopt materials and textbooks, and plans to include parents in this process.

Conklin said the district has many community partners that work with them to provide resources and support for teachers and students. And some offer support and programs specifically targeted to financial literacy. One of these such groups is Junior Achievement of North Florida (JA), which employs a pathways approach to teaching financial literacy to young people.

Shannon Italia, president of leadership for JA, said this bill “elevates the priority and provides a framework to ensure that all young people in Florida will be exposed to this critical information. Even if people have limited means, a better understanding of how money works and how one can use budgeting, cost management and credit as a tool can help lead to better financial outcomes, which can contribute to a greater quality of life and financial wellness.”



Two students review lessons from Junior Achievement’s in-school literacy programs.

Another partner in the community is VyStar Credit Union, which started the VyStar Academy of Business High School Branch Program about 15 years ago. High school students receive real, hands-on experience by operating a fully functional VyStar branch in the school, which is open to students and faculty only.

“Instead of doing a classroom presentation or offering job shadowing, which are still very beneficial, we decided to build a fully functional VyStar credit union on campus that was exclusively operated by the students as part of their business program,” VyStar Vice President of School Programs Michael Rathjen said.

Vystar just opened its 18th high school branch and now operates in eight school districts. In Duval County, there are branches at Samuel Wolfson, Ribault, First Coast,

Mandarin and Fletcher high schools. Vystar offers 12 yearlong paid internships to students at each branch.

“As we’ve been able to partner with schools over the years, we realized how valuable this opportunity is to students, regardless of their career aspirations,” Rathjen said. “They learn how to work with two key elements. They learn how to work with money, and they learn all types of financial literacy concepts, and they learn how to work with people.”

“When it comes to learning how to handle money, it’s not a matter of if we need to learn those skills, is just a matter of when,” Rathjen said. “So, we can do one of two things. We can either take the time to prepare for our future or we will take the time to repair from our past.”



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# MOVERS & SHAKERS

## Goodman joins Baptist Health in new role



Jeremy Goodman

Jeremy Goodman, MD, MBA, FACHE, CPE, FACS, joined Baptist Health in the newly created role of vice president and system quality officer on May 15, 2023. The role is responsible for the effectiveness of clinical management, patient safety and performance improvement, as well as facilitating collaboration and integration across the brand's entire system. Goodman comes to Baptist Health after six years as chief medical officer at Banner-University Medical Center Phoenix, Arizona's largest hospital.

"[Goodman] is a highly accomplished physician executive with a significant background in process improvement and clinical care design. He has successfully worked with physicians, nurses and administration across disciplines to drive clinical excellence and improve outcomes," said Timothy Groover, MD, MBA, CPE, FACHE, senior vice president and system chief medical officer of Baptist Health.

## Jacksonville viewers give \$130,000 for children's treatments



Michael Erhard

Nemours Children's Health raised more than \$130,000 during its fifth annual Day of Giving, in partnership with WJXT Channel 4. All funds raised will go toward the Compassionate Care Fund, which provides for children who may not have the resources for treatment. Viewers called in donations in the telethon-style fundraiser, and donations were matched by the 2023 sponsors: VyStar Credit Union, the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation and Ruckus.

"Our commitment is to do good and lead by example, and there is no better way to do that than work with Nemours Children's and partner with the Compassionate Care Fund to help the children in greater Jacksonville get the support they need," said Chad Meadows, executive vice president and COO of VyStar Credit Union.

## Thurson shines as a guiding light



Noreen Thurson with Deacon Bob DeLuca

Noreen Thurson has been honored as the recipient of the Sr. Marie Celinie Joubert Award for Excellence in Forming the Faithful. The award was started in 2015 to recognize those who excel in their catechetical roles in schools and parishes in the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Thurson began her career in ministry as the Director of Religious Education at Resurrection Catholic Church, teaching first grade before moving on to teach Religion I to freshmen at Bishop Kenny 18 years ago. She is also the sponsor for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

"As a Catholic school teacher, I can say, 'I touch eternity. I teach in a Catholic School,'" said Thurson, who also recalled how the move from public school to private, Catholic school brought her to tears when she was again allowed to reference God and Jesus in the classroom.

Thurson considers her teaching a vocational calling, drawing on the spirit of the children she teaches.

"They inspire me to serve," she said.

## Hammond to head HCA Florida Memorial Hospital

Reed Hammond has been named the next CEO for HCA Florida Memorial Hospital, taking the reins from Bradley Talbert June 1.

"I am excited to join a team that is known for delivering high quality care," said Hammond. "That is a tribute to the medical staff and HCA Healthcare colleagues that raise the bar when it comes to caring for their community."

"Reed is a compassionate leader that has a track record of success," said Hugh C. Tappan, president of HCA Healthcare's South Atlantic Division. "He will always put his team members and patients first."



Reed Hammond



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# Cummer Museum awarded \$650,000 grant



Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole  
[BOSTON PHOTOGRAPHY, AMELIA ISLAND, FLORIDA]

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens overlooks 2.5 acres of historic gardens situated on the St. Johns River in Jacksonville, Florida. [PHOTO CREDIT: RYAN KETTERMAN]

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens was awarded a \$650,000 grant from the Leadership in Art Museums (LAM) initiative, a partnership between the Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Pilot House Philanthropy and Alice L. Walton Foundation. The funding provided by LAM enables the Cummer Museum to establish the Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole Curator position, a new post named in honor of the Jacksonville native. The new curator will work collaboratively with museum leadership and colleagues on the development of exhibitions, educational initiatives, public programming and acquisitions. The funding will also support the Cummer's and LAM's shared goals of advancing professional development in the museum field.

"Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole has always considered the Cummer Museum her hometown museum. The

curatorship named in her honor will help us advance Ninah Cummer's vision of being a 'center of beauty and culture for all,'" said Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Ph.D., George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director and CEO.

The Cummer is one of only 19 museums across the country selected to receive a LAM grant, which are designated for creating and sustaining new leadership positions that are inclusive of communities of color.

"It is an extraordinary honor and a joy to have my name associated with this new curatorial position at the Cummer Museum. I am witnessing this institution emerge into a beacon where the stories of all of the world's people are told," said Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole. "Imagine how much further we will go as this curator builds upon the Museum's momentum, values its legacy and facilitates opportunities to expand the vast stories that art tells."

# Waters to retire, Oliver succeed as president of The Community Foundation

Following a nationwide search, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (TCF) unanimously selected Isaiah M. Oliver to succeed Nina Waters as TCF's new president, effective July 31, 2023.

"I am incredibly grateful to our staff, trustees and partners who have been essential to our success over the last 22 years," Waters, who will officially retire September 1, said. "We are starting our next chapter in a position of great strength, and I have no doubt Isaiah is the right leader for us at this time."

Oliver is the third president of the organization, stepping into TCF's engaged network of more than 660

fundholders and donors, \$57.7 million in grants distributed in 2022, a 25-person staff, and more than \$1 billion in total lifetime gifts.

"The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida has an outstanding reputation locally and nationally for donor service and strategic community philanthropy," Oliver said. "I'm looking forward to building relationships with donors, grantees and the community, to better understand how I can build on the strength of the Foundation in our next chapter."



Nina Waters



Isaiah M. Oliver

## SAN MARCO PRESERVATION SOCIETY | CONTINUED FROM COVER

### EVENTS AND TRADITIONAL OUTINGS

SMPS relished in discussing the success of community building events and looked back on the success of Concert in the Park, Luminaria during the holidays, Wine Down in the Parks, along with Story Time in the Square in conjunction with San Marco Books and More. The events and annual outings all reinforced the importance of traditions that stand the test of time for the preservation group.

### ACCOLADES AND AWARDS

Residential and commercial awards were presented on a wide array of projects, as several strong years of real estate and growth prompted improvements throughout the neighborhoods.

Commercial awards kicked off the winnings with Matthew's Restaurant recognized for its façade upgrades and updates designed and implemented by Jaycox Architects and Associates; Regency Centers and Publix for East San Marco; Worth Turner for 1917 Hendricks Avenue and the Foliahome, a living boutique; Will Ware and Group4 Design for 1939 Hendricks Avenue; Corner Lot Development Group and Industry West for 1001 Kings Avenue; One Bridal and 1901 Contracting for 1712 Hendricks Avenue; and Aspire Church and Keith Doles and Bridge Muralists "Emergence" mural on Hendricks Avenue.

Lauren and Matt Carlucci, Jr. were also on hand to accept an award for their renovation and remodeling of 1551 Alexandria Place, a residential project completed during Carlucci's tenure as president.

### PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS RECOGNIZED

In closing out the meeting, partnerships with the public and private sector were mentioned, as the City of Jacksonville and the Cultural Council helped to facilitate artwork in public spaces. With the work of muralist Ainsley Randall in focus, the San Marco Blvd. and Nira Street intersection was transformed into a colorful, weather resistant public art spectacle. The Fishing Pier at Riverfront Park was also recognized as a public/private partnership with the City of Jacksonville, along with the SUP or Shared Use Path, which also illustrated the cooperation with multiple agencies to include the Florida Department of Transportation and the City of Jacksonville.

### NEW LEADERS ANNOUNCED

As the meeting drew to a close, the ceremonial passing of the keys from Lauren Carlucci to David Paulk was made official. The newly elected president was nominated, seconded and all were in favor. The leaders also announced Matt Stupski as Treasurer, which was welcomed with applause. Praise for outgoing Treasurer was also made clear, as an award was announced for Mack Volk, who, despite raising a newborn with his wife, was honorably mentioned for his commitment to the organization over the last calendar year.

"Thank you all for being here, it's great to have such support from residents, business owners and friends, so thanks for all you do...please continue to invest in us and in the neighborhood," said President David Paulk. "We look forward to the next year with you all in the 'hood."

San Marco Preservation Society is coming up on fifty years, it was founded in 1975, more can be learned about SMPS by visiting [smpsjax.com](http://smpsjax.com).



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# Rutherford Tops at NAI



John Rutherford

John Rutherford, Senior Vice President of Multifamily Investment Sales at NAI Hallmark, was recognized by NAI Global as a global top 10 producer for the commercial real estate brokerage firm. The award honors individuals who are handling the highest volume

of business within NAI. The award was presented at the NAI Global Convention in February in Las Vegas.

“John’s success over the past few years, particularly in 2022, comes as no surprise to his colleagues at NAI Hallmark and his clients around the world. John’s preternatural understanding of the multi-family industry and thoughtful approach creates exceptional value, leading to a long list of repeat clients. John success is also a tribute to the strong team he has developed at NAI Hallmark. We are very proud of his accomplishments and excited to see his career continue to flourish,” said Christian Harden, managing partner at NAI Hallmark.

“This award represents outstanding performance within the organization,” said Jay Olshonsky, President and CEO, NAI Global. “We are proud of John Rutherford’s success, and the dedication and commitment to service excellence he has shown.”

# Stophel Retires from Episcopal Children’s Services

CEO Connie Stophel announced her upcoming retirement from Episcopal Children’s Services (ECS), the second-largest nonprofit in Northeast Florida. The announcement was made to ECS’s board of trustees, and will go into effect at the end of 2023.

“I am grateful to have served the Northeast and Central Florida community for more than 30 years, and I am excited about the future of Episcopal Children’s Services. I am still, and will always be, invested in the mission and will work to ensure that all children reach their fullest potential,” said Stophel.

Stophel has been in the CEO position at ECS since 2003, and with the agency for more than 30 years total. Throughout her career, she has helped expand ECS’s revenue from \$13 million to \$98 million and extended the service area to encompass 14 counties. She was honored as one of the Jacksonville Business Journal’s Ultimate CEOs in 2017.

ECS has begun the search process for Stophel’s replacement with the goal of having a new CEO in place no later than January 2024.



Connie Stophel

# Three leaders added to Blessings board



Charmaine Crockett



Paris Owens



Shivam Shah

“We are thrilled that these three exceptional leaders have joined our team.”

— Wyatt Haynes, First Coast Blessings board chair

The First Coast Chapter of Blessings in a Backpack, the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to providing weekend nutrition to children, announced the selection of three new professionals to its 2023-2026 Advisory Board. Charmaine Crockett, CSX Transportation; Paris Owens, Nemours Children’s Health, Jacksonville; and Shivam Shah, University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business. They join 14 other advisory board leaders whose experience spans logistics, banking, technology, finance, sports management and education.

“We select our board of advisors very deliberately for depth and breadth of experience, mission commitment, and a range

of unique and valuable professional and personal factors. We are thrilled that these three exceptional leaders have joined our team, and we are confident they will add tremendous range to our outreach in the years to come,” said Wyatt Haynes, First Coast Blessings board chair.

“I’ve long admired [First Coast Blessing’s] commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable children in our community and that’s especially been the case during the extraordinary disruptions of the pandemic,” said Crockett.

First Coast Blessings in a Backpack partners with 46 public schools in three counties to provide 5,500 children with hunger-free weekends.

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# Bridgers advances at Watson Realty

*Named new vice president and managing broker for the San Marco and Sunbeam offices*



Neil Bridgers

Neil Bridgers has been named vice president and managing broker for Watson Realty’s San Marco and Sunbeam offices.

He has been with Watson Realty since 2016, moving up to branch manager last January before advancing to his current title.

Between the two offices, Bridgers oversees a team of approximately 30, mentoring and training both new recruits and tenured agents. This new title, he said, allows him opportunities to recruit, educate and nurture both emerging agents new to the field and more seasoned ones.

It is a duty he said he truly enjoys and one he wasn’t necessarily expecting while working to obtain his broker’s license.

“I was always worried if I was a broker, that it would just be, ‘Oh God, I need to know the law by heart and be able to guide people.’ But really, it’s a lot less of that, and it’s a lot more of coaching and developing people through building their business and building their brand, which I love to get to do. I love getting to bring on new agents,” Bridgers said.

When he’s not working with his team of agents, Bridgers can also be found

“I’m so happy to say that I’m here with Watson, with this company. It’s where I started in real estate. I really do think that we’re one of the best companies in Northeast Florida. I really do.”

— Neil Bridgers

teaching continuing education courses as a faculty instructor with Florida Realtors, a “rewarding experience” which allows him to stay current in a field that is a “never-ending education” while also providing the opportunity to get more involved in the Florida real estate industry.

“I’m so appreciative to be here and be in this role where I get to help others, and I get to run two offices,” he said. “I’m so happy to say that I’m here with Watson, with this company. It’s where I started in real estate. I really do think that we’re one of the best companies in Northeast Florida. I really do.”



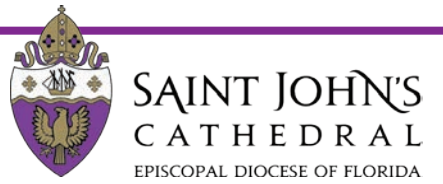
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# Building dream spaces one job at a time

## Established contractor helps homeowners put plans in motion

When the time comes to remodel or restore your home – whether it’s a bathroom, kitchen or an addition – there are many boxes to check and plans to make before you commit to a contractor. The most important part of the process is hiring the right party that has safety in mind, innovative design and quality craftsmanship come with a top notch firm. Finding someone that can help you navigate the process in the most flawless of ways is difficult, but there is an industry professional that’s ready to serve.

For certified general contractor Mark Herron, a 30-year veteran of the commercial building industry, his goal is to use the experience, knowledge and expertise to deliver results that far outpace the competition. Mark’s company, The Herron Group, has completed over 800-million-dollars in projects successfully throughout Northeast Florida and the greater Southeast, which makes him a savvy contractor that has a track record of delivering an outstanding product for his customers.

From historic homes that require special attention and historical knowledge, to remodeling a more recently built home; there are advantages to using an experienced contractor that can lead you down the right path. Mark is confident in his ability to navigate the recent supply chain issues that plague jobs, pull permits in a timely fashion; all while knowing how to match stucco, brick, mortar and other dynamic elements like accommodating the movement of load bearing walls in historic structures.

Experience is paramount and can’t be compromised in a valuable home. Being a reliable and trustworthy partner to the homeowner requires the right skills and depends upon good communication, on-time work, and budgets being met.



Mark Herron of American Home – Remodel & Restorations

a Certified General Contractor,” shared Herron. “There’s a big difference between someone that’s qualified to do work on your home, but do they have the proper licensure, insurance and bonds that can pay for mistakes and issues – when, and if, they arise?” said Herron, while making an

### Choosing experience, trusting the process


In today’s construction climate, there are thousands of contractors, but being one of the best requires focus, clarity and excellent communication skills. Herron’s foray into home remodels has been extremely successful and he is looking forward to becoming a household name by way of his residential construction company – American Home Remodel & Restorations. For those who love their location, but want to upgrade to fit their lifestyle, the value of new spaces can be game changing, bringing value to your home and providing satisfaction for years to come.

By taking experiences learned from the commercial building industry and moving laterally to helping homeowners achieve their dreams, Mark is poised to help people looking for a great listener who is budget conscious and stands by his work.

“I know that the quality of our work, the timely nature of our deadlines and the communication it requires will be refreshing to those that haven’t had that prior,” he shared. “I know how to navigate supply chain issues and avoid delays due to my industry knowledge,” said Herron, “I’m prepared to handle the job and limit setbacks due to my advanced preparations, contacts and sheer number of years that I’ve been handling difficult circumstances.”

Mark is a proud Jacksonville native who grew up in the South Jacksonville area and has built businesses, raised a family, all while regularly spending time with his 91-year-old mother. With his roots planted firmly in town, he is looking forward to building even more relationships. He wants to help homeowners in Jacksonville feel confident in their decision to work with a trusted, local company.

If you are looking to renovate, restore and create the space or spaces of your dreams, let American Home – Remodel & Restorations deliver for you. Call Mark today at 904-646-6476 or visit [americanhomefl.com](http://americanhomefl.com).



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# Coffee and Cream

San Marco locals bring a coffee and ice cream shop to Hendricks Avenue



Friends and business partners Ty Claggett, (left), and Doug Tutwiler, pose with their families.

Foxtail Coffee Co. opened its San Marco doors at 2039 Hendricks Avenue on April 24 to a full Foxtail coffee menu featuring beans locally roasted in central Florida. Friends and co-owners Ty Claggett and Doug Tutwiler partnered with the franchise in 2021 with a territory agreement that covers much of Northeast Florida. They plan to add a Kelly’s Homemade Ice Cream Counter and a Mocama Beer Company mini-tap area to the location in early June.

“We could not be more excited to have opened Foxtail in the heart of San Marco,” said Claggett. “I live locally in San Marco, and both of our families live, work and play in the area. By far, the coolest aspect of this location for us has been the community component. We strive to make Foxtail a local gathering place, as we love to bring our own families up to socialize on the patio with a Foxtail cold brew or some Kelly’s ice cream.”

Foxtail Coffee Co. first opened in Winter Park, Florida, in 2016. There are now 50 locations located throughout Florida and Georgia.

# OCEANA Raw Bar and Seafood opens

From the team who brought you Taverna



Sam Efron and Kiley Wynne Efron, owners of Taverna Oceana. [PHOTO CREDIT: Jensen Hande]



Taverna Oceana, in San Marco Square, opened its doors to the public on Tuesday, May 2, 2023. The raw bar and seafood-focused concept is the brainchild of owners Sam and Kiley Wynne Efron, the husband-and-wife team behind Taverna.

The two restaurants are connected via an open passageway, while Taverna Oceana offers a slightly more intimate experience than Taverna and includes an exposed oyster-and-champagne bar, visible shucking station and a private dining space.

Taverna Oceana’s coastal-inspired décor, designed by Jacksonville-based Design Cooperative, echoes Executive Chef Sam Efron’s coastal-caught offerings like the Lobster Thermidor, Miso-glazed Chilean Sea Bass or Ceviche Tostada.

A full bar complements the dinner menu with its expansive collection of terroir-driven wines.

“At Taverna Oceana you can expect the same consistency and quality that you have come to know and love with Taverna. The menu will be rooted in the classics but will have modern touches that keeps everyone excited, also allowing our team to play with global flavors, like Asian- and Latin-inspired dishes,” said Sam Efron.

Taverna Oceana currently offers dinner Tuesday-Thursday from 5-9 p.m., Friday-Saturday from 5-10 p.m., and Sunday from 5-9 p.m., with plans to open for lunch, brunch and private events in the coming months.

# One Bridal relocates, beautifies San Marco

Luxury bridal boutique One Bridal has moved a few doors down from its former location, to its own building at 1712 Hendricks Avenue. Owners Danielle and Tommy Currie have added a touch of beauty to the former trio of buildings that once occupied the site, which now includes additional parking following the demolition of one non-contributing structure.

The Curries updated the interior and added decorative awnings and fresh paint. In May, the San Marco Preservation Society gave the couple a beautification award for commercial construction for the project.

“When I saw [the buildings] were available, I told my husband ‘You have to trust me on this one, we must invest in this opportunity,’” said Danielle Currie. “I just knew it was the right spot for us, so I convinced him that we should purchase.”



One Bridal owner Danielle Currie. [Photo credit: Christina Karst]

# Andre Ayoub appointed Jacksonville Emergency Preparedness Chief



Andre Ayoub

Mayor Lenny Curry has appointed Andre Ayoub as the City of Jacksonville’s new emergency preparedness chief.

The appointment was announced on Friday, May 5. Ayoub’s past experience includes nearly three decades as a former police chief as well as the chief of Special Events Division, where he served as the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office’s primary emergency preparedness point of contact.

In this new role, Ayoub will oversee “the preparation, prevention, response, recovery and mitigation in an all-hazards environment.” The Emergency Preparedness Division is responsible for responding to various emergency and disaster situations, “including, but not limited to: apartment fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, gas leaks, hazardous material spills, building collapses and flooding.”

Ayoub’s duties also include overseeing downtown Jacksonville’s Emergency Operations Center, which is the “central location for disaster and emergency information and the central voice of government as it relates to protective actions for the public and any actions being taken to protect life, property, and to mitigate damage.”

“Public safety is a top priority and being prepared for an emergency plays a big part in keeping our city safe,” said Mayor Curry in a press release. “Andre is an excellent leader and tireless public servant. I have complete confidence in his management and expertise during an emergency and am looking forward to working together to keep Jacksonville Jax Ready.”

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Jose Padilla with Miracle Harper



Shawn and Bonnie McCormick



Ashele Joplin, Mike Buresh, Chrissy Wallis Henry and Andrea Read



Leslie and Jacob Gorman

## A SUCCESSFUL DAWN FOR DERBY & DIAMONDS

The Developmental Learning Center (DLC) hosted Derby & Diamonds, it's first-ever Kentucky Derby watch party fundraiser, on May 6 at San Jose Country Club with live bluegrass music, hat and bowtie contests and Derby-inspired bites. Guests and sponsors helped raise more than \$30,000 for DLC through sponsorships, a silent auction, a raffle-style drawing for jewelry from Miriam's Jewelry and a Bourbon Pull.

The event was co-chaired by Ashlea Joplin, Liz Page, Allison Sample and Regina Sooe. Action News JAX chief meteorologist Mike Buresh emceed the evening.

DLC is a faith-based nonprofit providing on-site nursing, education and therapy for medically complex and significantly impaired children since 1989.



Susanna Barton with Carlos Sanchez, Suzanne Honeycutt and Katie Towers

## FINFEST DELIVERS ON FESTIVE OCCASION, ISLAND-STYLE



Adrianne Taylor and Katherine Reynolds



Emma Jones and Katarina Orourke



Joe and Melissa Baker



Bill and Sarah Ware



Shirin Brenick, Jesse Lewis Jr., Henry Hill, Karen Hike, Scott Romero and Debra Hill



Hannah Shite, Susan Bateh, Suzanne Horne and Ari Jolly

The Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center (JSHC) hosted its annual FinFest fundraiser on Saturday, May 13 at Timuquana Country Club. Darnell and Celestine Smith served as event Chairs along with Honorary Chairs Katie Jeffries and Chris James, Dr. Christine Sapienza and Jasmine Bragg, Ashley Smith Juarez and Alex Juarez, Al Emerick and Ashely Carroll and Clara Mangin.

The island-themed celebration was hosted by First Coast News Anchor Katie Jeffries, who was honored and recognized for her work as emcee for the tenth consecutive year.

"FinFest is a festive party for a great cause," shared CEO Michael Howland. "All proceeds raised from FinFest directly support the speech and hearing needs of our community, ensuring that all children can experience the gift of communication."

On the brink of its 75th anniversary, the Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center provides professional and compassionate audiology and speech/language services to thousands of Northeast Florida residents regardless of their ability to pay. For more information about Jacksonville Speech and Hearing, visit [shcjax.org](http://shcjax.org)



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## CSI GIVES BACK IMPROVES EDUCATION, COMMUNITY

CSI Gives Back hosted its 4th annual gala, titled “A Night Under the Stars Masquerade Ball,” at the University of North Florida arena on April 29, 2023. Guests enjoyed food from Biscotti’s, dancing and a silent auction. Proceeds from the event went to support children and families in the First Coast community, and this year’s program highlighted the 2022 event’s impact on Duval County Public Schools (DCPS), their students’ educations, health and self-esteem.

“We are humbled by the support and dedication throughout Jacksonville and look forward to continuing to propel our mission throughout the community, break down barriers and build morale where darkness is lingering,” said Becky Lowry, CSI Gives Back director.

In addition to DCPS, other 2022 beneficiaries of the CSI Companies’ charitable arm included: Charger Academy, Dreams Come True, Hunger Fight, Jacksonville Humane Society, Grit Camp and Sadie T. Tillis Elementary.



Sarah Brock and Carson Smith



Ashton Fields, Addi Wetjen and Anna-Caroline Bridgeman



Ronald Baul and Tanya Cole



Magan Lowery and MarieAnn Howard with Christina Ible



Heather Schatz with Jason Roth, Heather Shoup and Liz Grebe



Lisa and Jonathan Muise



Lori Ann and Joe Lawrence



Event Co-chairs Laura Phillips Edgecombe and Carolyn Klucha



Lorraine Rodriguez with Irene Lazzara, Don Cameron, Kyle Etzkorn and Holly Cameron

## THE BIG EASY RAISES BIG MONEY FOR FLORIDA THEATRE

The historic Florida Theatre held its annual fundraiser, The Florida Ball: Big Easy Style, presented by Dex Imaging, on Saturday, May 20, 2023. The signature fundraiser raised \$200,000 in support of the arts and culture in downtown Jacksonville.

Since its creation, the event has raised \$1,684,000 since 2013 for the almost 100-year-old Florida Theatre venue.

“Running and booking a historic theatre like the Florida Theatre is, in part, a labor of love by the whole community, and we appreciate the community showing up in record numbers and showing their support for the nonprofit Florida Theatre,” said Numa Saisselin, president of the Florida Theatre.

“I have been given so many opportunities in my life that have revolved around performing arts and I am truly grateful for every opportunity,” said Dex Imaging’s Angela Ward Merritt. “Many often forget that our historic Florida Theatre is a nonprofit organization. Venues like the Florida Theatre are an important part of having a healthy community. Art is good for mental health and is a universal form of communication. It helps to create a shared community.”

In addition to Dex Imaging, top sponsors for the event included Auld & White Constructors, Eisman & Russo Consulting Engineers, VyStar Credit Union and Dr. Gasper and Irene Lazzara.

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Chad and Lauren Munsey with Ryan Rafferty



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Kelly Manel, Jim and Pat Jamison with Ron Mackoul

## EPPING FOREST CELEBRATES 35TH CHANGE OF COMMAND



Will and Kristen Inman



Grant and Carly Bledsoe

The riverfront marina, fountains and backyard beauty of Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club set the tone and provided an unbeatable backdrop for a big day in Club history. On Friday, May 19, the 35th Annual Change of Command Ceremony and Dinner welcomed members and guests to join club leadership for the occasion, where cannon fire and the raising of the next Commodore's flag took place on the banks of the St. Johns River.

Past Commodore George Henley presided over the function by welcoming the board of governors and executive officers, while taking time to thank outstanding staff members. Leadership bestowed honors and gifts to those shifting out of the Flag Officer duties.

The executive officers were announced as Jody Brandenburg took the helm as the 35th Commodore, Ryan Rafferty as Vice Commodore, Nathan Adams as Rear Commodore and H. Phil Littlefield as Immediate Past Commodore. The board of governors was also invited to join leadership for the official swearing-in as retired Lt. Col. Scott Taylor II joined Allen Jones Sr., Danny Falero, Meghan Congro, Kristen Inman, Grant Bledsoe, Laura Phillips Edgecombe and C.R. "Chad" Munsey III as they raised their right hand in honor of club tradition and history.

Jody Brandenburg, following his flag hoist and cannon blast, closed out the ceremony by thanking Herb Peyton, chairman and founder of Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club. "Herb, we know your mission, we know what your thoughts are on the success of the club, and we promise not to disappoint you."



Michael and Morgan Roberts with Michael and Michaela Schmidt

## ROOT BALL RETURNS FOR DERBY DAY

Frosty mint juleps flavored Greenscape of Jacksonville's 16th annual Root Ball fundraiser on May 6, aptly named "Ante Up for Derby Day" for its Kentucky Derby-themed watch party, complete with casino games, hat and bowtie contests and silent auction. Funds raised will assist in providing education, advocacy and tree-planting here in the River City.

"We had record attendance this year and it was such a fun crowd," said Lisa Grubba, Greenscape's executive director. "We're so grateful to our supporters, many of whom have been with us since our founding in 1975."

The event was co-hosted by Late Bloomers Garden Club. Club members Debbie Early and Sally Ragsdale, along with Greenscape board member Tiffany Davis co-chaired while Ann Hicks served as Honorary Chair.

Greenscape of Jacksonville is one of the nation's longest-running tree groups, serving Jacksonville for 48 years.



Tiffany Davis and Cathie Robinson



Ann Kelley, Ryan Coppens, Lesley Stocker and Gabriele Dempsey



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# ANIMAL HOUSE

## Kittens, Kitnapping & Krusaders

*A case study in properly handling feral cats and kittens*

BY **JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA**  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

When a gorgeous, but gaunt, tabby cat with swirly fur appeared at Connie Williams’s home begging for food, Williams rushed to feed her distressed visitor. While the cat would approach and meow for food, it would run if Williams attempted to pet her. Thus began a daily routine between the nervous cat and the retired Southwest Airlines supervisor — one that would end happily for all involved.

**THE ARRIVAL**

“Her body was thin, with rough fur. She had been on her own for a while,” Williams said. “One day, we noticed that she seemed frantic and unusually hungry, almost like the first day she appeared. My daughter, Katie, and I wondered if she was pregnant, but we couldn’t tell.”

Soon after, on a stormy day, Williams looked outside to see how bad the rain was coming down. As she opened the patio door, a tiny kitten hopped down from under

Katie’s car in the driveway. Then, one at a time, three more kittens followed.

Katie, who works for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, had rescued and fostered cats and kittens during college. Katie credits the Jacksonville Humane Society’s (JHS) “Don’t Kitnap” campaign with teaching her the importance of not immediately scooping up those kittens. She knew that the mother cat was probably nearby.

To keep the babies with their mother, but knowing that Kitten Socialization 101 needed to begin immediately, Williams and Katie hatched a plan. Despite their tiny size and being no more than a few weeks old, the kittens were already ferocious, little blue-eyed, spitter-hissers. However, they responded to the calming consistency of gentle voices and handling — the first steps of successful socialization and taming.

The goal was to enclose them on the back patio for safety and access. However,



Vicki Cross, ACPS 15-Year Kitten Army Volunteer



Connie with kittens at the vet

the mother cat rejected their plan and kept relocating her kittens. Sometimes, the women quickly found the family’s new location. Other times, they had to manually pull kittens from under the car or out of the engine to cuddle them. Gradually, the mother cat showed cautious trust in the Williamses.

When the kittens were old enough to be zipped into a soft enclosure, they were placed inside the screened patio with the screen door propped open, in an attempt to lure mom inside. The women watched, ready to attempt the safe capture of the mother cat inside the patio.

“It took forever before she even approached, let alone walked into the patio, but she finally did. It was wonderful when we were finally able to shut her inside and know that they were all safe,” Katie said.

**UNDERSTANDING FERAL CATS**

The mother cat’s curious-yet-fearful, conflicted behavior characterizes homeless animals that were formerly family pets. They behave like a domestic pet that understands everyday life with a caring family — purring or rubbing against a leg

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27





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Katie with Cayenne petting Bonsai

—but the homelessness gradually increases anxiety and fear, sometimes triggering panic and retreat. Even the tamest pet cat can become partially or entirely feral without positive intervention.

A homeless cat must elude or fight off predators, unleashed dogs and other cats. Hunting for food and water are daily needs that, combined with constant fear and danger, negatively affect temperament and personality. Traumatic interactions with humans who mistreat homeless cats are even more psychologically damaging. Besides psychological and emotional damage, homeless pets suffer physical deterioration and exposure to diseases and parasites.

HOW TO HANDLE FOUND KITTENS

Anyone who finds kittens alone outside should wait and watch until their mother returns, usually within a few hours. Rescuers say the kittens’ best chance to thrive is to stay with their mom, nursing. JHS, Jacksonville’s Animal Care & Protective Services (ACPS), and No More Homeless Pets all offer free advice to assist anyone

who finds orphaned kittens alone outdoors, or a homeless mother cat with kittens.

Relocating the family, enclosing them or safely trapping everyone for removal allows the kittens’ normal development, veterinarian care, vaccinations, spaying, neutering and adoption. There are local, free services available to help find veterinarian care and foster homes.

The Williams family successfully saved the mother cat and all the kittens, even a wild-child fifth kitten who miraculously survived alone until the next day when he arrived, yowling outside for help. They enrolled all five tabby kittens in the JHS’s Kitten Crusader program.

The Kitten Crusader program is a partnership between JHS and private veterinarian clinics. They support citizens who find kittens, helping keep these fragile babies out of shelters and in new homes. In overcrowded shelters, the kittens’ immature, weak immune systems expose them to potentially life-threatening illnesses.

ACPS also has dedicated kitten volunteers, the Kitten Army, who care for orphaned kittens until they are healthy and ready for sterilization and adoption. There are many adoptable cats of all ages and personalities available at both JHS and ACPS during adoption hours.

Vicki Cross is one of the longest-serving, if not the most experienced, ACPS kitten volunteer. She has spent fifteen years successfully raising more than 1,100 orphaned kittens. Cross specializes in caring for kittens with ringworms, something many volunteers avoid. Her supportive husband, George, provides socialization.

“No one wants ringworm babies because it’s contagious to humans, dogs, and cats,” Cross said. “But I’m immune to ringworm. I’m also a cat adoption counselor at the



Tame, beautiful Millie

shelter. My friend, Becky Hamilton, volunteered at the shelter and said how much they needed help, so I took the class on fostering.”

The Crosses volunteer together as a hobby and encourage volunteering at the shelter, fostering and adopting. They advise cat and kitten fosters or adopters to have scratching posts available and to acclimate cats to nail clipping since declawing can cause negative medical and behavioral problems.

CONQUERING KITTEN MOUNTAIN

In most parts of the country, kitten season begins in spring when warm weather triggers unfixed cats to mate and give birth to kittens, according to Best Friends Animal Society. The season typically ends with cold temperatures, except in the South, where year-round moderate weather results in continuous litters of homeless kittens with high survival rates. In 2022, JHS and ACPS accepted 5,352 kittens under five months old.

Anyone feeding unfixed outdoor cats contributes to the kitten crisis by nutritionally

boosting mother cats to birth even more surviving offspring, and enabling male cats to father more litters. The only solution is to trap, neuter and release (TNR) outdoor cats. Safe traps are sold at hardware, feed supply or thrift stores. Rescue organizations can provide information about TNR volunteers who can be contacted.

A Tail With a Happy Ending

The Williams’ foster kittens, three males named Bonsai, Cayenne and Nova, and two girls, Chico and Cosmo, and mother Millie all received medical care from participating veterinarians at Durbin Creek Animal Hospital. Millie is now tame, loves petting, and uses her litter box perfectly...after they added a little potting soil. A friend adopted Cosmo. The Williamses fell in love with the rest of their swirly tabby fosters and adopted them all.

Anyone interested in helping kittens should visit [jaxhumane.org/foster](http://jaxhumane.org/foster), or send a gift to kittens through [jaxhumane.org/donate](http://jaxhumane.org/donate). To foster, adopt, volunteer or donate to kittens and cats at ACPS, visit [coj.net/departments/neighborhoods/animal-care-protective-services](http://coj.net/departments/neighborhoods/animal-care-protective-services).

Resources:

Youtube.com/KittenLady: kitten care videos.  
Jacksonville Humane Society  
[www.jaxhumane.org](http://www.jaxhumane.org)  
8464 Beach Blvd., 32216 | (904) 725-8766  
Found kittens & need advice? [jaxhumane.org/kittenhelp](http://jaxhumane.org/kittenhelp)  
Interested in fostering? [jaxhumane.org/foster](http://jaxhumane.org/foster)  
Want to send a gift? [jaxhumane.org/donate](http://jaxhumane.org/donate)  
Interested in Kitten Crusader? Email [petsafetynet@jaxhumane.org](mailto:petsafetynet@jaxhumane.org) with KK in the subject line for Kitten Crusader  
[Petsafetynet@coj.net](mailto:Petsafetynet@coj.net) | [JaxPets@coj.net](mailto:JaxPets@coj.net)  
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SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

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DA Nationally Ranked Consistently In Top 1% of Best Arts & Academic High Schools  
Cinematic Arts • Creative Writing • Dance • Instrumental Music • Piano • Guitar • Theatre • Visual Arts • Vocal Music

## Douglas Anderson Graduates Accepted At The Colleges & Universities Listed Below:

American University  
Alabama State University  
Anderson University  
Appalachian State  
Auburn University  
Arizona State University  
Aveda Institute  
Baldwin Wallace University  
Belhaven University  
Belmont University  
Brenau University 2  
Berklee College of Music  
California Institute of the Arts  
Carnegie Mellon University 2  
Case Western Reserve University

**100%**  
Of Enrolled Seniors  
Receiving  
High School  
Diplomas

Clark Atlanta University 3  
Cleveland Institute of Art  
Clemson University  
Coastal Carolina University 2  
College of Charleston  
Colorado State University  
College of William & Mary  
Columbia University  
Columbia College /Chicago  
Cooper Union  
Cornell  
Converse College  
Daytona State College  
DePaul University  
Dillard University  
Duke University 2  
Eastern Kentucky University  
Eckerd College  
Edward Waters College  
Emory University 3  
Embry Riddle Aeronautical University  
Elon University  
Emerson College  
Flagler College 2  
Florida A&M University 3  
Florida Atlantic University 2  
Florida Institute of Technology  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
Florida International University 2  
Florida Southern College

Florida State College of Jacksonville 12  
Florida State University 15  
Fordham University  
Fort Hayes State University  
Furman University  
George Mason University 2  
Georgia State University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Howard University  
Hampshire College  
Hofstra University  
Ithaca College  
Jacksonville University 10  
Johnson & Wales University  
Jones Technical Institute 2  
Juilliard School 2  
Kennesaw State University  
Long Island University  
Louisiana State University  
Loyola University  
Lynn University  
Manhattan School of Music 2  
Maryland Institute College of Art 2  
Marymount Manhattan College  
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Miami University  
Mercer University  
Montclair State University  
Morehouse College  
New England Conservatory of Music  
New College of Florida 2  
New Hampshire Institute of Art  
New York University 2  
North Carolina State University  
Northeastern University  
Nova Southern University  
Oberlin College  
Oglethorpe University  
Otis College Of Art and Design  
Otterbein University  
Pace University  
Parsons School of Design

Peabody Conservatory  
Pennsylvania State University  
Piedmont College  
Portland State University  
Point Park University  
Pratt Institute  
Purchase College  
Purdue University  
Randolph College  
Ringling College of Art and Design 2  
Roanoke College  
Rollins College  
Royal College of Music, London, England 2  
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Wales  
Salem College  
Samford University  
Santa Fe College 2  
San Francisco Conservatory of Music  
Sarah Lawrence College  
Savannah College of Art and Design 3  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
Seton Hall University  
Sewanee University  
Shenandoah University 2  
Southern New Hampshire  
Southern Union Community College  
St. Johns River State College  
Stetson University 6  
Tallahassee Community College  
Temple University 2  
Texas A&M  
Texas State University  
The Art Institute of New Hampshire  
The University of the Arts  
The University of Alabama  
The School of Art Institute of Chicago  
Tulsa Welding School of Jacksonville  
United States Air Force  
University of Advancing Technology  
University of Alabama  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Central Florida 10  
University of Cincinnati

University of Denver  
University of Florida 18 (one is going to UF and Joffrey Ballet School)  
University of Georgia  
University of Illinois  
University of Kansas  
University of Kentucky  
University of Massachusetts  
University of Miami  
University of Mississippi  
University of New Haven  
University of New Mexico  
University of North Carolina

**96%**  
Of The 229 Graduates  
Will Attend Colleges,  
Universities, And  
Conservatories

University of North Florida 28  
University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown  
University of South Carolina  
University of South Florida 9  
University of Southern California  
University of the Arts  
University of Tampa  
University of Vermont  
University of Virginia  
University of West Florida  
Valencia College 3  
Valdosta State University  
Wake Forest University  
Warner Pacific College  
Webster Conservatory

**2 GRADUATES**  
National Merit Finalists

**8 GRADUATES**  
Presidential Arts Merit  
Finalists

**2 GRADUATES**  
National Reflections  
Winners

**7 GRADUATES**  
National Scholastic Arts &  
Writing Award Winners  
In Visual Arts, Creative  
Writing & Cinematic Arts

**2 GRADUATES**  
Florida Arts For Life  
Winners

**18** National Theatre  
Applause Awards

## Douglas Anderson 2023 Graduates

**\$21**  
Million  
Total Scholarships  
Offered Graduates

Alexander Eugene Agaliotis  
Christopher James Agaliotis  
Tywan Jaleel Takey Allen  
Helena Naomi Mishima Almeida  
Portia Fern Apostol  
Azyria Monet Artis  
Valeria Marie Aviles  
Lucija Ryan Antonia Bacon  
Mason Douglas Balcarek  
Jessica Shay Barone HHB  
Samantha Kathleen Beane  
Zoe Dee Beard  
Lachey Ann Marie Benson  
Naomi Dayne Bierowski  
Lillian Jewel Blanco  
Lilliana Mary Bella Braddock  
Jordan Marie Bradford  
Benjamin Daniel Bravo  
Graham O'Neil Briggs  
Ella Grace Brisson  
Lydia Frances Bautista Broward  
Emerson Hill Brown  
Chloe Krishna Browne  
Kennedi Amara Brush  
Jayci Evelyn Bryant  
janai Trinity Burton  
Erinne Adrianna Butler  
Aiden Alexander Camp  
Rosalea Lyndale Carr  
Bailey Anna Carson  
Claudia Gwyneth Cassaro  
Maurice Chakour  
Alisa Gwendolyn Chamberlain  
Nevaeh Ceri Chamberlin

Te'Avion Nicole Champion  
Caiden Madison Church  
Hazelanne Doreen Claudio  
Emily Nicole Collins  
Melody Claire Combs  
Aiden Jason Coots  
Liliana Copeland  
Shaira Jada Corbitt  
Maeve Edna Coughlin  
Jill Meredith Crews  
Aidan Robert Curran  
Ariyana Zana'e Davis  
Brian Jordan Davis III  
Sarah Riley Dickey  
Nicolas Jacob Dobleo  
Jessie-Ellen Doherty  
Abigail Anne Douglas  
Insselena Lunise Dufrene  
Samia Nelda Dumesle  
Dakota Jeanette DuPree  
Christina James Dyches  
Taylor Strever Ekern  
Amelia Claire Elder  
Lauren Alexandria Emerson  
Bethany Grace Farris  
Davin Giann Fasci  
Babafemi Oluwasubomi Fatoki  
Camille Jordan Faustino  
Jace Patrick Felix  
Ka'Layla Unique Fells  
Katrina Dahl Fluker  
Emily Mae Folsom  
Brenna Danae Fox  
Jahquez Wesley Fudge  
Anissa Dahlia Galagarza  
Jacquelyn Garcia  
Lauren Elizabeth Bato Garcia  
Juliana Kaleigh Gates  
Grant Jonathon Gatto  
Leeyah Dior Genaovargas  
Emily Grace Giacchetto  
Amaya Dava Gray  
Carter Jacob Gray  
Elias Mahan Greene  
Taylor Marie Griffith

Jadalyn Darlene Gubat  
Lily Anna Guerrant  
Meghan Brooke Haile  
Bryce Alexander Hamilton  
Tatyana Katherine Hardnett  
Audrey Brooke Harrell  
Michaya Annice Harrell Henry  
Thalia Ilyana Hart  
Julie Ann Hathaway  
Sophia Alannah Henry  
Padm'e Amidala Henshaw  
John Richard Hermann  
Lanina Faith Herndon  
Natalie Elise Holden

**59%**  
Of Seniors  
Offered  
Academic & Arts  
Scholarships

Rodney Eugene Holmes Jr.  
Reagan Maree Hoogesteger  
Mallory Elizabeth Howard  
Sarah Jade Hunn  
Denver Dawn Hunt  
Kaley Adelaide Hylton  
Eric Lawrence Impey  
Giovani Jacques  
Ryan Michael James  
Ella Tova Todd Jenkins  
Gabriella Maria-Rosa Johnson  
Gracie Jayne Johnson  
Kaelyn Tiara Johnson  
Hayden Reese Johnston  
Zachary Holden Kaiser  
Aniyah Denae' Umi Kargbo

Ta'Nivea Syaughn Kinchen  
Ethan Jeremy King  
Aria Simone Kirkpatrick  
Bethany Ann Klimchak  
Eileen Sarah Kohner  
Alexandria Joy Leilani Kollmann  
Kayla Marie Lapaugh  
Charlee Stafford Lawrence  
Allison Harper Lee  
Erica Gabrielle Lehosky  
William John Letscher  
Alexander Stephen Leuschen  
Samuel Wayne Lewis  
Brooke Eileen Little  
Mattelyn Elizabeth Locklear  
Lucas Michael Lowery  
Savanna Nicole Lyles  
Isabel Ramos Magpusao  
Alexandra Nicole Manaos  
Jack Simon Martin  
Giovanni Jacob Martinez  
Isabela Sofia Martinez-Rivera  
Samira Hope Mashburn  
Ciara Marie McCarthy  
Bria Hailey McClary  
Aurielle Paris McCoy  
Nicholas Adam McDonald  
Kyro Brianna McMahon  
Jaslyn Marie Medina  
Rae Allison Merrifield  
Kiana Nadayla Michel  
Anthony John Mikus Jr.  
Beckett Peter Miles  
Jesse Nabil Mitchell  
Mackenzie Elizabeth Moore  
Paris Anisa-Brantley Morrison  
James Stewart Moseley II  
Jackson Patrick Moser  
Diana Rose Murrey-Settle  
Ian Anthony Naville  
Charlie Dean Nelson  
Kaitlyn Renee Nelson  
Samantha Allison Nelson  
Brendan Joseph Nurczyk  
Jackson Guy Owen

Alana Sue-Ann Pablo  
Katherine Monica Page  
Lorelee Camile Patterson  
Shimla Dakota Perez Briones  
Michelle Drew Phillips  
Cyana Rose Phipps  
Alyssa Monique Pilgrim  
Emily Anne Poe  
Francis James Polly IV  
Ahvane Sharai Porter-Cook  
Eurayah Lyvette Postell  
Nora Paige Preza  
Trinity Faith Pama Quinto  
Tristan Gabriel Ratchev  
Lavari-Ay Gabriel Ray  
Eden Paige Rewa  
Sachiko Rivamonte

**47%**  
Of Graduates  
Will Pursue College  
Degrees In  
The Arts

Daija Cy'rai Roberts  
Jaiden Christian Robinson  
Lily Becker Robison  
Sofia Madison Rodriguez  
Cassidy Alexis Rose  
Finley Rion Rosenbaum  
Matthew Ezekiel Royal  
William Aidan Salter  
Ciara Lauryn Sanders  
Kaya Nicole Elizabeth Sanders-Jones  
Anna Belle Schell  
John Irving Elias Scott IV  
Madeline Katrina Scotti

Haylie Bryanne Self  
Rylan Leslie Serrano HHB  
Bianca Alegria Shaffer  
Colin Duval Shelby  
Chesley Jude River Simmons  
Phillip Nazir-Jhahid Simmons Jr.  
Jacob Patrick Skidmore  
Kaleb Elijah Smith  
Matthew Nicholas Snead  
Annelise Jean Spottswood  
Julian Malcom St. John  
Annalisa Guo Hua Strub  
Noah Daniel Suarez  
Jhalena Sian Sulcer  
Ansley Elizabeth Taylor  
Brayden Cortland Tebbe  
Emma Jean Terrill  
Aidan Henry Carswell Thomas  
Zayne Xavier Thomie  
Aniya Nicole Thompson  
Mikayla Murphy Titus  
Tru Elise Kiryn Truelove  
Lan Ngoc Turner  
Terri Anne Umberger  
Kathryn Lane Underwood  
Rhiannon Arianna Valdez  
Maya Maittee Vazquez  
Elanee Kristen Gacula Viray  
Brynn Ashlee Von Seggern  
Taylor Jenette Wade  
Emma Grace Waidner  
Kylea Danielle Watson  
Benjamin Robert Wells  
Luke Vincent Whipple  
Jah'mia Annette Lashaye Williams  
Rhea Sarah Williams  
Alexandra Grace Willis  
Iputu Andrew Wiranata  
Trinity Elizabeth Wirth  
Ivy Marie Woodman  
Leilani Patrice Wright  
Gianna Maria T'ra Yaccino  
Shamar Josiah Zimmerman  
Catherine Emily Zurcher  
Jacob Benjamin Zussy



# JUNIOR RESIDENTS

## Students named national music ambassadors



A record number of seven Douglas Anderson School of the Arts band students, received national recognition with the National Youth Ensembles, which is organized through Carnegie Hall. The highly competitive ensembles are comprised of the best young instrumentalists in the country.

Maurice Chakour, jazz guitar; Nelson Keakopa, trumpet; Luke Malobay, percussion; Beckett Miles, percussion; Sophia Para, flute; TJ Shistle, trombone; and Dru Verge, saxophone, were selected from a pool of thousands.

Miles was named as one of the two drummers to the National Youth Orchestra Jazz Ensemble, and will be touring a variety of Europe’s top summer jazz festivals with the ensemble. Malobay, Keakopa and Shistle were chosen to play select ensemble shows, including one at Carnegie Hall. Para, Verge and Chakour received recognition as alternates.



## Assumption shines at track championships

The girls’ track and field team from Assumption Catholic placed fourth overall at the Florida Youth Running Association’s Middle School State Track and Field Championship, held May 12-13. More than 1,500 athletes from 69 teams across Florida descended on IMG Stadium in Bradenton, Florida to compete.

On the track, Assumption’s Maria Patelli took eighth place in the 100-meter hurdles. The 4x800 team, comprised of Ashten Wolff, Makenzie Wolff, Graziana Gowdy and Alexandra Lumpkin, placed seventh. On the field, Sarah Ruen won sixth place in the pole vault. Makala Desjarlais took third in discus and second in javelin.

As Always, GO PACK!

WOLFSON

BEST WISHES FROM THE CLASSES OF 2024, 2025 & 2026

2023





## A champions’ concert

The Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Jazz Combo performed a free concert Thursday, May 4, in the Recital Hall on the Douglas Anderson campus. The concert featured jazz standards along with student compositions, and lasted a little over an hour. Recently, these honored students were named the small group winner of the National Jazz Festival for the second year in a row.

## AN EYE FOR ART



Bolles seniors Ashvatha Arun and Lars Jendruschewitz took home first and second place, respectively, in the 5th Congressional District Art Competition, a juried exhibition organized by the Office of U.S. Representative John Rutherford. Winners were recognized at a reception and awards ceremony on May 2 at the Florida State College of Jacksonville Deerwood Campus.

Arun’s first-place acrylic painting “Eye of an Era” earned her an expense-paid trip to Washington D.C., a tour of the Capitol and an opportunity to attend the national reception for the Congressional Art Competition. Her artwork will also be on display in the National Congressional Art Show in the Capitol for a year beginning this June.

Jendruschewitz won a monetary prize for his second-place photograph “Spring Sunrise.”

## A “dodgy” reunion



Ethan Luker, James Mickler, Nate Cobb, Sohan Gummadi, Ryan Servis and Andrew Morgan with Kindergarten teacher Rebecca Turner, center.



Class of 2017, front row, L to R: Nate Cobb, Sohan Gummadi, Michael deVaux, James Mickler, Alex Shalley, Julia D'Arienzo, Blair Baldwin, Ainsley Gray, Ben Swingle, Addison Nunley, Caroline Connell. Back row: Reef Winchester, Colin Kirk, River Penland, Ethan Luker, Ryan Servis, Andrew Morgan, Ben Monger, Reese Edwards, Lee Nimnicht, Paxton Parks, Max Moorehead.

San Jose Episcopal Day School (SJEDS) welcomed back its graduates of the Class of 2017 in April for a heartwarming tradition. Named “Celebrate New Beginnings,” the chapel service has become an annual event for soon-to-be high school graduates who graduated sixth grade from SJEDS.

The service, led by Fr. Stephen C. Britt, rector of San Jose Episcopal Church, not only offered an opportunity for the graduates to reconnect with their former teachers, but also provided a platform for them to reunite with their fellow classmates. The service was followed by a reception, and surprisingly, an impromptu game of dodgeball between the spirited students and the P.E. teachers.

“We are beyond proud of each of our students, and it was so rewarding to listen to them share about their unique plans and the schools they selected for college,” said sixth grade math and science teacher Natalie Inclan.

Congratulations to the

San Jose Episcopal Day School

Class of 2023

Pictured with their 1st Grade Buddies

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# 15 rounds of Applause for Douglas Anderson’s “Chicago”



A performance by the cast of Douglas Anderson’s “Chicago.”

Douglas Anderson School of the Art’s (DA) recent production of the musical “Chicago” took home 15 of its 21 regional Applause Award nominations for the 2022-2023 school year, including Best Musical. The students will perform a selection from the show at the awards ceremony on June 3 at the Dr. Phillips Center in Orlando for a chance to advance to the National High School Musical Theatre Awards®, known as The Jimmy Awards®, and compete among the next generation of Broadway stars in New York City. A panel of 12 statewide casting agents have selected nearly 300 students from 33 high schools and seven counties to vie for the honor.

DA’s Applause Awards wins for “Chicago” include: Outstanding Musical, Outstanding Ensemble, Outstanding Orchestra - Directed by Don Zentz, Outstanding Director - Bradley Akers, Outstanding Choreographer - Ellie Potts Barrett, Outstanding Lead Performer - DJ DeJesus as Billy Flynn, Outstanding Lead Performer - Christina Dyches as Velma Kelly, Outstanding Lead Performer - Brennan Mitchell as Amos Hart, Outstanding Lead Performer - Samantha Nelson as Velma Kelly, Honorable Mention for Outstanding Lead Performer - Samia Dumesle as Matron “Mama” Morton, Outstanding Supporting Performer - Jace Felix as Emcee, Outstanding Sound Design - Rick Painter and Alanna Cooper, Outstanding Dancer - Alex Agaliotis, Outstanding Dancer - Chris Agaliotis, Outstanding Stage Manager - Charlee Lawrence.



Six Bolles students presented at the Global Entrepreneurship Challenge in New York City.

## Bolles students address global homelessness

Six students from Bolles’ Student Global Connections Committee were chosen to participate in the 2022-23 Global Entrepreneurship Challenge, an initiative that invites students from select international schools to solve the world’s largest problems. Hosted in New York City, the challenge asked students to solve real-world problems based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Bolles students Abby Bradley, Ava Cheng, Esha Kasavaraju, Anaiya Nahar, Sarah Park and Jaden Taher presented their project, “Heartbeat in a Box,” a sustainable and accessible kit for the homeless population.

“I think we started off the project without fully knowing what we were getting into, but over the course of around the six months we spent working on it, we learned how to collaborate as a team to create something we were all very passionate about,” said Cheng. “We were able to look at some issues that mattered to us and create something new to help.”

## Bisher named National Merit Scholar



Episcopal School of Jacksonville senior Ella Bisher has been honored as a National Merit Scholarship recipient. The \$2,500 scholarship is issued by The National Merit Scholarship program, an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. Approximately 1.5 million high school students enter the program each year through their PSAT scores, typically taken during their junior year. Bisher is one of the approximately 7,250 finalists nationwide to receive the scholarship. She will be attending the University of Florida.





RIVERSIDE

Presbyterian Day School

Congratulations, Class of 2023!

830 Oak Street | Jacksonville, FL | 904.353.3459



# Jacksonville Debutante Coterie To Be Presented

The Jacksonville Debutante Coterie has been announced for 2023. The debutantes will be presented June 9 during the Magnolia Ball at Timuquana Country Club. The Coterie will make its final, formal bow on December 28 during the Christmas Ball at Timuquana Country Club.



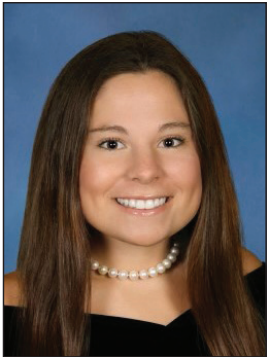
**Eleanor Somerset Acosta-Rua**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fernando Javier Acosta-Rua  
Somerset is a student at the University of Alabama



**Sarah Alice Craddock**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gregory John Craddock  
Sadie is a student at Florida State University



**Meagan Dianne Donovan**  
Daughter of Mrs. Celeste Rice Green and the late CDR John Matthew Donovan  
Meagan is a student at Washington & Lee University



**Hannah Pendleton Goldfield**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Max Goldfield  
Hannah is a student at the University of Richmond



**Barley Jemison Hilpert**  
Daughter of Ms. Elizabeth Christian Hilpert and Mr. Paul Martin Hilpert  
Barley is a student at Florida State University



**Catherine Kelly Kunz**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen James Kunz  
Catherine is a student at Clemson University



**Mimi Page Kurlas**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Scott Kurlas  
Mimi is a student at Florida State University



**Ann Geneva Miller**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Earl Miller  
Annie is a student at John Cabot University



**Evelyn Elizabeth Miller**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Miller IV  
Evelyn is a student at Florida State University



**Catharine Tucker Ogletree**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Todd Ogletree  
Katie is a student at the University of Mississippi



**Wentworth Grace Pajcic**  
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Curry Gary Pajcic  
Winnie is a student at the University of the South



**Elizabeth Alston Rachels**  
Daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Philip Sanford Rachels  
Alston is a student at the University of Virginia



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# CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS *of* 2023!



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# Summer entertainment for kids

and summer sanity for parents

BY MICHELE LEIVAS  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

As the school year draws to a close, many parents are likely wondering how to keep the kids entertained and off their devices during summer break. The Resident has compiled a small list of summer camps and activities we thought sounded fun:

## SCHOOLS

### Assumption Catholic School

Coach Polster’s summer camps run throughout the summer, both for sports and enrichment camps. These week-long sessions span the entire summer break and are hosted at Assumption Catholic School. Sessions are available for grades K through 8th with the option of half-day or full-day registration. Prices range from \$95 to \$150.  
[www.coachpolsterscamps.com](http://www.coachpolsterscamps.com)

### Bolles

Read through the Bolles Summer Program catalogue to review all the available options for summer campers across the different school campuses throughout the summer.  
[www.bolles.org](http://www.bolles.org) under “About” (Auxiliary Programs)

### Bishop Kenny High School

Student athletes can participate in one of eight athletic summer camps at Bishop Kenny in a variety of sports, from basketball, baseball, track and field, soccer, volleyball and football in 17 different sessions. BK-registered students also have the option of registering for a summer workout schedule. Registration ranges from \$120 to \$150. Age and grade ranges vary in each sport.  
[www.bishopkenny.org/summer/camps2023](http://www.bishopkenny.org/summer/camps2023)

### Episcopal School of Jacksonville

ESJ is offering a full roster of summer programs for rising kindergartners through 12th graders along

with summer shuttle options from Beaches and St. Mark’s campuses.  
<https://esj.org/summer/>

### San Jose Episcopal Day School

SJEDS summer camps are available in an array of activities, from art and STEAM to sports and dance and everything in between.  
<https://sjeds.org/programs/summer-camp/>

### St. Johns Country Day School

St. Johns Country Day School is entering its 33rd Summer of Fun with a full catalogue of summer camp options covering arts and crafts, swimming, air conditioned gym games, computer games and more at its Orange Park campus.  
<https://www.sjcds.net/our-community/summer>

## AROUND TOWN

### Broadway in Jacksonville (presented by FSCJ Artist Series)

Presented by FSCJ Artist Series, Next Stop Broadway offers a week-long musical theatre for children ages 10 to 17 (nine-year-olds turning 10 in June are eligible to join as well). This immersive week offers workshops, classes and rehearsals “that focuses on being in the ensemble of a classic Broadway show.”  
[www.fscjartistseries.org/education/next-stop-broadway](http://www.fscjartistseries.org/education/next-stop-broadway)

### Friday Musicale

The historic Friday Musicale is partnering with Grammy Award-winning drummer and educator Ulysses Owens Jr. to host a daily (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) summer jazz camp for grades 5 thru 12 on July 31 to Aug. 4. Tuition is \$250 and includes family membership to Friday Musicale.  
[www.fridaymusicale.com](http://www.fridaymusicale.com) under “Upcoming Events.”

### Gyminators Gymnastics

Gyminators is offering 10 one-week sessions throughout the summer, each with a different themes

and with varying options (three-hour, six-hour, nine-hour, full-day and morning care). Prices range from \$30 to \$250.  
[www.gyminators.com](http://www.gyminators.com) under “Camp Events”

### Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center

Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center is hosting Camp Chatter 2023, its first summer program for children ages three to 10 “focused on enhancing speech and language skills.” This is a 10-week program at \$135/week.  
[www.shcjax.org/camp-chatter](http://www.shcjax.org/camp-chatter)

### Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

Let your camper spend the day at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens in one of the several themed summer camps. Kindergartners through eighth graders can participate in full-day weekly sessions while younger campers can join in on the VPK half-day camps.  
[www.jacksonvillezoo.org/summer-zoo-camp](http://www.jacksonvillezoo.org/summer-zoo-camp)

### The Performers Academy

Let your budding thespians get their drama on at one of The Performers Academy’s two-week Summer Acting Boot Camps (or both!). Session A runs June 5 to 16; Session B, June 19 to 30. Camp is \$250 per week per camper with sibling discounts available.  
[www.jaxtpa.org](http://www.jaxtpa.org) under “What We Do”

## COUNTRY CLUBS

### The Florida Yacht Club

The Florida Yacht Club is offering its Waterfront Programs this summer in weekly sessions for FYC members and sponsored guests. Options are available for ages five thru 16 in half- and full-day camps.  
[www.thefloridayachtclub.org](http://www.thefloridayachtclub.org) under “Amenities” and “Fleet and Sailing”

*Members of country clubs (including Timuquana Country Club, Epping Forest Yacht & Country Club and San Jose Country Club) should check with their youth programs for available summer options.*



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*Members of Episcopal School of Jacksonville's Class of 2023 were admitted into the following colleges and universities:*

American University	Drexel University	Northeastern University	The University of West Florida	University of Oregon
Appalachian State University	Eckerd College	Northwestern University	Tri-County Technical College	University of Pennsylvania
Arizona State University (Main Campus)	Elon University	Oglethorpe University	Trinity University	University of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh)
Auburn University	Emory University	Penn State University (University Park)	Union College	University of Rhode Island
Ball State University	Fairfield University	Penn State University (World Campus)	United States Naval Academy	University of Richmond
Barry University	Flagler College	Providence College	University of Alabama at Birmingham	University of Rochester
Baylor University	Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	Purdue University (Main Campus)	University of California (Berkeley)	University of South Carolina
Belmont University	Florida Atlantic University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of California (Los Angeles)	University of South Florida (Main Campus)
Berry College	Florida Gulf Coast University	Rice University	University of California (San Diego)	University of Southern California
Birmingham-Southern College	Florida Southern College	Rochester Institute of Technology	University of Central Florida	The University of Tennessee (Knoxville)
Boston College	Florida State College at Jacksonville	Rollins College	University of Colorado Boulder	University of Utah
Boston University	Florida State University	Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College	University of Delaware	University of Virginia (Main Campus)
Butler University	Fordham University	Samford University	University of Denver	University of Washington (Seattle Campus)
Case Western Reserve University	Full Sail University	Santa Fe College	University of Florida	Utah State University
Catholic University of America	Furman University	Savannah College of Art and Design	University of Georgia	Valdosta State University
Citadel Military College of South Carolina	Garrett College	Sewanee: The University of the South	University of Kentucky	Vanderbilt University
Clark University	George Mason University	Southern Methodist University	University of Louisville	Villanova University
Clarkson University	Georgetown University	Stetson University	University of Maine	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Clemson University	Georgia Institute of Technology	Syracuse University	University of Maryland (College Park)	Wake Forest University
Coastal Carolina University	Georgia Southern University	Tallahassee Community College	University of Massachusetts (Amherst)	Washington and Lee University
College of Charleston	Guilford College	Texas A&M University	University of Miami	Washington University in St. Louis
Colorado Mesa University	Hampden-Sydney College	Texas Christian University	University of Michigan	Wingate University
Colorado State University (Fort Collins)	Harding University	Texas State University	University of Mississippi	Yale University
Colorado State University (Pueblo)	Haverford College	The College of William and Mary	University of Missouri (Columbia)	
Cornell University	Indiana University (Bloomington)	The Ohio State University	University of New Hampshire (Main Campus)	
Culinary Institute of America	Jacksonville University	The University of Alabama	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	
Dartmouth College	Liberty University	The University of Tampa	University of North Carolina Wilmington	
Davidson College	Louisiana State University	The University of Tennessee (Knoxville)	University of North Florida	
Denison University	Lynn University			
DePauw University	Mercer University			
DigiPen Institute of Technology	Miami University (Oxford)			
	Michigan State University			
	New York University			
	North Carolina State University			







RJ Debee, Shannon Darling with Michael Darling



# Nacho Average Fundraiser

Assumption Catholic School raised over \$110,000 for a new playground at its annual fundraiser, Nacho Average Knight Out, on May 5, setting a new fundraising record for the event. The festive event, held at San Jose Country Club, featured a mariachi band, silent and live auctions, dinner and dancing.

The money raised at the event, coupled with funds raised at the school’s annual Jogathon last October, will allow construction of the playground to begin shortly after the end of this 2022-2023 school year.

San Marco resident Ambur Finley chaired the Knight Out committee.



Mary Foster, Maryann Jimenez, Alessandro Jimenez, Chris Waterman, Kelli Waterman and Megan Stephens



Tina Amico, Alicia Alligood, Meghan Rajta, Susanna Elliott and Shelby Kelly



Taylor Horne, Caitie Morgan, Meredith Jetton, Joy McDonald, Caroline Skinner and Simmons Skinner



Michele Small, Lisa Parker, Anita Moynihan and Tricia Novak at the fifth annual Angels for Allison Benefit Breakfast at the Timuquana Country Club on Tuesday, May 2.

# THE LEGACY OF ANGELS

The Allison Brundick Haramis Foundation, known as Angels for Allison, hosted its fifth annual benefit breakfast on Tuesday, May 2.

Approximately 200 guests gathered at the Timuquana Country Club to enjoy a meal together and listen to the even’t guest speaker Anne Neilson, author, artist and Jacksonville native. Neilson shared life moments from her newly released memoir, “The Brushstrokes of Life: Discovering How God Brings Beauty and Purpose to Your Story.” Following the event, guests were able to purchase signed copies of the book to take home, along with other merchandise from the Avondale Gift Boutique pop-up.

Board President, and Allison’s mother, Drew Haramis welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the breakfast. Because of the community’s continued support, Haramis said, Angels for Allison has served more then 875 children and their families since it was first formed 13 years ago.

“Though we didn’t know it at the time, this was Allison’s purpose,” she added. “This was why she was put on the Earth and this was all part of God’s plan...This is Allison’s legacy.”

Angels for Allison was launched in 2010 in memory of Allison Haramis with a mission of “aiding with the financial needs of families suffering the loss of a child.”



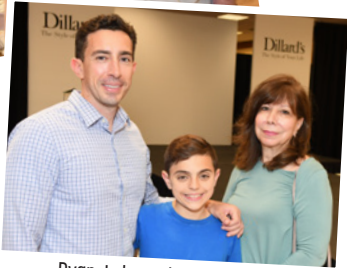
Eric and Pamela Fenton with their daughters, Coraline and Natalie



Dr. Bruce Mattern with Melanie Jensen, Barbara Mattern, Alisa Demico, Rachelle Ferrelli and Brett Trevett



Gloria and John Murray



Ryan, Luke and Gayle Mattinga

# RUNWAY SHOW SHINES LIGHT ON CRITICAL MISSION

For children who are hard of hearing or deaf, there’s never a day that doesn’t provide some form of challenge. Despite the difficult days, a very special day for students was made possible during a recent fashion show at the St. Johns Town Center Dillard’s department store, May 6. Proud parents, teachers and alumnus of the Clarke School helped cheer on models, leaving the stigmas of hearing loss and impairment behind, as they strutted their stuff in the Spring and Summer lineup provided by the upscale retailer.

Thanks to the professionals at Dillard’s and the emcee, Jana Angel, co-host of River City Live on NEWS4JAX, the crowd lit up and cheered on the models, many of whom walked with their parents at their side during the showcase. Whether it was the matching of cochlear implants (specialty implanted hearing devices) to purses and lipstick, or the dancing and posing of the most animated stage performers; the fashionable day was full of exuberance, exhilaration and good times for all in attendance.

The Clarke School in Jacksonville is part of a network of unique campuses that offer the resources and expertise of the largest Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) organization in the nation, Jacksonville is the only location that serves the Southeast portion of the United States. The goal via the Clarke network is for hard of hearing and deaf students is to thrive in mainstream schools, the local community and the wider world.

Visit [clarkeschools.org](http://clarkeschools.org) to learn more about the offerings and how you can help contribute to the mission.



Rachel Major, assistant store manager with Melanie Jensen, development and communications manager for Clarke Florida and Rodger Woika, store manager.

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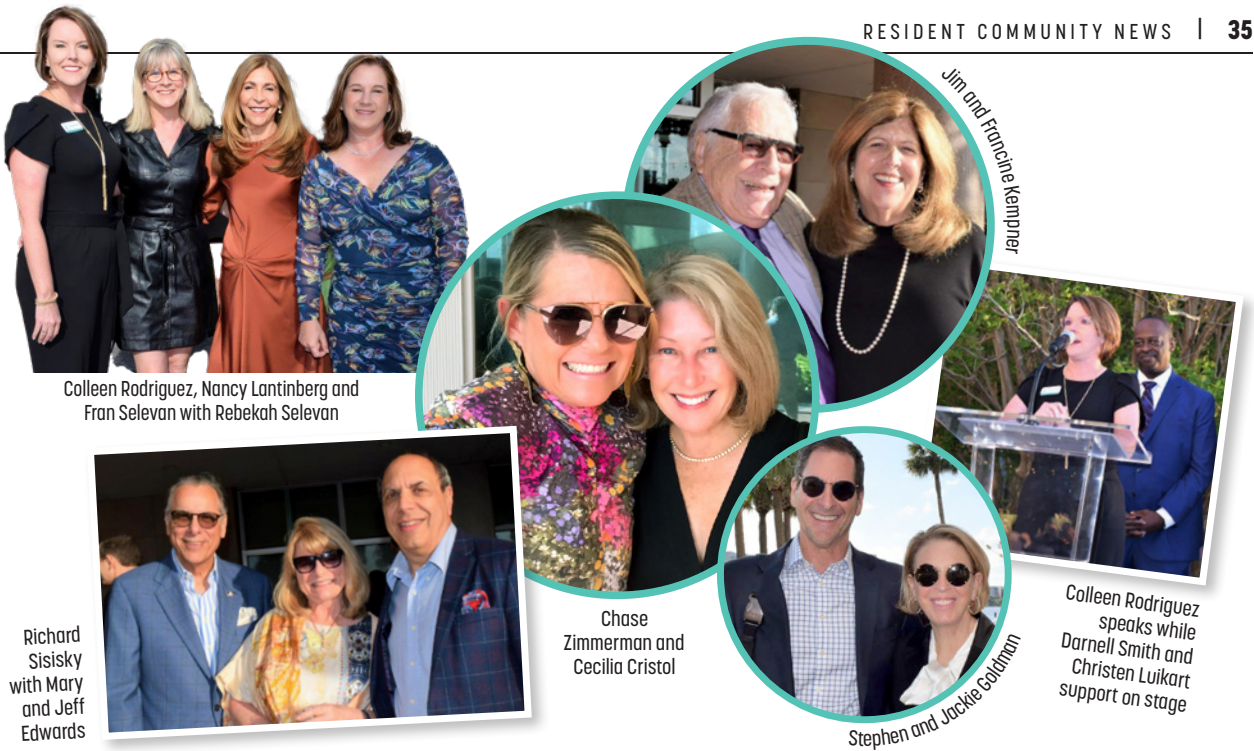


# JFCS CELEBRATED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LIVES

More than 400 friends and community partners came together to participate in The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services' (JFCS) annual event, "Wrapping Ourselves Around the Community" on March 30. The event celebrated JFCS' work in the community.

Guests listened to poignant and powerful stories of how the nonprofit's services have had a positive impact on the people JFCS has helped. Darnell Smith, Florida Blue's North Florida region market president, also made a surprise announcement that the insurance company committed \$25,000 as a match grant to benefit JFCS's CEO Impact Fund.

The fund honors CEO Colleen Rodriguez's 25 years working for the agency, and is in memory of Rodriguez's father, Bob Lloyd. It will enable JFCS to assist its own staff members when they are faced with the unexpected.



## FIESTA FOR GOOD

Sulzbacher and more than 250 supporters fiesta-ed for good Tuesday, May 2, at the organization's annual Fiesta on the Beach event at the Casa Marina Hotel in Jacksonville Beach. Over \$55,000 was raised to support the Sulzbacher Beaches Health Center, a clinic that serves as a healthcare safety net for people in need in the beaches community.

Christ Church Episcopal was also honored with the night's Healthy Hero Award for its 15-year support of the Sulzbacher Beaches Health Center. Sulzbacher provides more than 7,000 people with high-quality healthcare each year.



# WHERE FASHION MEETS COMPASSION

Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) hosted its 3rd annual Wine Women & Shoes fundraising event at Timuquana Country Club on Thursday, May 18. The fashion-forward event had attendees dressed to impress while they sipped varietals from Justin wines, and shopped a multi-designer marketplace with local and national clothing brands, shoes and accessories. The event also featured silent and live auctions, a raffle and a fashion show.

All proceeds benefited ECS and its mission is to create opportunity so that the more than 27,000 children it serves can achieve their full potential.

"The 3rd Annual Wine Women & Shoes Jax event allows us to share our agency impact in the community and engage with supporters, as well as those who are learning about our wonderful organization," said ECS CEO Connie Stophel. "Episcopal Children's Services is pleased to produce this event to raise money for our youngest citizens in North and Central Florida, and help the children and families we serve build a strong foundation for life."



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# Thank You Notes

FROM MY EMPTY NEST PERCH

BY **SUSANNA BARTON**  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

*I am grateful our Resident community offers so many delicious dining options. In this month's column, I would like to offer a short blessing for all the local menu items that enhance my diet and expand my pallet (and menopausal waistline) week after week.*

**Dear God, most merciful Connoisseur of All Things Epicurean and Divine, Tantalizer of All Taste Buds, Friend of all Who Feast, thank you for these fantastical culinary destinations in San Jose and San Marco, and the people who make such heavenly goodness:**

Thank you for the hands that prepare the Elena Ruth sandwich and the delicious ham and chicken croquettas with that holy green sauce — plus the chicken a la plancha and the gordita — at 1828 Cuban Bistro on Baymeadows Road and Roosevelt Boulevard. My son, Ben, and I — and, if we elect to invite him, my husband David — have made a weekly habit of lunching at this heavenly place, where the bottled Cokes and Matervera soda cans are always cold, and the homemade Cuban desserts alluring. We are grateful for the food coma this outing puts us in every Monday.

Thank you for Casa Bonita Mexican Bar & Grill on University Boulevard behind the Publix. Thank you for the skilled cocinero who prepares the most perfect Sopos plate of thick, fried masa with chicken and refried beans, white cheese, fresh avocado and pico de gallo — hold the lettuce. This trio has my heart, though I can only ever eat two. Thank you for the satisfying blessing of the white cheese dip appetizer, chips and salsa and regular Coke pairings.

Thank you for Noura Café in Lakewood. If you know, you know. It is

good every time. Plus, you see pretty much everyone you know there. And if someone in your world is sick or not feeling their best, Noura's chicken soup is a miracle-worker. And is there ever NOT a time to rip into some fresh pita bread? Nope.

Thank you for the Brussels sprouts appetizer and fun, happy hour scene at Toscana Little Italy in the Miramar Shopping Center. This place is heaven-sent — a true answer to prayer — no advance OpenTable or Resy reservations are needed. All you require of me is an empty tummy, the ability to swing their front door open with low-sugar abandon and a polite voice to request a booth — just like the good ole days. Thank you for this local dining establishment.

My breadbasket puffs outward with gratitude for Cultural Kitchen & Catering in that quiet little shopping center at St. Augustine Road and Philips Highway. Their Puerto Rican and German-inspired yumminess — especially the chicken rice bowls, spaetzle and the fried green plantain topped with rotisserie chicken, slow roasted skirt steak and sofrito roasted pork served with sweet guava and spicy, boom-boom sauce — inspires me to glorify your name over, and over, and over again, and later, to nap.

Thank you for Taverna in San Marco Square — where literally everything is delicious, always. Thank you for the person who prepares the parmesan truffle fries, the fungi pizza and the

steak frites, and for putting hearty Italian white wines on the menu that taste like the good California chardonnays I love. One prayer request, if I may: please, Lord, nudge these talented pastry chefs to bring back the budino pudding dessert — for my budino-loving son, of course. OK, a second request: that my shellfish and fish allergy miraculously disappears so I can enjoy the new Oceana restaurant next door.

Thank you for the Florida Juice and Bowl on San Marco Boulevard. It is always a blessing to besmear my face with the always-satisfying peanut butter, honey, cinnamon and banana toast sweet toast, hold the strawberries. And when my taste buds scream for the savory and protein-rich, I am grateful to have the Egg and Avocado option on the menu, sans hot sauce, of course.

**Dear God, most glorious Glutton of Goodness, Loving Gourmand of Diets Bright and Beautiful, Chef of all Chefs, Bon Vivant of Bougie Delights, thank you for the restaurants and cooks that rustle up such ambrosial wonders in Riverside, Avondale and Ortega:**

Thank you for Homespun Kitchen on Oak Street near Riverside Presbyterian Day School, and the fresh, homemade delicacies they brew up day after day. I offer particular thanks for the Chunky Monkey smoothie with whey protein, the Harvest Bowl (add rubbed grilled chicken thighs) or the Lily avocado toast, with or without hard boiled eggs and uncured turkey bacon. I just got real hungry writing that, oh dear.

Thank you for Arepa Please on Riverside Avenue...because, yes, please! Every day, please! My tummy tingles for their hearty little corn cakes, filled to the brim with beans and meat and avocados and other yummy deliciousness. Forgive me for eating so much every time I go, but it's just all so irresistible, and beautiful, and perfect. Thank you for showing me how scrumptious Venezuelan food can be, and thank you for locating it far enough away from my

house that I won't gorge there on the daily.

Thank you for all the restaurants with a rooftop view — River & Post and Hoptinger Bier Garden and Sausage House. I did, of course, have Black Sheep on that list, but God, please rest its soul. And if you're so inclined, please inspire another restaurateur to step in and make magical morsels there one day soon. It's always a delightful experience to look out over our beautiful city!

Thank you for the fancy places like Restaurant Orsay and Josephine, where I can get my bon apetit on and see Westsider friends I haven't seen in a while. Thank you for giving Jacksonville a restaurant that really feels like a big city epicurean adventure, complete with nice stemware and cool waitstaff.

A big, big thank you for Terry's Kitchen. I am so grateful Terry's is still spreading chicken tetrazzini love after all these years! And thank you for Terry's crack dip and all the other delectable casseroles that are available for us all to swing in, buy, and serve up or deliver to our families and friends.

Thank you for any opportunity to be invited to the Florida Yacht Club for dinner, on occasion, because everything there is good and the pours are hearty, praise Jesus! My prayer request is that David and I will be invited soon by his card-carrying member brother and sister-in-law, Ellis and Stacey. Thank you, Lord for reminding them — and any friends or family needing to use up their minimums — of our availability in this regard.

So now I am STARVING and must wrap things up ,so I can bust a move on some lunch. This has been a tasty and titillating exercise in gratitude IMHO. We are way fortunate to live near such heaven-sent nourishment. Most people must get in a car and drive long distances — or into the bowels of traffic trauma hell, like the Town Center — to get a memorable meal. This is not our refreshment-reality. We can all raise a glass — and a heaping platter of something noted above — to that!

Susanna Barton is a sucker for local restaurants but secretly laments the void of good drive-thru Mexican food options (read, Taco Cabana) in town. She has lived in a house on Granada Park with her husband David, their children, Ben and Marley, and geri-dog, Dot, for 25-plus years. She has written for The Jacksonville Business Journal, The Resident, Jacksonville University and The Bolles School during her professional life in Jacksonville, and is now ruminating on geri-scaries and all things elderly through Grand Plans, an online brand community at [www.mygrandplans](http://www.mygrandplans) she founded in late 2022. She really enjoys embarrassing-mom-walk exercising later in the morning, napping, reading and catching some rays. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.





# THE WAY WE WERE

## Diane and Bill McFadden

BY MARY WANSE  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Diane and Bill McFadden married 66 years ago on a late December day in Illinois while they were college students. The theme of their life has been the joy of being able to travel to many different places and to learn from the people there.

Since they married, Bill and Diane have moved 20 times. "We moved to areas that were fascinating. We've met many people, and we have grown from knowing them," Diane said. Their neighbors have been of a variety of races, creeds and colors. "I learned to understand them and be a part of their lives."

Though not local natives, Diane and Bill have lived here for several decades. They were both born in a small town, Herrin, in southern Illinois, 85 and 88 years ago, respectively. They both graduated from Southern Illinois University. Bill was drafted soon after into the United States Navy. They were sent to Newport, Rhode Island, before being transferred to Jacksonville, Florida, for navigation training in 1959. They lived on Post Street off Edgewood Avenue, at the start.

The first McFadden child, Michael, was born in July of that year at NAS Jax in a Quonset hut without air conditioning, one that had been left over from WWII.

"It was the most exciting birth I've ever had," Diane said. Almost immediately, they were sent to Hawaii, where they spent 3 ½ years. While there, their second child, Marla, was born in Oahu. "I wanted to name her Lili'uokalani after the queen of Hawaii," Diane said. But she was told that would not be a good thing to do, so she chose a different Hawaiian name.

Bill was restationed to Jacksonville in 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Because NAS Jax was on alert, Diane could not give birth to their third, Amy, at the hospital there. Instead, she was assigned to St. Vincent's in Riverside. Diane drove herself there in her Volkswagen Beetle while her mother stayed with Michael and Marla. Bill had already been deployed to Spain by then.

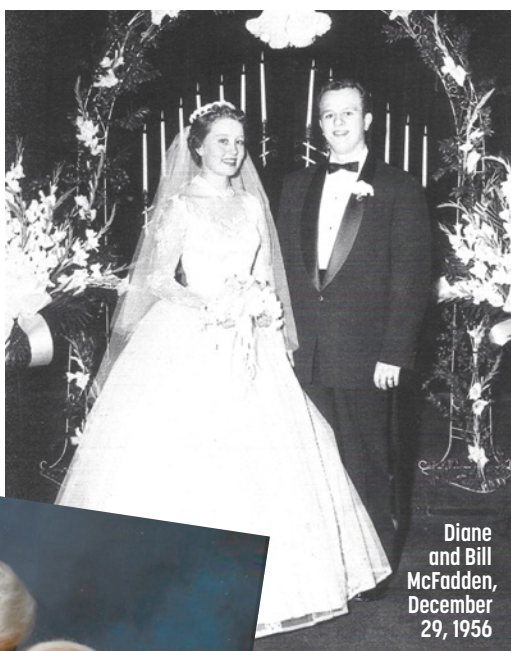
While Bill was away, six weeks after Amy was born, Diane boarded the train called City of Miami that used to begin in Miami, travel through Jacksonville, and end in Chicago. With three little children in tow, Diane was heading back toward her hometown to be with her Illinois family of origin. It wasn't until late December 1963 that the McFaddens reunited at NAS Jax. That was the first time Bill had met his second daughter, who was six months old by then.

"When he left, I was nine months pregnant and had dark brown hair. When he came home, I had lost a considerable amount of weight and had bleached my hair. He practically walked right by me," Diane said.

Bill retired from active military duty in 1965 to join the Navy Reserve. For 13 more years, he still had to report to NAS Jax regularly, so he and Diane bought a two-story house nearby. Bill landed a position at Peninsular Life Insurance Company. Diane was a stay-at-home mom who occasionally substitute taught, as she had done nearly every day when they lived in Rhode Island.

Bill's officer status at the insurance company included recruiting salesmen for overseas offices, so the McFaddens continued to travel a lot, often attending insurance conventions and serving as the host committee. They've been to Scotland and the Panama Canal. They have ridden the Rhine River through Switzerland, and have visited Amsterdam. Domestic trips were included as well, like Washington, D.C. and the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee.

"We have enjoyed being able to see this magnificent world that we live in," Diane said.



Diane and Bill McFadden, December 29, 1956



Diane and Bill McFadden, June 2018

a part-time assistant librarian within the Raleigh system.

"It was great fun. I enjoyed it because I got to read all the books I wanted to, which I love to do. Reading is my favorite sport," she said.

After seven years, Bill and Diane returned once more to Jacksonville, bought a house in

In the mid '70s, Bill accepted a transfer to London, England. The children were 11, 13, and 15. They learned to survive in an enormous city with a totally different structure than they were used to.

"They had the joy of being at school in London, but they went to school most of their lives in Jacksonville," Diane said. Their list of local schools is long: Venetia Elementary, Lake Shore Middle, Lee High (now Riverside), Riverside Christian (during the bussing crisis) and St. Johns Country Day.

For the nearly two years that the McFaddens lived in London, they rented out their Jacksonville home so they would have something to come back to. When they did, Diane, in her 40s, began a new adventure. She partnered with a friend and went into the dry-cleaning business.

"I knew nothing on earth about it," she said, but there was her last name out front, McFadden's Dry Cleaners, in the Venetia Shopping Center beside the old Pizza Hut.

A decade more had passed before Occidental Life took over Peninsular and transferred Bill to Raleigh, North Carolina. By that time, the McFadden children were grown and off on their own, so it was only Bill and Diane who made that move. Before they left, Diane sold her business.

While Bill worked at the new insurance office, Diane took a job as



McFadden Family, Ortega Forest, November 1997

Ortega, and have lived there on Pirates Cove Road ever since. Both have been active in the community in a variety of pursuits.

Bill used to be an active sportsman.

"When you're in your 80s, there are always parts that aren't working quite properly anymore," Diane said.

For Bill, it's his back and his knees. So, he has taken to building model airplanes and ships in the evenings. But team tennis at the Florida Yacht Club was a pastime for him and Diane up until a few years ago.

"And we were boating people," Diane said. For a long time, they had at least one or two different kinds of vessels docked at the Club.

For years, Diane and Bill have been heavily involved at St. Johns Presbyterian Church. Both are ordained elders. She is a Stephen Minister, ordained to help those in crisis. He is a trustee. Diane had been a Sunday school teacher there for a long time. These days, she leads a women's bible study group twice per month. Both of the McFaddens' daughters live in Jacksonville, their son in Dallas. They have seven grandchildren, "Five of whom are married, so that doubles my grandchildren," Diane said. And they have nine greats.

"It's been a wonderful life, and it still is!" she confirmed.



Bill McFadden, 1950s



Bill McFadden, Florida Yacht Club, April 1985



The McFadden Family, December 1967



Diane McFadden at McFadden's Dry Cleaners, 1980



Kay Biddy Watson

JANUARY 31, 1934 – MAY 16, 2023

Kay, devoted wife, mother, grandmother and friend to all who were blessed to know her, was born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida. She attended Landon high school where she was a Lionette and a member of the class of 1951. Her professional career included working for Florida title company and Florida national bank prior to living her true passion: wife and mother. Along with the passion she had for her family, Kay enjoyed

her tennis. A member of both Florida Yacht Club and later San Jose Country Club for many years, she played competitive tennis with her club teammates and life long friends. Kay's family has been members of south Jacksonville Presbyterian for decades.

Kay was the daughter of Thomas and Ruth biddy. She was predeceased by her sisters Joyce Kesler Glenn and Janet Holloway. She

is survived by her loving husband of 60 years Gary Edgar Watson and their children Andrew Watson, Mindy Gullede (Mike), and grandson Michael (mick) Gullede, Jr. She is also survived by stepson William Gary Watson (Susie) and children William Watson Jr. and Savannah Watson. Lastly, Kay was cared for in her home by the devoted caregivers from Concierge Care and Community Hospice.



William Franklin Johnson Jr.

FEBRUARY 28, 1944 – MAY 5, 2023

In life, Bill was a husband, a father, a grandfather and a great-grandfather. He was a friend to many and served the Lord faithfully.

Bill was born in Witchita Falls, TX on February 28th, 1944 to William Franklin Johnson Sr. and Francis Hollingsworth Johnson.

He attended Bolles High School and was an all-state athlete in baseball, basketball, and football.

Bill attended the United States Naval Academy from 1962-1966 where he played both baseball and football for the Academy.

He served as a Supply Officer in the U.S. Navy on the U.S.S. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Bill married his beautiful bride, Mary Tullis, on June 11th, 1966 in Jacksonville, FL.

Bill was a loving and devoted father to Lisa Dullum (Mark), Jennifer Howard (David), and Billy Johnson (Cari).

He cherished the friendships he made at Florida Furniture Industries for over 30 years as well as being a realtor in the Jacksonville area.

He had an uncanny ability to reach people in a deep and positive way and couldn't go

anywhere without making friends with a stranger.

Bill meant so much to his family and leaves behind a legacy that lives on forever through his grandchildren - Lauren (Alex), David (Chrissy), Ashley (Austin), Billy, Allison, Zach, Colton, Lea - and his great-grandson Deacon.

He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who knew him.

The family would like to thank Dr. Muhammad (Hassan) Imam, Sarah Souverain, NP, Florida Cancer Specialist, and Advent Health Hospice.



Bruce & Johnnie Hatcher

MAY 10, 1935 – APRIL 21, 2023

SEPTEMBER 29, 1935 – MARCH 31, 2023

Bruce Edwin Hatcher was born on May 10, 1935 in Albany, Georgia, and he passed away on April 21, 2023. He was the first of two sons born to Charles Marvin Hatcher and Naomi Joyce Gwines Hatcher. The family relocated to Southwest Georgia, where he met the love of his life, Johnnie Maddox.

Johnnie Myrle Maddox was born on September 29, 1935 in Opp, Alabama, and she passed away on March 31, 2023 (three weeks to the day before Bruce). She was the middle of three children born to John Henry Maddox and Myrtle Stanley Maddox. Johnnie's family also relocated to Southwest Georgia, where she met the love of her life, Bruce Hatcher.

Bruce and Johnnie attended school together in Sylvester, Georgia. At age 14, Bruce and Johnnie had their first "date" when his parents took them to the traveling ice show. After graduating from Sylvester High School in June

of 1953, Bruce and Johnnie both entered Georgia Southwestern College in Americus, Georgia, and both graduated with an Associate Degree in 1955.

On November 11, 1954, at the young age of 19, they married each other in Americus, Georgia, and began a long and happy life together as husband and wife. That loving union was blessed with one child, Bruce Doyle Hatcher.

For most of his professional life, Bruce worked in the insurance industry while Johnnie made a loving home for the family. In 1962 they moved to the house in the Lakewood neighborhood of Jacksonville where many friends and family visited and made happy memories with them. However, the most important thing in their life has been their service to their heavenly Father, Jehovah God. Bruce and Johnnie dedicated their lives to Jehovah on August 26, 1961, and both Bruce and Johnnie were baptized at a Circuit

Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in Fernandina Beach, Florida. Bruce and Johnnie actively served in the San Jose Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses for many decades and will be dearly missed. They were wonderful examples of loyalty, faith, and endurance along with genuine compassion and kindness to others.

Bruce and Johnnie's individual dedications guided the decisions they made throughout the remainder of their lives, including how they raised their son. It brought them immeasurable happiness and joy to see their son serving Jehovah with them, and then raising his own family in the same faith.

Bruce and Johnnie were both known for their kindnesses and a sense of humor that brought smiles to so many faces. They both passed away at home attended by family and confident in their future hope of a resurrection to a restored paradise here on earth.



While they are resting in their heavenly Father's loving memory, family and friends alike look forward to seeing both of them again according to God's promise.

In addition to many friends and spiritual brothers and sisters, Bruce and Johnnie leave behind their son Doyle and his wife Lisa, their grandson Alan and his wife Kelsea, and their granddaughter Mallory. Bruce is survived by his brother Keith (Diane), niece Melodi and nephew Cameron. Johnnie is survived by her brother John, niece Kim and nephew John III.

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~ Jody Brandenburg, President  
~ Matt Tucci, Director of Operations

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