

Hendricks Avenue businesses launch the #HendricksCorridor

It's happening on Hendricks. Joe Cline of Cline's Custom Meats is just one of the small business owners who is riding the building momentum, growth and success along Hendricks Avenue. To help raise the visibility and spread the word about the multitude of dining, shopping and other experiences available along Hendricks Avenue, the small businesses there, including Cline's, are banding together to promote the newly-minted #HendricksCorridor campaign.

The Resident News spoke with some of the newer owners joining this Hendricks Avenue community of small businesses, as well as some of those more seasoned, to discuss this new campaign and what it is that sets the Hendricks Corridor apart.

READ MORE ON PAGE 10

Safety in Numbers

Revisiting the 20 is Plenty speed reduction initiative

With Jacksonville continuously ranking as one of the top 10 most dangerous cities in the country for pedestrians, efforts continue on the "20 is Plenty" initiative to reduce residential speed limits from 30 to 20 miles per hour.

READ MORE ON PAGE 4



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Wolfson Freshmen Gear Up For FALL

For incoming members of Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies' class of 2027, summer has been a chance to make friends and prepare for classes while getting to know their way around campus. As part of Wolfson's annual summer mixer series, the incoming ninth grade students got challenged both athletically and academically through a series of fun events.

The first event, in June, gave students a taste of what a pep rally and basketball game feels like on campus. The Brain Games in July gave students a feel for switching from class to class and ended in a competitive water balloon fight. The final event of the summer is a big, family-friendly movie night in the gym, hosted by the Wolfson PTSA.

Being a dedicated magnet school, students can come to Wolfson from all over Jacksonville, but the majority of Wolfson's students come from Julia Landon Middle School.

Mayor Deegan Coming to District 5 for Community Conversation

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Mayor Donna Deegan has announced she will hold a series of Community Conversations in all of Jacksonville's 14 city council districts throughout the month of August.

The announcement came in a July 26 press release, which shared the aim of these meetings is "to give every voice in Jacksonville a chance to be heard."

Topics of conversation, according to the release, will include arts, constituency and community outreach, culture and entertainment, economy, health, infrastructure, military and veteran affairs and public safety. These meetings are open to the public.

District 5's scheduled Community Conversation will be held on Thursday, Aug. 10, from 6-8 p.m. at Aspire Church (1435 Atlantic Boulevard).

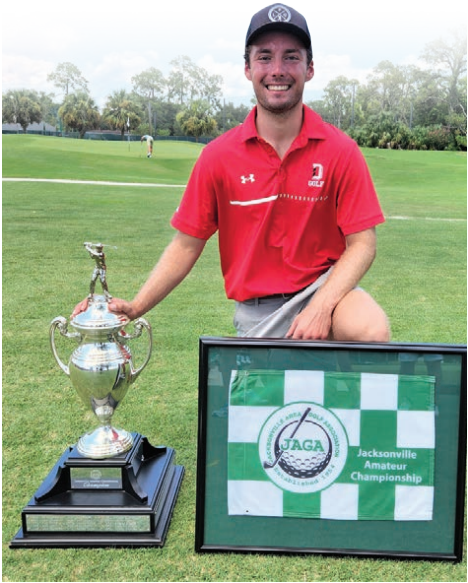
Glow-in-the-Dark

Mural

Coming to

Locals' Bar

San Marco is gaining another mural, this time on the side of the Locals' Bar on Kings Avenue. Artist Steve Arflin, Jr. of Arflin Creative Company, has designed and is currently working on this expansive, glow-in-the-dark mural – his third glow-in-the-dark mural overall and his first in the San Marco community.



Best Birthday Ever

Will Davis gave himself a 21st birthday present one day early when he fired a closing-round 67 to become the 62nd champion of the Jacksonville Area Golf Association Amateur Championship at San Jose Country Club.

"This place (San Jose CC) means a lot to me and my family," Davis, a Wolfson High School grad said. "It's pretty cool to win here."

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Letter TO THE EDITOR

This is a follow up to the Letter to the Editor by Chris Hildreth from the June issue of The Resident News.

REGENERATE BIODIVERSITY. PLANT NATIVE.

Chris’ article on the need to plant native plants was spot-on. While Chris focused on native plants’ water-saving qualities, I would just add that there are a couple other reasons to use native plants, too. Native plants form an interconnected system with other native plants, animals, land and climate which provide us all with ecosystem services (benefits) including clean air, clean water, pollination, decomposition, food, etc. Without these benefits, all life on earth would struggle to survive.

We humans are altering so much land and leaving so little natural, untouched land that these ecosystem services are faltering. This can be seen in the increasing number of endangered species. Central to this problem is the residential yard and its high usage of turf grass and exotic plants, both of which are of no benefit to the environment. If we could turn our yards into functioning ecosystems instead of just decorations, we could help to fix this problem. One of the easiest ways to do this is by planting native plants.

Native plants provide food for all life in the form of berries, nectar, and leaves but most importantly in the form of host plants for native insect larvae, which exotic plants can’t do. This is very important because insects are the base of the food chain feeding birds, amphibians, fish, reptiles and on up the food chain all the way to us. Without these host plants, 90% of our native insect species would disappear, and the food chain would be wrecked.

Exotic/nonnative plants (what is sold at most retail nurseries) haven’t had enough time to adapt and interact with other native plants and animals. As a result, most insects can’t utilize them. Many are also laden with pesticides before you even bring them home. Therefore, these exotic plants, while beautiful, serve little purpose. Exotics also become a problem because they need fertilizer, irrigation and pesticides, eroding the environment. Natives don’t need any extra water, fertilizers or pesticides because they long ago adapted to live in Florida’s environment without our help. And on top of that, they’re just as beautiful as any exotic!

Plant it and nature will come. Add just 10 different species of keystone natives (those that provide the most benefit for the most species) and you’ll see a huge increase in the number and species of birds, bees, moths and butterflies not just flying through your yard but living in your now productive habitat.

Our local chapter, IXIA of the Florida Native Plant Society, can help you. Go to: <https://ixia.fnpschapters.org/>. Once you plant some natives, register your yard at: <https://www.homegrown-nationalpark.org>, a grassroots call-to-action to regenerate biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants and creating new ecological networks.

Your neighbors, both human and animal, will thank you.

Lisa Williams

Master Naturalist and Ortega Forest Neighbor

Deegan Presents First Budget Proposal

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Mayor Donna Deegan rolled out her 2023-2024 budget proposal at a special City Council meeting on Monday, July 17.

Deegan’s budget proposal detailed \$1.75 billion from the general fund and nearly \$406 million from the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), including \$64 million in PayGo funds, “which allows us to pay for projects instead of borrowing funds.” Also included in the CIP are “shovel-ready projects that can be completed over the next year.”

Deegan highlighted infrastructure as a priority for her administration, allocating nearly \$26.8 million for roadway projects and \$13.6 million for sidewalk and crosswalk improvements – a 67% and 78% increase from the 2022-23 fiscal year, respectively. Deegan also allotted \$2 million to ensure all sidewalks citywide are within ADA compliance.

“Infrastructure is the foundation for everything, even if it’s not always terribly glamorous,” she said. “The investments we are making will improve the quality of life for every family in every district.”

A mowing budget of \$21.7 million – a 95% increase – garnered applause from those attending the meeting; this budget will allow for increased trimming, edging and litter pick-up to reduce roadside blight and will also increase mowing cycles for city parks for improved maintenance.

Deegan proposed that \$10 million be directed to resilience infrastructure and staff positions to “aggressively address the simple, mathematical fact that sea levels are rising.” She noted that Jacksonville’s Chief Resiliency Officer is still conducting “vital” heat, flood and vulnerability studies. Once the studies are complete, Deegan’s proposed budget has allocated funds to implement priorities from those study results.

The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (JSO) will be able to add 40 additional police officers and 18 non-uniformed positions to its force through the allotted \$7.8 million of additional funding. This funding will also provide for 66 additional vehicles for JSO.

“I’ve looked at the numbers and in a fast-growing city of our size, we absolutely need more police officers on the street and in our communities,” Deegan said.

Deegan added this funding provides for the 4.25% raise promised to fire and police unions two years ago.

As Jacksonville continues to see growth both in population and business, Deegan also announced \$21.72 million for “planning, permitting, building inspections and enhanced technology” to allow for a speedier permitting process for new and emerging businesses. Four new positions and equipment will be funded by nearly \$1 million in additional funding to improve that process.

“The return on that investment will be a system that is faster and easier to navigate,” she said.

“This budget reflects the priorities of the people. It invests their money in ways that will create more opportunities to live, earn, learn and love with a good quality of life,” she said in closing. “It keeps the promises of the past and builds a city of the future.”

The full budget proposal, as well as Deegan’s address to city council, is available for viewing at COJ.net - Mayor Deegan Presents 2023-2024 Budget to City Council.

Pending city council approval, the proposed budget will go into effect on Oct. 1.



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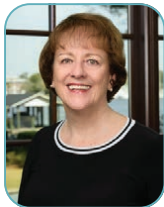
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20 is Plenty Initiative Urges Drivers to Slow Down in Neighborhoods

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

The push for lower speed limits on residential streets continues to be a prevalent issue for Jacksonville, and safety concerns remain high as the city consistently ranks in the top 10 most dangerous cities for pedestrians.

Mayor Donna Deegan’s proposed 2023-2024 budget allocated \$13.6 million for sidewalk and crosswalk improvements.

“There’s no reason that Jacksonville should be in the top ten cities for pedestrian fatalities every year,” she said during her budget presentation at a special City Council meeting last month.

Beyond sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, however, other efforts can be made to create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists on Jacksonville roads. Lowering the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph has been an initiative several neighborhoods have spearheaded to promote calmer traffic on their streets.

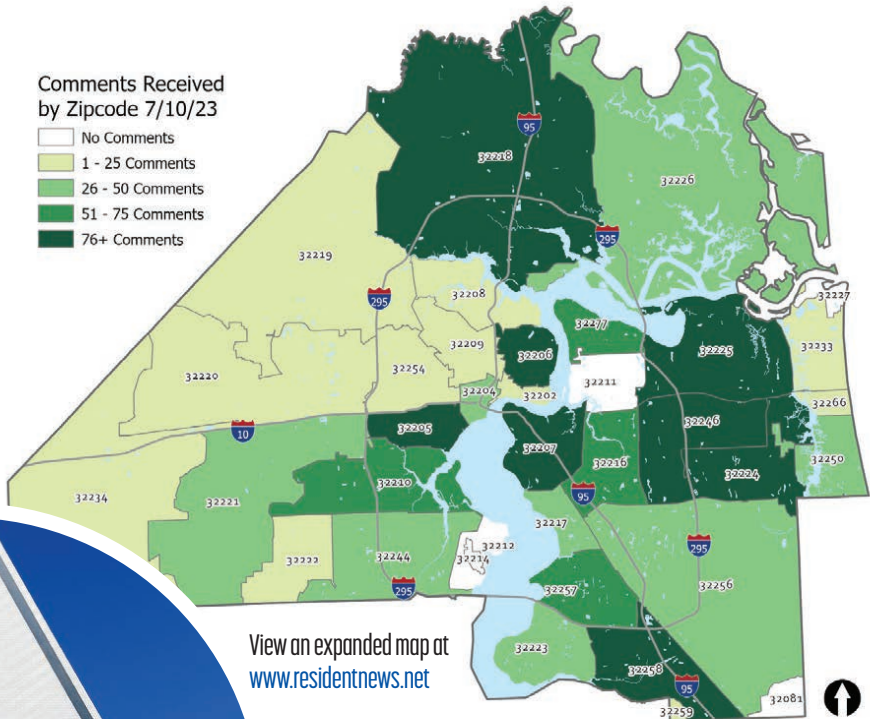
Over the years, *The Resident News* has reported on several neighborhoods pursuing speed reductions, including River Road (2015), London, Gadsden, Morvenwood, Greenridge and Mapleton roads (2018), River Oaks Road (2018) and Ardsley Road (2019).

The dangers pedestrians and bicyclists face on the roads are a problem, but not everyone feels that speed reduction is the solution.

Avondale resident Pamela Telis wonders how many drivers would adhere to a lower speed limit when some drivers already disregard the 30 mph speed limit and is concerned that lowering the speed limit might increase risky interactions between speed limit-abiding drivers and speeders.

“To me, it’s already a dangerous situation where people want to drive even faster than 30,” she said. “So, now we’re going to do 20, for example, and the difference between what people want to drive and 20 is even more dangerous, more dangerously different so we’re going to have even more angry people driving on the streets. When you even try to go 30, they’re angry.”

Telis also brings into question the matter of enforcement, which she believes is a key component to reducing the dangers on the road that already exist at the current residential speed limit.



“I don’t know what the solution is, except – like I said – enforcement,” she said. “Lowering the speed limit, to me, is a big mistake.”

Whether it’s speed reduction or traffic-calming devices like speed humps, something must be done to protect everyone on the road.

Last year, a pilot study to monitor drivers’ speed and behavior in reduced speed zones was conducted in Lakewood last August, during which 30 mph speed limit signs within the designated area were swapped for 20 mph signs.

An executive summary of the study stated that the new speed limit signs “did not statistically change or reduce vehicle speeds.”

“When I found out that other pilot program was not, according to them, successful in changing behaviors, we just kind of dropped it,” City Council Member Matt Carlucci said. “I think this might be a good time to reinstitute an effort on it because the new administration has made pedestrian safety one of their hallmarks.”

Currently, a Citywide Residential Speed Limit Reduction Study is underway as part of the 20 is Plenty program, launched last December.

The study includes a three-minute survey for residents to take, and City of Jacksonville Transportation Planning Division Chief Laurie Santana said the survey has garnered more than 2,000 participants so far, and she urges more residents to complete it before the study wraps toward the end of the year.

According to the Jacksonville 20 is Plenty website, 49 pedestrian and bicycle fatalities were reported last year. Reducing the speed limit in residential areas from 30 to 20 mph lowers the risk of fatality in a pedestrian- or bicycle-involved collision from 40% to 13%.

Santana explained the survey results will help the city identify neighborhoods with the greatest support and need for speed reduction, as rolling out an initiative like this across the city would be a costly project.

“If you think about it, the cost to take down every single speed limit sign and put up all new speed limit signs...that’s a big endeavor because it’s a big city,” she said. “So, we have to find out how much would that cost, and then we also have to look at the crash data and make sure that, if we’re going to do this, we do it in the most important areas first.”

Jacksonville’s older neighborhoods without sidewalks or with narrower streets within the old urban core would likely be an ideal focus area, Carlucci noted.

Santana added this effort to improve pedestrian safety will dovetail nicely with Jacksonville’s

“Vision Zero Action Plan: Targeting Zero Bicycle and Pedestrian Fatalities by 2030 in a Designated Safety Focus City,” for which the city’s Transportation Planning Division was awarded \$280,000 in federal grant funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Safe Streets and Roads for All competitive grant program last February.

“[20 is Plenty] will help us to have one more thing in our tool kit to help make our streets safer and less dangerous for the most vulnerable users, which are bicyclists and pedestrians,” she said.

More information, including the survey, is available at www.20isplentyjax.com.

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JSO Hosts Town Hall

Agency unveils Realignment Project, new programs

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Sheriff T.K. Waters welcomed the community to a Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) Town Hall Meeting at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center on Wednesday, July 19, where he shared several announcements and discussed new JSO additions.

Zoned Out

During his address, Waters unveiled his Realignment Project, which replaced JSO's former Zones of Response with Police Service Districts. These new districts redraw the boundaries of the former zones, creating new borders for each of the six new districts for Jacksonville.

Specific to *The Resident News* readership, the newly minted District 1 pulls San Marco from its former Patrol Zone 3 (where it was grouped with Southside and Mandarin) and combines it with the areas of the old Patrol Zone 1, including Downtown, Eastside and Springfield. Brooklyn joins it as well. Riverside, now within the boundaries of District 5, was separated from Ortega, Avondale and Westside, which had all been grouped together in the former Patrol Zone 4.

The areas within the new districts are as follows:

- District 1:
Brooklyn, Downtown, Eastside, San Marco, Springfield
- District 2:
Arlington, Intracoastal West
- District 3:
Mandarin, Southside
- District 4:
Avondale, Ortega, Westside
- District 5:
Baldwin, New Town, Northwest, Riverside
- District 6:
Northside, San Mateo, Oceanway

Waters stated that while the previous zones were based on "arbitrary geographical markers," the creation of these new lines were deliberate, data-driven decisions. Following the Town Hall, Waters explained the data considered for the new district areas was based on calls for service.

"We looked at the calls for service, where they're happening, how many there were over a three-year period of time, and we looked at all of that, and we divided it up because they stayed pretty consistent throughout the year," he said. "Some places had 153,000 calls for service, some places had 60,000 calls for service. This place was always officers being held over on overtime because they're overworked, this side doesn't. So now we spread that out. But we based on it calls for service and the data that provided us."

These new districts went into effect on Saturday, July 29.

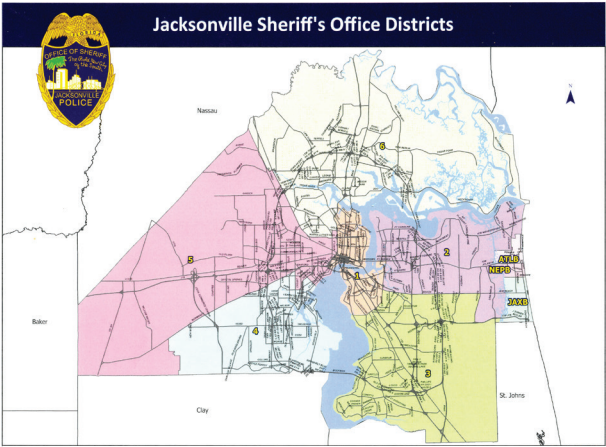
216: The Magic Number

Waters stated the data used in his Realignment Plan also helped provide a clear picture of how many police officers are needed to "adequately" serve the city and said an additional 216 officers are needed on the force.

Just two days before the JSO Town Hall, during her presentation of the proposed 2023-2024 budget, Mayor Donna Deegan announced \$7.8 million would be allocated to JSO, providing for 40 additional police officers and 18 new, non-uniformed positions with the sheriff's office.

Following the Town Hall, Waters stated that, ideally, he'd like to see 10 officers in each squad. Current staffing numbers have squads populated with seven or eight, he explained, but he hopes to continue to work with the city to "make a slow advance and build our force" each year.

"I believe Mayor Deegan is open to listening to that; I believe the City Council's open to listening to that," he said. "So, we're gonna ask and we'll see what happens. But I think it's very important."



A map of the new Police Service Districts Sheriff Waters unveiled during the Town Hall. View an expanded map at www.residentnews.net

ConnectDuval

Later during the Town Hall, JSO Director of Investigations and Homeland Security Mark Romano unveiled ConnectDuval, a voluntary program allowing citizens to register their exterior security cameras with JSO.

A fact sheet about the new program states it was developed to "create stronger public-private collaborations and enable businesses and community members to work more closely with law enforcement."

If or when a crime incident occurs, investigators will notify registered ConnectDuval participants in the area to alert them of the incident "and request access to recorded footage," Romano said.

Romano said this new program has many benefits, including increasing public participation in community safety and security, providing investigators a faster method of collecting evidence previously unavailable to them and "strengthening the justice system."

He also said the ConnectDuval was created with "layers of privacy protection."

"The aim of this initiative is not to create a surveillance state," he said. "Rather this program empowers citizens to contribute actively to the safety of their community using surveillance footage that's already been gathered."

As of Thursday, July 20, 201 cameras have already been registered with ConnectDuval.

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A photo of the demolition at Riverside Presbyterian Day School, taken July 6, as the school and church prepare for the new Family Life Center.

Site Cleared for New Family Life Center at Riverside Presbyterian Day School

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Demolition crews have cleared the way for Riverside Presbyterian Day School’s (RPDS) new Family Life Center at Oak and Post streets.

The former church youth program facility that once stood on the site will be relocated to its own renovated space in the church education building for youth, explained RPDS Director of Advancement Doug Walker.

This construction is part of a multi-phase campus development plan funded by the Cornerstone Campaign – a capital campaign for both the school and the church. Additional improvements will include the installment of perimeter fencing around the campus grounds, renovation of the Rice Sports Zone and the renovation and expansion of the existing parking facility at Oak and Post streets, which is currently underway. The final phase of the development plan will be the actual construction of the Family Life Center.

All construction encompassed in the campus development plan is expected to be complete next summer, according to Walker.

“It’s been super exciting because I think this is the opportunity for both the church and the school to see this is just a new, sort of a future vision of unity – both church and school unity – but also an outreach to the community,” Walker said. “These facilities will be available for programs that can be a real strong ministry for the church and school. It’s been just extremely exciting and rewarding to see that come about.”

The Cornerstone Capital Campaign Fund for the church and school launched in 2021 and has since raised \$6.2 million of its \$7 million goal. In addition to these construction and renovation projects, the campaign will also fund three endowments.

According to Walker, a contractor has yet to be awarded the project.

Realtors Spiff Up the St. Johns



NEFAR Realtors gathered at Sidney Gefen Riverwalk Park as part of the Clean-up Florida Waterways initiative.

More than 300 Realtors, friends, family and members of the public gathered at eight different clean-up sites along the St. Johns River to take part in Northeast Florida Association of Realtors’ (NEFAR) Third Annual Clean-up Northeast Florida Waterways event on July 8. More than 3,300 pounds of trash and debris were collected and disposed of from the shoreline of the St. Johns River between Mayport and Palatka.

Clean-up organizers are also in the process of applying for permits to remove a derelict sailboat from the river near the Lions Club Boat ramp, according to Mark Feagle, a NEFAR member who also serves as president of the Northeast Florida Coastal Conservation Association.

“If it can be removed, we will have met our goal of removing 10 tons of trash from the St. Johns River in Northeast Florida,” said Feagle.

“This one-day event brought a better awareness of our biggest asset, the mighty St. Johns, as well as the importance of clean waterways in our region,” said 2023 NEFAR President Diana Galavis.



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Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary Celebrates 50-Year Legacy of Service, Support

BY SUSANNA P. BARTON

The Wolfson family: Don, Erin and Karen.

This summer marks 50 years of the Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary, a dedicated group of community volunteers who bring comfort and cheer to hospitalized children, their families, hospital team members and visitors.

During the past half-century, the Auxiliary has established myriad ways for volunteers to support the important work of Wolfson Children’s Hospital patients and medical staff. Auxilians are the heart and soul of the hospital, performing such important tasks as greeting patients and families arriving at Wolfson Children’s and escorting them to their room or destination, participating in bedside activities with patients like crafts, puzzles and games, responding to basic requests from patients for blankets, ice or water, hosting community groups and providing patients with Pet Therapy, among many other loving services and volunteer initiatives.

“The vision the founding members of the Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary had half a century ago still rings true today,” said Allegra Jaros, president of Wolfson Children’s Hospital. “Auxiliary volunteers have touched the lives of countless patients and team members, and we’re grateful for their friendly and compassionate service.”

The work of the Auxiliary differs from that of The Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital, which also celebrated its 50th anniversary this year.

“The Women’s Board works to increase awareness about Wolfson Children’s facilities and services and raises funds to ensure the best healthcare is provided to the children,” said Kathleen Burns, longtime volunteer and 2020-21 president of the Auxiliary. “The Auxiliary is composed of more than 100 dedicated folks who give of their time and talents volunteering in 17 service areas to bring aid and comfort to the patients and their family members and to assist staff. Those services range from POPS (Post-Op) where the volunteers assist family members and staff with patients following surgery; to Goofieactrics (our clown corps); to our award-winning Pet Therapy Program; to NICU (neonatal intensive care unit), where volunteers hold babies when other family members aren’t able to be there; and so much more.”

The Auxiliary’s volunteer spirit extends far beyond its daily hands-on work – volunteerism that has surpassed one million hours since its 1973 inception. Members also have donated more than \$1 million and funded a \$500,000 Baptist Foundation endowment to provide critical care equipment, advanced technology, amenities for patient rooms, wheelchairs to transport patients and more. Currently, there are more than 100 volunteers in the Wolfson Children’s Auxiliary.

During the past decade alone, Auxilians have contributed nearly 200,000 hours of service to Wolfson Children’s Hospital, a value of more than \$4.5 million, according to hospital officials. Their efforts have helped make the Southbank-area children’s hospital one of the top children’s medical facilities in the country.

While Wolfson Children’s Hospital is and always has been a city- and region-wide resource, the Auxiliary has deep roots in the neighborhoods. It was started by a group of loving individuals who had a shared vision of supporting hospital staff and their young patients. Eunice Gooding, whose daughter Elaine Vickers lives in San Marco and volunteers at the hospital even to this day, was the Auxiliary’s first president. The group’s very first fundraiser was a garage sale held in 1975 at the San Jose home of the late Dr. J.W. Hayes and wife Lou Hayes, the Auxiliary’s third president.

The Auxiliary’s earliest founders and supporters led the group by example, and many were connected to or part of Baptist and Wolfson’s inception. The Gooding family was on the front lines of this important work.

Before being named first president of the Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary,



Auxilian members at the 50th celebration.



Debbie Gottlieb with Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary therapy dog Jack, Dr. Mobeen Rathore, Marlow Levy and CC Brooks with Dr. Michael Mayo.



Former Auxiliary presidents Lou Hayes and Ray Martin with Elaine Vickers, daughter of the first Auxiliary president.

Eunice Gooding and husband Judge Marion Gooding (who is credited for helping develop and execute the initial plans for Baptist hospital and made the first donation to the hospital in 1947) were very active in the Auxiliary of Baptist Medical Center. Eunice Gooding served as its president from 1956 to 1959. There she helped establish many important programs including the hospital’s Day Care Program for children of the nursing staff, according to Gooding’s 2011 obituary.

A June 2023 story in the hospital’s Care Connection magazine referenced the Goodings’ zest and ongoing passion for serving the organization. Their efforts included everything from Auxiliary founding, leadership and financial support to making dolls and dressing up as an elf for patient photos during the holidays.

Eunice Gooding’s hospital volunteerism was legendary – with much of the work she helped launch in earlier decades still thriving today. Her example inspired the Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary volunteer work over the years, including expanded opportunities to support hospital workers and patients during the pandemic.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Auxiliary wrote cards to front-line caregivers, hung banners of support in the hospital, and supplied refreshments for those working long hours in vaccination clinics. Volunteers used some of its fundraising dollars to purchase sticker-by-number books to keep patients occupied during the pandemic when volunteers were not permitted in the hospital to interact with the children. Auxiliary volunteer efforts have made a positive impact on countless hospital visitors, patients and families, as well as the general health and wellness of the community – in seasons of sickness and in health.

“The Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary was created 50 years ago to assist the hospital with meeting the needs of the patients, families and staff,” said Jeannie Poon, director of Volunteer Services for Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson Children’s Hospital. “They are a huge blessing in that they stand in the gap and help with hours and resources that are needed for our team members to provide care for the patients we serve.”

Poon said it has been a special time this year celebrating all that Wolfson Children’s Hospital Auxiliary means to the Wolfson organization – generation after generation.

“It takes special people to share their hearts with others, our volunteers and their impact truly are timeless!” Poon said.



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Wick co-owners Kristanna and Hampton Barnes.

Explore the Corridor

Hendricks Avenue merchants launch the #HendricksCorridor visibility campaign

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

With a simple hashtag on social media, small businesses along San Marco’s Hendricks Avenue are working together to help raise the visibility of the destination that street is becoming for shopping, dining and living your best life in San Marco.

Kurt Rogers, co-founder of Bar Molino and The Swinerie, coined #HendricksCorridor in a June social media post on Bar Molino’s Instagram account, tagging as many businesses located along Hendricks Avenue as he could and, in the comments, inviting viewers to tag others he may have forgotten.

The post read:
“We love San Marco and everything it has to offer. From the Square to the river, from all the parks to all the local business, it never ceases to amaze us anytime we walk or drive through our neighborhood just how lucky we are. With all of the hustle and bustle and new construction going on, we wanted to bring some awareness to our little strip and all of the locally owned business on it.

Welcome to the #hendrickscorridor
Spanning from Atlantic to 95, there’s just about something for everyone down the corridor. So next time your [sic] out and about shopping, eating or drinking, tag the corridor and help us gather some steam behind the campaign.”

Since then, other businesses along the corridor have picked up the hashtag to help promote the area and their business.

“We want it to be a thing,” explained Bar Molino Co-founder Alfred Young. Rogers and Young have spearheaded the Hendricks Corridor through more than just social media hashtags. In addition to reaching out to other businesses, they’ve reached out to the San Marco Merchants Association (SMMA) to discuss ways it can work with Hendricks businesses to help identify the corridor as another destination within San Marco beyond the San Marco Square, which is easily the most recognizable and well-known part of the community. And they hope this movement will extend beyond Hendricks Avenue onto other San Marco streets that are beginning to boom with new businesses as well.

These corridors are “culturally different” from the rest of San Marco, Young said.

“It’s just a different part of the neighborhood,” he said. “We’re wanting to kind of tag it; we’re wanting to kind of identify it.”

Before The Corridor

Robert Harris is the managing partner of San Marco law firm Harris Guidi Rosner, P.A., located on Hendricks Avenue. As a lifelong San Marco resident and lawyer – he built his firm’s first building in 1986 and the second in ’88 – he’s been in a unique position to observe the evolution



Macy Howard, daughter of Vive Yoga Studio Founder Alejandra Amegin, leading a yoga class.

of the area and said he has been “overwhelmed” by the improvements he’s seen and is excited about all the change and growth the area currently underway.

“In almost all respects, [I’m] really excited,” he said. “It isn’t just residential; it isn’t just commercial. It’s retail, it’s professional, it’s restaurants. It’s a little bit of everything.”

Next door to Bar Molino is High Tide Burrito, owned by Alejandro Juarez. It has called Hendricks Avenue home since May 2009. Juarez said already back then, he saw “a lot of opportunity” on Hendricks and that opportunity has carried through to present day.

“I think the Hendricks Corridor is appealing because it’s still in the urban setting of San Marco and there is available space,” he said. “I think there’s good, positive momentum. The more businesses that open up, I think it will attract more people to the area. The San Marco Square is always going to have its charm, but there’s only so many restaurants or businesses that can open up there.”

New Kids On the Corridor

Just now approaching its first anniversary, Bar Molino is still one of the newer businesses on the corridor, but it’s joined by several other businesses that have opened in the recent years, either before or just after.

Vive Yoga Studio, part of Jax Natural Healing, was founded by Alejandra Amegin just one year before Bar Molino opened. Amegin works with Dr. Dan O’Leary, owner and clinical director. According to their website, Amegin’s is the first Latina-owned yoga studio/wellness space in Northeast Florida.

She said there is a certain level of cohesion among the businesses that are growing around her studio, which has generated opportunity for everyone.

“I think it’s been a really big win, plus also the type of restaurant that [Bar Molino is] aligns with the type of customer that comes into a holistic and wellness place, and now with the addition of KraVegan just like a few doors down, which is even more aligned, we have just increased visiliby, increased traffic,” she said.

Within one year of opening his family-owned butcher shop along Hendricks Avenue in 2018, it became evident

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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to Cline’s Custom Meats Owner Joe Cline that his shop would rapidly outgrow its space. Just last month, Cline’s was able to move into its larger location two blocks down, still along Hendricks. Cline said to be so wholly embraced by the community to allow expansion within such a short period of time was a “humbling” experience.

“Sometimes I gotta pinch myself at how fast we grew,” he said.

While Jacksonville itself is a spread-out city, people are beginning to find pockets of walkability within different neighborhoods. With various phases of the Emerald Trail either currently under construction or in development, along with the planned riverfront parks and North- and Southbank Riverwalk expansions planned, walkability will continue to increase.

In San Marco, however, that walkability is already there, and Cline said it’s allowing residents and visitors to find everything they need in one place.

“With the growth that we’re seeing in San Marco, you’re finding the one-stop shopping and the variety of restaurants and you’re able to get everything here in this cool neighborhood,” he said.

Wick: A Candle Bar is located across the street from Bar Molino and opened in 2019. Locally owned by mother-son duo Kristanna and Hampton Barnes, it provides guests with a unique experience of pouring their own custom-made scented soy wax candles.

Hampton said it’s exciting to see the momentum building along the corridor and anticipates more

opportunities to interact with new clients as construction nears completion at the Station at San Marco – the mixed-use residential development down Hendricks near I-95 – and units begin filling up at the recently completed The Hendricks at San Marco, another residential complex near the new Publix. He sees these new developments as an opportunity to introduce the community to more people who haven’t had a chance to experience it yet.

“It amazes me how many people at least come into my business, and they’ve never been to San Marco or they’re afraid to kind of come downtown,” he said. “So, the more people that come to live here hopefully brings growth to businesses and entertainment, leading people from other neighborhoods in the city to our neck of the woods.”

Other businesses along the Hendricks Corridor include KraVegan, Foliahōm, Pure Barre, One Bridal, Aardwolf Brewing, Jack Rabbits, Sidecar Jax, The Olive Tree, Good Dough, Earth Pets San Marco, San Marco Dreamette, V Pizza and more.

A Merchant Collaboration

When SMMA President Leah Roesler stepped into her new leadership role this past January, she told The Resident one of the things she looked forward to was



Alfred Young and Kurt Rogers of Bar Molino.

bringing more cohesion to the association for on- and off-square merchants.

The launch of the Hendricks Corridor campaign is the perfect opportunity for her to do just that, and Roesler said she’s excited to see the drive and commitment these merchants have to invest in themselves and their community.

“Obviously when people think of San Marco, they think of the Square, which is great, but there are so many things to do, places to eat up the Hendricks Corridor, up San Marco Boulevard, now up Atlantic

as well,” she said. “So, they’re starting to really put their heads together and think of ways to make those destinations themselves within San Marco.”

SMMA is looking at new ways to help with that visibility effort and providing more opportunities for off-square shops and businesses to participate in events that, historically, have been more easily accessible by on-square merchants.

“We have to be a little more creative,” Roesler said. “We’re in the process of getting all those ideas together. They don’t have to be held on the square only, they don’t have to be one-day only. They can be a coordinated effort where everybody has a QR code at their register for a discount or there’s some sort of a passport or whatever the case may be. We’re just trying to get all the information from people on what’s helpful.”

Restoring Historic Florida Theatre

The Florida Theatre will be closed July-Oct. for the next round of renovations in its Centennial Campaign, which started in 2019. The Centennial Campaign was launched to prepare the historic theatre for its 100th anniversary in 2027.

During the closure, the Florida Theatre will repair all the flaking and peeling decorative plaster in the auditorium, return the paint colors in the lobbies and the auditorium to the original 1927 color palette, replace the heating, ventilation and air conditioning

system, move the electrical vault and update the public restrooms.

“By the end of this calendar year, over the last four years, we will have raised and spent \$15 million on building improvements to the historic Florida Theatre,” said Numa Saisselin, president of the Florida Theatre. “After this, there’s about \$8 million left of work to do to get the rest of the building where it needs to be.”

These projects build upon projects that have already been accomplished at the Florida Theatre, which include replacing the Theatre’s 1,865 fixed seats, doubling the wheelchair seating capacity, installing a new assistive listening system for the hard of hearing, improving aisle lighting and handrails, installing new sound and lighting systems, and repurposing the second floor of the office building into the new Remedy Lounge, which was the first expansion of the venue’s public space in 95 years.

Saul Lucio, who has been the Technical Director of the Florida Theatre for 40 years, said this is the most extensive work he has seen done at the Theatre, with exception to the Remedy Lounge, since it reopened almost 40 years ago in 1983.

“We want to make the building functionally better for how we use it today by improving it with 50-year solutions so we can be financially solvent for the next 100 years,” said Ed White of the project’s general contractor, Auld & White Constructors, who is also a member of the Florida Theatre’s Capital Campaign Committee.

“I have been going to the Florida Theatre for years,” said Don Cameron, Florida Theatre First Vice Chair and Chair-Elect of the board of directors. “It has always been great, but this renovation will improve the intimate experience. It will offer the best of both worlds, as it will be vintage and new.

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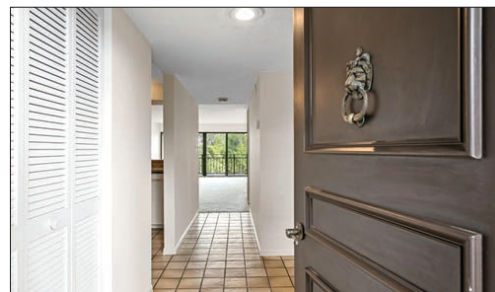
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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Collier Named New Nemours Division Chief

Anderson Collier, III, MD, will lead a team of eight as the new Division Chief of Hematology/Oncology, Department of Pediatrics for Nemours Children’s Health. Dr. Collier is a national expert in the treatment of sarcomas in children, experienced



Anderson Collier

in leading pediatric cancer teams, and has served as a pediatrics professor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. An active clinical researcher, Dr. Collier was the institutional principal investigator for Children’s Oncology Group (COG) work at UMMC, as well as director of pediatric oncology research. He is an author, editor and reviewer for a number of medical journals, with a specific focus on recurrent or refractory Ewing sarcoma and outcomes of patients with relapsed or progressive Ewing sarcoma. “With Dr. Collier’s leadership, we will be able to amplify our efforts to provide the highest quality of care and expand our program to help more children with cancer and blood disorders. We are thrilled for what Dr. Collier will bring to our already robust and well-respected program,” said Eric Sandler, MD, Department of Pediatrics chair at Nemours Children’s. The Nemours Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders is the most extensive pediatric cancer program in Florida.

No Place Like Home Returns

The Guardian ad Litem Foundation’s (GALF) annual fundraiser There’s No Place Like Home (NPLH) returns Saturday, November 4, at the Garden Club of Jacksonville in Riverside from 6-10 p.m. The Emerald City-worthy event will feature food from Chef’s Garden, spirits, live and silent auctions, and music from Bold City Classics. Tickets are \$150 per person and are available at www.galfoundation.org.

GALF has been serving children in Duval, Clay and Nassau counties since 1991. They help abused, abandoned, and neglected children who have been removed from their home as they navigate the dependency system.

“It is difficult to fathom that there are 1,200 abandoned, neglected and abused children going through our court system right here in our own community,” said Avondale resident Chavet Constable, NPLH committee chair and GALF board vice chair. “These are innocent young children who have found themselves alone and without a voice. This is where Guardian ad Litem comes to the rescue.”

Children with a Guardian ad Litem are half as likely to re-enter foster care, more likely to be adopted by a loving family and more likely to perform well in school.

Crecelius Receives VA Accreditation



Jacalyn Crecelius

Attorney Jacalyn Crecelius, who leads Jacksonville Area Legal Aid’s (JALA) Veterans Legal Services Unit, has received Veterans Administration accreditation, a qualification that helps ensure claimants have access to responsible and qualified representation on their VA benefits claims.

“JALA is thrilled to have a VA-accredited attorney to better serve our veterans.”

– Jim Kowalski,
JALA president and CEO

“This accreditation opens up major opportunities to serve Northeast Florida veterans and their families,” Crecelius said. “There are so many underserved veterans who aren’t receiving the VA benefits they deserve, and I’m excited to be able to advocate for them in a notoriously complicated system.” With accreditation, Crecelius can represent claimants after the VA has issued an initial decision on a claim. She can help them develop evidence to support their claim, devise legal arguments on their behalf to submit to VA and navigate the VA appeals process. “JALA is thrilled to have a VA-accredited attorney to better serve our veterans,” Jim Kowalski, JALA president and CEO, said.

“VA studies have found that civil legal assistance is among the top unmet needs of unhoused veterans, and the affordable housing crisis has only increased the challenges faced by our veterans. Access to veterans’ benefits is critical to providing all low-income veterans with stability.”

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Buck Poderski Joins NAI Hallmark Team



Buck Poderski
(Photo/NAI Hallmark)

Buck Poderski has joined Jacksonville's commercial real estate brokerage and property management firm NAI Hallmark as its new vice president of multifamily investment sales.

Poderski has worked in real estate since 2018. Most recently, he served as managing director for GREA in Dallas, Texas. He holds dual bachelor's degrees in economics and finance from University of North Florida.

In a press release announcing Poderski's appointment, NAI Hallmark explained that Poderski "specializes in the brokerage of value-add, multifamily assets throughout Florida and has a proven track record of success advising on multifamily investments for both private and institutional investors."

"We are very excited to announce the addition of Buck Poderski to the NAI Florida Multifamily Team. Buck brings an impressive track record of success, sharing our passion for delivering above-and-beyond value to his clients," said NAI Hallmark Senior Vice President John Rutherford in the release. "In his new role, Buck will build on NAI's industry-leading market share and spearhead our growth outside of Jacksonville into markets throughout North & Central Florida."



Mike Krzyzewski



Steve Wozniak



James Stavridis

Florida Forum 2023-2024 Lineup Announced

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital has released the lineup for its 2023-24 Florida Forum Speaker Series schedule.

Mike Krzyzewski, coach of Duke University men's basketball team, will speak on Wednesday, November 8, 2023.

Steve Wozniak, Silicon Valley technology entrepreneur, will appear on Wednesday, January 17, 2024.

Retired Adm. James Stavridis, who received numerous U.S. and international medals while serving for 37 years in the U.S. Navy, will take the stage on Monday, February 26, 2024.

The Florida Forum series is held at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts. All programs begin at 7 p.m. The series is sponsored by Wells Fargo, Landstar and Florida Blue. Meg Folds, Drew Haramis and Robin Love are serving as this year's co-chairs.

The Women's Board has committed to raise \$1.5 million for a new Kids Kare Mobile ICU, a neonatal and pediatric critical care transport vehicle, by 2024.

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YMCA Launches Discounts for Foster Families

Family Support Services Duval and Nassau Counties (FSS) and the First Coast YMCA have partnered to offer new support for foster families across the First Coast. In the first-of-its-kind program, First Coast YMCA will be providing foster families with discounted memberships. FSS will be sending Foster Parent Partnership e-cards to more than 600 foster families licensed with the agency in Duval and Nassau counties.



Leigh Ann Luttrell, Tim Burrows, Rochelle Lockett, Burt Cannon and Rachel Mills gathered at the Winston Family YMCA to support the collaboration between Family Support Services Duval and Nassau Counties and the YMCA of Florida's First Coast.

Families simply need to show their Foster Parent Partnership e-card at any First Coast YMCA branch in Duval or Nassau County to receive the special discount. Cards are valid for six months and will be renewed to families that keep their licensure in good standing.

“Family Support Services and the First Coast YMCA are aligned in our missions to support our First Coast families and build stronger communities,” says Leigh Ann Luttrell, Community Engagement Manager for FSS. “We’re thankful for this opportunity to provide our families a new network for fun, health and connection through this ongoing friendship with the Y.”

“Everything we do is grounded in meeting the unique needs of the individuals and communities we serve – and we can’t do it alone. Partners with like-minded values and goals, like Family Support Services, help us increase access and involvement so more people can

reach their potential and thrive,” said Michelle Moore, First Coast YMCA Chief Membership and Marketing Officer.

The First Coast has nearly 1,000 children in its foster care system.



R. Lawrence Moss

Moss Named in Physician Leaders to Know

Becker’s Healthcare has included R. Lawrence Moss, MD, president and CEO of Nemours Children’s Health, in its 2023 “Physician Leaders to Know” list. The physicians on its list are being recognized for having amassed both clinical expertise and leadership experience, providing them with unique perspectives that benefit patients and colleagues alike. Honorees serve in executive roles at hospitals, health systems, medical groups, ASCs or healthcare companies.

This list honors physician leaders for their dedication to optimizing healthcare and improving the healthcare industry. The Becker’s Hospital Review editorial team accepted nominations and curated the list.

James to Head Eagles Baseball



Nick James

Nick James has been hired as the Episcopal School of Jacksonville’s (ESJ) next baseball program director and varsity head coach. James’ extensive background in teaching and coaching includes 18 years in the dugout at the high school level, nine of which were at Westminster Academy in Fort Lauderdale where he was a three-time district coach of the year and National Christian Coach of the Year. As a player, he was a three-time, all-conference scholar-athlete on James Madison University’s baseball team.

Since 2019, James has also served as the co-director of Cannons Baseball United, one of the top college placement and player development programs in the U.S., putting 52 players into college baseball and four players into the Major League Baseball draft in 2022.

“Coach James’ experience as an educator and coach made him the ideal choice to serve as Episcopal’s next head coach. He truly embodies everything we look for in a coach for our student-athletes. We are pleased that Coach James’ education background will allow him to be on campus full-time as a member of our English Department faculty,” said Andy Kidd, Director of Athletics for ESJ.

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Baptist Recognized for Heart Bypass Excellence

Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville received its first three-star rating, the highest, from The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) for excellent patient care and outcomes in isolated coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) procedures.

CABG, also commonly referred to as "bypass surgery," is a procedure used to improve blood flow to the heart for people with severe blockages in critical arteries that connect to the heart.

"Quality comes first. That's why receiving a three-star designation from STS is such an honor for the entire team here at the Heart Hospital of Baptist Jacksonville – from our surgical team dedicated to cardiovascular surgery, to the experts who serve in our Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit, the nursing floors and diagnostic testing departments– they are each focused on high quality and compassionate care," said Nicole B. Thomas, hospital president of Baptist Jacksonville.

Approximately 20% of participants receive the three-star rating for isolated CABG surgery.

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida Receives National Recognition

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida was recognized as a national model through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary's Award for Public-Philanthropic Partnerships. The award recognizes excellence in partnerships that have transformed the relationship between the public and philanthropic sectors and led to measurable benefits for local communities.

"This year's awardees represent the heartbeat of our great nation," said HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge. "Every day, they respond to the call of some of our most vulnerable neighbors, advocate on their behalf and confront some of our most pressing challenges."

Dawn Lockhart, the inaugural Director of Strategic Partnerships who has led the work since 2016, joined Kathleen Shaw, the Foundation's Senior Vice President, Program and Initiatives, to receive the award, one of nine from across the country.

"We are proud to receive this honor on behalf of many partners, most importantly, the City of Jacksonville, the public sector partner whose work was recognized through the award," said Shaw. "The city has embraced this position as an essential tool to foster collaboration with the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. I especially want to express my gratitude to Dawn Lockhart, whose leadership has led to a measurable, positive impact in the community. She has exceeded our expectations for what we hoped to see when we championed the creation of this role."

"I am proud that our partnerships with community leaders and organizations are being nationally recognized," said then-mayor Lenny Curry. "Listening to the experts and working together with community partners is the most effective way of advancing the greater good, which is the most important mission of good government."

The Office of Strategic Partnerships has worked on several critical, quality-of-life issues pertaining to economic growth, health, disaster resilience and housing access. Examples of impact include the following:

- A decrease in homelessness by 39% since 2015.
- An increase of 4.5% in self-response participation in the 2020 U.S. Census, up from 2010, and increasing Jacksonville's participation ranking among Florida's 67 counties from No. 22 to No. 11.
- The First Coast Relief Fund pooled support from the city and private funders to award \$5.4 million to 112 organizations for COVID response and recovery.

Major private funders of the position included individual philanthropists, The Community Foundation, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation and the United Way of Northeast Florida.

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McGinnis, Clements Achieve Director-Emeritus

Two of the longest-serving board members of Junior Achievement of North Florida (JA), Fred McGinnis and Mike Clements, are the first board members to achieve the designation of director-emeritus. McGinnis was appointed to the board in 1977 and served 46 years. Clements joined in 1991 and has spent 32 years on the board.

“The dedication that Fred and Mike have shown to Junior Achievement will likely never be surpassed,” said Shannon Italia, president of JA of North Florida. “Their commitment to the advancement of young people in North Florida through JA’s programs teaching financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work readiness is honorable. In the last four decades, our nonprofit has grown a lot, and that is in part to Fred and Mike’s guidance.”



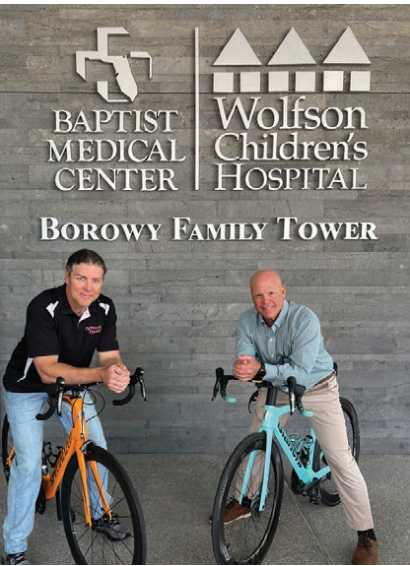
The pair, fondly referred to as “rare breeds” by Board Chair Meg Rose, has also served as volunteers and fundraisers for JA. With the new designation, the two will remain members of the board but will not be involved in motions and voting.

“I enjoyed being there and helping grow Junior Achievement. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching the younger kids the value of free enterprise. The value of being an entrepreneur,” said Clements.

“Rare breeds.”
– Meg Rose, Board Chair

When asked what he would like to see for the future of JA, McGinnis said he would like to see every board member go into the classroom at least once or twice.

“Until you get into the classroom you really don’t appreciate the value of Junior Achievement,” he said.



Moi Monroe and Jason Rogers days before their cross-country ride.

Cross-Country Ride for a Cure

Cyclists Moi Monroe and Jason Rogers recently embarked on a nearly 5,000-mile cross-country cycling trek in support of Wolfson Children’s Hospital. The two friends began their 42-day journey in Anchorage, Alaska, on July 22 in the hope to raise money and awareness for families battling childhood cancer. Their ride is in partnership with Wolfson Children’s and the Georgia-based Mattie’s Mission, and will end at Wolfson Children’s in September, during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

Competition Turned Co-Counsel

The Law Firm of Pajcic & Pajcic has welcomed a former foe into the firm. Duke Regan spent 15 years defending health care professionals as an insurance defense litigator, but now joins the Pajcic & Pajcic team to focus on medical malpractice cases and civil litigation. He brings a wealth of knowledge on how to tackle complex medical negligence cases. Regan and attorney Seth Pajcic went to high school together and Pajcic had witnessed him in action many times over the years.

“I wanted Duke on our team,” said Pajcic.

Regan has been named a Florida Super Lawyers Rising Star and Florida Trend Legal Elite multiple times. He also received Chamber and Partners’ highest rating for medical negligence litigation.



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AG Lafley

Lafley Keynotes the Great Cities Symposium

Former Procter & Gamble (PG) CEO AG Lafley will be the guest speaker at Scenic Jacksonville's fourth annual Great Cities Symposium, scheduled for Wednesday, October 4, from 5:30-8 p.m. at the Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1005 Riverside Avenue. The evening includes a cocktail hour, hors d'oeuvres and a Q&A following Lafley's remarks. Tickets are \$100 per person and available for purchase at www.scenicjax.org.

In addition to his two terms as PG chairman, Lafley has been honored with some of the highest awards in business, including CEO of the Year. He also founded and served as board chair of Cincinnati Center City Development, which focused on the renewal and redevelopment of downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. After moving to Sarasota, he became the founding CEO of The Bay Park Conservancy, which is creating a \$200 million-dollar, 50+ acre, bayfront public park.

Henry to Lead Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation

Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Ascension St. Vincent's health care system, appointed Patrick Henry II its new president. Henry began in his new role at the Riverside-based organization in late June.

Henry brings more than 13 years of fundraising experience leading development campaigns for nonprofit and academic medical centers including UF Health Shands, the American Heart Association and the University of South Florida Foundation. Most recently, he spearheaded multiple fundraising programs at UF Health that resulted in millions of dollars raised. He helped secure the second largest individual gift ever for UF Health's cancer center.

"I'm thrilled to join the Foundation and lead efforts to raise funds and awareness for the advanced medical treatment offered at Ascension St. Vincent facilities," Henry said. "Helping care for individuals and families who are impoverished or underinsured is an exciting aspect of our mission and our community outreach."



Patrick Henry II

Developmental Learning Center Selects Annual Honors and Promotes New Director

The Developmental Learning Center (DLC) recently announced its annual Teacher and Volunteer of the Year honors for 2022-23. Aixa Atherton was honored as DLC's 2022-23 Teacher of Year. Nominated by her peers and selected by the board of directors, Atherton's nomination included feedback like, "She puts her whole heart and soul into her students," and "She sees the good in each and every person."



Aixa Atherton



Allison Sample



Carolyn Janzen

DLC selected Allison Sample as its 2022-23 Volunteer of the Year. Sample has been volunteering with DLC for two years and recently joined the board. She has volunteered countless hours on special events, served on multiple committees and as a community advocate for DLC's mission. Sample led the efforts for DLC's campus beautification project and poured hours into personally pulling weeds, planting new flowers and pressure washing the campus. She recently co-led the efforts of the inaugural Derby & Diamonds event that raised over \$60,000 for the organization.

Internally, Carolyn Janzen, DLC's physical therapist since 2022, was promoted to the organization's director of therapy. With an emphasis on neurology and pediatrics, Janzen has practiced physical therapy for 32 years. She's also served internationally, travelling many years with Medical Ministry International to the Dominican Republic to provide physical therapy with a medical missionary team and co-leading mission teams from her church to Haiti and the Bahamas.



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Dale Porter

Porter Splashes into Top 50

Bolles School Sharks Head Age Group Coach Dale Porter has been named among the Top 50 Age Group Coaches of the Year for 2023 by the American Swimming Coaches Association and Fitter and Faster.

Coaches were selected based on USA Swimming's National Rankings, including both long-course meters and short-course yards data for the 9-10 and 11-12 age groups from May 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023. Bonus points were awarded to coaches whose swimmers had attained No. 1 national rankings and for coaches with multiple swimmers ranked.

From the Top 50 coaches, the Coach of the Year will be selected and announced at the September 7 ASCA World Clinic in Dallas. The 10 finalists will be revealed in July and will all be honored at the world clinic. Porter was named among the 10 finalists in 2021.

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Mason to Chair No Place Like Home

Chavet Constable Mason, local business owner and Guardian ad Litem Foundation (GALF) Volunteer, will act as the event chair for the foundation's annual fundraiser, There's No Place Like Home, to be held on Saturday, November 4, 2023. The Emerald City-worthy event will be held at the Garden Club of Jacksonville in Riverside from 6-10 p.m. GALF supports the Guardian ad Litem Office, which is the primary child abuse victim advocacy agency in Florida.

Mason is the owner of the Jacksonville-based Starlight Valet and Parking Services. She is also a mother, wife and veteran of the United States Navy. She has served as a Guardian Ad Litem volunteer and is a nine-year board member of GALF. As a personal survivor of severe child abuse, being the event Chair for There's No Place Like Home is very personal to Mason.

"Our mission is to protect and provide our children in our community with safety, security and empower them to thrive in their lives. Together, we can make sure these children overcome the adversity they have experienced through no fault of their own," said Mason. "I'm excited to see the impact we can make."



Chavet Constable Mason



Linda Lindenmoyer



Michael Howland

New Board for Leadership Jacksonville

Leadership Jacksonville, an organization that educates, connects and inspires diverse leaders to build and strengthen their communities, announced its 2023-24 newly elected officers and board members. The Leadership Jacksonville board of directors is now led by President Linda Lindenmoyer, Vice President of Relocation for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices.

"It is my honor and privilege to serve LJ as board president for this coming fiscal year," said Lindenmoyer. "I look forward to working with our board and am grateful for their willingness to share their unique talents and perspectives. Together, with a very talented staff and the diverse skills of this board, I am confident and excited about the future of Leadership Jacksonville."

Appointed 2023-24 Officers:

- President-Elect: Cynthia Griffin, Vice President, Government Pharmacy Programs, Florida Blue
- Secretary/Treasurer: Will Smith
- Immediate Past President: Michael Howland, President and Chief Executive Officer, Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center

Governor Earmarks \$5M for Pediatric Behavioral Health

Governor Ron DeSantis' 2023-2024 state budget (SB 2500) went into effect on July 1, which includes a \$5 million appropriation toward a new 20-bed inpatient pediatric behavioral health unit at Wolfson Children's Hospital.

"For decades, Baptist Health has made it our mission to address this critical need for Northeast Florida and beyond," said Michael A. Mayo, DHA, FACHE, president and CEO of Baptist Health, which includes Wolfson Children's Hospital. "While it is a significant investment, it is necessary to address health and well-being from a holistic perspective."

Despite demand, there are only 65 pediatric inpatient behavioral health beds between Daytona Beach and Fernandina Beach. Many providers do not have the resources to invest in inpatient pediatric behavioral health beds, which some attribute to low Medicaid reimbursement.

"Members of the Northeast Florida Legislative Delegation have a unique understanding of the need for inpatient behavioral health beds in the greater Jacksonville area," said Allegra C. Jaros, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital. "Northeast Florida has long been challenged to match limited mental health resources for children and adolescents with the overwhelming demand for this specialized type of care."

The inpatient behavioral health unit is expected to be completed in early 2024.

Cultural Council Celebrates Golden Anniversary

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville will celebrate its 50th anniversary at its annual Arts Awards on September 21. This event celebrates regional organizations and leaders working to deliver high-quality arts and culture programming throughout the community.

The Arts Awards, presented this year in partnership with Downtown Vision, recognizes individuals, businesses, educators and advocates across eight categories. The nominees were vetted by a comprehensive panel of volunteers that includes Cultural Council board members, former winners, artists, community representatives and the City of Jacksonville. In addition to the awards night, winners will be highlighted on the Southbank RiverWalk during Downtown Vision's monthly Sip 'N Stroll.

"Honoring our creative community and sector, for over 50 years, is one of the greatest privileges and capacities we serve," said Diana Donovan, executive director of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville. "Jacksonville is rich in creative game changers, from innovation to education to philanthropy – and we stand ready to celebrate them all."

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New Restaurant for San Marco

City Grille now open

City Grille and Raw Bar, located in historic San Marco at 1314 Prudential Drive, opened to the public July 25. It is located at the site of the former Wine Cellar restaurant on the Downtown Southbank. The new restaurant concept draws inspiration from restaurants in Chicago, New York, Charleston, Nashville, Savannah and travels abroad. The menu offers seafood, steak and other seasonal specialties, as well as an extensive wine list. The Raw Bar features fresh oysters and a selection of ceviche, tartar and crudo.

“We are really excited about this opening. There have been some construction and development delays which are to be expected with an older building renovation, but we are thrilled with the result, and it was worth the wait,” said John Nagy, owner along with his wife, Karen Belloit Thomas.

Nagy and Thomas are longtime Riverside residents who have owned and operated Eleven South in Jacksonville Beach since 2005. Thomas also owned The Filling Station until 1994, which was located in the same city block of City Grille and Raw Bar.

“I am thrilled to be back in my stomping grounds of San Marco and love to see some of the great revitalization projects happening in the area,” said Thomas. “We are passionate about food, service and the experience. And that is what we want to deliver.”

City Grille and Raw Bar is open Tuesday-Friday at 11 a.m. for lunch and Tuesday-Saturday at 5 p.m. for dinner. Sunday brunch hours start at 11 a.m. Reservations are encouraged.



The board of the Merchants Association of Avondale presented Hooshang Harvesf, affectionately referred to as “The Mayor of Avondale,” a recognition plaque for being the longest single proprietor in Avondale. His business, Hooshang Oriental Rugs was established in 1977. Pictured are Bronwyn Benoit, Lindsey Bush, Hooshang Harvesf, Cathie Clark, Erica Davis and Liz Bobeck at the plaque presentation.

Gornick Joins The Windsor at Ortega



Cynthia Gornick

Cynthia “Cyndi” Gornick comes to The Windsor at Ortega with more than 20 years of experience in senior living. She holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration and is CORE certified as an Assisted Living Administrator. She will serve as the sales director for the organization.

Having grown up in Philadelphia, Cynthia is an avid Eagles fan with a passion to assist families in navigating through the decision-making process and transition of a loved one’s move into senior living. The Windsor at Ortega offers assisted living and memory care services with around-the-clock caregivers.

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Dr. Mark A. Toney

Toney to Take New Position at Wolfson Children’s Hospital

Dr. Mark A. Toney, a board-certified pediatrician and pediatric hospitalist who has served the Northeast Florida community for more than 20 years, has been appointed to the newly created position

of vice president of medical affairs at Wolfson Children’s Hospital, effective November 1, 2023.

In this role, Dr. Toney will focus on the effectiveness of clinical care for children who are served at all Wolfson Children’s locations. He will work closely with community

pediatricians and pediatric specialists with Nemours Children’s Health, the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville, and other collaborating pediatric healthcare organizations.

“Dr. Toney’s significant experience and expertise as a respected pediatric clinician, combined with his natural leadership ability and outstanding communication skills, make him the perfect fit to serve as vice president of medical affairs. I look forward to working with him on initiatives to further enhance care across the continuum for patients and families,” said Dr. Timothy G. Groover, senior vice president and system chief medical officer, Baptist Health.

Partnership for Child Health Turns 30

The Jacksonville-based nonprofit Partnership for Child Health (Partnership) celebrated its 30th anniversary in July, having served tens of thousands of children and families with integrated health, justice and trauma-informed services. Over the past decade, it has distributed nearly \$60 million in funding to community-based organizations through public and private grants and contracts.

The Partnership has catalyzed and sustained more than 50 initiatives over the decades, developed numerous models of national and international distinction, and has been recognized nationally and internationally for its child rights-based approaches to child health and well-being, particularly for marginalized children and youth.

“For thirty years, our community has convened the partners and generated the funding necessary to develop and implement innovative services and systems of care to address the holistic needs and rights of children and families throughout our region,” said Jeffrey Goldhagen, medical director for the Partnership.

In collaboration with the Kids Hope Alliance and multiple community mental health organizations, the Partnership has received \$9 million in funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to address children’s mental health challenges.

“Guided by data and research, we have expanded our services areas across the city to serve the health zones and communities that have needed our resources the most,” said Vicki Waytowich, executive director. “The results have been transforming for the families we serve – from direct service for justice-involved youth to supporting families who have experienced trauma. We know our work is far from done, however. Together, we have made tremendous progress to advance the health and well-being of the families we serve.”

The Partnership for Child Health will mark its 30th anniversary at a private event on Tuesday, August 29, at The Jessie.

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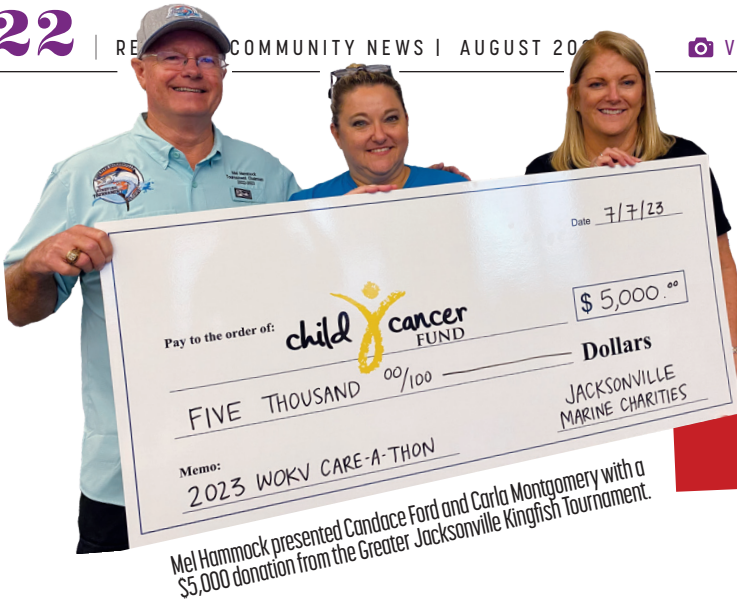


as well as litigation concerning dangerous consumer products and unsafe motor vehicles.



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WOKV Care-a-thon RAISES \$300K+ for Child Cancer Fund



Tenikka Hughes and Carla Montgomery

Now in its 9th year, the WOKV Care-a-thon presented by Duval Asphalt, raised over \$300,000 to benefit Child Cancer Fund, which provides caring support, resources and financial assistance to local families fighting childhood cancer. This year marked more than \$2 million in overall donations for the cause since Care-a-thon's inception in 2014.

More than 150 community leaders, sponsors, families and supporters, including over 85 volunteers, gathered at Nemours Children's Health for the day-long radiothon, hosted by WOKV's Rich Jones. Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Sheriff T.K. Waters and Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department Director/

Fire Chief Keith Powers were among the community leaders who came to show their support, make donations and challenge others to do the same.

Nationally syndicated Clark Howard joined Jones on the air while Action News Jax did live segments throughout the day. 95.1 WAPE's Dex and Barbie T and ESPN 690's Brent and Friends shows also broadcast live from the call center.

"I can't tell you how much the outpouring of support from the community means to our families," said Carla Montgomery, executive director of Child Cancer Fund. "The gift of extra time it gives them to spend with their children during those critical times is priceless."

The Child Cancer Fund was started in 1994 by a group of Jacksonville parents whose own children were fighting childhood cancer. Care-a-thon will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Child Cancer Fund.



Clark Howard



Mayor Donna Deegan chatted with Logan Silva, now 13, who fought medulloblastoma at age 7, and is pictured during his fight on the panel behind him.



Doctors Eric Sandler and Anderson Collier with Peggy Parish



The Silva family



THE PLAYERS' Lee Smith, Miranda Rossum and Emily Bellack



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Sheriff TK Waters sent a \$500 donation challenge to Fire Chief Keith Powers during Care-a-lition to which he responded with a \$500 donation.



Clark Howard on air with Rich Jones.



Darlene and Joe Jeseeph



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'68 CELEBRATES 55

ROBERT E. LEE CLASS OF 1968 AT THEIR 55TH REUNION

More than 100 graduates of the Robert E. Lee Class of 1968 rocked out at the Ortega River Club to celebrate their 55th high school reunion. Amusing conversations included thoughts on how "55 years ago" now feels like just "last week" or "a few days ago."

Alumni traveled from near and far. Ron Baker traveled cross-country from Seattle, Washington, to be with his old classmates while super-local Tommy Young only had to go three blocks from his current home to the old high school. Attendees enjoyed dancing, singing and musical classics like "Louie, Louie" and The Righteous Brothers' "Unchained Melody."

Several of the attendees donned attire from their youthful era. Entertaining awards were given for those with the most grand- and great-grandchildren, those who have been married the longest – Pam Register Murray and Rudy Murray who were married December 12, 1968, and still live in Jacksonville! – and newlyweds Victoria (Box) and Ronzana Emmons. Twenty classmates in attendance had been to nine or more reunions.

Longtime friends John Covil and Candy Henderson reflected on their school days together at West Riverside Elementary and John Gorrie Junior High before they came to Lee High School while co-committee chairs Darlene Joseph and Lynda Reynolds crowned Pam Murray as reunion queen. Other committee members included: Ramsey Salem, Gail Pender, Elizabeth Britt, Dee Lucas, Sherry Colton, Cary Whittier, Percy Rosenbloom, Victoria Emmons, Jen Gamble, Candy Henderson, Nancy Ware and Carol Ann Para.



Pam and Rudy Murray



Carol Ann Para, Elizabeth Britt, Dee Lucas, Sherry Colton, Lynda Frye Reynolds and Jan Harris Gamble



Gail Pender and Dee Lucas



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ANIMAL HOUSE

Something to Bark About

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA

It was raining cats and dogs inside the Avenues Mall lower level at the 2023 Petco Love Mega Pet Adoption Event on June 23-25. The event finally returned to Northeast Florida, having been on hold since October 2019 due to COVID-19 and economic factors. Petco stores at Marsh Landing Parkway and Kernan Village participated, while the Jacksonville Humane Society (JHS), Duval County Animal Care & Protective Services, and the Clay and Nassau County Animal Services brought animals in for adoption. As part of the promotion, all adoptions were free, with some exclusions.

Denise Deisler, who has led JHS as CEO for the past 12 years, called the event a “thrilling success,” with 1,946 pet adoptions across Florida that weekend, including all locations. Deisler reported that 943 cats and 1,003 dogs happily went home with their new families. Those numbers have continued to increase as some attendees decided to adopt pets they had met at the event in the days following.

The gray, stormy weather outside did not dampen the excitement in the mall’s lower level, where a sprawling pet-viewing area encircled an adoption counseling command center. A small, busy army of helpful volunteers and staff guided guests through the rows of neatly arranged crates, where families searched for their new best friend and family member.

Conversations about individual animals could be overheard on every aisle between staff pet advisors, volunteers and potential adopters. Individuals of all ages, couples and families were petting, talking to,



An owner reunited with her lost pet at Mega Pet Adoption.

Dekaia, 8, and Locklinn Figuerrez, 6, wanted to adopt all the kittens, according to mom, Megan.

holding and getting to know animals they were considering for adoption.

Emerson and Anne Banas of Arlington adopted Shaffer, 2, a large, mixed-breed, 55-pound male dog from Nassau County Animal Services.

“We have had Rottweilers for 30 years; our last one passed a while ago. We have missed having a dog,” Emerson Banas said. “Our 25th wedding anniversary is in August. We thought this was a perfect way to celebrate that, too. Then we got here and met Shaffer and fell in love with him.”

Jami Davidson and her daughter Kenzie, 12, of Baymeadows, saw the event advertised on Facebook and came to shop, but made a beeline straight for the kittens. Their choice was a silky black beauty who made it quite clear the Davidsons were his choice too. Davidson said that they always try to choose solid black animals, because those usually have the most difficulty being adopted.

“The cats and kittens are getting a lot of attention. Several kittens were claimed by people who were here

early the minute we brought them out of their carriers,” said Kathryn Belina, a JHS volunteer, who also organizes her co-workers at Florida Blue to group volunteer walking dogs at the JHS shelter every month.

The Mega Pet Adoption weekend often brings more than just happy adoption stories. A potential adopter who had lost her dog visited the event to adopt another pet. To her shock and amazement, as she walked down the aisles of available dogs, she saw her own lost dog!

Bystanders recorded the tearful reunion in photographs as the overwhelmed owner cried out, dropped to her knees and pressed her head to her dog’s forehead through the crate. He had been taken to Clay County Animal Services as a stray dog who was never claimed and was brought to the adoption event.

The Mega Pet Adoption Event was made possible when organizations like JHS and the animal shelters joined with the event’s national sponsors, Petco Love, BOBS from Skechers and I Heart Media. The statewide, coordinated marketing and promotional campaign supported the mission of 45 participating Florida animal welfare groups. Their goal was to find loving families for hundreds of shelter dogs and cats in 31 Florida counties. Nineteen Florida Petco stores and three large regional events, like the one at The Avenues Mall, all hosted adoptable pets. Deisler said this was the first time that government and private agencies coordinated in an effort of this kind and size in Florida.

Jacksonville first offered Mega Pet Adoption Events in 2011 and 2012, and the successful idea was soon copied by communities nationwide, according to Deisler. Planning has already begun for the 2024 event.

“We were thrilled with the results and the number of adoptions for an event that took place across Florida,” said Deisler. 🐾



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Thank You Notes

FROM MY EMPTY NEST PERCH

BY SUSANNA BARTON

I had a sweet, introspective column on friendships and community planned for this month, but a recent Facebook comment stirred me up real, real bad and inspired a much different – but equally important – writing topic: the meaning of names, and why we should all just simmer down already and be grateful for them – even the trending ones that twist up our identities and rebrand us negatively in memes and pop culture banter from time to time. (I’m looking at you, Karen, Becky and Stacy!)* No name is immune. And if you think it’s, like – SUH unfair – your name has been drawn and is now the cultural signifier du jour, just wait a minute. This too shall pass. And soon you’ll be like every other Tom, Dick and Harry – just an inconspicuous, average everyday person out there doing life in the wide, wide world.

Today, I am grateful for the double meanings of our names, our misnomers – many of which belong to our closest neighbors, friends and family. Our Resident Community includes many such examples, and for this I am super thankful because it makes writing this column extra fun!

I’ll start with my own name: Susanna. Unless you’re a Bible scholar and immediately think of the woman in Luke 8: 1-3 whom Jesus cured of “evil spirits and diseases,” you probably hum a tune when you hear my name for the first time, and I’m pretty sure that song is “Oh, Susanna!” This popular American song has been going strong since 1848 – that makes almost 200 years that all the Susannas, Susanas, Suzannas and Susannahs of the world have endured this godforsaken jingle during well intentioned introductions. It would be better if the Susanna in the song was a respectable heroine, but NO: she is a boo-hooper pining away for some roving stalker in Alabama. Not impressive.

I took Russian classes in college and my professor gave me a Russian nickname, which was Сусанна (pronounced Sues-yah) which means “dirty girl” if in Spanish, so that is pretty rich and funny if you’re into linguistics. One more layer of hardy-har-har to tolerate when you’re blessed with the name Susanna.

This name game didn’t just start yesterday, or whenever memes and some unexpected woman named Karen pinched her lips and asked to “speak to the manager.” This stuff has been going

on a very, very long time. I mean, poor Job in the Old Testament! His reputation was so bad, you hardly ever hear someone name their kid Job anymore. These days it’s something hip like Jobie, which is def cuter than the poor grief-stricken original, but does make you wonder about the circumstances of their birth – or their future health – nonetheless.

Let’s not even start with the name Jezebel. Does anyone even have that name anymore? I think it died after that first edition Bible was published. Too much inappropriate context.

Though, who can forget about poor Martha in the New Testament. “Gah, don’t be a Martha,” Jesus told everyone back in the late-BC, early-AD while she wringed her hostess-pained hands together in the kitchen and golden child Mary lounged by his feet. Martha may very well have been the OG Karen, though like Karen, not every Martha you know acts like one.

Barbie and Ken are more modern-day renditions of cultural signifiers. You know exactly what I mean when I describe some pop singers, models or influencers – or co-workers – as Barbies. I might be insinuating someone is fake and plastic in their appearance and conversation. Barbiecore also is a trending aesthetic, lots of hot pink, glitter and gaudiness. Ken, we know him, too. Add a Chad, or Terry or Greg. These names have very specific meanings to some people, but do you ever hear a Barbara, Chad, Terrence or Gregory pitching a fit about their nickname being a cut-down du jour? No, you do not.

As the Fountains of Wayne song goes, “Stacy’s mom has got it going on,” but let’s be clear, not every mother of a Stacy does – most are just matronly and not interested. Neither is every oldest sister a type-A Marcia, Marcia, Marcia as described by middle sister Jan on “The Brady Bunch.” Jan’s Marcia is not everyone’s Marcia.

No way, Jose! How annoying if your name is Jose or Joseph or Joe. Speaking of Joe, “Joe-Joe” is what my 95-year-old father-in-law likes to call that stupid punk who cuts you off in traffic or careens through residential areas at an unreasonable speed. Is every Joe or Joe-Joe a Joe-Joe in the pejorative? No, they are not. Though some most certainly seem to act like one. And those poor Joneses, everyone – I mean EVERYONE – is trying to keep up with them, just Jones-

ing for some social cache and expensive accoutrements. I know some Joneses, and not many of them are living the Jeff Bezos life – though funny, some actually are. It all depends, you see.

It’s just all too much – maybe I’ll slip you a Mickey. Such a shame the Mickeys and Michaels of the world are forever connected to such nefarious behavior. This name game, it’s so unpredictable, so...Randy... that names like Randall are reduced to uncomfortable, out-of-the-blue moments of weird fortune.

“Saturday Night Live” has really wrecked some perfectly normal, under-the-radar names. Pat is forever linked to androgyny thanks to the “It’s Pat!” skit. If you’re a meathead or gym rat, you’ve probably been called Hans or Franz sometime during the three decades following Dana Carvey and Kevin Nealon’s brilliant sketch. Same goes for Debbie Downer if you have a negative countenance or Mr. Bill if you’re the kind of person who always ends up in life’s splat. SNL is an applaudable factory for those spot-on monikers.

Did you say your name was Janet? Miss Jackson if you’re nasty? Well, don’t get me started on the wisecracks people named Pete, Fanny, Willy, Jack and Cooter must endure. It’s all so Willy Nilly! Ah, don’t be such a Pollyanna, you know what I’m talking about here – no need to be Coy. If you’re still in the dark, ask Alexa and she’ll tell you everything you need to know. TBH, I think people named Alexa have it the worst. You can’t even say their name in most homes without being secretly recorded or yelled at or rudely interrupted.

Speaking of rude interruptions, nothing intrudes on my appearance more than eating fish, shellfish or soy. Thanks to these new mid-life food allergies, my face can expand to the size of a European sham pillow, a horrifying look also known as the Jocelyn Wildenstein, or the Cat Lady. That’s not exactly a nice thing to say, but look ‘ole Jocelyn up on the Google machine: her image is absolutely on point here.

I have run out of names with good double-meanings and social currency, but I think you catch my drift. Whether your name is Karen or Mickey, Pat or Job – or a name not yet connected to some meme or trending Tik-Tok video – be patient and keep moving. It will be some other neighborhood Patsy’s turn one day soon!

(*In case your name is Wilson and you’ve been living on a deserted island for the past few years unaware of current cultural references, “Karen” is the meme name ascribed to an angry, complaining white woman usually with short, angled hair who demands to speak to the manager about things that displease her. A “Becky” is defined by Dictionary.com as a stereotype for a “basic” woman who is unaware or takes advantage of her social privilege. Dictionary.com defines a “Stacy” as “stereotype for an attractive woman who is vain, rude and only interested in sex.” Oh my! As you might guess, women with these names are often fed up with hearing all the pop culture references and are just. Not. Having it. They also are not shy about letting you know, ermahgah.)



Сусанна Barton is NOT a dirty girl. She raised her family very wholesomely in Granada and has written professionally for The Jacksonville Business Journal, The Resident, Jacksonville University and The Bolles School. She currently manages an online community called Grand Plans, which addresses geriscaries and all things elderly on www.mygrandplans.com. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.



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JOURNEYS IN AN RV

Retirement on the Road

Part 2: No reservations

BY FAITH JONES

If you missed Part 1, you can read it at www.residentnews.net

The first column in this series on retirement focused on trip planning for our cross-country RV adventure and planning ahead – which leads us to this month's topic: the importance of reservations.

Even if you are not traveling in an RV, coordinating all your trip details, times, dates and costs can be a scheduling nightmare. At times, I worked backwards in making the park or tour reservations, as there were specific parks and tours I wanted to experience. But, in many cases, I had to wait for the reservation window to open. Knowing that window time frame was important. Some open three or six months in advance, others a full year.

It helped to have alerts on my calendar reminding me when a window was opening. In the popular parks, the reservations are gone in minutes. Once those “must have” reservations were made, I could then backfill other stops.

I found that many of the national parks required timed reservations to enter, so I made those as soon as I could. You don't want to make the mistake of not having a reservation pass and get turned around at the entrance. We saw several cars make the “U-turn of shame,” as we called it, at Glacier National Park. Glacier's Going-to-the-Sun Road, the major scenic drive in the park, is a three-day pass. Rates for the national park vary depending on time of year.



Two new alpaca friends from Harvest Host's Heart and Soul Alpacas in Whitehall, Montana.

We also wanted to take tours within the park system, but found those reservations much harder to obtain. I wasn't aware the tours were so popular and tickets would be hard to come by – a novice mistake.

One morning, while trying to get tour reservations for Mesa Verde National Park, we used both phones and two iPads to try to get into the reservation system the moment it opened. We even began hitting the online tour pass “submit” button a few minutes before the reservation system opened. No luck. Within seconds, the tickets were gone. We tried again the following morning with the same system, and finally were able to get reservations for one of the two tours we hoped to experience.

While on the topic of national parks, we found having a Lifetime National

Park Pass made getting into parks easier and less expensive. The one-time \$80 pass fee paid for itself in no time. A quick flash of your park card and ID and in you went.

We found that staying in state parks over private campgrounds was a money saver. Most state park fees were \$25-\$30 per night and were less crowded, with larger campsites.

When we weren't staying in parks, we stayed at Harvest Hosts. These are exclusive to RVs only. The annual membership fee is roughly \$100. Membership allows access to over 3,000 farms, breweries, wineries, museums and distilleries, where members can camp for one night. Most don't offer any services, though some might have an electric hook-up for a small fee.

The beauty of Harvest Hosts is the host location will give you a tour of their specialty, and often have a store where they sell their local goods. We have found them to be very educational, and are our favorite places to stay. We have stayed at a lavender farm where we were gifted a dozen fresh eggs the next morning, an alpaca farm where we bought alpaca yarn after learning all about alpacas, a sunflower farm which produced flavorful sunflower oils, a distillery which stocked us up on gifts of bourbon and whiskey, and a regenerative farm where we learned all about composting. We highly recommend Harvest Hosts for an overnight stay.

Bottom line: to fully enjoy a trip with no reservations, make sure you have reservations.



Heart and Soul Alpacas in Whitehall, Montana, has two cabins, room for 2-3 RVs and a unique gift shop. There is no charge for the beautiful scenery.



Booking time with a National Park Service Ranger is the most efficient way to learn more about the park you are visiting. This Zion National Park ranger, Lexi, was knowledgeable, full of personality and very energetic.



On Independence Day, eight local rock climbers scale the 450-foot-high walls of Colorado National Monument, formerly part of a massive eroded rock wall, to annually raise the American flag.

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A Plea for Art Preservation



BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Brenda Kato is one of several artists who have brought their large-scale works to life in murals throughout the Murray Hill community.

In 2017, she painted “Bloom Where You Are Planted,” a 25-foot tribute to Vincent Van Gogh, in collaboration with Mary Allegretti, at 4045 Post Street. At the time, it was the ninth mural in the Murray Hill Preservation Association’s Community Beautification Project.

In March of last year, The District Church purchased the building and shared plans to renovate it in a Facebook post.

Kato said these plans include painting over her mural. Since learning this, she has launched a campaign to help convince the new property owners to preserve the artwork.

“I can’t even really believe this is really happening,” she said. “I can’t believe anyone would want to paint over beautiful murals.”

Kato said she has reached out to the property owners and has met twice with them to discuss preserving the mural or collaborating on a new design, citing the long-held relationship between church and artist but said the proposal has not gained traction.

It is a delicate situation, Kato said, acknowledging property owners’ rights to do what they wish to their property, including painting over a mural. She stated she does not wish to alienate or cause a backlash against new community members before they even move in, particularly a church congregation.

“It’s delicate. I’m aware of all of that. That’s why I’m trying to make it a little bigger than me and say, ‘If this neighborhood likes their artsy look, then they need to say something. And they need to say it to the owners of the property, “We love this. Don’t paint over it.””

Kato has encouraged community members and art lovers to show their support by signing her petition and leaving their own reviews on Google Maps, which marks the mural as a local landmark.

If painted over, Kato said hers will be the fourth one lost to the community. Artist and former Murray Hill Preservation Association President Jason Tetlak has also seen one of his murals lost and said it’s “disappointing” to see these colorful walls convert back to flat grey, though he recognized, ultimately, those decisions are at the property owners’ discretion.

“It really just comes down to, as I said, convincing the owner to not paint over [it] and educate them as to the benefits of what artwork in the neighborhood has done for the community and why it’s important to keep it there,” he said.

The District Church declined to comment on its renovation plans or on the mural specifically.

Those interested in learning more about the mural or signing the petition can do so at www.katocreative.com/project/spiral-vortex-sunflower

“I can’t believe anyone would want to paint over beautiful murals.”

– Brenda Kato
Artist

Artist Brenda Kato stands before her mural, “Bloom Where You Are Planted.” The sunflowers mural is at risk of removal with the new property owners’ renovation plans.

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Viktor's Payless and Grocery off San Juan Avenue is built on a simple cornerstone: offer a variety of goods at discounted prices. Yet customers who have frequented this well-known local store all know the same secret: no experience will be like the one before. While they know every visit will bring a smile from Viktor's helpful, friendly staff, each trip brings the excitement of discovering surprise inventory and intriguing new items.

Viktor's Payless and Grocery is a go-to for many household staples. The store receives weekly shipments of new, discounted merchandise ranging from clothes and nonperishable groceries to everything from cleaning supplies, appliances, tools, designer-brand furniture, rugs, mattresses and more. Sometimes, what's inside those truck deliveries, is a surprise even to owner Viktor Gjergji.

"We always have something new," Gjergji said. "The beauty of this type of business is that it changes daily."

Though the liquidation store has been a staple in the community for more than 60 years, Gjergji only took ownership of it in 2009 when the former owner, Denny's Payless, decided to walk away from the business.

"It was family-owned before me, and now, it's family-owned again, too," he said.

In order to pass along steep discounts to his customers, Gjergji purchases goods from government auctions and seizures, custom auctions, warehouse liquidations, and unclaimed freight and overstocks from other retailers. When

a shipment of furniture is delivered to his store, he may not always know what type of furniture will be inside.

"It can be somewhat of a mystery, but that's what makes it fun," Gjergji said.



While the price of many goods and services has continued to increase, supply has decreased, and families are struggling to stay afloat, Gjergji keeps his store fully stocked with items people truly need.

"One of my passions is to keep prices as low as I can," he said. "And what you see is what you get."

What you get, as many locals know, is honesty. Gjergji prides himself on being upfront and honest with his customers. Prices are clearly marked and

there is no hidden, fine print to confuse or trick his customers.

During the COVID pandemic, Viktor's Payless was one of the few that remained stocked with anti-bacterial items and cleaning supplies. Today,

inventory is still strong, even at much lower prices than other stores. A bottle of Lysol disinfectant spray is nearly \$1 less at Viktor's Payless than at his competitors.

"We have tried to keep our prices stable," Gjergji said. "I try to not let it get out of hand."

The Viktor's Payless shopping center, which consists of three buildings, is about 60,000 square feet of wall-to-wall bargains. Gjergji began with one store, expanded and then took over his third

space, which was previously occupied by the Family Dollar.

Viktor's Payless Salvage and Furniture, which focuses on home furnishings, includes deals on furniture brands like Lulu and Georgia, Broyhill and Lilly Pulitzer. He also offers name-brand mattresses from Stearns & Foster, Sealy and Serta.

"I promise you won't leave these three stores without something in your hand," Gjergji said.

While Gjergji work passion is passing discounts onto his customers, his personal passion is helping others. He enjoys being able to help local nonprofits, homeless shelters and churches. When he has overstock of an item, such as sheets or clothing, Gjergji donates them to people in need, like those transitioning out of incarceration, or victims seeking shelter from domestic violence and abuse. He doesn't do it for notoriety or ego, but out of gratitude and a true appreciation for community.

"I came with nothing, and I believe the community is who gave me something," he said.

Gjergji grew up in Albania, escaped to Yugoslavia and eventually immigrated to the United States in 1991. His thankfulness for the community that welcomed him is apparent in his demeanor. And from the loyalty of his repeat customers there's no doubt it is reciprocal.

Viktor's Payless and Grocery is located at 6612 San Juan Avenue and is open Tuesday-Saturday from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. With an ever-changing inventory, Gjergji recommends calling the store at (904) 786-5424 to ensure online items are still available.

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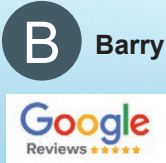
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LOCAL FOLKS



“It’s how I keep myself sane!”



Laura and Noah Ray, Horseshoe Bend, AZ



Noah Ray, MPA, FAEM



Noah Ray's Bucket Garden

BY MARY WANSE

Noah Ray, MPA, FAEM serves as the Emergency Preparedness Supervisor at Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department. He has been with them since 2016. To unwind, the self-taught Ray plays bass guitar. During his high school days at Stanton College Prep, he played in the jazz band. These days, he jams with friends.

“It’s how I keep myself sane,” he said. “I mostly play metal, rock ‘n’ roll and blues.”

Ray doesn’t perform like he used to because of time constraints. His job often requires him to be away. A case in point is when the small town of Rolling Fork, Mississippi was hit by a large tornado in late March. Ray was deployed there with the Florida Region 3 All-Hazards Incident Management Team to support local recovery operations through a mutual aid agreement between the states.

Ray has been married to his wife, Laura, for four years. They graduated from Stanton together in 2007. He stayed in Jacksonville to attend the University of North Florida, while she went off to Gainesville to pursue a degree at the University of Florida. Eight years later, they met up again at downtown Jacksonville’s International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union hall where they both were attending a Bernie Sanders rally. Together, they campaigned for the Vermont senator while he was running for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. Ever devoted to him, the Rays later named their three cats in his honor – Bernie, Jane (his wife), and Larry (his brother).

As a music enthusiast, Ray, attends quite a few local concerts when he’s home. Since Freebird and the Landing closed, Rain Dogs in 5 Points and Daily’s Place downtown have become two of his favorite venues. But, music isn’t Ray’s only hobby.

“During COVID, I started gardening a bit when I had some free time,” he said. In his Avondale yard on Macarthur Street, he has grown a variety of vegetables: potatoes, lettuce, radishes, tomatoes and beans. Peppers are the most populous, though, because Ray likes to make his own hot sauce, which he bottles to keep fresh. He consumes most of the sauce himself as a spicy food lover, but occasionally he’ll gift a bottle to a friend.

The fruits that Ray has grown haven’t fared so well. Unfortunately, raccoons feasted on nearly 150 blueberries that hadn’t yet been picked, and the strawberries were planted in a spot that didn’t allow enough sunlight on them. Ray’s had better luck with raspberries and blackberries, but they still don’t compare with his vegetables.

Ray likes to exercise and work out at Snap Fitness.

“I do mostly barbell workouts, compound lifts, just to keep myself in shape,” he said.

He also maintains a pool membership at Good Shepherd, which brings him back to his high school days when he used to swim competitively.

“It’s a good workout,” he said.

The irony of Noah Ray is that after lifting weights and swimming laps, he often grabs a slice at Moon River Pizza in Murray Hill. It’s not only eating pizza that he enjoys there. That’s where he sits to read the latest issue of *The Resident* each month. 🍷



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JUNIOR RESIDENTS



Angels for Allison's Drew Haramis, Meg Grimes and Ginger Kurlas with Camp Sunshine Counselors Emily Commander, Emme Grimes, Mia Grimes, Ainsley Pruden, Charlotte Seay, Garland Rogers, Bella Schiavo, Charlotte Benton and Emily Stevenson alongside the 2023 campers.

A Decade of Sunshine for Angels

This summer marks the 10th anniversary of Camp Sunshine for The Allison Brundick Haramis Foundation, Angels for Allison, a Jacksonville-based nonprofit dedicated to assisting with funeral costs associated with the loss of a child. For the past ten years, host families have opened their homes to “spread sunshine” to neighborhood children.

This year’s week-long day camp was held at the Kurlas residence June 12-16, hosting 26 girls ages 5 to 10. Ginny Kurlas was the head counselor of the camp, which teaches young women to display servant leadership and charitable giving at a young age. Camp Sunshine donated \$5,000 to the Angels for Allison mission. It continues to be a neighborhood tradition with campers returning as counselors years later.



Future minister Clayton Moulder's signing to the St. John Vianney College Seminary was attended by fellow ministers, church leaders and family.

Moulder Receives Peace in Christ Award

Clayton Moulder was selected as the Bishop John J. Snyder Peace in Christ Award recipient for 2023. The award was established in 2001 and is given to a graduating senior who demonstrates love of God by consistently exhibiting those virtues modeled by Bishop Snyder. The recipient must be in good academic standing, possess a character reflecting humility, demonstrate a history of serving others with compassion and resolving conflicts, and be an active member of their church community.

Moulder decided to attend seminary immediately following his graduation from Bishop Kenny High School. He will be entering St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami, Florida, this fall. A signing celebration was held on June 1, in the Bishop Paul F. Tanner Chapel.

“I am overjoyed with my decision and really wanted to pursue my vocational calling right away. I didn’t want to waste my time but wanted to follow God’s call now,” said Moulder.



Return from Tokyo

Three Bolles upper school students returned from an enriching trip to Tokyo as part of the Bolles Japanese Exchange Program with the Keio School.

The group – consisting of Alex Boutwell, Akshay Ketty and Bode Klassen – immersed themselves in Japanese culture and experienced life as a student in Tokyo while staying with students from Keio and their families from June 2-18. Their Japanese peers visited Jacksonville earlier this spring.

During their trip, the students participated in engaging academic classes and cultural experiences, including Japanese calligraphy, judo and kendo lessons. They sampled local cuisine, participated in a traditional tea ceremony, carved kanji into stone to create stamps and met with Bolles upper school Japanese teacher Yukari Braren.



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Scott’s Jersey to Hang in Hall of Fame

Standout girls basketball player Taliah Scott, Class of 2023 at St. Johns Country Day School, will have her jersey hung in the Ring of Honor display at the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tennessee, in recognition of her outstanding play for the 2022-23 season.

“The Ring of Honor is an exhibit at the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame where we honor the nation’s top players at every level,” said Kelly Mathis, Director of Development for the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame. “To have your jersey on display at the Hall of Fame is a huge privilege, and we are proud to celebrate the accomplishments of these young women.”

Currently, the Ring of Honor consists of over 100 jerseys hanging from the rafters of the back rotunda at the Hall of Fame, which opened in 1999. The display includes jerseys of the top high school and college players from the previous season. By acknowledging these young athletes, the Hall of Fame can fulfill its mission to “honor the past, celebrate the present and promote the future” of women’s basketball. The Ring of Honor has displayed jerseys from the best players in the world including Candace Parker, Sue Bird, Kelsey Plum, Breanna Stewart and Aja Wilson.



Taliah Scott

“St. Johns is extremely proud of Taliah’s accomplishments as a Spartan,” said St. Johns Country Day School’s Director of Athletics John Sgromolo. “Our goal at St. Johns is to provide a world-class student-athlete experience; and, through Taliah’s hard work and determination, she has demonstrated that St. Johns environment is not only conducive to academic excellence but also to athletic excellence at the highest level.”



Hunter Mathews



Victoria Hayes

UNF Students Receive Timucuan Preserve Grants

Timucuan Parks Foundation and the National Park Service’s Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve have awarded \$1,000 and \$500 grants, respectively, to two University of North Florida (UNF) students. Victoria Hayes, an undergraduate student of anthropology, and Hunter Mathews, a graduate student and research assistant in the biology department, will be conducting research in the Timucuan Preserve. Each project will be completed within eight months and the results will be presented at the Timucuan Science and History Symposium on January 26, 2024.

Hayes will be conducting topographic mapping and limited excavation of a mounded shell deposit at Cedar Point under the tutelage of Dr. Keith Ashley, associate professor at UNF. Hayes will be investigating the site to increase the understanding of the Indigenous people of northeastern Florida. The results of her archaeological testing will be used to guide future excavations and provide information to the Timucuan Preserve on how best to manage, interpret and protect the site.

Mathews will be working under the mentorship of UNF Associate Professor Kelly Smith to investigate the use of pervious oyster shell habitat modules, or POSH modules, at Kingsley Plantation. The POSH module, an oyster reef restoration device made from recycled oyster shells, was designed at UNF to rebuild oyster reefs, stabilize shorelines, provide habitat and improve ecosystem health with minimal negative environmental impact. Mathews will assess the POSH’s ability to sustain a healthy oyster population, create a habitat for important fish and crustaceans and help build sustainable living shorelines.



Tyler Miller

Miller Heads Spartan Girls Basketball

Tyler Miller has been named the new coach of the St. Johns Country Day School girls basketball program. Miller is a former three-time Assistant Coach of the Year (2018-2020) from his time at Ridgeview High School. There, he led the girls varsity team to its first-ever district championship in school history and a runner-up placement at the 2023 FHSAA Girls Basketball State Tournament.

“Tyler Miller is an outstanding addition to the St. Johns athletics family,” said Director of Athletics John Sgromolo.

“Coach Miller is a very positive influence on student athletes and understands how to build competitive programs through great communication and positive coaching. I am very excited to watch Coach Miller continue to build on great traditions here at St. Johns.”

Miller played college basketball at LaGrange College from 2011-2014 while helping lead the team to a 2014 USA South Tournament Championship. As a graduate assistant coach at LaGrange College, he led the program to back-to-back USA South Tournament Championships along with receiving bids to the National Tournament in March of 2014 and 2015.

Wolfson Seniors Partner for National Fellowship

Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies seniors Kiele Rife and Marina Carabello have been awarded fellowship positions with the national nonprofit H2O for Life. Both girls are members of the Interact Club at Wolfson High School, where they have worked with H2O for Life as part of the Wolfson Water Project, first working to raise money to support the building of a well that would allow for the opening of a school in Sudan, and then more recently in the purchasing of fresh water kits for families that are members of the Navajo Nation in Arizona and New Mexico.

The Interact Club is partnering with H2O for Life as a way to become more engaged in global issues while focusing club efforts on meeting the direct needs of a specific group of people with real outcomes. The students are looking to give back and help promote global literacy and health systems worldwide. To date, the Interact Club at Wolfson has raised more than \$2,500 in partnership with H2O for Life, and Rife and Carabello are leading the charge with projects on campus and around Jacksonville for their senior year. Both girls are also involved in national discussions regarding the global water crisis as part of their fellowship.

The Wolfson Interact Club is in partnership with the Deerwood Rotary Club, which has also supported H2O for Life by way of matching donations that the Wolfson Interact Club has raised.



Marinia Carabello Kiele Rife.



Madison Dill McDermott

McDermott Returns to Coach Alma Mater

Former volleyball standout Madison Dill McDermott returned to her alma mater, St. Johns Country Day School, in a new role as the assistant volleyball coach.

“We are thrilled to have one of our very own back to St. Johns to help guide our student-athletes,” said Director of Athletics John Sgromolo. “Madi was a northeast Florida household name in high school and went on to an outstanding career at the University of Miami. Coach McDermott understands the vision and culture of St. Johns Country Day School and will be a huge asset to Coach Williams and our department in the pursuit of excellence for our Spartans.”

While at St. Johns, Coach McDermott was selected to the 2015-16 Under Armour Girls High School All-America Third-Team. She was a nominee for the 2015 All-Clay County Player of the Year and was named the FACA Class 3A Player of the Year and to the All-First Coast Team. Madison reached 1,000 career kills during her junior season and has amassed 1,650 in her career. She was a three-time All-Clay County selection and has been named to the Florida Times Union All-Area Team three times. At the University of Miami, Coach McDermott played four seasons with the Hurricanes as a middle blocker.



SUMMER CAMP '23

Learning Making Friends

HAVING FUN

Summer camp is a cherished tradition that kindles the spirit of youth and adventure. The ability to pursue interests without the watchful eye of their parents gives children a foundation for community, a playground of self-discovery and the independence to develop confidence and knowledge. At the heart of every camp is the joy of learning, and these summer camps packed in more fun than a three-ring circus.

San Jose Episcopal Day School


Summer at San Jose Episcopal Day School brought an American Girl fashion show, a jet-pack journey to space, an African savanna safari and super-sized water slide splashes. Dancers showcased ballet, jazz and hip hop routines led by Jacksonville ROAR Cheerleader Cici Mills, an instructor at Campus Dance Academy, and campers worked on Lego building challenges and ceramic art projects.

“During four action-packed weekly sessions, just shy of 500 registrations were entered into 30 camp options,” said Director of Auxiliary Programs Amy Blumstein.



Episcopal School of Jacksonville

Episcopal School of Jacksonville offered camps and programs for eight weeks this summer, including horseback riding, beach fishing, day camp, beach volleyball, academic classes and sports camps.



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Assumption Catholic School

Assumption Catholic School is home to Coach Polster's Summer Camps, which have been held on campus for the past seven years, giving children fun and engaging camp options to attend. During its engineering-themed week, campers worked on engineering-based science projects like designing and building a roller coaster, playing with paper circuitry, using 3-D printers, and building motorized race cars and Lego robotics. The camp also provides local high school students an opportunity to work and earn volunteer hours.

Bishop Kenny

Bishop Kenny campers got colorfully fun at the Wink's Volleyball Camp "Team Spirit Day," led by head coach Suzanne Winkler, while others decoded their digital potential at its CyberCamps. The Bishop Kenny Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps' hosted its Standard and Advanced Air Force Association CyberCamps for cadets from the Bishop Kenny, First Coast, Nease and Ridgeview high school programs. The camps are designed for high school and middle school students who are just getting into cybersecurity and want to learn more.

Softball coach Laurie Wray's Softball Camp was also popular with area students, with more than 60 participants sharpening their skills this year.



Bolles

Hold on tight! As the school year approaches, the thrill of summer adventures on the St. Johns River lingers in the hearts of these kids who made lasting memories at Bolles summer camps. Fun-filled days on the river brought laughter, excitement and a true sense of adventure, and campers honed their sports skills at the football camp in Skinner-Barco Stadium and tennis camp at the brand-new Bent Tennis Center on the Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus.



A Sole for Good

Avondale United Methodist Church is holding a shoe fundraiser, collecting pairs of shoes in all stages: new, gently used and worn. The collection is being held until the end of August. Participants can clean out their closets and bring their donations to the church at 1651 Talbot Avenue during church business hours. The office is open from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Sunday and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Any type of shoe is welcome, but they cannot accept cleats or skates.

Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday Underway

The Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday is now underway, extending sales tax relief for school supplies through Sunday, August 6.

The two-week sales tax holiday is part of Governor DeSantis' Framework for Freedom Budget, a \$1.3 billion tax relief package in Florida's Fiscal Year 2023-24. The budget contains funding for more than 15 sales tax holidays and exemptions, including two Back-to-School Sales Tax Holidays, one prior to the start of the fall semester (July 24-Aug. 6, 2023) and one prior to the start of the spring semester (Jan. 1-14, 2024).

“Quality education is key to child development and positioning future generations of Floridians for success.”

– Dominic M. Calabro
Florida TaxWatch President/CEO

Together, they will save Florida families over \$160.6 million by applying to items such as personal computers and accessories up to \$1,500, clothing up to \$100, school supplies up to \$50, and learning aides and jigsaw puzzles up to \$30.

“Quality education is key to child development and positioning future generations of Floridians for success. It is critical that the state invest in initiatives like the Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday that will ensure students and teachers alike are adequately equipped for a productive school year,” said Florida TaxWatch president and CEO Dominic M. Calabro.

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about Bolles
GL&E program





During the observation station, students observe the river, ask questions and take notes about what they see.



Education Specialist Jamie De Nisco gives out water samples for the students to test river salinity using refractometers.

Thanks to Furyk Foundation

The St. Johns Riverkeeper program accessible to more Title 1 classrooms

The St. Johns Riverkeeper’s RiverX program is expanding opportunities for students to learn about the health of the St. Johns River thanks to a generous grant from the Jim and Tabitha Furyk Foundation. RiverX is a floating, river taxi classroom for students in fourth through sixth grades at Title 1 schools. The Furyk Foundation grant covers the cost of the river taxi, as well as transportation to and from the river taxi, for any Title I school in Duval County. Because of the grant, St. Johns Riverkeeper, whose mission is to defend the St. Johns River and advocate for its protection, was able to run these trips from Fall 2022 through Fall 2023.

“Many students that attend these trips have never been on a boat before, so being able to share that experience with them is so rewarding,” St. Johns Riverkeeper Education Specialist Jamie De Nisco said. “The kids always have a blast! Teachers and principals have shared with us that RiverX is their favorite field trip.”

The 90-minute long, standards-based field trip allows students to gain firsthand experience with the St. Johns River.

“Keeping our rivers healthy and safe for the community is so important,” Tabitha Furyk said. “Funding the RiverX program, with tremendous support from our title sponsor, Constellation, allows Title 1 students to understand the significance of the St. Johns River, attend field trips and enable teachers to expand their classroom experience.”

During the RiverX educational boat trips, the students rotate through stations tailored to their subject area and grade level. Teachers receive educational curriculum to familiarize the students prior to the trip and to continue the learning opportunity in the classroom.

There are three stations that students rotate through during the program: salinity testing, EcoWeb (an activity related to ecosystem connections) and an observation station. At the salinity testing station, the students use refractometers to test five different samples along the river to see how the salt increases or decreases. The interactive EcoWeb station uses photos and ropes to build a web, which allows students to visualize the connections ecosystems have and how they rely on each other. Students then record their notes and studies at the observation station on the bow of the river taxi.

“This program allows students from Title 1 schools to experience the St. Johns River on the water to see firsthand the wildlife and the river’s conditions and learn how they can help keep the river healthy for generations to come,” Furyk said.

The Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation helps families and children in need through project-specific funding. The foundation collaborates with charities to fund projects that make the community a better place. The sponsors and advisory board members of the Constellation Furyk & Friends tournament help the foundation find new and deserving organizations to support the community.



More students will have access to the St. Johns River because of a generous grant from the Jim and Tabitha Furyk Foundation.

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On the Lookout for the St. Johns’ Gentle Giants

BY LUCY RACHELS

Editor’s Note: The Resident News encourages the next generation of bright, talented journalists and writers. We believe in helping give students the opportunity to learn from the industry and have their work published. This article was written by one of our own aspiring locals, Lucy Rachels, who will be starting her sophomore year at Auburn University in the fall.

Just under the surface of the St. Johns River, amidst the familiar algae and occasional gator, reside nature’s gentle giants – manatees, who have inhabited Florida for hundreds of years. These gentle, slow-moving creatures gracefully move about the St. Johns, capturing the attention of locals and visitors alike.

Manatee sightings in the St. Johns River are most common in the late spring or summer. During the remainder of the year – roughly November to March – manatees swim south to warmer water, often congregating in warm Florida springs. By early April, manatees begin to leave their winter homes and disperse themselves across Florida, hundreds of them returning to the St. Johns. However, the increased number of manatees during summer months lends itself to June having the highest number of manatee deaths due to boat strikes.

Boat collisions are the third-leading cause of death overall for manatees, behind natural fatalities and perinatal death, and is the leading cause of unnatural death. Manatees swim close to the surface and come up every 3-5 minutes to breathe, making them very easy to hit if boaters aren’t on the lookout. Additionally, manatees cannot hear the low-frequency sounds of boats, meaning they are unaware of the need to dive deeper when a boat approaches. In other words, they don’t know you are coming until they are hit.

However, manatee deaths can be easily avoided. There are many tricks for spotting manatees, such as keeping an eye out for “manatee footprints,” which are flat circles on the surface of the water, checking for bubbles rising to the surface and listening for water snorts.

According to Dr. Quinton White, a marine science specialist at Jacksonville University, it is also important to avoid feeding or giving fresh water to manatees.

“Such activities are not only illegal but encourage manatees to seek out humans for food and water, which in turn puts them in harm’s way,” said White.

Boaters should obey speed limits in protection zones and no-wake zones. Since



Manatees in the Ortega River.

manatees prefer to hang out in shallow water, the no-wake zones located throughout St. Johns are very important.

The good news is that watercraft deaths for manatees have been down in Duval County in recent years, with zero so far this year and only two in 2022. However, Florida manatee deaths overall are up, with 1,100 deaths in 2021 and over 800 in 2022. These have been the two worst years on record in the 2000s.

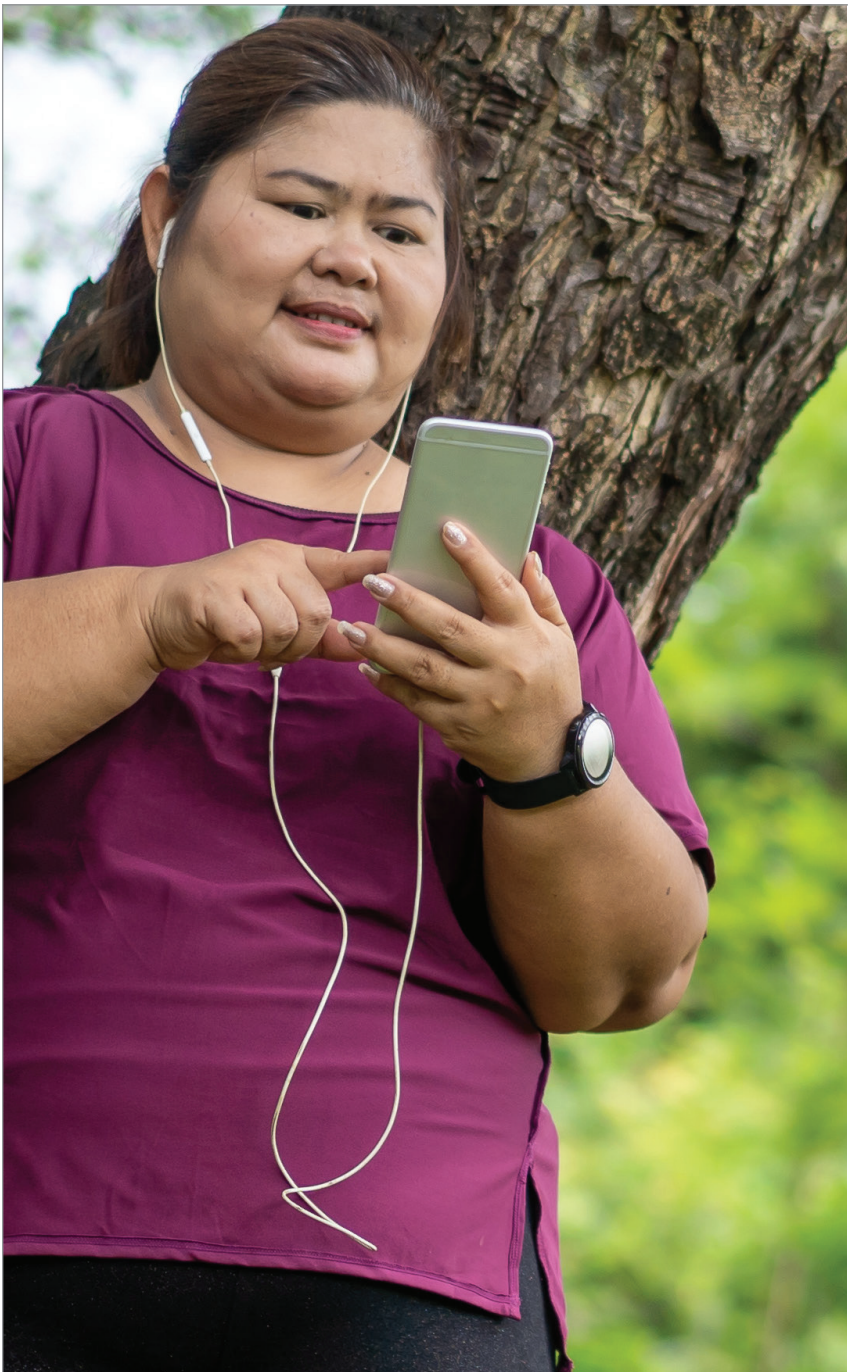
Another way to help save manatee lives is to reduce toxic runoff. This means cutting down on fertilizer use, not blowing grass cuttings onto the street and making sure storm drains receive only water.

“Homeowners can reduce polluted runoff to reduce the risk of harmful algae outbreaks toxic to manatees and conserve water to protect spring flow that is critical to manatees and river health,” said the St. Johns Riverkeeper’s Lisa Rinaman, who helps spread awareness about manatees and the St. Johns River.

Being mindful of plant pollution is vital to manatee life, as plants are the only things manatees eat; they have no natural predators or prey. Manatees often spend up to eight hours a day hunting for enough plants to sustain their huge bodies.

Manatees are protected by multiple pieces of legislation, including Florida state law: the Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act, which says that it is illegal to intentionally harm a manatee, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which further protects marine mammals and their habitats. Locally, in 2017, the Jacksonville Zoo created the first-ever Manatee Critical Care Center in the Northeast Florida region. Here, injured manatees are nursed to health and released back into safe waters.

Despite the many threats manatees face, there is still a clear path to their protection. By being vigilant in protective practices, we can enable manatees to thrive in the St. Johns River for years to come.



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THE WAY WE WERE

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

As of the publishing date of this article, Mr. Dick Barker had passed away and is now in the loving arms of his late wife, Claudette. The family wishes to honor his memory with this article and remembrances of the life and times they enjoyed with their patriarch.

“He was the consummate, genuine family man. He cared about his family and his community...it was a life well lived,” shared his son Mike, who felt the memoirs were appropriate for readers to enjoy.

Services for Dick Barker will be held at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Ortega at 1:30 p.m. on September 2.



Dick Barker, circa 1943

BY MARY WANSER

Dick Barker was a native of Riverside, born at St. Vincent’s Hospital on March 14, 1933. He began school a year ahead of other students his age, thanks to his mother, Alene Barker, a schoolteacher at West Riverside Elementary. “I was never in one school more than two years the whole time,” Barker said. With World War II as a backdrop, Barker spent much of his boyhood exploring with his friends what used to be the woods of Ortega, gathering scraps of metal and rubber for military drives to

help support the war effort. “We were rationing everything,” he said. His family lived next to the pilots’ training camp that was at the NAS JAX Base. Barker would go down to the fence and watch the planes practicing. He and his buddies found a few long, silk sleeves that the attack pilots would practice shooting at in the days before artificial fabrics existed. He used to draw pictures of fighter planes. From a young boy’s perspective, he didn’t have the worries that adults had. “It was exciting,” he said. He’d watch the patrol boats navigating in and out on the St. Johns River and watched a couple of tankers burn off the coast of Jacksonville. They had been torpedoed by German U-boats and burned for days before sinking. His dad, Richard D. Barker, Sr., had taken him to Jacksonville Beach to witness it. Tar and oil from submarines had washed up on the sand. Barker overheard the story of four German spies who had landed in Ponte Vedra Beach in 1942 and sensed the relief that was felt when the FBI that had been racing around town finally found them. He was 12 when the war ended.



Dick Barker, circa 1938

Barker spent some time away at a military academy before returning for his last year of high school at Robert E. Lee, now Riverside, prior to earning a business degree at the University of Florida. He was a member of Kappa Alpha as well as the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps. and was commissioned upon graduation. The next two years found Barker on active duty aboard the USS Pocono until he transitioned to the Navy Reserves in 1956. As a reservist, Barker returned to Jacksonville. In 1957, he joined the family real



Dick Barker, 1954



Claudette and Dick Barker, 1961



President Dick Barker and Claudette, 1970

estate firm that his father had begun in 1925, offering appraisal and residential brokerage in the Riverside/Avondale area. In 1970, upon his retirement as a Navy commander, Barker took over the family business. Today, that company still exists, taken over by Barker’s elder son, the founder’s grandson, who turned it into an investment business.

For several decades, Barker had a highly successful brokerage career. He was known for his classic business model, his knowledge of the profession, and his fairness in all transactions. He was president of Jacksonville’s Association of Realtors and Multiple Listing Service. For the span of his career, prior to his 1995 retirement, Barker most enjoyed meeting local people. There were two in particular who changed his life forever, a widowed woman and a baby boy.

Claudette was a widow on a walk through her Ventia neighborhood, pushing her infant son in a stroller. She hadn’t intended on attending the open house event but noticed the lawn sign and walked in out of curiosity. There was agent Barker, the host. “We knew each other only four months when we got married,” Barker said. He liked to recall how the photographer at their wedding had to hide his right hand, as it was bandaged. At the prior night’s bachelor party, he was thrown in a pool, his wallet got wet, he put it in the oven to dry and burned himself pulling out the smoking mess.

After the wedding, Barker adopted baby Mike and bought a house for their new family on Corinthian Boulevard in Ortega, one large enough to welcome a second son, Richard III, and a daughter, Yvonne, before the family of five moved to a home on McGirts Boulevard along the Ortega River in 1969.

Barker ushered at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church while his children sang in the choir. He and his wife encouraged them to be active in sports, too. Barker attended nearly every wrestling match, football game and equestrian competition they had. As third-generation members of the Florida Yacht Club, they learned to sail, power boat, swim and fish. The family was always in motion. They’d drive around town in a Mercury Marquis station wagon with wood-paneled sides, replete with yellow and green daisy stickers, sometimes with a horse trailer towing behind. The family took many trips in that wagon. On one, Barker played “The Sound of Music” 8-track tape over and over.

The Barkers were avid travelers. They sailed The Bahamas chain, camped the Great Loop in the U.S. and in Europe, spearfished and scuba-dived around the world. Interestingly, 40 years after Barker and his dad had watched those tankers burn during the war, he dived that wreck with his wife, doing fish counts and taking soil samples as volunteers for the Jacksonville Reef Research Team.

Barker also volunteered as a mentor in Jacksonville public high schools, helping several promising teens in underserved communities improve their math skills and giving them a vision of what is possible if they would keep moving forward. And keep moving forward is what Barker did as well.

In 1990, he earned his private pilot’s license. A few years later, he and his wife had a mountain house built in North Carolina so they could spend summers hiking, canoeing and whitewater rafting.

Claudette had ridden jumper horses competitively for decades, but when it became too difficult for her to mount anymore, Barker joined her in the competitive show dogs circuit instead. Their Jack Russell, named Absolutely Chaps, nationally ranked eighth in agility.

“I was the official photographer for all these events, and I really got to be pretty good,” Barker said. He had gotten a lot of practice over the years at the children’s sporting events.

In later years, Barker found his own true sporting passion – croquet. After retirement, he would spend morning until noon on the lawn at the Florida Yacht Club. He’d come home for a midday break, then return by 2:00 until dinner.



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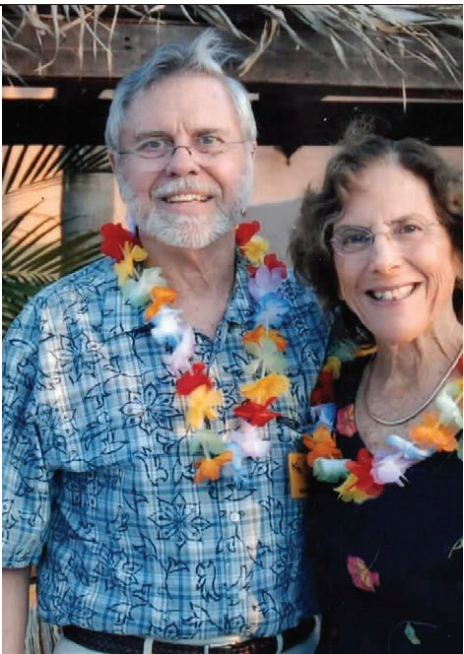
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The Barkers, Abaco, Bahamas, 1990



The Barker Family, 1974



Dick and Claudette Barker, 2005

“Worse than golf,” Barker said of his croquet addiction. His family has come to call the game crocaine. Barker even had two small greens at home, one outside and one inside.

“I don’t think anybody else has an indoor croquet court nowadays,” he said. A couple times per month, he would meet with friends on the lawn at Ponte Vedra. Barker was a Meninak member and a former chairman. As a Tchaikovsky fan, Barker was an avid supporter of the Jacksonville Symphony and would attend as many performances as possible.

Claudette passed away in January 2023. She and Barker had been married for 62 years. He spent the rest of his days living on the shore of the Ortega River, not far



Claudette and Dick Barker, 1985

from where he grew up, in the same home he bought 54 years ago. Today, it’s owned by Mike, who raised his own family there and had added a wing for his parents. Richard III comes by every weekend to visit from Live Oak where he has a veterinary practice. Yvonne comes at least a couple of times a week when she’s not travelling to horse shows.

"It's not the end of the world," Barker said of his stroke in 2020. "You just have to make do with what you have left." 📺



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THE LIFE OF



DR. JOEL DAVID

OCTOBER 9, 1953 – JUNE 24, 2023



Throughout his life, Dr. Joel David was a purveyor of kindness, compassion and love. He was a dedicated friend, doting husband, and he showed unwavering support for those in his community. He was surrounded by his loving family when he passed on June 24, 2023, at the age of 69. Joel began his professional journey at The University of Florida. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry, he subsequently obtained his Doctor of Medical Dentistry from University of Florida in 1979. From that moment, Joel began to revolutionize the practice of dentistry and the lives of those around him.

Joel first opened The Dentist Place in Mandarin, before establishing the nationally renowned David and Associates Center for Cosmetic and Implant Dentistry in 1988. David and Associates was the first multi-specialty dental practice to give patients access to all sub-specialties of dentistry under one roof. An entrepreneur and innovator, Joel invented the acclaimed D5 Teeth in 2016, which now has businesses in six states. He developed his own integrated software and 3-D printing into the design and construction of Zirconia bridges to give patients complete sets of teeth in just two days. Even his

business advertising efforts were notable, being the first dentist to advertise on television and winning a Tally Award and a Clio Award for his ingenuity.

Not one to simply change people's lives professionally, Joel was equally compassionate in his personal life. He leaves behind his best friend, loving partner and husband of 34 years, Brian Ware. When not busy with his growing practice, Joel could be found out on the golf course, a passion at which he excelled. He loved sports and fast cars, and enjoyed sharing his affection for food, laughter and good times with those around him.

Joel dedicated a large part of his life to caring for those in the community. He was one of the very first dentist to care for patients with HIV, and countless people benefited from his pro-bono dental work in Jacksonville, Atlanta and Chicago. Always generous, he gave anonymously to countless charitable organizations.

Joel was an active supporter, donor and volunteer for JASMYN, an organization that supports and empowers LGBTQIA+ teens and young adults through leadership, advocacy, resources, and a safe and affirming community. He and his husband, Brian, were also champions for Equality of Florida and

Strides for Pride, organizations that work tirelessly to promote equality and create a more inclusive society for all individuals.

Joel's kind heart made an impact in the local dental community as well. He was a patron of Give Kids A Smile and provided donations and dental supplies to help other nonprofit dental clinics. He performed numerous, full-makeover smile donations in our community. Joel was also a big financial supporter of the Jacksonville Humane Society.

Furthermore, Joel and Brian were generous donors to the Renand Foundation group in Haiti. Their contributions played a significant role in helping the foundation build a school, ultimately changing the future for countless children in Haiti. Without this support, many of these children would have been vulnerable to the horrors of slavery and sex trafficking. Dr. Joel David's passing leaves a void in our community, but his legacy of giving and making a difference will continue to inspire us all. While he will be missed by all his friends, colleagues and patients, those that knew him will have an everlasting memory of the beauty he left behind. The world is better for having known his selflessness and unwavering dedication to improving the lives of others.

Meet Our Hardage-Giddens Staff!

Hardage-Giddens is made incredible by our esteemed and passionate staff. This month, we want to introduce you to some of our wonderful Funeral Directors!



Ivy Mackay – Licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer
Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Location

Beach-goer / Outdoors Lover / Football Enthusiast (Go Georgia Bulldogs!!)

My name is Ivy Mackay, and I'm a licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer working out of Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn.

I spent my childhood in Orange Park, FL until moving to Georgia for my four years of high school. After graduating, I returned to Florida to reside in Jacksonville. I graduated from the University of North Florida in May, 2003 with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Psychology. In 2005 I graduated from Florida Community College of Jacksonville with an Associate of Science (AAS) degree in Funeral Services.

I began working in the funeral profession while in high school in Kennesaw, GA. I worked as a funeral services assistant and quickly realized that helping families was much more than a simple part-time job. I have now worked for Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes for 16 years! I started my career at our Hardage-Giddens Beaches Chapel and am now at Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn on San Jose Blvd.

I have always been drawn to this profession because of the incredible opportunities it holds. I have the remarkable chance each day to help families during the most difficult time of their lives, and I feel so blessed to know that I can be of comfort to them. Helping our families celebrate their loved ones is extremely rewarding, and I could not think of any other career that would be as fulfilling as this one. I am so thankful for the support I received back in my early years from family and friends, as it guided me exactly where I needed to be.

If you would like to get in touch with me, please call our Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn office at (904)-737-7171.



Robert J. Dean , M.Ed., CFSP – Licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer
Hardage-Giddens Mandarin Location

Detail Oriented / Educator / Proud Washington, DC Native / Football Lover (Washington Redskins [Commanders] & the JAGS!)

My name is Robert J. Dean, and I am a Licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer working for the Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes (Mandarin Location).

I received my Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Mortuary Science from the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), my Bachelor of Mortuary Science (BMS) degree from the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science (CCMS), and my Master in Education degree from Strayer University. As a Funeral Service Educator, I began teaching Mortuary Science in 1996 at the University of DC. I have also served as the Program Director and faculty at three accredited funeral service programs (University of DC, Florida State College of Jacksonville [FSCJ], and the Arapahoe Community College [ACC]). I am licensed as a Funeral Director / Embalmer in multiple jurisdictions (Washington, DC, Virginia and Florida) and am certified as a Funeral Celebrant (CC), Crematory Operator (CCO) and Funeral Service Provider (CFSP).

The key to being an excellent Funeral Director is being a good listener. Families will share and tell you exactly what they need. At the Hardage-Giddens Funeral Homes, we pride ourselves in carrying out our “Every Detail Remembered” motto because it's a standard we ensure is carried out in every service that we provide.

I also would like to say that a very important aspect of being a Funeral Director is how we make a family feel. When speaking with a family, I listen intently to every word because they are sharing information and stories about their most prized possession, their loved one. Whatever I can do to make this difficult time easier for the family, I'll do. Going the extra mile and providing extraordinary service is something I try and provide for every family that I have the honor of serving. Every service is completely unique and different and I strive to make sure that every funeral or memorial service is carried out with the utmost of care, dignity and compassion.

If you would like to get in touch with me, please call our Hardage-Giddens Mandarin office at (904) 288-0025.

CLASSICS & COFFEE
FOR A CAUSE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12TH @ 8:30 AM

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

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