HABL Board Member Jason Eliopulos throws out the first pitch during the Opening Day Ceremony of HABL's 78th year.

Hendricks Avenue Baseball League Board Member and former Commissioner Jason Eliopulos throws out the first pitch on at HABL's Opening Day Ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 24, continuing a 78-year tradition of teaching life lessons and instilling a passion for baseball in neighborhood children. **READ MORE ON PAGE 13**



Wolfson Children's Hospital celebrated the opening of its new Behavioral Health and Wellness Unit with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb. 9. The new unit will double the capacity to serve children requiring hospitalization for mental health conditions. **READ MORE ON PAGE 6**

Fashion Shines After Dark

San Marco

Fashion and flair were in full display at North Florida School of Special Education's inaugural Heart of the Runway After Dark evening fashion show at the Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

Local celebrities, including television personality Vic Micolucci and the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville Executive Director Diana Donovan, strutted down the runway in springtime ensembles created by the fashionable partnership between Rodger Woika's team at Dillard's and Linda Cunningham of Linda Cunningham Designer Boutique.

READ MORE ON PAGE 25



Hope Hana, Jacksonville Trustee for Florida House, with Chef Kenny Gilbert and Desiree Bailey, owner of San Marco Books.

Southern Chef, Global Reach

San Marco Books and More hosted Chef Kenny Gilbert and his Southern-inspired cookbook, "Southern Cooking, Global Flavors," for a broadcast in partnership with the Florida House on Capitol Hill Book Club, out of Washington, D.C.

READ MORE ON PAGE 31

Third Time's a Charm?

Twice-revised designs for the proposed self-storage unit at Hendricks Avenue and Prudential Drive now include 10 stories of residential, storage, expanded parking and retail space, as well as a open-air courtyard. **READ MORE ON PAGE 10**

Contending with Corruption

Jacksonville Ethics Commission issues joint statement in an attempt to prevent a state amendment they say might "weaken anti-corruption laws and local ethics commissions." **READ MORE ON PAGE 8**

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Volunteers from the community, Bank of America and Merrill Lynch joined the San Marco Preservation Society for the tree clean-up.

San Marco Preservation Society Clears the Air (Plants)

The San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS), along with community and employee volunteers from Bank of America and Merrill Lynch, tended to the health of the crepe myrtle trees in San Marco Square Feb. 3. SMPS organized the clean-up day to revive the crepe myrtle trees and preserve the trees' beautiful latespring to early-summer blooms.

Volunteers plucked air plants, called epiphytes, from the surface of the trees. While epiphytes are not parasitic to the trees – they pull their nutrients from the air and rain – an excessive amount can inhibit the host plant's ability



Linzee Ott climbs a ladder to pluck air plants from a crepe myrtle in San Marco Square.

to thrive and bloom. This small task will certainly help keep San Marco Square beautiful for years to come.

Vote-by-mail Ballots Issued for Duval County Presidential Preference Primary Election

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

On Feb. 14, the Duval County Supervisor of Elections Office mailed out more than 19,000 vote-by-mail ballots to eligible Republican voters to vote in the upcoming Presidential Preference Primary on March 19.

Only Republican voters will be able to vote in this upcoming primary since the Democratic Party has already selected its candidate. As Florida is a closed-primary state, only registered members of a party can vote in its primary election.

Vote-by-mail ballots can be requested online at duvalelections.gov, by phone at (904) 255-8683, via e-mail (with required items included as attachments), by fax, mail or in person.

Vote-by-mail ballots must be completed and submitted to the Duval County Supervisor of Elections Office by 7 p.m. on Election Day, March 19.

More information can be found at the Supervisor of Elections website or by phone.



The Neighborhood's Most Eligible

Do you know a dynamic and driven individual under the age of 35 who is making waves in the community? We are seeking nominations for our "Young Independents" feature, celebrating the rising movers and shakers in our community. Whether they're leading groundbreaking projects or making significant strides in their careers, we want to shine a light on these young trailblazers who are shaping the future of Jacksonville. Nominate a standout bachelor or bachelorette who embodies ambition, creativity and commitment. Submission names must be received by April 15. Send nominee's name, contact information, and 100 words or less on why they should be considered to editor@residentnews.net.

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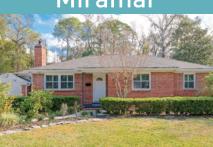


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Miramar



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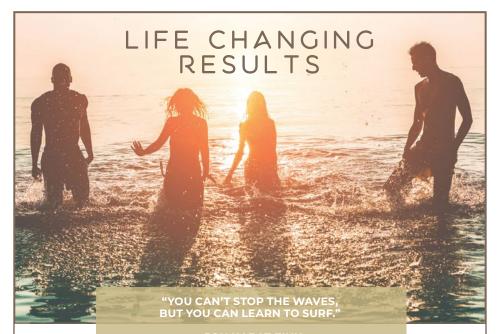
Mayor Appoints James Director of Planning and Development

Mayor Donna Deegan has appointed R. Brett James, a 24year U.S. Navy veteran, to serve as Director of Planning and

R. Brett James Development for the City of Jacksonville, effective Monday, Feb. 5, 2024. In this role, he will be responsible for all operations of the City's Planning and Development Department, including the Community Planning, Current Planning, Development

Services, Building Inspection, Transportation Planning, and the Office of Resiliency. "I'm excited to see Brett join our administration as the Director of Planning and Development," said Deegan. "His successful career brings a fresh perspective and a wealth of knowledge to Jacksonville, both of which will benefit our citizens now and into the future."

During his previous federal career, James established himself as an industry leader in the federal planning niche. As a longstanding member of the American Planning Association, he was elected as chair, conference chair, and vice chair of its eminent Federal Planning Division. Career accolades include Outstanding Community Planner for the U.S. Air Force and the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal.



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Friendship Fountain along downtown's Southbank reopened Feb. 15.

BY JENNIFER JENSEN

After three years, the Friendship Fountain along downtown's Southbank has finally reopened. The city unveiled the updated, state-of-the-art entertainment fountain during the Sip and Stroll on Feb. 15. The 500,000-gallon fountain features a programmed light and water show with the river and city skyline as its backdrop.

"When you picture Jacksonville in your mind, it's Friendship Fountain that comes to mind," Mayor Donna Deegan said during the ceremony. The development of the fountain and park was originally a citizen-led effort, she said. "It truly is the people's park."

The Friendship Fountain, located within St. Johns Park, originally opened in 1965 and was designed by architect Taylor Hardwick, who also designed the building that now houses the Jessie Ball duPont Center. The project was originally led by Commissioner Dallas L. Thomas.

"The fountain that is open and operating now is a very different fountain than what was operated in 1965, of course," said Daryl Joseph, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services for the City. "Friendship Fountain is now a state-of-the-art facility with the latest technology as it relates to entertainment

According to Joseph, a focal point of this renovation project was to also address the aging infrastructure of the fountain. These upgrades included addressing malfunctioning lights, leaks and deteriorating structures, as well as new innovations like a waterfall wall and revamped fountain components. Additionally, improvements were made to the surrounding area, including circular benches with integrated speakers, pergolas for shaded seating, and new walkways with LED lights that can change colors. The overall cost of this phase was \$7.95 million.

"This is just the beginning of the types of projects we want to have...more riverfront public spaces," said Councilmember Joe Carlucci.

The next phase will include a mist screen and on-site projector, as well as changes to the park area through the addition of a themed playground, restroom, picnic area, concession stand, wedding venue and interpretive gardens. These phases are scheduled to open late summer 2024 and fall 2025.

This is not the first upgrade for the fountain; there have been many projects to update or maintain the various systems that are required to operate the fountain's water, lighting and music. It was refurbished in 1985 when the Southbank Riverwalk opened. It operated for about 15 years before its water pumps started showing signs of irreversible damage. An update was planned in 2001, specifically centered around Jacksonville serving as the Super Bowl host city, but shortly after it was repaired, two of the fountain's three water pumps stopped working permanently. In 2010, the city planned a \$3.1 million project to replace the old pumps. It reopened in June 2011 and had been unchanged until now.

Former Councilmember and Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer was a big champion for getting the fountain reopened during her tenure.

"This project has been a long time coming," Boyer said. "And it's an exciting

"Since Friendship Fountain has been open, it has increased the visitors to the park and Riverwalk," Joseph said. "Also, it has provided another exciting space downtown for citizens and visitors to experience."

Nightly shows will be held at 7 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 8 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., weather permitting.





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Baptist Health, Wolfson Children's Hospital and THE PLAYERS Championship Village celebrated Wolfson Children's new Behavioral Health and Wellness Unit with Michael A. Mayo, president and CEO of Baptist Health, a ribbon-cutting ceremony and tour on speaks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Friday, Feb. 9. The 20-bed inpatient unit will double the number of beds available for children and adolescents requiring hospitalization for mental health conditions.

"Unfortunately, the 66 beds that are available between Jacksonville and Orlando are not enough to meet the growing need for inpatient behavioral health care services in Northeast Florida, and we are grateful to all who have helped us meet the demand for this vitally important care," said Michael A. Mayo, president and CEO of Baptist Health.

The unit is funded, in part, by a \$3 million gift from THE PLAYERS Championship Village and a \$5 million appropriation from the State of Florida. Located on the third floor of Wolfson Children's, in the space previously occupied by the pediatric intensive care unit, the Behavioral Health and Wellness Unit opened to patients Feb. 12.

"We know the need for behavioral health services is increasing, and our new inpatient unit will not only help save lives, but it will serve as a safe and comforting space for our patients as they receive the care they need," said Allegra C. Jaros, president of Wolfson Children's. "Wolfson Children's can continue to provide compassionate and individualized care for our patients and families thanks to their support of this new behavioral health unit."

Free Services for Child Well-being

The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services recently established Project LAUNCH, a new mental health care initiative aimed at promoting the holistic well-being of children in Jacksonville, specifically for those from birth to eight years old.

Project LAUNCH is designed to enhance the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and behavioral aspects of a child's development. It includes free, comprehensive, inhome mental health services for parents and families to help foster the nurturing environment that is crucial during a child's early years.

"We understand that positively impacting mental health at an early age is not just a goal; it's a heartfelt mission that holds the power to transform lives," said Project LAUNCH Program Director Chris Atkins. "We aim to instill a sense of emotional well-being that will resonate throughout a child's life, ensuring a brighter and more resilient future for the children and families we are privileged to serve."

The program is made possible through a five-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Certified mental health therapists will provide in-home mental health assessments as well as tailored counseling, parent education and wraparound services.

For more information or to enroll in the Project LAUNCH program, call (904) 487-5802 or email projectlaunch@jfcsjax.org.

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Planned Giving Symposium Helps Philanthropy Professionals Sharpen Skills

The Planned Giving Council of Northeast Florida convenes industry professionals for education, ethics and networking

BY LAURA PHELPS



The Planned Giving Council of Northeast Florida (PGC) welcomed a diverse crosssection of professionals from the philanthropic sector on Feb. 8 for the 14th annual Planned Giving Symposium.

"As an organization, we work to bring together those in the philanthropic sector, nonprofit leaders and development professionals, as well professional wealth advisors," said Mariette Brodeur, president of the PGC. "Our goal is to network with other professionals, educate ourselves, share ideas and build a community with a goal of

increasing philanthropy in our community."

This year's half-day symposium was held on Florida Blue's sprawling campus on the Southside of Jacksonville and covered a broad range of topics from ethics to

'This year we wanted to focus on some of the ethical aspects of charitable gift planning, some of the tax issues, and then round out the day with some emotional intelligence. What's nice about that broad range of topics is it's helpful for everyone," Brodeur said.

The Council brought in experts from across the country and within the local community to speak with about 50 attendees. The morning sessions examined case studies for an in-depth discussion on ethics, legal considerations and lessons learned from success stories. Later sessions offered engaging exercises on how to build relationships with different personalities, and keys to success for fundraisers.

PGC is a professional association for people whose work includes developing, marketing and administering charitable planned gifts. Its members include estate planning and tax attorneys, accountants, bank trust officers, financial advisors, consultants and representatives of nonprofit organizations and institutions. It also works closely with the Estate Planning Council of Northeast Florida to share resources and education for the benefit of the members of both organizations.

"If we're all working together to share best practices and discuss trends, we can have a greater impact in Northeast Florida," Brodeur said.



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South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church Paves Way for New Building

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

A rendering of the new building at South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church

The first phase of construction is underway at San Marco's South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church as it prepares to break ground on a new building.

Once completed, it will feature approximately 6,700 square feet across one story of event and fellowship space, including youth and children's areas, administrative offices, a kitchen, meeting areas, fellowship space and "generous open space."

In addition to the site work for the new building, this first phase of construction includes renovations to the existing sanctuary on Alford Place, which includes replacing existing plywood with brick on the building's north face along with interior renovations.

This project is a long time coming, both for the parish and the San Marco community. In 2021, *The Resident News* reported on an earlier design for what was then dubbed Presbyterian Plaza, which included an open courtyard facing Hendricks Avenue, but also a new three-story, 14,000-square-foot building.

The new building, Pastor Adam Anderson explained, will be constructed in a way that when the church is ready, it will be able to add on a second story.

"We wanted to make sure that we both were able to develop a building that we knew we could build today, but also be prepared for the future, both for us but also for the needs of San Marco," he said.

A new courtyard is still planned in the open space

between the sanctuary and the new building. It will abut the recently completed apartments at The Hendricks at San Marco, which stands on property that was once owned by the church, along with the land now occupied by the apartment complex's parking structure.

"[The courtyard] is meant to act as the southern



A rendering of the planned courtyard space at South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church.

anchor of the San Marco Square so we're just excited to have people want to live their lives with us, whatever that looks like," Anderson said.

The new plans propose transformational change for the stretch of Hendricks Avenue that was once filled with "a massive brick wall" where the church's educational and administrative buildings stood, which, Anderson said, was not "a representation of what we thought about ourselves or what we thought about the community. By redoing it, it allowed us an opportunity to show we really do care about this community right down to how we designed the bricks and the grass."

The development team includes Bent Construction and Jaycox Architects & Associates. Jaycox Principal Nathan Labagh wrote in an e-mail:

"I love to see well planned and thoughtfully designed improvements in our community. They are a sign of a healthy neighborhood with a promising future. I am absolutely overjoyed when I see them happen to our church buildings. These iconic structures hold such a vital role to the character of our community and our urban fabric. Being some of our oldest buildings they remind us of our history. Observing their conditions today tells us a lot about our current needs and are a good indicator of our future paths."

Anderson said he expects the project will break ground on the new building this summer and construction on the building itself will take approximately 12 to 18 months. He said a project of this magnitude directly contradicts narratives that churches, or this church in particular, are dying.

"I don't think churches that are dying set on ambitious projects like this," he said, calling the project a way for the church "to say very boldly 'This church isn't dying; it is resurrected."









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A

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Commonly found items include electrical systems, plumbing, structural integrity, and HVAC systems. (Ground fault electrical outlets, leaking windows from not being caulked, sprinkler heads spraying on the home, rusted or frozen plumbing valves, fallen insulation). Maintaining your home for the little things will prevent larger issues in the future. After heavy rains check out your attic space for any evidence of roof leaks.



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Group 4 At-Large City Councilmember Matt Carlucci addresses the Jacksonville Ethics Commission to express his continued opposition to Senate Bill 7014 at a special meeting on Monday, Feb. 12.

City Raises Contention Over Ethics Bill

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

The Jacksonville Ethics Commission has issued a statement opposing a state bill containing amendments that it says would result in "reducing anticorruption efforts of all local ethics commission in the State of Florida."

The bill in question - Senate Bill 7014 - was passed on Feb. 1 with amendments added "last minute," the statement continued, "without any notice to, or input from, any local ethics officials in the state."

include These amendments language regarding how complaints be submitted to ethics commissions, requiring allegations to "be based upon personal knowledge or information other than hearsay," and virtually eliminating the ability to submit complaints anonymously by requiring "a complaint to be written and signed under oath or affirmation by the person making the complaint." Furthermore, it would prohibit ethics commissions' from self-initiating investigations.

During the Feb. 1 Senate Session, Senator Danny Burgess responded to questions regarding the personal knowledge requirement.

"What we're looking to do here is add greater protection from more malicious or meritless attempts that are politically motivated," Burgess said. "I believe this is consistent with what we already require in other areas," adding that allegations or complaints must be "based on some form of merit."

Senator Jason W.B. Pizzo said he was "fully in support" of the bill but argued the amendment pertaining to personal knowledge should not be included.

"I think this is a poison pill as a gatekeeping function, which I get because we think people abuse it," he

said. "But this is unnecessary, and we should just let with the standard that applies now, otherwise there's a lot of stuff you're not going to be able to

Ultimately, the Senate passed the bill as amended.

The Jacksonville **Ethics** Commission has joined a coalition of local ethics commissions, including those from Miami-Dade County, Palm Beach County, City of Tallahassee and the City of Naples. In a letter sent to the member of the House State Affair Committee and the Florida House of Representatives on Feb. 12, the coalition, on behalf "all major Florida local ethics commissions," urged representatives and committee members to:

- "Pass the House Ethics Bill (CS/HB 1597) without any amendments that weaken anti-corruption laws and local ethics commissions;
- "Oppose the personal knowledge requirement for ethics investigations and complaints, which would dismantle oversight of government;
- and "Oppose any efforts to restrict local ethics commissions' ability to self-initiate investigations of public corruption."

The Jacksonville Commission held a special meeting on Monday, Feb. 12 to discuss the legislation and its response to it.

During the meeting, City of Jacksonville Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight Executive Director Kirby Oberdorfer said the amendments included in SB 7014 are "a solution for which there is no problem, at least in Jacksonville."

Ninety-four complaints have been filed with Jacksonville's ethics commission from 2015 to 2023; of those, 55 were "either anonymous or informal."

Twelve of those 55 complaints were considered for self-initiation, Oberdorfer said, and the commission has "self-initiated in two of the 55."

At-Large Group Councilmember Matt Carlucci attended the meeting as a guest to speak to his continued opposition to the legislation.

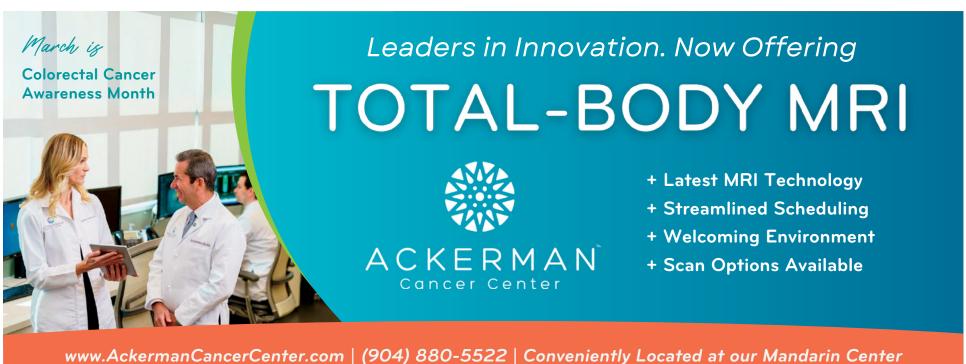
"The way that the language was inserted into the bill, without public hearing and without any committee work, that's the height of contempt and arrogance, and I think it's unethical, which is exactly why we are against it and most of the local commissions around the state are against it – matter of fact, all of them are," he said after the meeting.

In its statement released later that evening, the Jacksonville Ethics Commission urged the House to reject the amendments as the requirements included therein "may intimidate and have a chilling effect on persons who have information about corruption by local officials and employees."

"If this bill passes, it would be a disservice to Jacksonville citizens and it will cause us to move backwards in ethical oversight," said Jacksonville Ethics Commission Chair Juanita Dixon in the statement. "This will impact public trust in government. We hope this bill, as amended in the Senate, does not pass in the Florida Legislature."

The statement also requested that representatives of local ethics commissions have the ability to testify before the House of Representatives before the amendments are voted on.

SB 7014's companion bill in the House of Representatives - House Bill 1597 - does not currently have these amendments and as of Feb. 19 was added to the State Affairs Committee agenda.



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Self-storage Development Proffers Third Design Attempt

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Atlanta-based developer The Simpson Organization is hoping the third time's a charm as it returns with revised plans and a new approach for a proposed mixed-use development featuring self-storage on approximately one acre at the corner of Hendricks Avenue and Prudential Drive in San Marco.

A History

This is not a new conversation for the San Marco community; in fact, discussions surrounding allowing more self-storage facilities into the Downtown Overlay date back several years. In 2021, legislation was introduced proposing changes to the overlay to do just that. The bill, introduced by then-councilmember Reggie Gaffney, was withdrawn in summer 2022 after being met with substantial community opposition.

The discussion resurfaced a second time last year in the form of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) rezoning request specific to the site at Hendricks and Prudential. Initially, the PUD proposed only 16,000 square feet of ground floor retail space beneath four stories of selfstorage. After extensive negotiations with the San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS), other San Marco residents, conditions from the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) and recommendations presented by the city council in the form of a floor amendment, the final development proposal the city council considered at the time was a mixed-use development featuring an expanded retail space across least 36,609 square feet of residential space (equaling to a minimum of 20 residential units located on the floors above the self-storage units), an increase in parking spaces from 33 to 63 and 5,741 square feet of rooftop uses to include a bar and/or restaurant.

Despite the changes made to the project, the community remained unmoved in its opposition and ultimately, the previous city council voted the rezoning request down in a dramatic 9-to-9 tie vote with Councilmember Rory Diamond excused for military service. An accompanying alley closure was also unanimously voted down in the same meeting.

Then-District 5 Councilmember LeAnna Cumber, an ardent opponent of the PUD and accompanying alley closure, later told *The Resident News* the applicant had the right to appeal the city council's decision, though she expected it would be a "heavy lift" for a court to overturn.

Town Hall Take Two

San Marco residents gathered at Aspire Church on Thursday, Feb. 1 for another Town Hall hosted by SMPS to review the project's redesign following mediation sought by the developer. Once again, attorney Steve Diebenow, on behalf of the developer, stood before the community members to answer questions, address concerns and discuss the "very big changes" the designs have undergone.

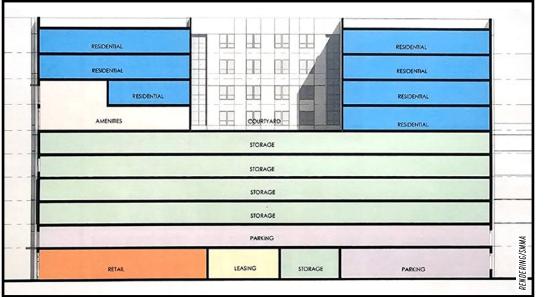
Diebenow said he believed these new designs addressed the major concerns his client had heard from the community, those being design, "what was inside the building" and the partial alley closure.

"We think we've addressed all of those and we addressed them in the context of a mediation," Diebenow said. "What you're going to see is the result of our work with staff. Staff doesn't have the authority to bind the city like in a normal mediation. In this

type of mediation, all the staff can say is, 'Yeah, looks good to me, but you still have to go get approvals from the elected officials and the independent board members.'"

For the new designs, Diebenow explained, his client had brought on San Marco-based companies The Vestcor Company and Group 4 Design, Inc. The new mixed-use development features a 10-story building with ground-floor retail, parking and office space with the second level devoted entirely to parking. Floors three through six will house the self-storage units. The remaining levels will split into two towers for roughly 100 residential units and an amenity center for those residents, between which will sit an open-air courtyard.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



19,127 square feet, an allotment of at A cross-section rendering of the proposed self-storage building design.



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Rather than requesting to reduce the 20-foot-wide alley to 10 feet "and close it all the way down," the new applications leave the width intact while only requesting to close a portion of it to the west.

Another new aspect of the proposed development is the inclusion of affordable housing: Diebenow explained a minimum 80% of the studio, one-bedroom and twobedroom units will be affordable units, meaning "they are at 120% of the Area Median Income or less."

"In this case, there will probably be about 40% of the units around 60% [of the AMI] and 40% of the units at 40%." Diebenow said.

The remaining 20% of the units, he added, "will be somewhere in that range of 100 to 80%."

For Jacksonville, the Area Median Income (AMI) is approximately \$66,000 for a single person.

Examples of other mixed-use developments in the area featuring affordable housing components include the Lofts at Murray Hill and the Lofts at Brooklyn, both of which were Vestcor projects.

Old Questions and New

Following Diebenow's presentation, residents raised questions and concerns regarding the project, many of them reminiscent of those previously expressed.

Regarding the self-storage component of the project, those in attendance at February's Town Hall remained in steadfast opposition, with residents stating they simply did not want it.

While the increased traffic the self-storage and retail aspects would bring to the Hendricks and Prudential intersection – particularly in the form of moving trucks or vans – has always been a concern, residents now asked about the impact of the increased traffic from the residential units as well.

Diebenow referenced previous testimony by Martha Moore, who had conducted a traffic analysis on the past designs, and stated Moore is in the process of updating her analysis to allow for the increased residential units.

"I will say, based on the amount of traffic capacity that's available on those roads, adding another 50 or 60 units is not going to make those roads fail or become congested," he said.

Further, he argued, accessing the retail, selfstorage or other ground-level components are oneway-in from Prudential Drive and one-way-out onto We have worked with the developer and as a result, they've really put effort into making the project better, but storage is still not a permitted use under the downtown overlay, so for that reason we don't support the project as it currently stands.

 David Paulk SMPS President

Home Street. Parking for the residential units is accessible via Home Street.

"Not only are there fewer driveways, but they're actually better organized than they are today," he stated.

A new concern raised by these new designs has been the issue of parking: There will be one parking space per residential unit – 100 parking spots – and 25 for retail. While several residents at the Town Hall argued that's an insufficient amount of parking, particularly for the residential units, Diebenow pointed out that the Downtown Overlay requires no minimum for parking.

"You can park whatever you think will work from a marketing perspective," he said. "Now in the real world, you have to have parking. In urban developments, you want at least one parking spot per unit."

Ryan Hoover, president, TVC Development, from Vestcor, also addressed the concerns regarding parking, saying, "We stick to about one spot per unit. As he said, there's studios, ones and twos. That's what we've done and that's our history, that works for us."

What's Next?

The project will be reviewed by the Downtown Development Review Board, which will review the PUD rezoning request, exterior architectural design and the partial alley closure before advancing and the city council for approvals. It will go before the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA), where it will be seeking a \$600,000 local preference loan. Additionally, it will also be seeking a \$6 million loan "that is contemplated either from the housing commission or the city or some combination that would only benefit the affordable housing component. It would not benefit the storage, it would not benefit the retail," Diebenow explained.

He added the project will not be seeing completion grants, REV grants or other such incentives.

In an interview following the Town Hall, SMPS President David Paulk said the organization remains in opposition of the development in its newest iteration.

"We have worked with the developer and as a result, they've really put effort into making the project better, but storage is still not a permitted use under the downtown overlay, so for that reason we don't support the project as it currently stands," he said. "We are continuing to work with the developer to improve the project and make it something that's better for the neighborhood as a whole, but we just don't currently feel that what's currently proposed is the highest and best use for that property."

The Resident News reached out to the applicant via Diebenow for comment but did not receive a response by press time. We will continue to report on the situation as it develops.

Visit www.residentnews.net for more information and renderings.



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Renderings of the Park Street Road Diet

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Spring Start Date for Park Street Enhancements

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

The Brooklyn community will soon be seeing progress on the long-awaited road enhancements planned in the Park Street Road Diet.

Discussions and plans for this project, part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), stretch back several years. The development team on this project include Prosser, Inc. and Prime AE. According to a summary of the project in the CIP, it will "provide modifications to existing roadway infrastructure from Forest Street to Stonewall Street with the Brooklyn Neighborhood to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and improve vehicular safety."

The planned enhancements include adding a two-way protected bike lane, on-street parking, expanded sidewalk areas, reduced roadway widths (for safer pedestrian crossing) and the planting of street trees.

Earlier last month, Mayor Donna Deegan spoke on work the city is doing to streamline its processes to ensure projects – particularly projects like the Park Street Road Diet, that have

been in the pipeline for quite a while – progress and that those streamlining efforts are "continuing."

"From a technology standpoint, we're going to a DocuSign system where, obviously if you have digital signatures as opposed to stacks of paper, things are going to move through a whole lot faster and more efficiently," she said. "That'll save time. it'll save money."

In February, *The Resident News* reported on the Downtown Investment Authority's approval back in January of a one-year lease for a parcel of land on Bay Street to JEA to use as a construction easement to install chilled water lines along Bay Street. As payment for the lease, JEA has offered in-kind services at a minimum of \$300,000 for the Park Street Road Diet project.

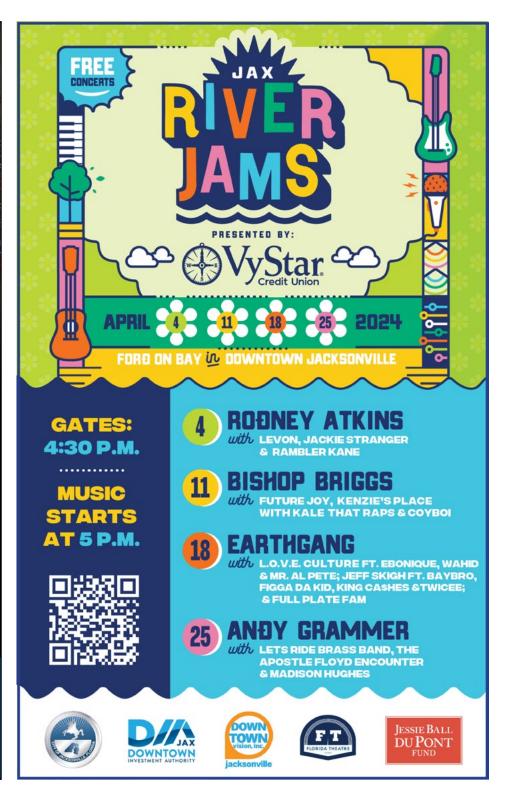
According to the City of Jacksonville, the project is currently budgeted at \$5.2 million, though updated costs will be available once the contractor submits bid pricing.

Construction is currently slated to begin this spring.



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Girl Scout Troop 2325 presented the colors and HABL player Kebron sang the national anthem during the Opening Day Ceremony on

Play Ball: Life Lessons Learned on the Diamond

The Hendricks Avenue Baseball League (HABL) kicked off its new season on Saturday, Feb. 24.

For more than 75 years, the community baseball league has introduced generations of children to the sport and instilled the love of the game.

This season will host 351 kids, divided among 32 teams in four different age groups: T-ball for ages four through six; Instructional for seven- and eight-yearolds; Minors for nine- and 10-year-olds; and Majors for 11- and 12-year-olds.

HABL Board Member Jason Eliopulos has been part of the league since fall 2020 and is now watching his youngest son age out of the league this season. He said being part of the league and introducing the sport to little ones "means everything."

"Baseball's a special game," he said. "San Marco and the surrounding communities are special communities. You can teach a lot of life's lessons through the game of baseball."



HABL teams lined up on the field to celebrate the start of a new season of baseball for the Opening Day Ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 24

In the final days leading up to Opening Day, Eliopulos said most of the hard work had been completed. Evaluations were held for all age groups - except for T-ball back in January and Eliopulos said the league holds drafts to avoid stacked teams or "behind-the-eight-ball" teams. Practices began on Feb. 3 and the first round of games were held the morning of Feb. 24, before the Opening Day Ceremony.

San Marco resident Zach Mitchell is another parent who will be watching his youngest son go through the league this year. Between his 13-year-old, 12-year-old and 9-year-old, by his math, his family has been a part of HABL for 16 seasons and played on more than 35 teams between regular and all-star teams. This last season is a bittersweet experience as HABL has given more to Mitchell himself than he had ever anticipated.

"I wasn't expecting to fall back in love with baseball," he said. "I fell back in love with my childhood sport. I wasn't expecting to make so many friends, I've made a ton of friends. I wasn't expecting to coach, I wasn't expecting to be a commissioner. I wasn't expecting to drag the field and do a lot of field maintenance. I just didn't expect what a big part of my life it would become."

Since joining in 2015, Mitchell said his children have "learned a ton" from HABL and it's where they want to be, even when they're not playing.

"We've spent a bunch of nights and days up there even when they don't play because they want to go watch their friends and play with their friends," he said.

Looking beyond HABL, Mitchell said his oldest one has joined a travel league, which his 12-year-old plans to do in the fall. Most youngsters move on to travel leagues after ageing out of HABL, Eliopulos explained, as "there's organizations all over town that offer that."

"Ultimately we'd like to have a third team – a 14/15 league – but it's just a matter of practice time and field constraints," he said.

HABL serves the communities of San Marco, St. Nicholas, the Southbank, Lakewood and San Jose. Its park is located on the Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church premises at 4001 Hendricks Ave.

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St. Johns Riverkeeper Wins Environmental Lawsuit

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

St. Johns Riverkeeper and six other environmental nonprofit organizations are celebrating a win after a three-year-old legal battle regarding delegation of the Clean Water Act wetland permitting program.

In December 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) delegated authority of the program to the State of Florida.

St. Johns Riverkeeper, the Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, the Sierra Club, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, the Florida Wildlife Federation and Miami Waterkeeper filed a lawsuit against the EPA the following January alleging this delegation violated multiple "bedrock environmental bedrock laws," among them the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act.

"The EPA essentially lowered the bar to allow a state for the first time to administer the federal wetlands program without meeting federal standards," stated a St. Johns Riverkeeper newsletter.

f [The ruling] basically restores federal protections that were lost with the delegation of the permitting process to the state. "" - Lisa Rinaman

St. Johns Riverkeeper

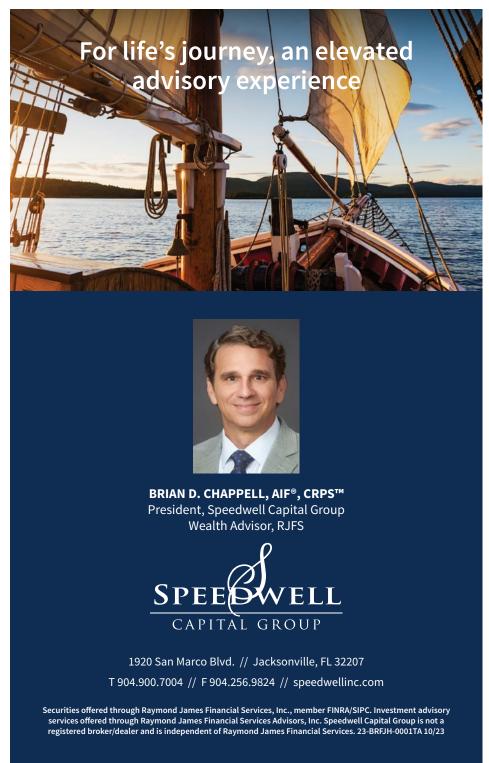
The newsletter explained, "Florida developers have long referred to the local delegation of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act as the 'the Holy Grail.' St. Johns RIVERKEEPER [sic] and environmental organizations throughout the state opposed the delegation due to concerns that a resulting lack of oversight, federal protections and due diligence would result in the potential losses of crucial wetlands and habitats for protected species."

"[The ruling] basically restores federal protections that were lost with the delegation of the permitting process to the state," said St. Johns Riverkeeper Lisa Rinaman. "It gives us another important layer for protection for vital wetlands in the St. Johns River watershed that impacts water quality as well as flood control right here in Jacksonville."

Rinaman added the defendants had 10 days from the Feb. 16 ruling to request a stay; they can also file an appeal.

As of Feb. 23, to Rinaman's knowledge, nothing had been filed by the defendants, though she said "it's probably likely" that they would.

Rinaman added this legal win "just underscores the magnitude of the importance of Florida wetlands. We're losing them at an alarming rate, so if anything, we need more protections, not less. So, we're thrilled that this is moving it back in the right direction."



Making Every Dollar Count: How Tax-Smart Strategies Maximize the Impact of Charitable Giving

Most people wouldn't manage their stock market investments or retirement funds without the help of a licensed financial advisor.

Shouldn't that be the case for philanthropy, as well? Giving generously to a worthy cause or non-profit organization should be undertaken with an experienced private wealth advisor who understands how to deploy smart strategies that help a donor's money go further.

"Everybody wants to do good, but most people don't know how to do it effectively," said Louis Walsh, CFA, Managing Director of Investments and Private Wealth Financial Advisor at Walsh Investment Consulting Group, part of the Wells Fargo Advisors Financial network.

Walsh Investment Consulting Group offers private wealth advising, including institutional consulting services, retirement plan consulting, and charitable giving strategies. Walsh provides comprehensive investment management strategies for wealthy families, small businesses and foundations to the greater Jacksonville area. He also has significant experience serving and operating charities and foundations.

Altogether, Walsh and his team offer more than 100 years of experience in private wealth management. They work with each client to customize a philanthropic plan that help maximize their giving through several targeted strategies.

For example, donors often make payments on a large

gift over multiple years and claim each payment on their annual taxes separately. Walsh said this historically increases the tax burden for the donor. Concentrating their charitable giving to a single year, however, helps to allow donors to exceed the standard charitable giving deduction and can save clients thousands of dollars, depending on the amount of the donations.

"We use a vehicle called a Donor Advised Fund. This can allow donors to shift their charitable giving into one calendar year to ease the tax burden, while still distributing the funds to their charities of choice across multiple years," Walsh explained.

We believe another successful strategy Walsh uses leverages a little-known rule: Donors over the age of 70.5 can make donations to non-profit organizations directly from traditional IRAs and those funds are not subject to federal taxes. Not only that, but the funds are fully deductible. Both the charity and the donor benefit from the gift.

"Some time ago, one of our clients was at a social function with friends, and they were all discussing their favorite charities. Our client casually mentions their 'charity checkbook' and explains how they give directly from their IRA. And none of their friends – who all give generously to various charities – were using this strategy or had even heard of it," Walsh says.

Walsh says the goal is to help improve the efficiency



and impact of his clients' current charitable giving. However, these strategies often lead clients to give even more to the charities they love, which can lead to a greater and more direct impact for the causes they champion.

Decreasing tax burdens on the upper-middle class and the wealthy may seem counterproductive for taxpayer-supported programs. Walsh argues the opposite, in fact, is true, because the top-earning families are the biggest charitable givers.

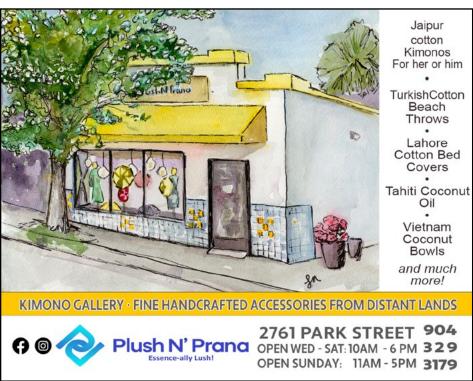
"While taxpayer-funded support for government-run programs is still important, I believe it's the least efficient means of giving back to those who need it most," he said. "As little as 25 cents of every dollar of funding goes directly to government program beneficiaries. Private and religious-based nonprofit organizations have a much better track record; they minimize overhead and make every dollar count. That makes them a better philanthropic investment," said Walsh.

"When you give directly to nonprofits and use proven, tax-efficient strategies, the money is still going to those in our society who need it most, it's just three times more effective," he said. Please remember to always ask your own tax preparer for the strategies that will work best for you.

To learn more about effective charitable giving strategies, call Walsh Investment Consulting Group at (904) 839-2891.

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MOVERS HAKERS



Fisher Retires, **Sells Agency**

After a notable and well-respected 35-year career at the helm of Fisher Agency, Mary Fisher has completed the sale of the firm to Erin Gordon, owner of Savvy Partner. Fisher began merging her branding, website and public relations agency with Gordon's digital marketing agency in 2020; now that it is complete, Fisher will officially retire effective April 1.

Fisher has had a long Jacksonville-based career, starting in 1979 as a graphic designer with Lee Printing and then as a creative director of Jacksonville Magazine before founding thennamed Mary Fisher Design in 1989. It was one of the first woman-owned website design companies in America. She has been honored by multiple organizations for her entrepreneurialism and has served as a mentor to students and business owners through Florida State College Jacksonville, University of North Florida, Junior Achievement, Chamber of Commerce, Women Business Owners of North Florida and Women's Business Center's Athena PowerLink.

Fisher will remain a consultant for the agency on an as-needed basis.



Owner Peter Jaghab stands before his inventory of premium cigars at Second Wind Cigars in San Marco.

A Smokin' New Business for Hendricks Corridor

Where there's smoke, there's premium cigars, as Second Wind Cigars has now joined the ranks of the small businesses along the Hendricks Avenue corridor in San Marco.

The cigar lounge opened Jan. 1, though owner Peter Jaghab said his team is still planning its official grand opening celebration. At Second Wind Cigars, in addition to premium cigars, patrons can enjoy a 15-seat lounge with soft jazz playing over the sound system – when sports aren't being played on the four big-screen televisions. Lockers are available to store personal belongings - including cigars, since the lockers are temperature- and humidity-controlled. Coffee and soft drinks are currently available for purchase and Jaghab said he hopes to expand that to include alcoholic beverages as well.

Jaghab said it's "an honor" to be a part of the San Marco small business community.

"I've always loved the community, the restaurants, the atmosphere, the architecture and the history behind it, and I'm just happy to be a small part of what I've always loved," he said.

Second Wind Cigars is located at 3921 Hendricks Ave. Its hours are Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.



A Spark for Berkshire Hathaway

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty recently announced the addition of Stacey Sparks to its team. Sparks is a top producer with over two decades of experience in the industry. She specializes in military and relocation services, understanding the unique needs and challenges faced by families undergoing those kinds of transitions.

"I am thrilled to be part of such a prestigious and forward-thinking brokerage," said Sparks. "I am eager to leverage the cutting-edge tools and technology available at Florida Network Realty to enhance the level of service I provide to my clients."







Judge Brian J. Davis, 2022-23 board chair of The Community Foundation, with honoree Sarah Crooks and Sally Lee, daughter of Ann

Crooks Receives Art Award, Grant

Sarah Crooks, a multidisciplinary ecofeminist artist who has made significant contributions to the Northeast Florida community for more than three decades, has been honored by The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida with the 2023 Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award.

The award is bestowed annually in recognition of a local artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida. It is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker, the first woman to serve as the chair of the Board of Trustees of The Community Foundation, and it includes a \$10,000 unrestricted grant for the recipient.

"Sarah shares a love for many of the things that inspired my mother: love of nature, education, and service to the community," said Sally Lee, award selection chair and daughter of Ann McDonald Baker. "These intersections, as well as the sheer beauty of Sarah's work, made her a natural choice for this year's award."

Crooks's work blends art with environmental science, reimagining human relationships with the natural environments of Northeast Florida. Collaborations include Cathedral Arts Project, The St. Johns Riverkeeper, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, The Museum of Science and History, The East Coast Greenway Alliance.

"Sarah's work takes us on a journey to understand ourselves and our environment in new ways," said Isaiah M. Oliver, president of The Community Foundation. "We are so proud to honor her with this award, and to ensure the legacy of Ann McDonald Baker lives on through perpetual support for the arts community she cherished."



Teachers Confer on Technology's Impact on Education

Faculty and staff from Episcopal School of Jacksonville attended the Future of Education Technology Conference in Orlando Jan. 23-26. David Sandlin and Megan Trumpler attended from the Lower School; Tracy Jester and Marcus Wells from the Middle and Upper School; and the Technology Department sent Kelly Bates and Chip Morgan.

"After each conference, I always come back with a new excitement for teaching, eager to implement some of the tools and ideas that I learned. With this year's big topic, generative AI and its impact on the future of education, we were able to see a glimpse of what education may look like in the next two to 10 years and learn ways to navigate these advancements in the classroom," said Jester. "Many of the workshops were geared towards our AI policy, which taught educators and students how to use AI efficiently and ethically."

New Home Base for Baseball Charity

Walk Off Charities celebrated the opening of its new facility at Fort Family Park, 8000 E. Baymeadows Rd., with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, Feb. 23. The Fort Family Park facility will serve as the organization's home base for its baseball leagues for children ages 5-18.

Mayor Donna Deegan was in attendance at the event, along with leaders from the city, city council, Walk Off Charities and Duval County Public Schools.

Walk Off Charities runs youth baseball clinics and leagues and improves facilities in the area in order to bring the sport of baseball to children who can't afford to play.









Starling Joins Berkshire Hathaway

Kyle Starling joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty as its newest Realtor. Having called Northeast Florida his home for 40 years, Starling finds joy in exploring all the area has to offer alongside his wife and daughter. He is deeply familiar with the local real estate market and brings customer service experience to his new role.

more capacity to serve our patrons. See you in Lakewood!

"I am thrilled to embark on this new chapter," said Starling. "Having spent four decades in this vibrant community, I am eager to help families achieve their real estate goals and contribute to the growth and success of our beloved Northeast Florida."

"We look forward to witnessing the positive impact he will undoubtedly have on our clients and the community," said Josh Cohen, Broker Manager at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty.



Caribbean in your neighborhood! **Lunch Hours** WED, THUR, and FRI We've combined the San Marco Blvd. restaurant with the Lakewood location...same menu, same hospitality and 11am - 2pm

Choate Raises the Bar(ettes) at Fashion Weeks

Local hairstylist Melody Choate had a hair-raising triumph last month as she was chosen to join the expert stylists on the Odete DaSilva Hair Team, which works with the Global Fashion Collective. The international team consists of only 18 stylists from around



the world that work backstage to prep models for the most iconic Fashion Weeks across the globe: New York, London, Milan, Paris and Tokyo. She recently tressed to impress at the New York Fashion Week, Feb. 9-14, and the Milan Fashion Week

Choate was chosen based on her spectacular audition performance after a class with DaSilva. She described the audition process as an "impeccable style in 10 minutes or less."

"One of the main things when working this kind of event is timing, so you have to work very well under pressure because there is a lot going on around you, and everything is very fast-paced," she said. "With all these really high-shine lights, they catch every single stray hair, any imperfection, so you have to make sure that's perfect for photography and be able to do it very quickly."

Choate said they sometimes must complete as many as 30 models an hour, along with makeup and dress, but that she thrives under that pressure and loves the chaos, as it helps her stay laser-focused on the end goal.

"It really is a team effort. There's not any ego involved or any competition, because everyone is just working to create the same goal: to get all those people out on the runway looking perfect," she said.

In addition to being 12-year stylist, Choate is the Director of Education for Hair Peace Salon in Riverside and has spent five years as a Color Educator for Goldwell the color line used by Hair Peace - teaching classes to other stylists in salons along the East Coast.

She plans to attend the fall 2024 New York Fashion Week as well. Her 2025 goal? "Next year, I'd like to do all of them."







Charles E. Commander IV

Three New Directors Step Up to Save Florida Land

North Florida Land Trust (NFLT) has welcomed three new individuals to its now 16-member board of directors. Pierre N. Allaire, Charles E. Commander IV and T.R. Hainline, Jr. are the newest members of the NFLT board and will each serve a term of three years.

'We welcome Pierre, Charles and T.R. to our board and are very lucky they have agreed to help guide us in our efforts to save Florida's natural landscapes because it is now or never," said Allison DeFoor, president of NFLT. "These men bring a wealth of knowledge that will help contribute to our organization."

It is now or never.

- Allison DeFoor, President, NFLT

Allaire is an independent consultant and works in nonprofit fundraising, board development and management, executive coaching, campaign planning and endowment building. He retired from the Baptist Health Foundation in 2018 after serving as the vice president and chief development officer.

Commander is a partner with the Atlanta office of Heidrick & Struggles, serving as the global sector leader of the engineering, construction and infrastructure services specialty division. Commander has served in the U.S. Navy and has a personal link to NFLT as his late father was one of the organization's top supporters.

Hainline is a shareholder at Rogers Towers' Governmental and Regulatory Law Department. He has extensive experience in comprehensive planning, zoning and permitting and sat on the Mayor's Park Task Force from 2004-2005.



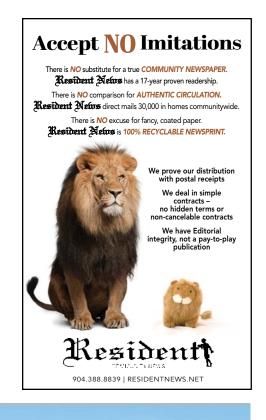
Zentz Honored as Jazz **Educator of the Year**

Don Zentz, Director of Jazz Studies at the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, has been honored with the John LaPorta Jazz Educator of the Year Award, presented by The Jazz Education Network and Berklee College of Music. It recognizes educators who have made a distinctive impact on jazz.

Zentz has 39 years of musical impact under his belt, having taught at every level in education and across all areas of band: concert, marching and, particularly, jazz. He has directed the All-State Jazz Bands of Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Maine and has been a Keilwerth Saxophones Performing Artist

Last year, Zentz was named Jazz Educator of the Year by the National Jazz Festival and the Jacksonville Jazz Festival inducted him into their Hall of Fame. For over 20 years he was a per service saxophonist with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and his 30-year tenure with the St. Johns River City Band culminated with his appointment as music director and conductor.

In addition to his long list of musical accomplishments, he and his wife, Laurie, led an interactive "Jazzin' It Up" concert series for elementary students that served over 20,000 children in Northeast Florida and South Georgia.



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Bannister Roby Called to Lead ECS

Natalya Bannister Roby has joined Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) as the new CEO, effective Jan. 16, 2024. She will be responsible for overseeing the strategic vision of the organization and day-to-day operations. Bannister Roby replaces Connie Stophel, who served in the role for the past two decades and has been with the organization for 34 years.

"I am honored to lead Episcopal Children's Services as we embark on this exciting next chapter. Building upon Connie Stophel's strong foundation, our commitment to children achieving their full potential remains our top priority," said Bannister Roby.

Bannister Roby comes to ECS with a doctoral degree in educational leadership and a proven track record of transforming organizations through her purpose-driven culture efforts. Her experience includes

working with Boys & Girls Club where she garnered national attention for her award-winning programs and most recently at the PACE Center for Girls' national office, leading center operations throughout Florida.

"I approach this work with my whole heart. It is a calling," she said. "Throughout my professional journey, I have witnessed the importance of early childhood education and prevention as crucial elements in fostering stronger and healthier communities. Together, we can secure a brighter future for children and families across Florida."

With a budget of more than \$100 million, ECS is one of Florida's largest youth service nonprofits and a leader in early childhood education, serving thousands of children and their families throughout the state of Florida.

Specialty Pediatric Cardiologist Comes to Jacksonville

Pediatric cardiologist Dr. Ram Bishnoi has joined the C. Herman and Mary Virginia Terry Heart Institute at Wolfson Children's Hospital. Dr. Bishnoi is double boardcertified in pediatrics and pediatric cardiology. His areas of expertise include pediatric interventional cardiology, pulmonary hypertension, and inpatient and postoperative care. As a pediatric interventional cardiologist,



Dr. Ram Bishnoi

he is trained to perform specific minimally invasive catheterbased treatments for heart conditions.

At the Terry Heart Institute, Dr. Bishnoi will also establish a pediatric pulmonary hypertension program in addition to caring for patients recovering from cardiac surgery and interventions at Wolfson Children's.



Firehouse Subs Juggernaut Sets Eyes on Cap's on the Water

San Jose resident Stephen Joost is returning to the restaurant industry as he takes over majority ownership of the St. Augustine restaurant Cap's on the Water.

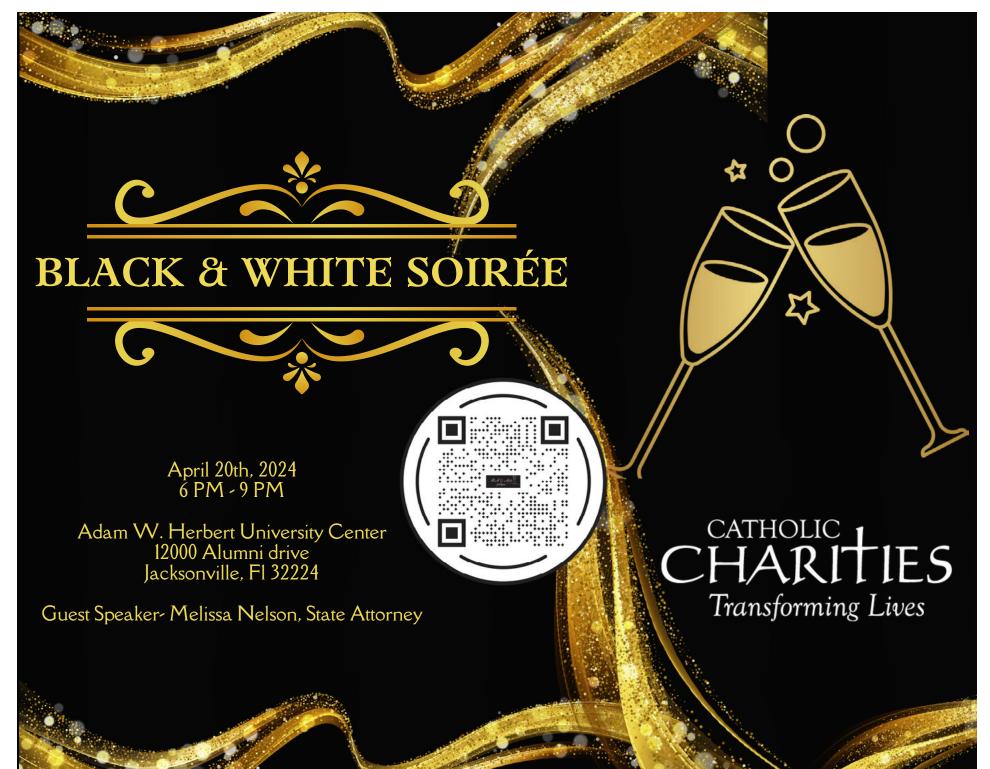
Along with his fellow founding partners, Joost sold their popular sandwich chain Firehouse Subs in 2021. Following that, Joost invested in Yoga Den, a privatelyowned yoga brand with 12 studios throughout Northeast

Florida, including locations in Avondale and San Marco. Returning to the restaurant industry, however, remained a goal.

"I've been blessed to be a part of the restaurant industry in Jacksonville for the last 30 years, but I'm not finished yet," he said. "I wanted to build another restaurant company, but never imagined this opportunity or that I would find such a perfect fit with Bernard. It is an honor to own an iconic restaurant like Cap's on the Water and continue the legacy that Bernard and his team have built."

Bernard De Raad purchased Cap's on the Water in 1999 and plans to stay on as an owner to oversee and manage daily operations. The two restauranteurs also plan to work together on developing "several full-service, coastal restaurants."

"Stephen believes in the culture and philosophy we have built at Cap's and will ensure that it remains intact, and that is very important to us," said De Raad. "My fingers are always itching, and I have been dreaming up ideas for future concepts for years. We share a vision of opening new, iconic restaurants that use the same proven model as Cap's on the Water."



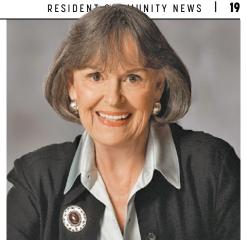
Weaver Ignites Legacy 2024

Local philanthropist Delores Barr Weaver, through a \$61 million gift to the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, has recommended grants to local nonprofits as part of her Legacy 2024 grantmaking plan. She has chosen to focus on selected nonprofits that she has supported for many years in causes like the arts, revitalization and housing, environmental issues, and ensuring all people in Northeast Florida and beyond can live a life in which they thrive. The nonprofits receiving the funds will be notified as grants are awarded.

The \$61 million contribution to Weaver's donor-advised fund in July 2023 made it the largest gift in the The Community Foundation for their

foundation's 60-year history. Legacy 2024 was developed in partnership with staff at The Community Foundation over the last six months. The process identified organizations with exceptional previous results records and tailored funding in ways that would help each grow beyond Weaver's support, setting them up for long-term success.

"The Community Foundation's expert staff and charitable giving solutions have enabled me to have greater impact in the region I love than I ever could alone," Weaver said. "I want to congratulate and thank the Legacy 2024 agencies and the staff of



partnership over many years."

The plan includes a variety of grant types: one-time funding for specific projects; matching challenges to bolster sustainability; and longterm, multi-year grants to deepen community impact.

Pawsitively Luxurious New Dog Spa

San Marco now has a brand-new, highend doggie day spa and dog grooming facility. FURology opened in February at 1924 W. University Blvd. under the direction of owner and expert stylist Morgan Murphy. The luxury salon cares for all breeds and sizes but specializes in skin and coat issues as well as longcoated, specialty and breed-standard cuts, like those for doodles and poodles.

"The dogs actually feel better through the art of grooming," said Murphy. "You can totally see the difference from when they come in to when they leave and how much better they feel."

Murphy's own standard poodle, who regularly gets groomed and dyed, has served as a testament to the power of doggie pampering.

"If she was just white with a shavedown, she was depressed. But the minute I would bring her into the salon and color her, she was a totally different dog. She knew that when she got color, she got more attention," said Murphy. "I see that daily when dogs come in. When we go through the whole spa process and get them all cleaned up and cute, they get more attention. They love it."

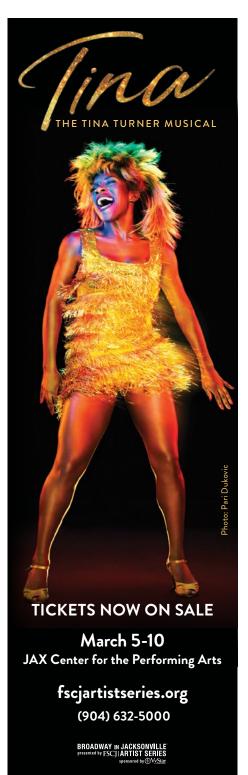
Murphy, who previously owned Grooming dales Dog Salon from 2014-20, has 16 years' experience in traditional and competition dog grooming. The new FURology facility provides baths, haircuts and nail services, catered to each dog's needs. Soon, Murphy will complete her certification as a canine aesthetician and bring in TheraClean services, which remove dirt, bacteria



Morgan Murphy at FURology, a dog spa.

and even allergens from the hair follicle, minimizing chronic conditions and promoting hair growth.

Appointments can be made online at FURologyjax.com or by calling (904) 800-9807.





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38th Annual **Celebrity Chefs Tasting Luncheon & Silent Auction**

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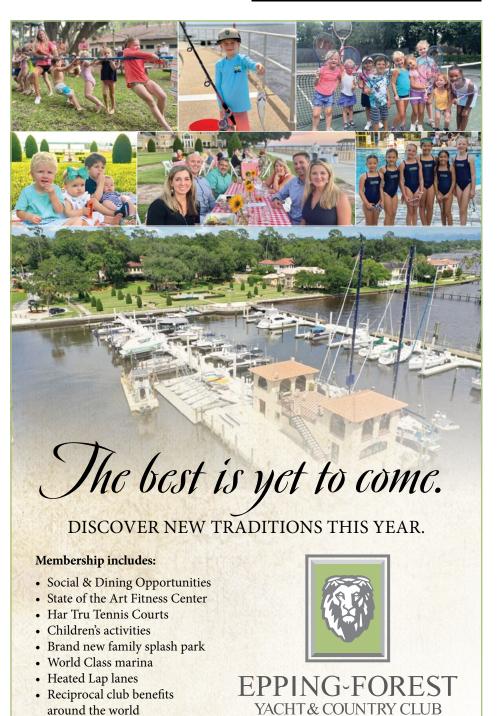
Luncheon: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Auction opens at 10:30 a.m. **FREE PARKING** Tickets: \$40 Individual Ticket \$35 for purchase of 10 or more tickets



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Renewing Dignity Merges with Feeding Northeast Florida

Feeding Northeast Florida (FNEFL) announced its merger with long-time partner Renewing Dignity, an organization whose mission is to eliminate "period poverty" through menstrual product distribution, education and advocacy. The organization will now be known as Renewing Dignity: A Program of Feeding Northeast Florida.

More than 260,000 individuals suffer from some level of food insecurity across the 12 counties FNEFL serves, a marker that oftentimes serves as an indicator of other unmet needs, like period products. While 2 in 5 people nationally struggle to purchase period products, Renewing Dignity sought to solve that for the First Coast.

The partnership between the two organizations began in 2019 in response to a shared concern about the lack of menstrual products for people facing homelessness or income insecurity. The organizations worked together to raise funds and awareness, as well as purchase, transport and store period products; FNEFL played a crucial role as a distribution partner. Moving forward, period products will be widely distributed across FNEFL's service area.

"The need in our community is high – and not just for food assistance," said Susan King, president and CEO of Feeding Northeast Florida. "We are grateful for the partnership we have had with Renewing Dignity, and we are looking forward to the increased difference we can make by bringing them under the FNEFL banner, making period products a staple of our distribution events."

Much of the program's daily operations will remain unchanged through the merger, but FNEFL will assume Renewing Dignity's administrative and advocacy responsibilities, including maintaining restrictions on funds raised for the program. The former Renewing Dignity board members will be retained as an advisory committee.

Jan Healy, Founder of Renewing Dignity, said the longstanding partnership with FNEFL "instills great confidence" in this next phase. "I could not be more excited to see how we can continue to grow and serve women, girls and all who menstruate in our community."

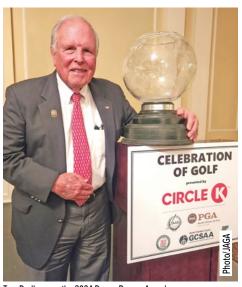


Collazo to Direct Salvation Army **Social Services**

Minerva Torres Collazo has joined The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida as its new Social Services Director at the Towers Center of Hope.

Previously, Torres Collazo served as a professor of social work at Ana G. Mendez University and the divisional social services director with The Salvation Army in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in social work and earned her doctorate in education with a concentration in organizational leadership.

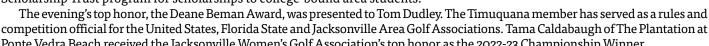
Torres Collazo's goals at her new position "are to evaluate development of organizational policies and protocols, as well as program planning, and adequately staff the facility so it can meet the needs of its participants as effectively as possible while being able to serve the community of Jacksonville."



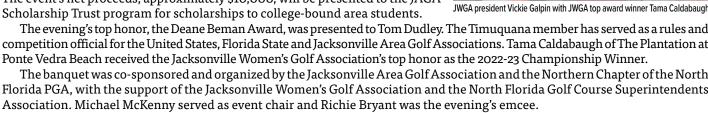
Tom Dudley won the 2024 Deane Beman Award

Evening Honors Golf Greats

The eighth annual Celebration of Golf presented by Circle K was held Feb. 21 at Timuquana Country Club to a sellout crowd of more than 240 supporters of the game of golf. The banquet brings together the golf community to recognize and honor those who have made notable contributions, both on the course and off. The event's net proceeds, approximately \$10,000, will be presented to the JAGA



The banquet was co-sponsored and organized by the Jacksonville Area Golf Association and the Northern Chapter of the North Florida PGA, with the support of the Jacksonville Women's Golf Association and the North Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association. Michael McKenny served as event chair and Richie Bryant was the evening's emcee.





<u>University of Florida Pianist Evan Mitchel</u>l: Virtuoso Masterworks for Solo Piano 4:00 pm, Sunday, March 10th www.evanmitchell.net

Douglas Anderson 'Bon Voyage'

Choral Concert: Chamber Chorale, Men's, Women's & Jazz Choirs 7:00 pm, Thursday, March 14th

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Savanne Giroire, Robin Klob and Agnella Dolor

Bohemian Benevolence for PlacemakingJax

Downtown Vision Inc. brought the opulence of the Belle Époque to Downtown Jacksonville on Friday, Feb. 23 as they hosted their annual #DTJax Gala. Themed "Duval Rouge," the glittering event blended Duval decadence with 19th century Bohemian Paris to raise funds for PlacemakingJax. PlacemakingJax helps Jaxsons engage underused public spaces by collaboratively creating pop-

Downtown Vision Inc. brought the up and large-scale activations to bring opulence of the Belle Époque to the community together.

Duval Rouge transformed MOCA Jacksonville into the full splendor of Moulin Rouge's mystery with captivating entertainment from Ramona + the RIOT and a silent disco with Hush Hush Headphones. The event also featured extravagant bites from local restaurants, a photo booth and silent auction.





Merry and Roger Rassman



olin and Kaci Barnes



Laura and Brad Vanzee



Four Stars for

Florida Forum

Four-star Admiral James Stavridis, retired, received full marks from

Jacksonville attendees for his appearance at The Women's Board's Florida Forum on Monday, Feb. 26 at the Jacksonville

Stavridis is currently the vice chair,

global affairs and managing director of

The Carlyle Group, a global investment

firm. But the decorated admiral is most

well-known for his numerous U.S and

international medals and decorations

while serving for 37 years in the U.S.

Navy. Among his commands, he served

from 2009-2013 as the 16th Supreme

Allied Commander at NATO and led

the U.S. Southern Command in Latin America from 2006-2009. He also served as senior military assistant to the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense, and has published 12 books on leadership and maritime affairs.

Stavridis's Florida Forum appearance was made possible by Florida Blue; he was the third and final speaker in the 2023-24 Speaker Series. Funds raised by the Florida Forum support The Women's Board's commitment to raise \$1.5 million for two new Kids Kare Mobile Intensive Care Units for Wolfson Children's Hospital's Neonatal and Pediatric Critical

Care Transport fleet.

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Great Food, Folks Gather to Solve Hunger

Velvety bourbons, savory samplings and even a few three-pointers spotlighted Feeding Northeast Florida's Bourbon & Brisket fundraiser Feb. 3. The annual tasting event, which raises enough money to provide over 250,000 meals annually to local families facing hunger, filled Strings Sports Brewery with philanthropists





Stef Cox with Travis Newsom, Colby and Victoria Adeeb

The event featured local restaurants and distilleries like Bono's, Manifest Distilling, Four Rivers Smokehouse, and the host restaurant's own brews. An executive bourbon steward led the whiskey tastings, bringing a touch of enrichment to the night's events, which included a silent auction, live music and a few tosses at Strings's full-size basketball hoop.

Proceeds from the event support Feeding Northeast Florida's mission to solve hunger in Northeast Florida through partnerships with more than 325 nonprofits across an eight-county area.









Danielle Anderson with Amy Miles, Victoria and Jason Miller

Rob White with Jeremy Pinkney





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Darlene Uhler-Batiste with Sheila Jackson, Georgeann and John Roeder, Laurie Haas, Rita Cannon, Debbie Veale, Karen Anderson

Cooking Up Hope

Menu chosen for Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary's 38th Annual Celebrity Chefs

Members and friends of the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary gathered in February to sample and establish the menu for the 38th Annual Celebrity Chefs Tasting Luncheon and Silent Auction, scheduled for April 4, 2024, from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Prime Osborn Convention Center.

The keystone of this popular annual event is the gathering of local celebrities - media personalities, government officials and business leaders - all dishing up tastes of their favorite recipes, as well as an eclectic silent auction to raise money for the programs of The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida. Since the event's inception, more than \$2 million has been raised, making it the largest fundraiser for the organization.





Debbie and Ernie Veale with Susie O'Quinn and Rita Cannon

Kathy Kelemen with Michele Kehnert, Deborah DeFoor and

"It's always an honor for us to collaborate with community partners and businesses when we work to serve our community's needs," said Major Keath Biggers with the Northeast Florida Area Command. "We appreciate their support of The Salvation Army here in Jacksonville. Help at this event helps sustain program services provided through The Towers Center of Hope."

Celebrity chefs for 2024 include Sheriff T.K. Waters, Action News Jax's Mike Buresh, Jen Burns and Kevin Brown from the Jacksonville Beach Sea Turtle Patrol, CSX's Mike Corey, Reverend Kate Moorhead Carroll of St. Johns Cathedral, Fellowship of Christian Athletes' Matthew Roop, Ernie Veale from Stellar Properties, and Beacon Fisheries' Mike and Karen Eddy and Sue and Hank Turner.

To purchase event tickets, visit bit.ly/3vMyJKd.







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1111 GREENRIDGE RD • \$950.000 4 Bed / 2 Full Bath / 1 Half Bath / 3,205 Sq Ft



10378 DEERWOOD CLUB RD • \$625.000 4 Bed / 2 Full Bath / 1 Half Bath / 3,432 Sq Ft



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10104 LEISURE LN. S, 121 • \$327,000 3 Bed / 2 Bath / 2,004 Sq Ft



10800 OLD ST AUGUSTINE RD, 306 • \$205,000 2 Bed / 2 Bath / 1,182 Sq Ft

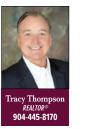




















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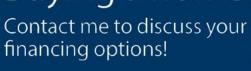


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Amy Meyer with Dave and Tina Caro

Grayson and Erin Avery with Elijah Von Almen and Jamie Sandifer Mark Velarde and Jessica Cummings with Kathy Barbour and



From Trauma to Triumph

17th Annual A Night for Heroes Gala supports life-saving efforts of TraumaOne

UF Health Jacksonville held its annual black-tie fundraiser, the 17th Annual A Night for Heroes Gala, on Feb. 3 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront where guests celebrated the true heroics of UF Health Jacksonville staff and first responders, raised funds to provide state-of-the-art equipment and spread awareness of the value of a local Level I trauma center in our community.

The night's 2024 honoree, Harvey Doliner, delivered a heartfelt message of the impact the organization had in his life, speaking about how UF Health Jacksonville and the TraumaOne helicopter saved his hand and arm, and gave him his life back after his life-threatening accident with a plane propeller.

"They really care," Doliner said. "It's so unbelievable, the dedication and care."

A Night for Heroes was started in 2008 to help fund UF Health TraumaOne and has since expanded its support to the critical care units as well. Its Heroes Council has grown to 30 members strong, led this year by event co-chairs Olivia Frick and Jessica Cummings.



Penelope Royer with Angela Simons, Mary Jean Coppedge and Diana Glendinning Linda Cunnigham with Mac



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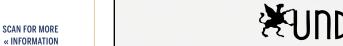
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The sold-out Heart of the Runway, hosted by North Florida School of Special Education (NFSSE), brought extra love to Valentine's Day with heartwarming, dual fashion show events on its campus at The Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center.

Success of Heart of the Runway results in dual events

Due to popular demand of the traditional fashion show and luncheon, NFSSE launched its inaugural Heart of the Runway After Dark Feb. 13, 2024, a special cocktail hour and evening runway show with Honorary Chair Karen Darr. The event was a preview of the high-style fashion show that would be held the following day featuring heart-stealing NFSSE student models donning designs from Dillard's and Linda Cunningham's spring collection reveal.

Heart of the Runway After Dark gave attendees a frontrow view of the latest fashions alongside hors d'oeuvres and signature cocktails created and served by NFSSE's own Berry Good Farms Culinary team. Meredith Frisch

served as Honorary Chair of the Feb. 14 Heart of the Runway Luncheon and Fashion Show.



Tiffany Heavener with Dr. Laura Grippa

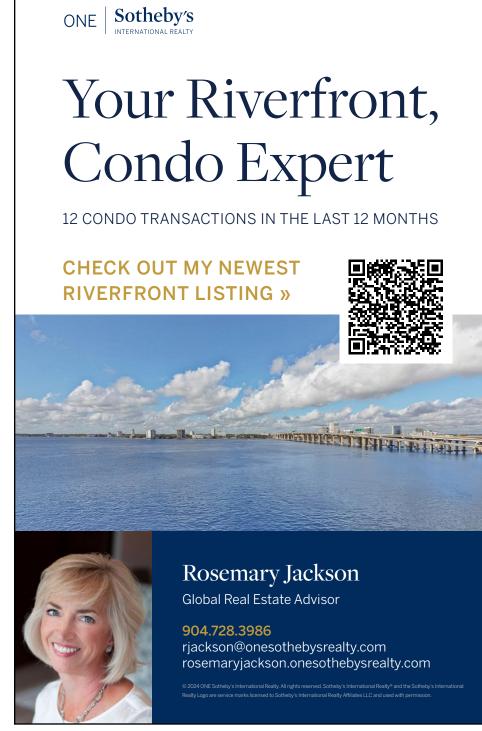
Josh Smith with Suzanne Hendricks and Tom Janning



Jana Angel with

Glen Iones and J. Houghton







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Anna Valent and her tennis team at the USTA Sectionals in Orlando.

Helping her community and being of service is at Anna Valent's core. She knew from a young age that being involved in something bigger than herself was what she was meant to do - and she does just that. Not only professionally as the incoming executive director of Dreams Come True, but through her

volunteer work as well.

"I always knew I wanted to be in a service role," Valent said. "At the end of the day, what drives me is knowing that what I'm doing is impacting something else."

Valent grew up in Georgia, most recently in St. Simon's Island. She left after graduating high school to attend the University of Florida (UF) and swim at the collegiate level; she was a worldranked distance freestyle swimmer and the 2002-2003 cocaptain of the swim team.

After graduating from UF with a degree in psychology and public relations, she was offered a position at the Make a Wish Foundation in Jacksonville.

"They wouldn't let me back in Georgia," Valent joked.

She didn't know anyone when she first moved to Jacksonville. so she found a place downtown at 11 East Forsyth. She was one of the first residents, which consisted mostly of young people and recent graduates.

"I felt like that would be a good way to meet people," Valent said. She ended up not only making friends, but also meeting her future husband, Kevin, who had been in Jacksonville since age 12.



Anna Valent with members of the Dreams Come True Horizon Board on a visit to Give Kids the World.

"I always thought I would go back to Georgia and that Jacksonville was just a stop along the way," she said. "And then I met him. His marriage proposal was, 'If you're ready to call Jacksonville your home, I'd love for you to be my wife."

They've now been together for 20 years, married for 18, and have three daughters: Riley, 15, Sawyer, 12, and Mary Parker, 8.

"I joked that I wasn't going to date the first guy I met in Jacksonville, I'm going to marry him instead," she said. "He loved it, and he understood the value of Jacksonville. I had the opportunity to see it, too, and I'm so glad he was adamant about staying here."

After working at Make a Wish for a few years, Valent followed up with positions at the JAX Chamber of Commerce and Athletes for CARE before transitioning to her current position at Dreams Come True, a nonprofit organization that grants the dreams of children with life-threatening illnesses.

"Our whole mission is to bring hope and joy," she said. "And so that's literally what we get to think about every day is, how can we make this more fun? How can we bring more joy? How can we take it up a notch. That's such a fun spot to be in. What will make

Being a swimmer, one of her favorite dreams was when a little boy got the chance to not only meet Olympic Gold Medalist swimmer Michael Phelps, but also swims laps with him. Another was of a little girl who had cancer whose dream was to get her mom blessed by the Pope. They traveled to the Vatican, where both were blessed.

"She survived and is now an oncologist herself," Valent said.



Outside of work, Valent is also heavily involved in her community. She is the membership chair for the San Marco Preservation Society, chair of Little Friends Preschool at Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, on the PTA at Hendricks Avenue

> Elementary School, and on the board of the National Charity League, which is a mother/daughter charity organization.

> "The preservation society really focuses on the San Marco area and making sure that we are growing in a responsible way and protecting our historic features," she said. "And making sure that people have the resources they need to grow and really make this area thrive. I love San Marco."

> Valent and her family have lived in the area for nine years. Prior to that, they lived near the Jewish Community Alliance in San Jose.

> "We just love the walkability. We love the restaurants. I love the way things are growing. I feel like it's getting even more active, and I love that. And I love raising our kids here," she said.

Some of her family's favorite spots around town are The Bearded Pig, Grape and Grain, and Posting House. Her daughters

also like going to Firehouse Subs and The Loop, or "anywhere in San Marco."

In her spare time, she also enjoys playing tennis. Around 2017, after she joined San Jose Country Club, she started playing along with a group of other women who were

'We got super competitive about it, and had a lot of fun, and really focused on learning how to play," Valent said. "And I created a bunch of really amazing friendships out of that."





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I'm grateful that our real-life Resident Community has an excellent complementary edition on the interwebs. This is such an amenity! We can go to social media and find an extra slathering of neighborly connection and community, making our actual neighborhood experience even more profound. We are lucky, because that's not always the case. Most people live in a neighborhood that's either spread out in its actual existence but super allied on social media, or in a connected neighborhood with no presence online. This is not so for our Resident Community. We are #ResidentStrong in actuality and cyberspace-ity, and for that, I am grateful - rather, #Blessed.

Some of you may say, "I have zero idea what you're talking about." Your online profile may be a blank space. You may not even be out there "on the line" in any way whatsoever. But I hope this column gives you the encouragement you need to get out there and embrace a presence on social media that will better connect you to all the goings-on, needs, celebrations, joys, challenges, giveaways, sales, events and opportunities in our neighborhood. I promise this will level-up your tangible Resident Community experience in meaningful, in-person ways.

The bottom line? We can be better neighbors if we are active on, aware of, and semi-fluent in both spaces.

Let me start with the obvious fact: our neighborhoods are GREAT. By design, our communities promote connection, conversation and ways to flex your "good neighbor" behavior - at the park, we see friends and support lemonade stands; at restaurants and stores, we run into people we know, catch up with neighbors and patronize their business; on street corners, sidewalks or streets, we convene about why there are police cars in the park or who's moving to what house where. We carpool together, cry together,

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bring meals to people who are sick or experiencing loss, find lost pets together, worship together and enjoy nature in the same spaces. Our communities have enviable connection points. And we should be so grateful to those landboom Florida developers who designed our neighborhoods for people and relationships. This is all good - good for our souls and great for property values.

The second obvious fact is that like our neighbors, and by their unique design - social media platforms offer an equally tight, buzzy version of our communities. The amiable kinship we enjoy in our actual neighborhood is amplified ten-fold in its digital realm.

I visited my interwebs accounts recently to prove this theory out. Here are a few things I learned about my neighbors during a five-minute perusal, info that already has upped my good neighbor game:

- · Mary Jane is out of the hospital, according to a post from her daughter. She welcomes any cards, calls or correspondence you might offer, as they uplift her spirits greatly.
- Neighborhood Coaches Verhoef and Rivera both earned state Coach of the Year honors, a win for the next grocery store run-in.
- The St. Johns Cathedral Bookstore and Gift Shop posted some great photos from a recent Downtown Jacksonville Artwalk, a helpful reminder to get out and go next time.
- A dog ran out in front of Laura's car and found his way into her home. Though "Boy Dog" is in good hands for now, he really isn't suitable for Laura's current living situation, and she is looking for his forever home. The Humane Society can't take him for a month. Can you? (Update: Laura's house IS his forever home, and that is everything wonderful.)
- Julie reads banned books.
- Corner Farm Kitchen has a new Indian-inspired breakfast menu with spicy and savory dishes for a change of pace.
- Kerry is taking on the 31-mile December Dash Challenge for To Write Love on Her Arms. You can support her fundraising efforts by making a donation, any amount helps, big or small.
- Happy Brew in San Marco is opening and asks that patrons be patient with and show grace to its employees who

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are hard at work training and learning new skills. They are also raising money for their mission operation. Happy Brew provides employment, training and leadership opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental differences in a community café where hope is shared.

- Jan Ann is giving away a book on Blenheim Palace on the Buy Nothing 32207 San Marco/Lakewood/Empire Point/Spring Glen page. It's available porch pick-up. Also, Jeff will receive any unwanted autumnal pumpkins for his tortoises. A local teacher is looking for some magazines if anyone has some they want to get rid of. Oh, and there's a family moving into a neighborhood house and they need EVERYTHING - please keep them in mind if you're looking to give any household items away. BTW, Nicole is giving away 20 acrylic name tags and a party garland for FREE. Mariana is offering up an orthopedic dog bed for that older pup in your life.
- Romeo has been found, again.
- Natalie is selling a beautiful gold mirror and some long bookshelves on the Ortega Forest, Ortega, Venetia and Avondale Neighborhood Home Goods Swap. Please note they are for porch pick up, no delivery.
- Jack just turned 16! Watch out for him. LOL.

These are just the neighborhood good-to-know tidbits for future inperson engagements that popped up in a quick five-minute scroll. The interwebs are bursting with opportunities to serve, support and better engage with our neighbors. Trust me, Julie and I are going to have a great conversation about those banned books she likes to read when I see her out on the town. And many posts have links where you can support people like Kerry on the spot. This is the power

of good inspired by a healthy online neighborhood community.

When you take a few minutes get out there online, you upload helpful context on what your neighbors, friends and family are going through. This is real connection! They may have just lost a family member or a pet; they maybe have moved their last kid into a college dorm and are empty-nesters like me at long, long last. This a-ha knowledge might spark thoughts on how you can reach out to someone in your actual space and offer assistance, love or encouragement. People don't shout these things at you from their kitchen window when you walk by their house - but they do toss it out there online.

So. I say. "More of that!" Let's celebrate our neighborhoods' rich, connected spaces by embracing opportunities to participate in each other's lives more this year. They are there for the taking both online and off. With an open mind and generous spirit, we can make the small investment of time it takes to be present and partaking wherever that community thrives. #HomeSweetHome

Susanna Barton loves building online community, especially during Lent when she publishes unconventional Lenten posts on the Facebook. This year's series is called "Rolling My I-s: A Lenten Challenge to Give Up Me, Myself and I-Talk," also available in book form. A Granada resident, Barton has written professionally for The Jacksonville Business Journal, The Resident News, Jacksonville University and The Bolles School. She currently manages an online community called Grand Plans, which addresses geri-drama and all things elderly on www.mygrandplans.com.









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Underdog Victory for Professionals at the Underwood Cup

Northern Chapter PGA Professionals overcome five-point deficit on final day to win

In a final day that harkened back to the American heroics at the 1999 Ryder Cup at Brookline Country Club, the team of 12 Northern Chapter PGA Professionals overcame a seemingly insurmountable five-point deficit entering the final day Singles matches to pull off a stunning victory in the 33rd edition of the Underwood Cup at Timuquana Country Club.

The Underwood Cup features elite players among Northeast Florida's professional and amateur golfers. With just 12 Singles points available, captain Mike Broderick's Professionals won eight matches and tied two to grab nine of the



Professional Captain Mike Broderick with Underwood Jewelers' Clayton Bromberg and fellow San Jose member

available points and eke out a 12 ½ - 11 ½ victory the Amateurs. The Professionals were captained Broderick of Deerwood Country Club, Jack Aschenbach of the North Florida Junior Golf Foundation assisting. Mike Del Rocco of San Jose Country Club led the Amateurs, assisted by Mark Taylor.

Conducted by the Northern Chapter of the North Florida PGA, the Underwood Cup has been sponsored by Underwood Jewelers all 33 years. Underwood Jewelers President Clayton Bromberg served as Honorary Starter and host of the post-event luncheon and awards ceremony.

With support from volunteers and promotion by Jacksonville Area Golf Association and the Florida State Golf Association, the event has been hosted by Timuquana Country Club for 31 years since 1992, with the exception of 2022 and 2023, when the event was held at San Jose Country Club. A third host venue, to be announced in the near future, will soon be added to the three-club rotation.

The Amateurs lead the cup series 17-13-3.



Selflessness of Four WWII Chaplains Resurrected in Humanitarian Awards

On Feb. 3, 1943, the WWII U.S. Army transport SS Dorchester was torpedoed by a German U-boat and sank. As the Dorchester went down, four 1st Lt. Chaplains of different faiths made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their life jackets to others. Two of the chaplains were Protestant, one was a rabbi and one was a Catholic priest. They assisted the crew, prayed, joined arms and went down with the ship, forever immortalized as the "Four Chaplains."

Eighty-one years later to the day, the Four Chaplains Annual Memorial Service was presented by Chaplain Patrick Archuleta at the National POW-MIA Memorial Chapel of the High-Speed Pass at Cecil Field in Jacksonville where Archuleta presented the prestigious Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation Legion of Honor Humanitarian Awards to four Jacksonville residents. The awards recognize lifetime service to all people regardless of race or faith.

Honored at the ceremony were retired U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Robert Adelhelm of the Vets4Vets and Semper Fidelis Society, Kathy Cayton of the Navy Wives Club of America, Rafael Santiago of the Military Affairs Veterans Service Office, and Beth Heath of the We Can Be Heroes Foundation.

The executive director of the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation, Bill Kaemmer, was the keynote speaker.



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St. John's Cathedral Provides Opportunity for Unity

St. John's Episcopal Cathedral will host The American Friends of the Parents Circle – Families Forum on March 16 from 9-11 a.m.

The Parents Circle – Families Forum stands as a beacon of hope, comprised of over 700 bereaved families from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. United by the profound loss of loved ones, these families have chosen a path of reconciliation over revenge. Despite their deep-rooted divisions and animosity, the event's two speakers will share their personal journeys of transcending hatred to embrace peace, forgiveness and hope.

Register to attend at https://bit.ly/4bMk8Pm. The program will also be presented online via Zoom. In the spirit of the event, the Cathedral requests that all attendees leave political paraphernalia at home and refrain from rallying or engaging in acts of public display.







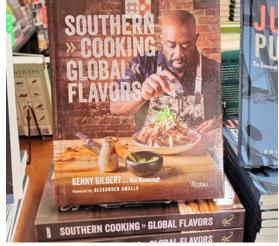


Little Run, Big Cause

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida (BBBSNEFL) hosted its 7th Annual Little Big Run 5K and Fun Run, presented by Availity, on Saturday, Jan. 27. Over 100 Bigs, Littles, runners and supporters gathered in Riverside to celebrate National Mentoring Month step-by-step, helping raise more than \$10,000. The course featured a route that crossed the new Fuller Warren shared-use path bridge.

"Funds raised through this event help our organization defend and ignite the potential of Northeast Florida's youth. Little Big Run is a little run for a big cause," said Sara Alford, CEO of BBBSNEFL.

For more than 110 years, BBBSNEFL's cause has impacted children, families and the community by providing mentoring services that inspire children's personal and academic achievement. To learn more or become a mentor, visit bbbsnefl.org.



Kenny Gilbert's Southern-inspired cookbook, and topic of his recent broadcast

Local Chef's Cookbook Goes National Florida's Embassy in D.C. partners with local bookstore

In February, the Florida House on Capitol Hill Book Club, along with San Marco Books and More, hosted Chef Kenny Gilbert for a broadcast about his cookbook "Southern Cooking, Global Flavors."

In the book, Gilbert offers up 10 iconic Southern dishes, followed by twists with international variations on the classic version. It connects the global culture to the comforting potential of Southern cuisine and celebrates the cultural influences that have coexisted in America.

Gilbert has had a three-decade career that includes fine dining restaurants and a stint as Oprah Winfrey's personal chef. He made his national debut on "Top Chef" in 2010, but is based in Jacksonville, where he owns Silkie's Chicken and Champagne Bar.

The Florida House on Capitol Hill Book Club hosts authors, booksellers and book experts quarterly to discuss literature about the Sunshine State. "Southern Cooking, Global Flavors" is available at San Marco Books and More. sanmarcobooksandmore.com, as well as online retailers.





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Sharon Cobb: Bumbling into the Spotlight

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS

Before the Creature from the Black Lagoon kidnapped actress Lori Nelson from what long-time Jacksonville residents remember as The Lobster House Restaurant in the classic movie "Revenge of the Creature," action, romance and mystery abounded at Norman Studios - located in Jacksonville's Arlington area - during the silent movie era. (normanstudios.org) The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in Riverside will be featuring an exhibit of movie posters from this era through July 7, 2024.

Kalem Studios was the first film company in Jacksonville, and by the 1920s, Jacksonville was known as the "Winter Film Capital of the World" with over 30 film companies. Fast-forward to an exodus to Hollywood,

CONFESSIONS

of a TRUE

SCREENWRITER

SHARON Y. COBE

Cobb's book "False Confessions of a

True Hollywood Screenwriter'

then roll the reel to the present where there are over 1,000 incredibly active independent filmmakers in the River City.

"The acting community in Jacksonville is very robust," said Sharon J. Cobb.

And should know. Cobb, a member

of the Screen Writers Guild of America, has garnered awards for her writing and conducted workshops locally and internationally on "Selling to Hollywood." She's published books: "Secrets to Writing a Killer 48 Hour Film Project" with the theme "shape your own destiny and never give up," and "False Confessions of a True Hollywood Screenwriter," which she dubbed faction part fact-part fiction - based on her years in Hollywood.

A hometown girl since the age of five, Cobb describes her circuitous journey from Riverside to Baker County to Key West to Hollywood - and back - as just "bumbling $along \, through \, life. "\, She \, attended \, community$ college, worked for her uncle's art gallery, created a graphic design portfolio which attracted prestigious clients, and, by age 21, had opened an ad agency in Jacksonville.

"I always followed what I loved to do, and everything I worked on just took off," she

That "everything" included her ad agency, being partners in a restaurant and operating Wool Works, a retail store. At 31, she made of list of what she really wanted to do: "Retire, be an artist and live on an island."

So, off she went to Key West where she joined the Guild Hall Art Gallery and lived

Grass, "After an hour, I knew that was what I wanted to do." Cobb then "bumbled off" to Hollywood in

1993, acquired an agent, had five meetings a week to pitch her ideas and got paid "a crazy amount of money for a movie for Danny Glover, "Return of the Sweet Birds," which unfortunately got caught up in a management shift and never was released."

However, it was in Hollywood in 1999 that she met a tall, handsome New Zealander named Robert J. Ward.

"Within two weeks, we were talking about marriage," she said.

They married at The Hilltop in Orange Park, went back to Los Angeles for stint, and later came back to Jacksonville where Ward was the editor of the Jacksonville Business Journal. They enjoyed 17 years together until

he passed in 2016.

Cobb is constantly with writing assignments, but she meditates to "stay as sane as possible," goes to the gym three days a week, walks her dog, Ziggy, and watches films. She is also on the screening committee for awards for the Writer's Guild of America. On Mondays, she enjoys the Jax

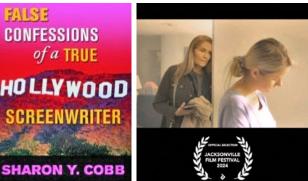
Film Bar, an energizing group of actors, producers, writers, technicians who gather for support and collaboration.

She is preparing for debuts of two of her movies: "Mandy's Voice," which is slated to be presented at Jacksonville Film Festival 2024 and features short films and features from all over the world, as well as her latest movie, "The Man in the White Van," a basedon-actual-events thriller co-written with Warren Keels.

> Cobb has won numerous awards in various genres, including her movie "Shine On," which won the Machete Chronicles Horror Film Festival for best film and a best actress award for Grace Bryan.

> From Jacksonville to Hollywood, PBS to CBS, to Filmapaloozas in Washington, D.C. and Rotterdam, Netherlands, Cobb "bumbles along" doing what she loves and has worked her way into a successful screenwriting career. Her humor, though, shines through even amid discussions about her accomplishments.

> "All this makes me sound like a compulsive liar!" she joked.



A scene from Cobb's movie. "Mandy's Voice."



Cobb's upcoming movie, "Man in the White Van," is based on real events.

in a neighborhood with interesting, creative people. While in casual conversation with her neighbor, Tom, otherwise known as Tennessee Williams, she mentioned that she had a desire to write. He suggested that she take a short story writing class and told her, "Just write &%\$#* it. Write!" She took his advice. After the short story

writing class, she took a screenwriting class and said in an interview with Darlyn Finch Kuhn of Scribbler's Corner at River and











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The Beat Goes On:

March - Robert Leedy's Watercolors Exhibit at Fort Caroline, 12713 Ft. Caroline Rd.

March 7 - Soft opening of "Alabama Story" at Theatre Jacksonville

March 9 - Reception for John Bunker's Paintings, Collages and Cards, 4-6 p.m. at Flip Flops Shops in 5 Points

March 9 - Jacksonville Artists' Guild juried exhibit reception at North Point Dental, 2-4 p.m. Free and open to the public

March 9-10 - Civic Orchestra of Jacksonville's "Rhythms of Life." civicorchestrajacksonville.org

March 17 - Artisan and Craft Festival, Jacksonville Jewish Center, noon to 4 p.m.

March 24 - TAC Gallery Juried exhibit reception, "In the Style of," 2-4 p.m. at 320 E. Adams St. Free and open to the public.

Susan D. Brandenburg honored as one of 10 "Women with Heart," Stetson Kennedy Foundation to benefit Volunteers in Medicine

Cookie Davis and Pat Setser had work accepted to The National League of American Pen Women Art Exhibit in Washinton D.C.

Do you know of an upcoming event or accolade that helps pump the rhythmic Artbeat of Jacksonville? Send the announcement to us at editor@residentnews.net for consideration in The Beat Goes On.

MARCH 2024 | RESIDENTNEWS.NET RESIDENT COMMINERS | 3



Winterland Festival Supports Local Arts

Winterland Music Outreach Foundation hosted Winterland Six at James Weldon Johnson Park Feb. 23-25. The mixed-genre music festival featured a mix of local favorites alongside national headliners like the Osees, Blonde Redhead and Caroline Rose. It brings in additional arts through local vendors, live demonstrations and visual art installations.

The festival raises funds for the Winterland Music Outreach Foundation to invest in the equality and sustainability of the Jacksonville arts economy. The organization is working to establish an artist residency program, record label, and has plans to bring more concerts

and educational opportunities for musicians and music lovers in Jacksonville.

"Being a part of the growing arts and culture scene here in Jacksonville is both inspiring and challenging," said Glenn Michael Van Dyke, Winterland co-founder and musician. "We want to cultivate an environment where artists can flourish and share their music, but also ensure that this city is a place their careers can blossom."

Winterland Six was presented by the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Music Experience, the music discovery platform of WJCT Public Media, and the Jessie Ball duPont Fund.





A Vision for Art 2024 Featured Artist Emily Ozier, professionally known as EMYO, with her art.

42 Artists Convene for A Vision for Art

A Vision for Art, the annual art exhibition fundraiser for Episcopal School of Jacksonville, St. Mark's Campus, recently selected 42 artists to showcase their work at the 5th annual A Vision for Art Exhibition. The artists, who were selected from over 90 applicants, hail from Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Louisiana.

This year's featured artist is Emily Ozier. Known as EMYO, she honed her craft in Italy under the guidance of

impressionist master John Singer Sargent. While she creates from her studio in Tennessee, she traces the roots of her expressive style to her Cuban heritage.

A Vision for Art kicks off April 19 with a ticketed openingnight celebration and shopping days April 20-23, all held on the Episcopal School of Jacksonville, St. Mark's Campus at 4114 Oxford Ave. This year's event is presented by Northern Trust. To learn more, visit avisionforart.com.

MOCA Installs Massive Frank Stella Work







rank Stella

MOCA Jacksonville unveiled the newest installation in its Project Atrium Series, Frank Stella's "Jacksonville Stacked Stars," on Feb. 29. This brand-new work of art was commissioned and created in honor of MOCA Jacksonville's 100th anniversary celebration. It features two of the artist's iconic stars stacked in a single sculpture that fills the museum's massive atrium. Through the use of sophisticated computer models, "Jacksonville Stacked Stars" seems to defy the forces of gravity and sculptural norms. A second Frank Stella exhibition, "Printmaking," will be installed alongside the stars, featuring works from its permanent collection complemented by loans from local collectors.

The installation was curated by MOCA Senior Curator Ylva Rouse; the Project Atrium Series is made possible by Joan and Preston Haskell and Driver, McAfee, Hawthorne & Diebenow.



The Sporting Fashion exhibit at The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens features women's sporting attire from 1800 to 1960, like this 1950's swimwear

Always in Fashion

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is hosting the final stop of "Sporting Fashion: Outdoor Girls 1800 to 1960", the first exhibition to explore the evolution of women's sporting attire in Western fashion. It contains more than 60 ensembles worn for outdoor activities during the 19th and 20th centuries, including swimming, fencing, tennis, golf, motorcycling and piloting. The attire on view come primarily from affluent women in Western Europe and North America, who had greater access to leisure and sport activities. The collection of garments and accessories explores how fashion met the needs of new pursuits for these women while preserving their socially approved mobility. "Sporting Fashion" opened Feb. 28 and will run through May 19.



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Slice of Love

Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus's family recipes bring authentic Neapolitan flavor

Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus may be brand new, but just one bite of its authentic, brick-oven fired pizza brings forth the generations of experience, greatness and integrity that flavor Philip Simonetta's classic Italian pies.

"When I put something out, it's 100%. It's the best it can be," said Simonetta.

It turns out "best" is a time-honored family tradition that began with his grandmother, Rose Symia. Simonetta, the oldest grandson of her six children, used to spend every Friday night as a child cooking alongside his grandmother – pizzas, soups, candies – in the classic Neapolitan style. It's an experience that fed his passion for food, and it's her recipes that built the Pizza Bus's individual pizza lineup and fresh Italian desserts like cannolis, Italian cookies and tiramisu.

"There's one reason I'm bringing this product to Jacksonville," said Simonetta. "It's because, for me, food is a way of life, food brings people together no matter what, brings strangers together."

Simonetta already has two thriving businesses – he's the brokerowner of Pier 21 Realty and the Florida Real Estate School by Pier 21 Realty, which he runs with his son, Aiden. But the Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus is bringing Simonetta back to his roots in the restaurant businesses. He owned several sandwich and pizza shops in Philadelphia before he got into real estate around 15 years ago.

"It was never work; it was a passion. It reminded me of [my grandmother]. Doing this kind of work isn't really work. It brings her memory back." he said.

Symia's memory comes alive in Simonetta's Margherita, The Meats, The Vegetarian and The Works pizzas. The Bianca, however, is his favorite, with mozzarella, parmesan and ricotta cheeses topped with minced fresh garlic and a drizzle of pesto sauce. The Margherita serves as the Pizza Bus's all-star base, which Simonetta said can be customized with any number of toppings.

The individual 12" Neapolitan pizzas are made with authentic 00 flour, also known as Caputo or Italian flour, San Marzano tomatoes and Grande cheeses. Traditionally, these high-end ingredients would drive up the costs of the pizzas, but Simonetta is able to offer them at about \$2-3 less than full-restaurant competitors who use cheaper ingredients.

"Instead of opening up a physical restaurant with all the overhead and expenses, I wanted to find something I could buy and

build, eliminate my expenses, and in turn, be able to charge less for the product I'm serving," he said.

The bus that houses Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus is a 1995 International 3800 that used to serve as a church bus. Simonetta purchased it with only 32,000 miles, gutted the entire thing and began constructing the mobile pizza kitchen.

"The bus is self-sufficient, everything is made in the bus," he said.

Simonetta and his son installed everything from a dough machine to a full-sized wood-fired brick oven, which they had to build by hand to fit inside the bus. It fires at around 900 degrees and cooks a pizza in just 90 seconds.

"Brick oven pizza is the best pizza in the world. That's how pizza was originally made in Napoli, Italy," said Simonetta. "When you make the Napoletana pizza with the oo flour, you'll see when you taste it. There's nothing like it. It's crunchy, but yet it's soft."

Simonetta didn't only lean on what he knew to be his favorite, he actually taste-trialed dozens of different dough and ingredient combinations to ensure he was serving what the people liked. He is so committed to keeping his dough to the highest standards that the bus is limited to serving just 150 pizzas per day.

"The dough we make is a two-day process, so you can't just make more dough. There's only so much you can make and hold for the time period." he said.

Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus is currently open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., or until the 150 pizzas are gone. It is stationed next to Simonetta's Real Estate Brokerage and School Pier 21 Realty at 2200 Cassat Ave. but is licensed as a mobile food unit and available for private parties.

"I want to give people this product that's superior to anything else on the market. It's probably going to be the best pizza in Jacksonville out of a bus. It's crazy," he said.

While Simonetta's ultimate goal is to have a Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus on every college campus, it's more about bringing a great product to people than making money.

"There's so much turmoil in the world today. Nothing brings people together anymore; I think there has to be something," he said. "Food has a big thing to do with that. It's an elixir that brings people together. Hopefully, it can."



Aiden and Philip Simonetta hand-built the kitchen inside Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus

Simonetta's Brick Oven Pizza Bus 2200 Cassat Ave. brickovenpizzabus.com (904) 927-4992















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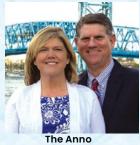




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Kirk Johanson 904,208,8009 Barb Johanson 386,503,4940



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Karen Ashley 904.859.1010



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Brayden Carroll 904.742.6734



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Christina Gonzalez 904.537.1005



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Anil Pathak 904.477.0629



Meg Sanders 904,790,3637



Marilyn Stewart 904.599.2369



Juliette Vaughn 904.993.3618



Sabrina Wickham 904.463.0315



Hannah Windsor 904-534-6790



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Joan Dismore's family: son David, daughter-in-law Kim, son Alan and husband George with Joan

Joan Dismore has lived a life abundant in love and Joe and Aunt Helen in Raiford. He was the assistant anyways," she said. experience.

BY JENNIFER JENSEN

"It's a lot of life to cover since I'm the big 9-0," she said. "When I look back, I never probably could have imagined all the things that I was able to do," Dismore said. "I had a lot of different experiences."

Dismore's mother died when she was 4 years old, and she was raised by her Aunt Isabelle, whom she affectionately called "Diddy" because she couldn't pronounce Izzy.

"I knew her more than I knew my mother," she said. "She's the mother that I remember."

Despite losing her mother, she had a large family and people around who cared for her and her sister, Nancy.

"I always had love around and never felt lonely," Dismore recalled.

Her grandfather was a train engineer, so they lived close to the train tracks on Hendricks Avenue. She and her sister grew up in a house right across from Landon High School where they would watch the band practice in the park.

The girls spent every summer with their Uncle

superintendent of the penitentiary, and they lived in the

"My friends would jokingly ask, 'Are you going to prison again?" Dismore said. "You had to be careful, but you knew everyone was watching out for you."

Her aunt kept her busy, teaching her a love for sewing. The couple had chickens and they used the cloth feed bags as the material for Dismore to learn to sew on. From flowers to squares, Dismore got to pick out the feed bags with the prettiest patterns. There was always something to do those days, she said. Dismore's sewing talents continued as an adult, as she sewed suits and other outfits for her children.

"[Aunt Helen] always used to say idle hands were the devil's work," said Dismore.

One of her favorite things to do as a child growing up in Jacksonville was attending the San Marco Theatre. Watching a movie and grabbing a sweet snack was a real treat for her and her sister. It cost 9 cents back then to watch a movie.

"We were frugal, but we managed to get the sweets

Dismore, who, along with her husband, were previous members of the Florida Yacht Club, has always loved being around the water. She was a Girl Scout Mariner in high school at St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Springfield and had to pass numerous tests to be a member. To her, it "seemed more interesting than the plain old scouts." One amazing adventure she had as a mariner was a two-week trip on a 72-foot sailboat to Nassau, Bahamas.

"We were the crew," she said. "We stood watch at night, and we did everything."

While in high school, she also had the opportunity to attend Florida Girls State. She stayed on campus at Florida State University (FSU) and fell in love with the school. When she received a teaching scholarship, deciding to attend FSU was an easy choice for her. While there, she joined the Kappa Delta sorority to meet people and still keeps in touch with many of those sorority sisters.

"I loved every minute of it all the way through," she

On summer breaks, Dismore worked at the shipyards in Jacksonville. She took all the coins out of the drink







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Joan Dismore, front right, with her extended family.

dispensers, worked in personnel and helped assign jobs. After graduation, she returned to Jacksonville, which she called "home." She taught third and sixth grades for four years at area public schools, including San Jose Elementary.

"I loved seeing that little light bulb come on, when they would make a little statement that let you know they really understood it," she said.

Dismore met her husband, George, through her sister, who worked as a nurse with George's sister. George was a banker at First Union, previously First National

"We just did crazy things," Dismore said of her relationship with George. "Instead of going to the movies, we took turns trying something different."

When it got cold one Christmas, they collected cardboard boxes for the Jacksonville Zoo to cover up the cages.

"We went around to the back of the grocery store and picked up boxes and took them out to the zoo," Dismore said. "That was one of our dates."

The couple had three sons, Alan, Tom and David, whom they raised in a house



When I look back, I never probably could have imagined all the things that I was able to do. I had a lot of different experiences.

- Joan Dismore

on Rosewood Avenue. Dismore took time off to be a stay-at-home mom while the children were little before going to work as the librarian of Jacksonville Country Day School when they were older.

"I didn't have to grade anything, so I could just have fun with them," she said. "I just enjoyed sharing stories and reading to them."

In the 90s, she and her husband built a house on the river on 3.5 acres of property George inherited from his great aunts. The 7-acre Mandarin property had been in the family since the 1800s and was split between he and his sister. The old house that was on the property had to be torn down and they did a lot of work to get the house built.

"My mom was out there whacking up weeds, and pulling up stuff, and getting rid of plants, and things like that so they'd have a space to build the house," said David Dismore.

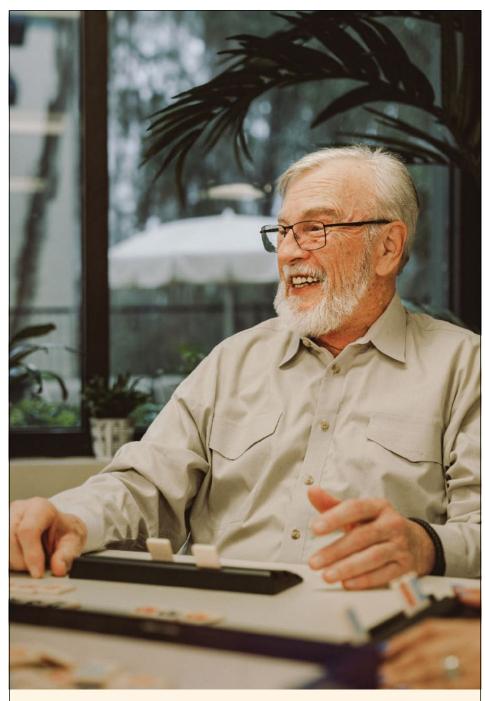
Once her children were grown, the couple began to travel. They went on several cruises and took trips to Germany and Italy - her favorite.

Tom passed a few years before his father, George, died in 2019, after 60 years of marriage.

"We had a good go," Dismore said.

In her spare time, Dismore volunteered for more than 15 years at Nemours Children's Health reading books to the children and using puppets to help tell the stories. Currently, she is enjoying her time at Starling San Jose and her weekly dinners with her son David.





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RESJUNION ENTS

Historic Firsts for Miss Wolfson Competition

Sofia West was all smiles as she was crowned Miss Wolfson 2024 during the "Saturday Night Fever"-themed annual pageant at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies on Jan. 27. The competition was the closest ever in the pageant's history, as there was a tie for first runner-up between Ella Hutsell and Skye Mason-Raper, with both earning the title and right to compete at the Miss Wolfson Sweetheart pageant next fall.

West showcased her speed-painting during the talent portion of the competition, alongside impressive showings of musical, dance and poetry talents, as well as never-before-seen skills by martial artist Anna Jones and Mallory Howell's unique archery demonstration that split an apple from across the stage.

The pageant highlighted 11 junior contestants: Julia Allen, Summer Aurelian, Malia Burt, Romeaka Edwards, Josalyn Horton, Mallory Howell, Ella Hutsell, Anna Jones, Iris Locure, Skye Mason-Raper and Sofia West. Hutsell earned the Scholarship Award, and Locure was named "Most Photogenic." Allen was a triple winner of the "Most Talented," "Most Loyal" and "Miss Congeniality" awards.



Douglas Anderson Student Magazine Wins Highest Honors

Élan, an international student literary magazine published by the Creative Writing department at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, won highest honors in the 2023 REALM national contest from has the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

REALM, which stands for Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines, awarded Élan its First Class distinction, bestowed upon only five recipients in the State of Florida and 105 nationwide. The REALM program celebrates the art of writing through publicly recognizing literary magazines produced by students with the support of their teachers. Nominations of 375 student magazines came from 46 states and five countries.

"I am so immensely proud of Élan and its staff, past and present, who have ensured the success of youth creativity in a time when our imagination is needed the absolute most," said Élan Senior Co-Editor-in-Chief Emma Klopfer.

Élan was originally created as a grassroots publication of the English Department in 1986 and now provides a creativity platform for students globally, including Japan, Korea, India and France. It is published three times a year by a staff of 18 juniors and seniors under the direction of faculty advisor Tiffany Melanson and student editors Niveah Glover, Klopfer and Brendan Nurczyk.

"As a former student editor of Élan, I am especially proud of how the publication has evolved in its 37-year history from a photocopied 'zine to a world-class international literary publication. It's a true honor to shepherd these talented young editors through the process every year," said Melanson.



vanna Nelson



Maurice Chakour



Ayviana Singh in character in Over the Tavern.

Douglas Anderson Students Win YoungArts Awards

Four local Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) students were among the nearly 700 visual, literary and performing artists named as 2024 YoungArts award winners. Maurice Chakour (Jazz/Guitar), Ayanna Nelson (Voice/Jazz) and Ayviana Singh (Theatre/Spoken) were selected as competition winners. Kierra Reese (Visual Arts) was listed as a notable Winner with Distinction.

These students will join a distinguished community of artists who are offered creative and professional development support throughout their careers. As a Winner with Distinction, Reese is also invited to participate in National YoungArts Week and is eligible to be nominated to become one of the U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

DA had one student make YoungArts's 2024 60-nominee list for U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts – Niveah Glover, a 2022 YoungArts winner for writing. The nominee list will be reviewed by the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars and the 20 winners will be announced in the coming months.

"The benefits of participating in the YoungArts competition extend beyond recognition; students who apply and enter automatically have their names sent to colleges across the country, opening doors to further opportunities in their artistic pursuits," said DA Foundation Director Jackie Cornelius. "This recognition is a testament to the hard work and creativity of our students, as well as the dedication of our instructors."

Additionally, the YoungArts Foundation acknowledged the instructors who have played a pivotal role in guiding and mentoring these students: Valerie Anthony, Michael Beaman, Ingrid Damiani, Deja Gee, Brian Griffin, Joe Kemper, Morgan Stuart, Khanh Tran, Barry Wilson and Don Zentz.





Students from Episcopal School of Jacksonville attended the Northeast Florida Regional Science and

Episcopal Sweeps to State Science Fair

At the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair Feb. 12-13, all of the students from Episcopal School of Jacksonville were chosen to move on and represent the region at the State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida April 2-6. Students Alex Chindris and Anabella Platt were also chosen to represent the region at the International Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles in May.

Several of the students were named recipients of special awards and cash prizes totaling \$1,400. Junior Alex Chindris also received an impressive \$35,000-per-year scholarship for four years to Jacksonville University.

Marion Zeiner, Episcopal's Director of Scientific Research, said, "It is the skills and knowledge that they gain in all academic areas that have provided the foundation for their successes in their research and science competitions."



Aging Gracefully

Kindergarten students at Assumption Catholic School celebrated the 100th day of school in style on Jan. 26. The tiny time travelers - and a few of their teachers - were not their normal, youthful selves, but instead marked the milestone day as 100-year-old versions of themselves, complete with gray hair, reading glasses and a touch of whimsical silliness. With age comes wisdom, and this group is definitely 100 days smarter!





Second graders perform during Grandparents Day at Assumption Catholic School

A Grand Celebration for Catholic **Schools** Week

Assumption Catholic School capped off the final day of Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 28 through Feb. 3, with a celebration for the families' grandparents. A festive mass was followed by performances from the kindergarten, first and second grade students, and the day ended with activities, classroom visits and snacks in the courtyard. Catholic Schools Week starts the last Sunday in January and runs the entire week.



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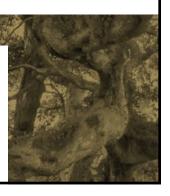
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We welcome you because if you are good enough for God (and you are!), then you are good enough for us!

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Cheerleaders from Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies attended a national cheer competition at the ESPN Wide World of Sports complex in Orlando

Wolfson Cheerleaders Rank Nationally

The varsity cheerleading team from Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies finished third in the state in the Florida High School Athletic Association Cheerleading State Championships in Lakeland, winning themselves a bid to the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) Nationals competition at Disney's ESPN Wide World of Sports Feb. 9-12. The squad, which also maintains an average GPA of 4.32, placed eighth nationally in the competition.



Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus counselor Katie Cussen with Olympic gold medalist Samantha Livingstone and fellow counselor

Olympian Speaks on Mental Health for High-Achieving Children

Olympic gold medalist Samantha Arsenault Livingstone visited the Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus Jan. 24-25 for a series of presentations centered on mental health, the dangers of perfectionism and finding balance for high-achieving kids. The world-renowned swimmer is a high-performance consultant, speaker and mental health activist.

Livingstone founded Livingstone High Performance (LHP) in response to the mental health crisis impacting young people across the globe, disrupting the old-school model of mental toughness as the path to high achievement. She spoke to school advisors about the mental toll that striving for success can take on students. She then presented parents with "Healthy High Achieving Kids – Perfectionism, Success at What Cost?" and had a similar discussion later that day with athletic liaisons and upper school students.

She shared her journey to the top of the Olympic podium, opening up about the stress of high achievement, the pressure to be perfect and how she rose above challenges through a shift from a performance-based identity to a purpose-based identity. She encouraged listeners to embrace humanness, use the power of pause, lead with curiosity, and practice self-kindness as opposed to self-judgment.



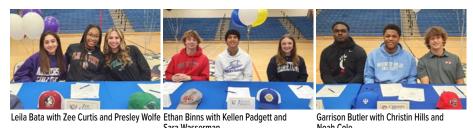
41 Phenoms Signed to College Athletics

It was a day of celebration and pride as 41 local high school seniors from Bishop Kenny High School, Bolles and Episcopal School of Jacksonville took center stage on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, for National Signing Day ceremonies that marked the next chapter in their educational journeys. These students were cheered by their respective schools for cultivating not only a strong education, but also committing to continue their athletic careers at the next collegiate level.



Bishop Kenny's committed collegiate athletes: Emily Wheldon, Kolbe Sexton, Carson Cope, Andrew McWilliams, Nash Beenen, Ethan Proffitt, James Resar, Lily Pragle and Davis Johnson

Nash Beenen, U.S. Naval Academy, football | Carson Cope, Eastern University, soccer | Davis Johnson, Emory University, cross country and track and field | Andrew McWilliams, Daytona State College, baseball | Lily Pragle, Erskine College, beach volleyball Ethan Proffitt, Florida Atlantic University, football | James Resar, University of Iowa, football | Kolbe Sexton, Benedictine College, football | Emily Wheldon, Georgia Southern University, cross country





Aidan Lynch with Garrett Watterson, Ella Stakem J.D. Matson with Jacob Campen and Hilary Englert

Anthony Whittall with Elizabeth Erlendsdottir and Keira Scott

Leila Bata, Amherst College, cross country/track and field | Ethan Binns, Grove City College, lacrosse | Garrison Butler, University of Cincinnati, football | Jacob Campen, Denison University, lacrosse | Noah Cole, Gardner-Webb University, football | Zee Curtis, Florida State University, track and field | Hillary Englert, Furman University, women's basketball | Elizabeth Erlendsdottir, Georgia Institute of Technology, swimming | Christin Hills, Washington & Lee University, football | Aidan Lynch, Middlebury College, baseball J.D. Matson, Washington & Lee University, football and lacrosse | Kellen Padgett, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, lacrosse Keira Scott, University of Northern Colorado, swimming | Ella Stakem, Belmont Abbey College, women's basketball | Sara Wasserman, Georgetown University, rowing | Garrett Watterson, Sewanee: The University of the South, men's basketball | Anthony Whittall, University of South Carolina, swimming | Presley Wolfe, Tulane University, track and field



Episcopal's National Signing Day student-athletes. Front row: Nate Blair, Hannah Kowkabany, Skyler Watts, Cam Goldknopf, Connor Hess, Henry Robards; back row: Omarr Dixon, Jake Melograna, Grace Jones, Ella Henderson, Nora Slack, Charlotte Seay, Grady Schwartz. Kent Jackson

Nate Blair, Western Carolina University, football | Omarr Dixon, College of Holy Cross, football | Cam Goldknopf, William and Mary, golf | Ella Henderson, College of Wooster, swimming | Connor Hess, Trinity University, golf | Kent Jackson, Jacksonville University, basketball | Grace Jones, Mercer University, softball | Hannah Kowkabany, Washington and Lee University, cross country/track and field | Jake Melograna, Catholic University, football | Henry Robards, Mercer University, golf | Grady Schwartz, University of Tampa, basketball | Charlotte Seay, The Citadel, soccer | Nora Slack, University of Southern Maine, soccer | Skyler Watts, University of South Florida, track and field









Trio Selected as National Merit Finalists

Bishop Kenny High School seniors Davis Johnson, Melanie Staples and Bridget Sutter have been named as National Merit Finalists in the 69th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. As finalists, they rank in the top 1% of the over one million students who started the National Merit process as juniors back in October 2022. The three young ladies were selected based on their PSAT scores, outstanding academic performance and involvement in leadership roles in extracurricular activities and honor societies. Finalists are eligible to compete for a \$2,500 National Merit Scholarship; scholarship offers will begin late March.



Students Fly Like Ospreys

Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus sixth grade students took a class field trip to the University of North Florida's Osprey Challenge Course Jan. 26. Advisors joined the sixth graders as the group climbed and ziplined their way through the course, working together to problem-solve along the way.

The high ropes adventure course opened in 2012 and is operated by the university's Campus Recreation.





Former Sheriff Speaks on Race Relations



School Bartram Campus social studies teachers Kellie Marks and Allison Greene

Former Jacksonville Sheriff Nathaniel "Nat" Glover visited the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus on Jan. 26 to speak with Kellie Marks and Allison Greene's eighth grade civics students about his experience facing racism and how he focused on uniting people during his career to inspire change.

Glover is the first Black sheriff of a major city in the Deep South since the Reconstruction era. At age 17, Glover unknowingly headed into Ax Handle Saturday, a harrowing encounter with racism that Glover says committed him to a lifetime of fighting for justice. He joined the Jacksonville Police Department in 1966 and rose through the ranks before being elected sheriff in 1995. He was a mayoral candidate in 2003 and served as the 29th president of his alma mater, Edward Waters University. His memoir, "Striving for Justice: A Black Sheriff in the Deep South," was released in 2023.



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Children at the Fundación Santa Laura Montoya in Columbia.

Students Organize Clothing Drive

Bolles Hispanic Student Union co-presidents Sofia Brieva and Emma Vasquez organized a clothing drive benefiting a children's community center to support families in need in Jamundi, Colombia, this winter.

The juniors collected, washed and sorted the clothes into categorized bags for Brieva to deliver in person to Fundación Santa Laura Montoya while visiting family.

The Hispanic Student Union is sponsored by language teachers Adriana Stam and Araceli Crotty.



and findings.

Downsizing D.C. Mini replicas bring capitol landmarks to life

San Jose Episcopal Day School's (SJEDS) fifth grade students created replicas of some of their favorite museum exhibits from Washington D.C. SJEDS faculty and students toured their iconic landmark exhibits, curated by social studies teacher Lauren Barcenas,

learning about each display from the in-the-know guides that shared interesting facts



ore than 550 people participated in the 12th annual Friends of Hendricks Walkathon on Saturday, Feb. 10.

Striding Support for Eagles Education



Alexis and Kylie Graham enjoying the pre-Walkathon festivities



Laura, Gigi, Josh and Mila Beran joined Ashlyn R. before the Friends of Hendricks Walkathon kicked off.

Friends of Hendricks hold annual Walkathon fundraiser

Families, friends and community members showed up in full force to support Hendricks Avenue Elementary School for the 12th annual Friends of Hendrick Walkathon on Saturday, Feb. 10.

According to Friends of Hendricks (FOH) Board Member and Walkathon Chair Kate Turpin, participants completed more than 7,000 laps around the track at Hendricks Avenue Elementary last month, equating to 875 miles.

Turpin added that more than 550 people participated in the event, alongside 40-plus volunteers and 11 business partners. While FOH will continue to collect donations from students and families for the event through March 1, Turpin said the event's business partners have donated more than \$29,000.

Funds raised through the Walkathon will support grants requested by the school and/or its teachers, as well as provide the necessary funds to complete

the shade structures for the school's basketball courts.

"An amazing event like the Friends of Hendricks Walkathon is really a testament to the community that supports Hendricks Avenue Elementary," said Principal Darrell Edmunds. "This Walkathon is not only an annual tradition that we love to have to get everybody out, but I think it's just an illustration of what kind of special things we have going on here."





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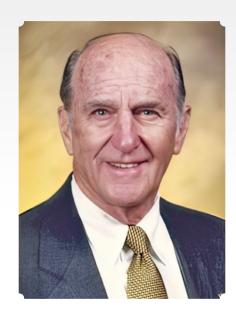
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ACCREDITED BUSINESS

IN MEMORIAM



Clayton Ford Riley

Clayton Riley would have enjoyed the standing-room-only gathering of his family and friends at Riverside Presbyterian Church where he had been a faithful member for 70 years until his passing at age 98. His joyful presence was evident in the scripture, words of remembrance, prayers, songs and the sweet and humorous stories shared not only at the service by his son, Jim, but also afterward, as those who loved him gathered to visit and talk about the dear, charming, charismatic man who never met a stranger, loved everybody he met and was a "relentless encourager."

Rev. Dr. Brian Lays said Riley was "always asking, pursuing, singing really loudly and enthusiastically, praying and loving. He was an ambassador for faith, rooted and established in love."



Mary Elizabeth "Bibbie" Ingram with Clayton Riley

Riley grew up in Ohio as the youngest of seven children in a loud, boisterous family who loved to work. His first jobs were in sales: soap, his mother's pies, chips at the fair, newspapers. After serving in the military during WWII and the Korean conflict, he graduated from Ohio University on the GI Bill.

With orders to report to NAS Jacksonville, Riley met Ed Morrow, who noticed Riley's Beta Theta Pi fraternity ring and invited him to his parent's house in Avondale where he met Morrow's cousin, Maureen O'Crowley. It was love at first sight and they were married within a couple of weeks.

In 1951, Riley started Riley-Kirby Company whose distributorship sold over 100,000 vacuum cleaners in the greater Jacksonville area. This "greatest salesman of all time who could sell you a \$1,000 vacuum cleaner in five minutes" said that things were easy to sell if you believed in them. He worked tirelessly, winning cars and luxury vacations for his achievements.

Riley, the "ultimate family man," stayed busy with his children, church, numerous civic organizations, playing golf and tennis at Timuquana Country Club, riding his bicycle, and playing volleyball at the YMCA. The couple, along with their six children – Ford (Elizabeth), Scott (Missy), Martha Love Rotella (Jay), Jenifer Skinner (Chip), Paul (Kelly) and Jim (Dana) – made Ortega Forest their home until Maureen passed in 1978.

At his memorial service, Riley's grandchildren remarked that he was always reaching out – writing letters, calling people on their birthdays and never missing an opportunity to tell people how important they were – and asked, "How did Grandpa have that much love to go around?"

That love extended to a young widower, Mary Elizabeth (Bibbie) Ingram, and her five children: David Ingram (Terry), Laurie Stottlemyer (Joe), Andy Ingram, Susan McCormack and Jennifer Tucker. He and Ingram enjoyed 40 years hosting Super Bowl parties, reunions at Crescent Beach, playing tennis, traveling and being with their extended "Norman Rockwell family" before Ingram and Tucker predeceased him.

Riley's singing, laughing and joking was ever-present, his blue eyes twinkling with childlike enthusiasm, and embracing life with gusto and a big "Yahoo!"

Rev. Dr. Steve Goyer told a story of how Riley decided at the age of 85 that he wanted to sing a solo at church and invited everyone to come. Secretly, the pastor and choir director, Andrew Clarke, were hesitant but, since Riley was a devoted elder member and church deacon, they agreed to do so with trepidation and a lot of prayer. During the service, Riley stepped up to the microphone, with no notes, and nailed his rendition of "Sweet Little Jesus Boy."

It was that spirit and confidence that exemplified the legacy of Clayton Riley. His children, 26 beloved grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and the multitude of people who loved and were loved by Riley can join the heavenly chorus – which, no doubt, Riley is leading.

As he would say, "I'll see you when the roads get better."



Hooshang Harvesf, Ph.D.

The Avondale community learned of the passing of Hooshang Harvest, Ph.D. on Saturday, Feb. 3, in Jacksonville, Florida, his hometown outside of his native country of ancient Persia. He was predeceased by his father, mother and brother, Dr. Keikhosrow Harvesf, M.D., a local pediatrician, whom he followed to North Florida back in the 1960s. He is survived by his niece, Mojdeh Harvesf (Ourmazdi), and nephew, Cyrus M. Harvesf, along with grandnephews and a grandniece.

Harvesf was born in Kerman, Iran, and emigrated to the United States due to persecution of Christians in his home country, which proved to be a great move for his family and his business pursuits. Remembering his roots was key for his passionate career; in his native culture, rugs were underfoot in every home. Multiple rugs would be spread throughout the rooms of homes across the Middle East. It was a tradition that he curated through his life's long journey.

After earning his Ph.D. at the University of California Berkley, he moved to Jacksonville to begin his career, where he would fall in love with the people of Jacksonville – from Avondale to the Beaches – and all neighborhoods in between. One thing was clear, he loved Avondale and was always proud to be a productive member and Board Chairman Emeritus of the Board of the Shoppes of Avondale, now referred to as Historic Avondale. His input brought the best outcomes in updating and management decisions for the area, even as far back as the mid-2000s, when Avondale went though major upgrades to pavers, historic lighting and more.

Starting his rug business back in 1977, Harvesf was the longest continuously running business in Avondale, selling rugs from the top weaving centers of the world for decades. Not only did he sell rugs, but he was an educator on the craft of hand-tied and loom-fed mills that procured beautiful works of art. If a guest or visitor wanted to learn about the value and craft of rugs,

he would take the time, and quite often would build friendships with those that were intrigued by this unique form of art. He made fast friends and procured relationships, even if there was no business to be done. He simply loved to talk about his treasure trove of rugs – it wasn't about the sale, and it wasn't about the money.

Many of the works he purchased were not just rugs, but pieces to be hung as displays on walls, or procured in museums due to the time-honored traditions of highly skilled, professional weavers that created life-like beauty in colorful, dyed wool and silks to create landscapes, patterns and colorcombinations of magnificence.

Harvesf was quick with a smile and had sincere respect for those that took time to build relationships and spread kindness; his wisdom was unmistakable. He was also a man of few words – but when they were spoken, people listened. Full of insight, wit and kindness, his advice was paramount and encouraging to anyone that took time to appreciate and enjoy his company.

He earned his reputation as one of the most knowledgeable, kind and considerate salesmen. His collection of rugs are placed in some of the finest homes in North Florida and far beyond the shop's local area; many will be passed on for generations to come as part of his legacy and that of the families and friends he served.





by Elainah Ehrlichman

uneral rites and customs have existed alongside humanity for thousands of years. The ways that we approach end-of-life ceremonies stem largely from our upbringing, culture, and religious affiliations. Different ways of handling funeral and memorial services have evolved over time, and today, planning a service for either yourself or a loved one can be as customizable as you can imagine. That's why we are so excited to announce that coming in July 2024*, our Hardage-Giddens Riverside location will be opening its doors to a brand-new celebration of life pavilion, designed specifically to accommodate your perfect service or event.

But first, a little background on celebration of life services and how Hardage-Giddens came to be a top-tier provider of them. A celebration of life service differs from a traditional service in both mood and the level of personalization present. In a celebration of life service, much of the focus is on celebrating your loved one's life and accomplishments rather than focusing on the loss of life, so oftentimes, the mood is one of hope. These services also offer countless personalization options, such as choice of music (some families choose to create a fully hand-picked playlist filled with impactful songs), delicious catering, round seating tables that allow for storytelling and the sharing of heartfelt memories, and a 100% unique Life Story display table that visually details your loved one's favorite moments and life experiences. The ways you can personalize a celebration of life service are truly limitless!

Before 2016, Hardage-Giddens' Life Story department was not yet established, and our funeral directors took it upon themselves to personally create meaningful displays with the items families brought in to them. Hardage-Giddens understood the need to devote an entire branch to creating a fully personalized service, as this was clearly something that families treasured (in fact, over 50% of families let us know that they would opt for a celebration of life service if given the choice). In 2016, we doubled down on efforts to make this vision a reality and successfully established our Life Story department. Now, we have a dedicated team of professionals who excel at making families' wishes bloom into beautiful visual representations of their loved one's life. From stunning table centerpieces to breathtaking Life Story displays, our Life Story department takes care of families in a unique and artistic way.

Providing families with everything they need to create a memorable service is what Hardage-Giddens does best, and our new indoor-outdoor pavilion is another incredible addition for families to utilize. This life event center features exposed wood to enhance its luxurious yet rustic feel, high ceilings, an open seating area, a covered patio, hinged side glass panel doors, and so much more. Having such a versatile space allows for countless options when planning a service or special gathering.

Another exciting aspect of the recently developed venue is that, while it can be used for funeral and memorial

services, it can also be used for other events. This elegant space was designed with the understanding that life has many reasons to celebrate, so we invite you to hold any momentous occasion here! From birthday parties to corporate lunches, our exquisite pavilion can accommodate any purpose. This indoor-outdoor structure also allows for the inclusion of nature by swinging open the side doors into the surrounding grass field. Perfect for a teatime luncheon!

Over time, we at Hardage-Giddens have learned that having more options on the table for families to choose from consistently benefits them. We have gathered extensive resources to ensure that creating celebration of life services is a viable reality for the families we serve, and this addition to our Hardage-Giddens Riverside location is yet another beautiful place to hold a meaningful service or important event in. Whether you opt for a traditional service, a celebration of life, or simply wish to celebrate one of the many monumental times in your life, our center is ready to accommodate you. Thank you for continuing to put your trust in us; we cannot wait for you to experience the pavilion firsthand!

Special thanks to Celebration of Life Manager Julie Bucek for providing information regarding celebration of life services.

*Date is approximate.

Hardage-Giddens Riverside's Life Event Center Pavilion

- Customizable indoor-outdoor event space
- Hinged side glass panel doors
- Rustic interior featuring exposed wood
- Round table seating
- Expansive interior of over 2,000 square feet
- Covered outdoor patio



Visit us today for more information.

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