



STARS ALIGN FOR MOCA SCULPTURE UNVEILING

The stars were out at MOCA Jacksonville Feb. 29 as Joan Haskell, Mary Gilman and other friends and supporters of the 100-year-old museum attended the unveiling of Frank Stella's Jacksonville Stacked Stars.

READ MORE ON PAGE 27



Katie Garner from Heritage Capital Group competes for a winning auction big to support survivors of human trafficking at Rethread's annual Mukti Freedom Gala.

BIDDING FOR FREEDOM

READ MORE ON PAGE 22

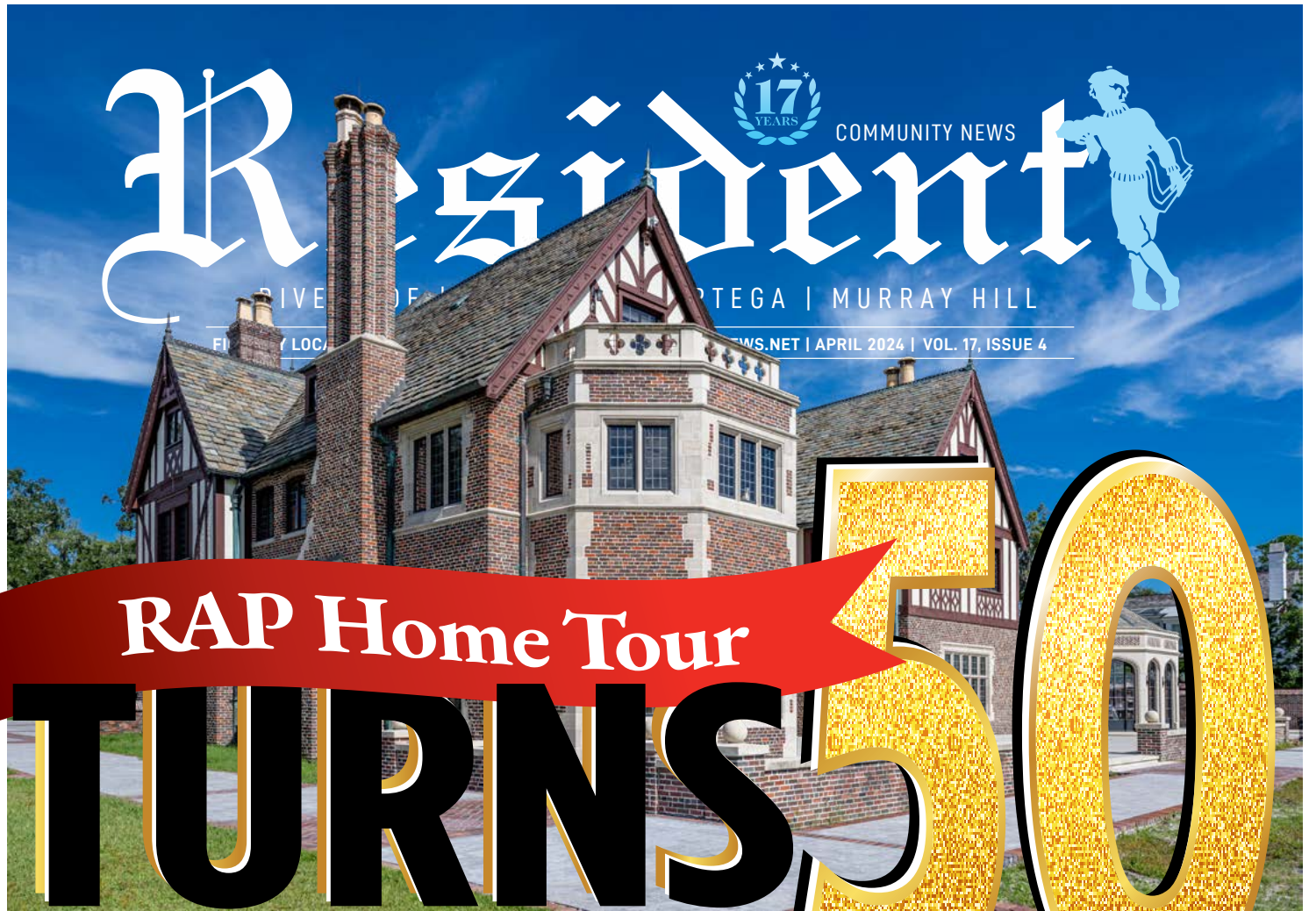


GRANT FAST-TRACKS FUNDING FOR EMERALD TRAIL

A \$147 million federal grant will fund the design and construction for the Emerald Trail's five remaining links. This record-setting grant is the largest one-time federal grant the City of Jacksonville has ever received.

READ MORE ON PAGE 11

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Historic gems, similar to this one in Avondale, are part of the 2024 Home Tour presented by David Gray Home Services.

The Riverside Avondale Preservation's annual Home Tour presented by David Gray Home Services celebrates its golden anniversary April 13-14, honoring 50 years of historic preservation, restoration and design. To get your golden ticket, visit riversideavondale.org/events.

READ MORE ON PAGE 13



Andrew Williams with Drew Haramis and Troy Winn

FLIP FLOP SHOP'S GIVING SOUL

Flip Flop Shop Jacksonville in 5 Points hosted the latest edition of its charity series, Celebrity Cashier for Charity, Feb. 29 to benefit the Allison Brundick Haramis Foundation, commonly known as Angels for Allison.

Drew Haramis, board president for Angels for Allison, appeared as the celebrity cashier at the fundraising event, where patrons "sip and shop" for a charitable cause.

Owner Troy Winn, along with her son, Chris, opened Flip Flop Shops Jacksonville in August 2023. In October, Troy Winn told The Resident News of her excitement to be "providing an opportunity to give back through various added-value events for charity."

"We were thrilled and humbled to have Drew Haramis join us for our February Celebrity Cashier for Charity on behalf of Angels for Allison," said Winn. "Thank you, Drew, for allowing us to show support for such a worthy cause."

Angels for Allison helps families alleviate the financial burden of funeral costs associated with the loss of a child and has served more than 1,000 families across Northeast Florida.

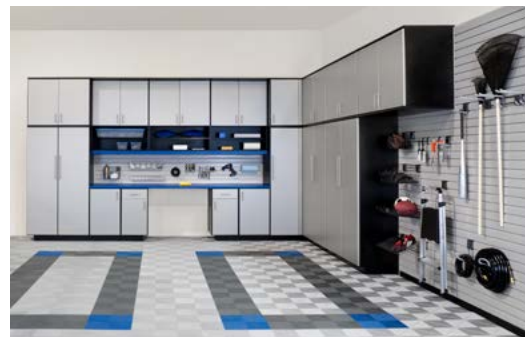


Jacksonville Symphony Blends Music and Fashion in Harmony

Adelya Nartadjieva, John Reed, Amy Reed, Chris and Lauri McNevin, and Kevin Fitzgerald toasted the Jacksonville Symphony's ode to VOGUE during its 2024 gala, Music in VOGUE, on March 2 at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts.

READ MORE ON PAGE 24

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You Asked FOR IT

I thought there were regulations governing larger semi-trucks delivering and traversing our local historic districts. The streets are already congested enough. Is there legislation that was passed that barred this activity and required smaller vehicles?

BY JENNIFER JENSEN

The short answer is yes. There are city regulations that determine where commercial trucks can drive within the city, restricting routes in certain residential neighborhoods. The city council passed an ordinance on January 22, 2019, that established truck routes within the city to reduce regulated truck travel on restricted roads, except for delivery and pickup, enhance safety and minimize pavement maintenance. Trucks are also not allowed to use these routes as a cut-through.

Former City Councilman Jim Love, who was on the council at the time, said the ordinance was passed to prevent trucks from transiting roads that were not designed for more than a 1-ton capacity.

The ordinance does not prohibit trucks from using all roads within the city, but it does require the use of certain roads that are more suitable for truck traffic to the greatest extent possible, and minimizes truck intrusion into sensitive areas, according to the city. The goal is to reduce congestion, noise, potholes and other safety hazards, specifically in neighborhoods such as Riverside, Avondale and San Marco.

"The driver of a regulated truck may travel on a restricted road for the primary purpose of delivery and pickup," read the ordinance. "The driver of the regulated truck must return to the preferred or non-regulated truck

route network by the shortest possible distance after completion of the delivery and/or pickup."

Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) Executive Director Shannon Blankinship said that, during that time, RAP fought to retain Roosevelt Boulevard as a preferred truck route, keeping the historic district as a space designated for local deliveries only.

"Most small businesses in the neighborhood work with their delivery folks to impact traffic and parking as little as possible," she said. "There is no reason to have major truck traffic running through the walkable and bikeable historic district because reduced speed limits, tree-lined streets and historic roads aren't built for large trucks."

A regulated truck is defined as a truck having a gross weight that exceeds 26,001 pounds and is designated for the specific purpose of transporting freight. A regulated truck does not include trucks that are used for government, utility or solid waste purposes.

Under the new ordinance, for roadways to be compatible with regulated trucks, lane widths on truck routes must be 12 feet; 11 feet is acceptable when truck volume is less than 10%.

The city highway engineer can designate streets with signage stating, "No Trucks in Excess of 1-Ton Capacity" if the engineer determines the vehicle would damage the street or the signage is needed to protect public safety.

If a truck violates this ordinance, an officer can issue a verbal warning, warning citation or punitive fine through a citation, according to City of Jacksonville Parking Services Supervisor Mark Schofield.

"It's left up to the officer's discretion," he said.

As far as parking, no truck of 1 ton or more, or recreational vehicles more than 20 feet in length or 8 feet in width, shall be parked on the street or street right-of-way or other public property in a residential district, unless engaged in temporary loading or unloading. A violation constitutes a class A offense.

Trucks, as well as any vehicle, must also stop or park on a two-way roadway with the right-hand wheels parallel to and within 12 inches of the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway. If on a one-way road, the vehicle must be stopped or parked to the curb or edge in the direction of traffic. If someone violates this ordinance, it is considered a nonmoving violation.



A truck blocks oncoming traffic along the restricted roads of the historic district.

You ask. We get answers. This column is dedicated to finding answers to our reader's most pressing questions. If there's a neighborhood-related question that you'd like help getting the answer to, submit it to our research team at editor@residentnews.net.

Amplified Avondale Returns in 2024

Amplified Avondale, in partnership with the Historic Avondale Merchants Association, returned for the 2024 season March 29, thanks in part to presenting sponsor Community First Credit Union.

Amplified Avondale originally launched in January 2023 and has quickly become a pillar of Avondale's blossoming music, arts and small business scene with over 10,000 attendees since its inception. Community First will also serve as the presenting sponsor for Christmas in Avondale 2024.

"We are proud to support Amplified Avondale and Christmas in Avondale – both treasured neighborhood and community events," said John Hirabayashi, CEO and president of Community First. "These festivals contribute to our quality of life in Jacksonville and showcase this historic neighborhood for many to enjoy."

Amplified Avondale is held on the last Friday of every month from 6-9 p.m. along the St. Johns Avenue merchant corridor.

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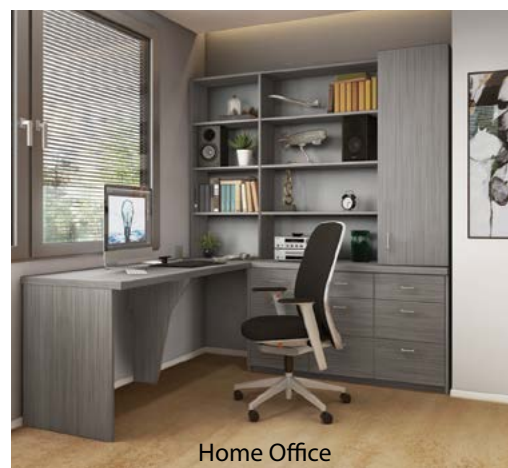
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Mandarin



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Miramar



4131 Peachtree Circle

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Riverside



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listed for \$489,900

Riverside



2565 Ernest Street

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listed for \$289,900

Old Ortega



4340 Baltic Street

3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 1,679 sf
listed for \$490,000

Ortega Terrace



UNDER CONTRACT

4958 Arapahoe Avenue

3 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, 2,494 sf
listed for \$800,000

Ortega Forest



UNDER CONTRACT

4969 Prince Edward Road

4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, 3,263 sf
listed for \$750,000

Fleming Island

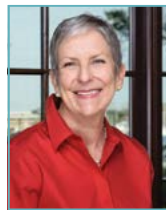


2963 Grande Oaks Way

5 bedrooms, 4 baths, 2,744 sf
listed for \$589,000



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Panelists for Urban Resurgence: Exploring Commercial Real Estate Developments in Downtown Jacksonville included Bryan Moll, Billy Zeits, Ken Thomas, Matt Marshall, Alex Sifakis and moderator Julia Holden Davis.

Bisnow Returns for Downtown State of the Market

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Bisnow, the global business-to-business platform for the commercial real estate industry, returned to Jacksonville Thursday, Feb. 29 for its fifth annual State of the Market event at the Southbank Hotel Jacksonville Riverwalk.

This year, Bisnow expanded the event to include three expert panels on topics related to Jacksonville's current commercial real estate climate.

The first panel, "Urban Resurgence: Exploring Commercial Real Estate Developments in Downtown Jacksonville," was moderated by Julia Holden Davis, shareholder and member of law firm Gunster's board of directors. The panel featured major players in Jacksonville's commercial and residential development community including: Alex Sifakis, president, JWB Real Estate Capital; Bryan Moll, CEO, Gateway Jax; Billy Zeits, vice president of government affairs, Corner Lot; Matt Marshall, senior vice president of development, RISE: A Real Estate Company; and Ken Thomas, project executive, Catamount Constructors.

The panelists covered a variety of topics during their discussion, among which was the theme of collaboration

between developers and the city. Sifakis called the utilization and availability of incentives "critical" for commercial development in the downtown area.

"Projects don't really pencil in downtown without incentives, currently," he said.

Sifakis added, however, that he hopes to see that change in the coming years, regardless of how long that takes, so government incentives will no longer be needed. He said the key is "building the right buildings."

"You can't build a suburban building in downtown," he said. "You've got to have ground-floor retail, you've got to have great architecture. We'll build a sense of place and have great amenities that will drive rents up, and now you won't need those government incentives."

Marshall said despite the challenges developers face in downtown Jacksonville – similar to developing other urban cores – now is "a fantastic time" to be part of the downtown area from "an opportunity perspective," particularly considering the work the city is doing with its park systems, including the Emerald Trail.

"All of that is so important for us as

developers to continue to have interest in wanting to develop downtown. We need that city as a partner and now's a great time to be part of it," he said.

Bisnow's other two panels, "Investment Trends: Uncovering Opportunities and Risks in Jacksonville's Commercial Real Estate Market" and "Jacksonville's Journey: Shaping a Community-Driven Future," featured speakers included Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer, Landings Real Estate Group President Christopher Bicho, The KABR Group Managing Member Adam Altman, Advanced Wealth Education Corporation Founder and CEO Dorian Carter, Carter-Haston Director of Investments Clayton Williams, Ability Housing President and CEO Shannon Nazworth, LISC Jacksonville Executive Director Dr. Irvin Pedro Cohen, Jessie Ball duPont Fund Downtown Public Spaces Principal Laura Phillips Edgecombe and Columbia Ventures Development Manager Ryan Akin.

Moderators were Ahead CRE Founder and CEO Laura Gonzales and Commercial Realty Advisors & Investment Group Broker Craig Emmanuel, respectively.

Bisnow will return to Jacksonville for another event in August.

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Construction is underway for a proposed shopping center and parking lot expansion along Roosevelt Boulevard in the Fairfax area.

Expansion Begins at Roosevelt Market Place

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Construction has begun on a proposed shopping center expansion at the corner of Roosevelt Boulevard and Beverly Avenue in the Fairfax area.

A permit filed on Feb. 9 allowed for the demolition of two existing structures on the parcel of land at 4461 Beverly Ave.

This parcel is located just behind the extended parking lot for the existing Roosevelt Market Place shopping center featuring Mattress One and Jersey Mike's Subs.

Prior to demolition, the Beverly Avenue parcel featured a single-family residence separated from that parking area by a wooden fence.

County records show the parcel was sold to Triple Net Equities Inc. in July 2020; this same entity owns the neighboring parcel for Roosevelt Market Place as well as the lot directly behind 4461 Beverly Ave. - 4457 Beverly Ave. - which it acquired in March 2022.

The principal and mailing addresses for Triple Net Equities Inc. is the same address as Peter Sleiman Development Group, which has a number of retail and office properties throughout Jacksonville and the surrounding areas, including the Roosevelt Plaza directly across the street from Mattress One and Jersey Mike's Subs.

A Proposed Building and Parking Lot Expansion plan for Roosevelt Market Place has been filed with the City and JEA. The plan lists the development team as Baker Design Build, Doherty Sommers Architects Engineers, Inc., Tri-State Land Surveyors Inc. and Janet O. Whitmill, RLA, Inc.

A building permit filed on Feb. 12 for the shell building describes the project as "6,010 [square foot] shell retail and office building," one story high, with an estimated cost of \$500,000.

According to Edd Langdon, principle with general contractor Ticon, no tenants are yet slated for the new construction, which will house one to three tenants. Estimated completion date is Sept. 1.

Jacksonville University to Host Armada Regular Season Games

The Jacksonville Armada Football Club announced Jacksonville University (JU) as its primary facility partner for the 2024 National Premier Soccer League and Women's Premier Soccer League regular season matches. The matches will take place at Southern Oak Stadium, located on the JU campus, just 10 minutes from the Armada's new stadium development in Downtown Jacksonville.

"We are proud to align with Jacksonville University for the upcoming regular season games. It's a somewhat full-circle moment; we have a lot of great memories playing in the U.S. Open Cup in the early years. Being able to host both men's and women's home matches at Southern Oak Stadium will undoubtedly enhance the game-day atmosphere and further strengthen the ties between both organizations and community," said Nathan Walter, president of the Jacksonville Armada FC.



City of Jacksonville Chief of Traffic Engineering Chris LeDew and City Councilmember Jimmy Peluso met with neighbors during a March 5 neighborhood meeting at Oak and Osceola streets.

Tapping the Brakes

Traffic-calming measures proposed at Osceola and Oak

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Traffic-calming measures are planned for the busy Oak Street corridor in Riverside at the intersection of Oak and Osceola streets.

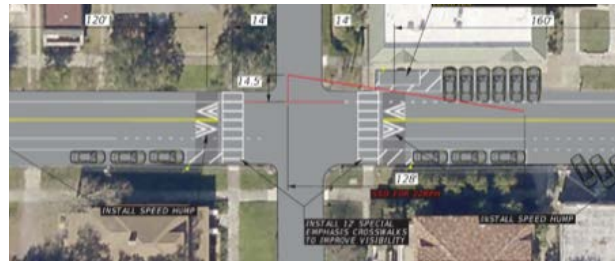
District 7 City Councilmember Jimmy Peluso hosted a neighborhood meeting at the intersection March 5 for interested residents to learn about the proposed traffic-calming measures from City of Jacksonville Chief of Traffic Engineering Chris LeDew, ask questions and share concerns.

LeDew said the root of the intersection's problem is the lack of sight distance, caused by the street parking in front of 2253 Oak St., which is worsened by speeding drivers.

While LeDew cited a traffic study's estimated one to three collisions per year at the intersection, local residents who can see the intersection from their homes argued the number was much higher than that.

LeDew's team of engineers considered six options of how to address the intersection's issues and, after gathering input from Peluso's office and Riverside Avondale Preservation, presented the best one in terms of cost, build time, effectiveness and the number of parking spaces to remove.

"At this location, we decided the best option was to do a combination of lowering the actual speeds that people drive and removing some of the sight obstruction," LeDew said.



Proposed enhancements for the intersection of Oak and Osceola streets, including the removal of four parking spots and the installation of speed humps and two pedestrian crosswalks.

To do this, a total of four parking spaces nearest the intersection will be removed from in front of the building. While he initially proposed designating the resulting space as a loading zone, neighbors at the meeting swiftly suggested making it a

space for bicycle parking instead. A total of four speed humps will be installed along Oak Street and, to further improve visibility, a pair of 12-foot pedestrian crosswalks will be installed on either side of the intersection along with a pair of "standard diamond pedestrian warning signs."

LeDew said a speed study of the corridor revealed that drivers are driving "well over the speed limit" and the proposed speed humps should "slow down the actual speeds to between 15 and 20 mph."

Residents posed questions and offered suggestions about other traffic enhancements, including four-way stops, raised crosswalks and angled or compact-only parking options.

LeDew explained the legs of the intersection don't sustain high enough levels of constant traffic to warrant a four-way stop; raised crosswalks would cause drainage issues; and angled parking spots "weren't feasible" for this particular location. Additionally, he said, he didn't believe denoting the remaining parking spots for compact cars only would be "very fair."

Overall, the proposed plan was well-received by neighbors attending the meeting. Following it, resident Jennifer Wolfe said the meeting and the proposed solution is what happens "when you're invested in your community."

"That is why we're solving the problem, because before any action was taken, we got input from all the players and that is the critical thing about building the neighborhood. I think that's part of the placemaking, including everybody who's a stakeholder," said Wolfe.

After the meeting, Peluso called this level of neighborhood input and conversation "essential."

"If you want the best product, you have to get the community involved," he said.

LeDew said the property owner still had to be notified and given an opportunity to pose questions or voice concerns, but once a final decision has been reached, his department is "ready to put this in...in a matter of weeks."



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PENDING

\$1,294,000
2965 ST JOHNS AVE
4BR | 2 FULL BA | 1 HB | 3,825 SQFT
Listed By The Thomsen Group
904-835-2300



UNDER CONTRACT

\$599,000
1253 EDGEWOOD AVE. S
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,946 SQFT
Listed By Seth Kimball
904-270-0210



\$439,000
2970 ST JOHNS AVE 7D
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,696 SQFT
Listed By Robert B Van Cleve
904-535-4420



CLOSED

\$390,000
1127 BLUE SKY WAY
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,546 SQFT
Listed By Edmund Akers
904-651-6676



\$349,900
2594 HALDUMAR TER
2 BR | 1 BA | 1,260 SQFT
Listed By Alan Aptheker
904-982-3950



CLOSED

\$290,000
2912 ST JOHNS AVE 1
2 BR | 2 BA | 1,220 SQFT
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\$285,000
9821 WINSTON ST
2 BR | 1 BA | 1,394 SQFT
Listed By Edmund Akers
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UNDER CONTRACT

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1396 DELMAR ST
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Listed By Edmund Akers
904-651-6676



UNDER CONTRACT

\$239,000
8318 CHIMNEY OAK DRIVE
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,372 SQFT
Listed By Edmund Akers
904-651-6676



UNDER CONTRACT

\$239,000
6956 ARQUES RD
3 BR | 1 FULL BA | 1 HB | 1,434 SQFT
Listed By Robert B Van Cleve
904-535-4420



CLOSED

\$110,000
9038 JEFFERSON AVENUE
3BR | 1 FULL BA | 1 HB | 2,038 SQFT
Listed By Robert B Van Cleve
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Windward on the Move, Two Marinas Acquired on the Waterfront

Amenities now enhanced due to input from boaters

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Winds of change are blowing at Windward Sadler Point Marina since its 2022 acquisition by Windward Marina Group, and they're bringing new fueling services for boaters on the St. Johns River.

The acquisition combined Sadler Point Marina with its neighboring Ortega River Marina and plans are in place to make access easier between the two formerly separate entities.



Crews working to install the new fuel tanks Windward Marina Group has brought to the marina.

Longtime boaters at Sadler Point will still see husband-and-wife duo Brooks and Jenny Busey at the marina, who have stayed on to run the service side of the marina under their umbrella, Sadler Point Marina Inc., and maintain a minority ownership in the larger combined property.

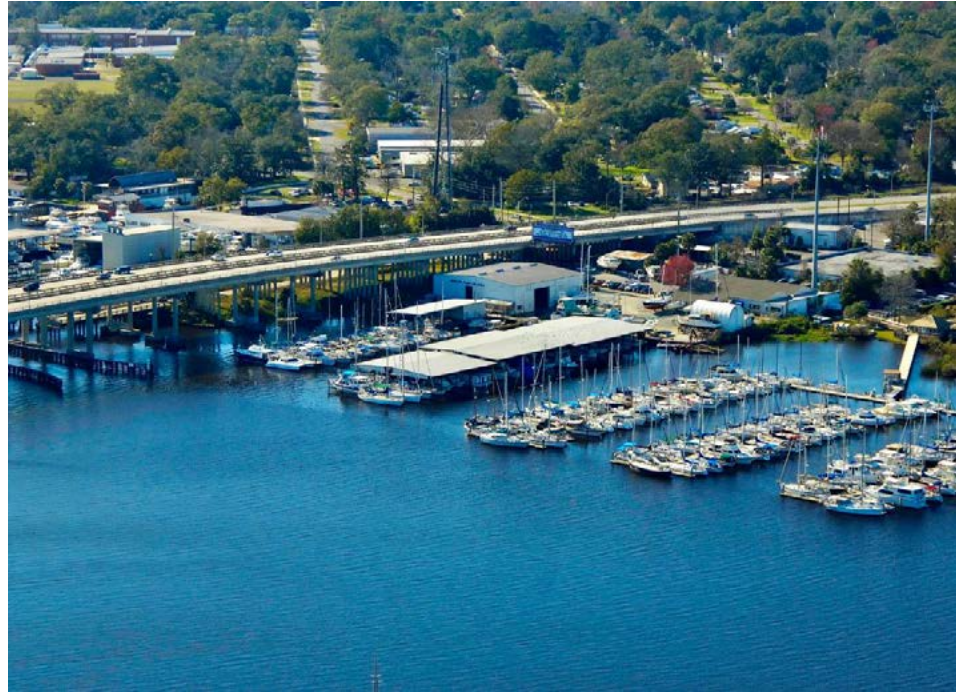
Since Windward came on board, Brooks Busey said, it has made a number of improvements: resurfacing the parking lot, painting the buildings and coating the decks on all the docks. But the fuel tanks, which are expected to be operational by April, are a "big deal."

"Prior to this, the Lamb's Yacht Center was the only game in town for getting fuel on the upriver side of the CSX Railroad bridge, and [it's] a little harder to get to," he said. "We'll be able to be competitive with Lamb's and offer a second place to get fuel on the river. Beyond Lamb's, you've got to go way upriver or past downtown, so I think it'll be a nice amenity."

Windward Marina Group Vice President and Commercial Relations Manager Stephen Mask said Windward typically allows for a 12- to 18-month period to get a "big picture" idea of what the community needs.

"Sadler and Ortega were both operational upon acquisition, so we brought them together to share existing amenities," he said. "We are currently working on upgrade designs and should have information to share by mid- to late summer."

Another feature that Windward has brought to its Sadler Point Marina is the JetRide boating club, which is leasing 20 slips there for its rentable boats. JetRide is a boating membership



This image illustrates the property at Sadler Point (Left, under the bridge at US 17 or Roosevelt Blvd), adjoining to the former Ortega River Marina, which are both now part of the Windward Marina Group's acquisition and merger of the two marinas.

that allows members to rent from its fleet of boats and jet skis from any one of its 12 Florida locations, with another one in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

"Typically, we see people who are new to boating get into boating that way," Busey said of the club. "Or folks who are aging out and don't want to deal with all the hassle, but still want to go for a boat ride periodically. It works out really well for them."

In addition to the amenities Windward has brought to Sadler Point, the marina has existing amenities that are popular by sea and by land: on-site restaurants The Loop and High Tide Burrito, and the latest microbrewery addition of Grace Note Brewing.

"Having two restaurants has turned out to be really nice, and opening the brewery has been the cherry on top," Busey said.

Busey said he believes the marina has "got good things going on" and now, with Windward Marina Group at the helm, he hopes to see the marina continue to grow.

"I think it's always going to be beneficial to get more people exposed to the waterfront," he said. "By partnering with Windward, leaning on their financial clout to do some of the things that we wanted to do around here that as a mom-and-pop we were struggling with...I think it's been a good move."

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ORLANDO VALLE V.
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\$14.5 MILLION

(VERDICT, 5/4/2022)

PERSONAL INJURY: TRUCKING CRASH

KATHLEEN THOMAS* V.
GEICO INSURANCE COMPANY

\$14.4 MILLION

(VERDICT, 8/5/2022)

PERSONAL INJURY: CAR ACCIDENT

**Names changed to protect client privacy*

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

\$4.5 MILLION

(SETTLEMENT, 8/17/2021)

PERSONAL INJURY: WORKPLACE NEGLIGENCE

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Amendment Proposed to City Council's Majority Action Rule

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

A piece of legislation is currently moving through city council proposing an amendment to City Council Rule 4.601 (Majority Action). The proposed amendment in Ordinance 2024-0119, filed by the Office of General Counsel (OGC), would "provide that a tie vote on a quasi-judicial matter does not constitute a denial."

This amendment is related to a San Marco PUD rezoning request that was denied by a tie vote last summer for a proposed mixed-use development featuring a self-storage component that was highly contested by the San Marco community.

Senior Assistant General Counsel Jason Teal explained this amendment emerged from a settlement agreement between the developer for this proposed project and the City of Jacksonville after the developer appealed the denial.

The tie vote being interpreted as a denial was "one of the points of contention" in the appeal, Teal said.

"The interpretation by the General Counsel's Office of the Council's rules was that the city council can only take positive action...or affirmative action by a majority vote," Teal said. "Because the motion was made to adopt or pass the rezoning, the fact that it didn't have an affirmative vote, which is defined in our council rules as a majority vote, then the interpretation was that it's

effectually a denial of the motion, which denied the rezoning."

Teal referenced Florida Statute 166.033, which contains language on how a municipality must handle land use matters, specifically "the municipality must approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application for a development permit or development order."

He added that OGC introduced the legislation "because the need for the filing of the legislation stemmed from a settlement agreement and not the normal channels."

Should the amendment pass, in the event of any future tie votes on quasi-judicial matters, the city council would be able to follow avenues already

Teal explained that last summer's 9-to-9 tie vote was a rare occurrence – "the first time any of us can remember it happening" – and this legislation is a "recognition" that a tie vote "doesn't restrict, prohibit, change any of the options that the council still has when they come to any vote on a quasi-judicial case."

However, former District 5 City Councilmember LeAnna Cumber, an adamant opponent of the previous PUD rezoning request, said the proposed amendment to the council rule is "outrageous."

"It's a total gift to developers, and to developers who have controversial projects, because what the bill would do is it would make it so you would have to have a majority of members vote to kill the bill," she said. "Tie votes fail, because in order to win, you have to have a majority. So what this would do is it would make quasi-judicial bills far harder to actually deny."

Quasi-judicial matters are matters in which council members essentially sit as judges and cast their votes for or against an issue after considering expert testimony and reviewing competent, substantial evidence on the matter in question. Cumber explained council members must have "a legal reason" to vote against a quasi-judicial matter.

2024-0119 will go before the Rules Committee at its April 1 meeting.

The Resident News will continue to report on these matters as they develop.

“It's a total gift to developers, and to developers who have controversial projects, because what the bill would do is it would make it so you would have to have a majority of members vote to kill the bill. Tie votes fail, because in order to win, you have to have a majority. So what this would do is it would make quasi-judicial bills far harder to actually deny.”

– LeAnna Cumber
Former District 5 City Councilmember

"The argument stated by the appellant in our case took the position that this means that there must be an 'affirmative action' to do one of those things," he wrote in a later e-mail. "Our position is that our Council Rules identify the need for an affirmative action to approve, so when they don't have an affirmative action (i.e. a tie vote) the motion fails."

available to it, which a bill summary for ordinance 2024-0119 explained, are "move to reconsider the item for the purpose of moving and acting on an alternate motion, rerefer the item back to the appropriate committee of reference for additional consideration, or take any other action authorized by the Council Rules or applicable law."



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‘Milestone Moment’ for Emerald Trail

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

The City of Jacksonville, Groundwork Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) are celebrating a “major victory” in their commitment to delivering the Emerald Trail to the Jacksonville community.

During a press conference on Tuesday, March 19 at the Phoenix Arts and Innovation District in Springfield, representatives from the three entities – Mayor Donna Deegan, City Council President Ron Salem, Groundwork Jacksonville CEO Kay Ehas and JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr. – shared details on this transformational \$147 million grant, the largest one-time federal grant the city has ever received.

“Infrastructure is about connecting people and communities.”

– Mayor Donna Deegan

Additional speakers at the press conference included District Director Bryan Campbell with the Office of Florida Representative Aaron Bean and Tony Cho with the Phoenix Arts and Innovation District, which will be situated along the Emerald Trail’s link in Springfield.

City Councilmembers Matt Carlucci, Jimmy Peluso and Ju’Coby Pittman attended the press conference as well.

Ford said of the nearly 700 applicants, a total of 132 recipients were selected, and Jacksonville received the sixth-highest allotment from the pot of \$3.1 billion in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Neighborhood Access and Equity grant program.

This grant, combined with a 20% match totaling \$36.65 million from the Local Option Gas Tax, will fund the design and construction for the remaining five links of the Emerald Trail: Segment 3 (southwest connector

between Riverside and McCoy’s Creek); Segment 4 (the S-line connector); Segment 6 (on the westside connecting North Riverside, Woodstock and Robinson’s Addition); Segment 7 (on the northwest, linking Durkeeville, College Gardens and Newtown); and Segment 8 (linking Eastside, Phoenix and Springfield).

“These remaining five segments will be significantly accelerated because the funding on the local option gas tax was over a 30-year period,” Ford said. “Now we have all of the funding that would have been slated over that timeframe on a much earlier passage of time and we’re able to move forward.”

The LaVilla link is the first segment of the 30-mile trail system set to open, tentatively scheduled for early May. Ehas explained that 40% of the trail is either “complete, under construction or in design.” In addition to the LaVilla link completion, construction on Hogan Street is slated for later this year and Hogan’s Creek, currently in design, should begin to see construction by 2026.

During her remarks at the press conference, Deegan called this grant a “milestone moment” for the city.

“That record-setting amount for the Emerald Trail is a testament to the power of collaboration, to the power of Team Jacksonville,” she said, adding that the Emerald Trail touches on “some of the top priorities” of her administration: health, economic development and infrastructure.

“Infrastructure isn’t just roads and bridges or how we get around,” she said. “It’s also about connecting people and communities. It’s one of the biggest goals of this grant: reconnecting neighborhoods that were cut off by infrastructure and transportation decisions implemented decades ago.”

Following the press conference, Ehas shared



City Councilmembers Jimmy Peluso and Ju’Coby Pittman, District Director with the Office of Representative Aaron Bean Bryan Campbell, Groundwork Jacksonville CEO Kay Ehas, City Council President Ron Salem, Mayor Donna Deegan, JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr., Tony Cho with the Phoenix Arts and Innovation District, JTA Board Chair Debbie Buckland and City Councilmember Matt Carlucci at the March 19 press conference.

comments on the additional funding still needed to carry the project through to completion. The only remaining portion of the project that still needs funding, she explained, is the Hogan’s Creek construction, which will “be a combination, too, of local and federal dollars.”

“There’s a FEMA BRIC Grant; it pays for 75% of the project, so that’s the grant we’ll be going after for Hogan’s Creek,” she said.

FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program has an allocated \$1 billion in funding; it “support[s] communities through capability and capacity building; encouraging and enabling innovation; promoting partnerships; enabling large infrastructure projects; maintaining flexibility; and providing consistency.”

Looking to future plans for Groundwork Jacksonville, Ehas said the organization will be establishing “a long-term agreement with the City” regarding the trail once it’s fully completed.

“We’re going to help with maintenance, we’re probably going to be doing programming and activation,” she said.

Last October, the City of Jacksonville, Groundwork Jacksonville and the JTA executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the trail’s remaining five segments.

Construction crews broke ground on the Emerald Trail in 2021. Once completed, it will connect 21 parks, 16 schools, 14 urban neighborhoods, three hospitals, two colleges and the JTA Regional Transportation Center.

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11 BISHOP BRIGGS
with FUTURE JOY, KENZIE’S PLACE WITH KALE THAT RAPS & COYBOI

18 EARTHGANG
with L.O.V.E. CULTURE FT. EBONIQUE, WAHD & MR. AL PETE; JEFF SKIGH FT. BA YBRO, FIGGA DA KID, KING CASHES & TWICE; & FULL PLATE FAM

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Mae, We Remember

Murray Hill residents honor Mae Boren Axton

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

It started off as rumors and urban legends for homeowners Artur and Jessica Nistra, whispers that their Murray Hill home at 3239 Dellwood Ave. had historical significance in Jacksonville's musical past and had once been home to Mae Boren Axton, the "Queen Mother of Nashville" and the woman who co-wrote Elvis Presley's first gold record award-winning song.

Nistra and his wife purchased the house in 2022 after falling in love with the vibrant, walkable community and said neighbors would mention here and there that the home had ties to Axton and Presley. Every now and then, he said, he'd see cars stop outside his house and passengers would snap photos of the one-story, post-World War II home, but still they dismissed it "because it sounded just like an urban legend."

It wasn't until a man from WJCT knocked on his door to explain he was doing a documentary for PBS that "the light bulb really came to my head," Nistra said.

"That's when I told my wife, 'Listen there's something about this house. I think we should look into it,'" he said. "We both appreciate history and we both appreciate art. This house a little bit of both."



Nistra says the room that serves as his office is true to the original layout and often wonders if Mae Axton once listened to or played music where he now works.

Little home, large legacy

So Nistra embarked on the unexpected mystery of discovering the history within the four walls of their home.

His first stop was City Hall to check property records and though he wasn't able to find anything, he was turned on to "Elvis Ignited: The Rise of an Icon in Florida," a book by award-winning journalist Bob Kealing chronicling Presley's rise to stardom in Florida between 1955 and 1956.

Kealing's book was Nistra's first piece of concrete evidence that his home had been the site of something special as he found a passage within the pages citing Axton's - and now Nistra's - Dellwood Avenue address.

"But what happened within its walls in 1955, weeks after the completion of Presley's second Florida tour, brought him the breakout hit he'd been waiting for," the passage read. "Just where are timeless songs supposed to be written? In this case, one took shape in the living room of working people hit by a bolt of inspiration that came and went in minutes, leaving them a legacy for the ages."

The "breakout hit" Kealing references in this passage is "Heartbreak Hotel," which Axton co-wrote with Tommy Durden, another Jacksonville-based singer/songwriter.

The Facts on Axton

Nistra said he's been unable to definitively confirm that Presley ever visited the house, but he has "many references" that he did. And while he does appreciate and respect the connection to the king of rock 'n' roll, it was Axton with whom he became fascinated.

"When I learned about Mae Axton, that's when I was dazzled," he said. "She was a busy, prolific, intelligent, active woman, and we're talking about the 1950s. All the things that she did, I was amazed. I was like, 'This lady by herself, she's a big deal.'"

Mae Boren Axton was a schoolteacher, a publicist, a journalist and a songwriter. She was born in 1914 in Oklahoma. Upon her passing in 1997, the Oklahoma State Legislature passed a resolution mourning her passing and celebrating her accomplishments. As stated in the resolution, she wrote more than 200 songs



A sculpture of Elvis Presley presides over the living room at Nistra's home. Before ever finding his Murray Hill home, Nistra originally purchased the memento for his father, who had been a big Elvis fan. His father passed before he could give it to him and Nistra brought it along in their move to Murray Hill, oblivious to their home's ties to Presley.

beyond "Heartbreak Hotel" and worked with several then-aspiring musicians including Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, Reba McEntire and Kris Kristofferson and served as publicist for Kenny Rogers, Hank Snow, Crystal Gayle and Jerry Reed.

Additionally, the legislation read, Axton was "a charter member and one of the organizers of both the Academy of Country Music and the Country Music Association."

She was inducted to the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame and was recognized by the National Songwriters Hall of Fame as "one of the 50 greatest women songwriters."

Axton's son, Hoyt, also lived in the Dellwood Avenue home for a period as a child and grew up to become a well-known singer/songwriter in his own right.

Living in history

Today, Nistra marvels at the ties his home has to music history. While his home had undergone renovations and an expansion over the years, he said the bones remain the same and the living room, and the room



Artur and Jessica Nistra at their historic Murray Hill residence.

that now serves as his office, remain true to the home's original floor plan.

"So, I know for a fact that where I'm standing [the office] and the living room, they are original spaces; they are untouched," he said. "They have been refurbished and painted but they have been untouched. So every time I go from my office to the living room, I always wonder, Did they hang out over here? Were they playing music over there? It drives me nuts!"

The home is recognized by the City of Jacksonville as a local historical landmark, and Nistra had a plaque installed describing why and how the home is recognized as such. Since the plaque's installation, he's seen more people swing through his street to snap photos, including one woman who drove up from Tallahassee.

When he saw her exit her vehicle holding a record, he thought she was another Elvis fan paying homage to the king and went outside to greet her. It turns out, however, she was a friend of the Axton family and it was a Hoyt Axton record she was holding. Nistra invited her inside for coffee.

"She was sharing all her memories of Hoyt and Mae and how pleased she was that somebody recognized them," he said. "Then she cried, and we all cried. It was awesome."

The Murray Hill residence is just another addition to Jacksonville's already rich musical history. Riverside's "Gray House" is recognized as the birthplace of the Allman Brothers Band. Another Westside home is known as the Van Zant House and was the childhood home to Ronnie and Johnny Van Zant, members of Lynyrd Skynyrd. Renowned musicians like James Weldon Johnson, Pat Boone, Ray Charles and modern bands like Yellowcard and Limp Bizkit all have ties to Jacksonville.

"The home of Mae Axton is just one of Jacksonville's many historically meaningful places," said Jacksonville Historical Society CEO Alan Bliss. "Recognizing it as an historic landmark is how we let the people of the present and the future know something about those who came before us. This city is their legacy, but now it is ours to maintain and improve, for the Jacksonvilleians yet to come."

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Historic Home Tour Celebrates 50 Years

The Riverside Avondale Preservation's (RAP) annual Home Tour presented by David Gray Home Services celebrates 50 years this April. Held Saturday, April 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, April 14 from noon to 4 p.m., the 50th Annual Home Tour gives attendees a gilded view of the most beautiful, well-maintained and historically relevant homes in the Riverside Avondale community. There are 11 properties participating in the Home Tour, all within a two-mile area.

"The long-standing tradition of neighbors welcoming neighbors into their home for the annual Home Tour continues," said Shannon Blankinship, executive director of RAP. "Homeowners gain a deeper appreciation for their home, and visitors learn about history, architecture and preservation in each property."

The Home Tour is as old as RAP itself, operating since 1974. Since its inception, it has grown to one of the most recognized and well-attended community events for viewers, homeowners and sponsors alike. The goal of the Home Tour is to elevate historic preservation, restoration, design and maintenance, and to promote homes in the community doing this work. This year's tour also showcases a "Before" house that is about to undergo significant restoration, viewable during a future Home Tour.



These historic properties are similar to those slated to be a part of the 2024 Home Tour presented by David Gray Home Services.

Included in the 50th annual Home Tour are along-the-route activations for patrons to enjoy. The Ixia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will be having a plant sale at Native Park on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the Jacksonville Artists Guild is hosting a pop-up gallery of locally made art at the Art House at 1504 Barrs St.

As part of the event, RAP is also hosting a ticketed Twilight Party preview April 11 from 6-9 p.m. With only 100 tickets available, this gathering will be held at the Home Tour's Feature Home, a stately, 100-year-old, Mediterranean Revival-style residence owned by John and Jan Hirabayashi and designed by Marsh & Saxelbye. This kickoff party features live music, drinks, food and dessert.

To purchase tickets to either of these iconic events, visit riversideavondale.org/events. Guided tours are also available, sold separately through Go Tuk'n and Art Bikes Jax, and include admission.

The Resident News is proud to be a sponsor of the 2024 Home Tour.

deWindt Assumes Command

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Naval Air Station Jacksonville (NAS Jax) held a change of command ceremony on Thursday, Feb. 29, passing command of the military base from Capt. Marc Cantu to Executive Officer Capt. Greg deWindt.

Prior to assuming command of the naval station, deWindt served as the NAS Jax executive officer. He stated the naval base's existence as it is today and the partnerships it has made throughout the years stand as testament "to the community's commitment and patriotism in having a premier location for warfighter development and training as well as the sustainment of weapon systems."

"I look forward to the continued partnerships and innovative support as the installation continues to grow," he said.

Under Cantu's leadership, NAS Jax was awarded the Commander, Navy Installations Command's 2024

Installation Excellence Award in the large installation category. The Jacksonville installation was awarded first place in its category for providing shore support for two Carrier Strike Groups, one Amphibious Ready Group, nine training detachments, and providing more than 35,000 incident-free flights for 16 tenant squadrons.

Following the change of command, Cantu also celebrated a retirement ceremony, bringing his 26 years of honorable service in the U.S. Navy to a close. During his ceremony, Cantu was awarded the Legion of Merit award for his leadership in championing an innovative Get Fit program, which later was adopted across the fleet as part of the Navy's Integrated Primary Prevention Strategy.

"So how do I sum up 26 years of experiences and an amazing tour here? I think it comes down to two words - appreciation and pride," said Cantu. "Specifically, the appreciation for the people I have had the pleasure to work with and appreciation for all the opportunities this career has made available for me."

Rear Adm. Ian Johnson, Cmdr. Navy Region Southeast, acted as the presiding officer over Cantu's retirement ceremony with Col. Michael Brennan, commanding officer, Marine Aircraft Group 41, as the guest speaker.

"Capt. Cantu has dedicated himself to the challenges



Cmdr. Navy Region Southeast Rear Adm. Ian Johnson, right, presents the Legion of Merit award to Naval Air Station Jacksonville Commanding Officer Capt. Marc Cantu during a change of command ceremony, Feb. 29.

and joys of managing the critical infrastructure that provides for the members who serve here - the readiness our Navy needs, and the honor our country expects," said Brennan. "I was then, and I am now proud to have been your first salute. You have made good on the promise of that tradition to humbly serve with honor and distinction. And so now as you find the opportunity to think about the value of your time spent in service to our country, know that it has been priceless."

50
YEARS
1974-2024



RAP
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RAP is the lead advocate for Riverside Avondale's historic neighborhoods, vibrant local commercial districts, public spaces, and welcoming community.

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50th Anniversary Home Tour

April 13-14 | 11 homes and businesses to tour sharing stories of preservation and rehabilitation success | tickets \$25 available at 904tix.com

15th Anniversary Celebration of RAM

April 6, 10-3pm | featuring special performances, guest speakers, and silent disco

EVERYONE WANTS TO SEE INSIDE

The RAP Home Tour, begun in 1974 with five houses, was one of the first such events in the South. It proved that residents wanted to view the magnificent architecture as well as to see how their neighbors were improving their homes. Today, the Home Tour is an annual two-day event that draws several thousand visitors to a dozen or so historic homes with a focus on celebration, preservation, restoration, and design.

"Learn more about the meaningful and lasting impact of Riverside Avondale Preservation over the last 50 years all year long..."



Make a contribution!

DeSantis Signs Bill to Protect Minors from Social Media

Governor Ron DeSantis signed HB3, "Online Protections for Minors," on March 25. It prohibits children younger than 14 to hold a social media account and children ages 14 and 15 will be required to obtain parental or guardian consent to create or maintain one.

"Social media harms children in a variety of ways," DeSantis said. "HB3 gives parents a greater ability to protect their children."

The bill also includes requirements for pornographic or sexually explicit websites to use age verification to prevent minors from accessing sites that are inappropriate for children.

Once the bill goes into effect, it will require social media platforms to terminate accounts by users younger than 14, including those the platforms categorize as "for the purpose of targeting content or advertising."

Users will have 90 days to file a dispute, after which point the minor account will be terminated. Users younger than 14 will also be able to request an account termination, which will go into effect within five business days after the request is made. Language in the bill also requires that any personal information the platform gathered on these terminated accounts must be permanently deleted "unless there are legal requirements to maintain such information."

Fourteen- and 15-year-old account holders will see similar terminations to their accounts should they fail to obtain parental or guardian consent. Parents or guardians, and the account holders themselves, will also have that same ability to request an account termination.

"Knowing or reckless" violations of the new law will cost social media platforms "up to \$50,000 per violation."

This is an amended bill from one DeSantis vetoed earlier in March that would have prohibited minors younger than 16 from holding social media accounts.

The bill's passage is not without opposition, however.

NetChoice, an organization launched in 2001 "to make the Internet safe for free enterprise and free expression," issued a veto request to DeSantis earlier in March, stating HB3 "would violate Floridians' constitutional rights and place their privacy at risk."

NetChoice Vice President and General Counsel Carl Szabo issued a statement following the bill's signing on the 25th stating, "An unconstitutional law will protect exactly zero Floridians. HB3 is also bad policy because of the data collection on Floridians by online services [it] will in effect require. This will put their private data at risk of breach."

NetChoice members include major social media platforms like Meta, TikTok and X as well as other internet giants like Google, Yahoo! and Pinterest.

The new law will go into effect Jan. 1, 2025.



MOSH staff and other cleanup volunteers at the Southbank Riverwalk Cleanup with MOSH event on March 19.

8.5 Tons Collected During Great St. Johns River Cleanup

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Last month, hundreds of volunteers gathered at various cleanup sites to participate in the second annual Great St. Johns River Cleanup.

This collaborative movement by the St. Johns Riverkeeper, local municipalities and organizations is an effort "to expand our collective cleanup efforts across the St. Johns River watershed this spring." The Duval County/City of Jacksonville event was held on Saturday, March 16.



A cleanup crew at the Harborview Boat Ramp in Ribault Park.

On March 19, cleanup efforts continued at the Southbank Riverwalk Cleanup with MOSH event, followed by the T. K. Stokes Boat Ramp Cleanup March 23.

According to St. Johns Riverkeeper Outreach and Engagement Specialist Steph Morse, nearly 500 volunteers gathered

at 37 clean-up sites across the county. These volunteers spent a collective 956 hours filling 859 garbage bags with more than 8 1/2 tons of trash.

The Great St. Johns River Cleanup will continue until April 25 at more than 60 locations in St. Johns, Brevard, Clay, Orange, Volusia, Putnam and Seminole counties to keep the watershed clean. The events in Duval County on March 16 kicked off the cleanup festivities and coincided with the City of Jacksonville and Keep Jacksonville Beautiful's 29th annual St. Johns River Celebration Cleanup.



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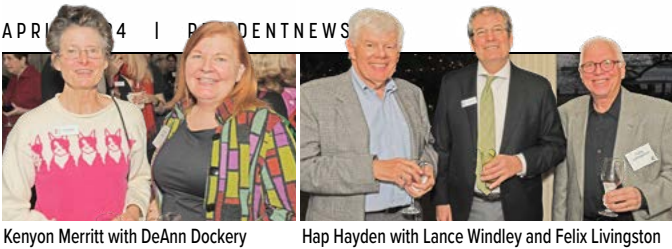
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The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens

Cummer Debuts Sporting Couture

Friends and supporters of the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, along with members of the Museum's Ponce De León Society, gathered during the evening of Feb. 28 for the Museum's opening party for the exhibit Sporting Fashion: Outdoor Girls 1800 to 1960. The first exhibition to explore the evolution of women's sporting attire in Western fashion, the collection examines the competing priorities of style, function and propriety, and charts the cultural and material developments that allowed women to make their way outdoors. It will be on display through May 19.



Susan Tudor with Teresa Cook



Lisa Kasper with Clare Berry



James Richardson with Judy Holm



Marjie and Abe Rogozinski



The restaurant space at 1534 Oak St., formerly home to Black Sheep, has been vacant since the popular neighborhood restaurant closed last summer.

bartaco Coming to Former Black Sheep Location

BY MICHELE LEIVAS

Five Points has passed the vibe check for bartaco, which plans to make its new home in the former Black Sheep restaurant space on Oak Street.

"We are so excited to be joining the Five Points neighborhood of Jacksonville," said bartaco President Anthony Valetta. "This neighborhood stands out for its eclectic vibe, diverse array of independent boutiques, long list of outdoor activities and unique, historic charm. It's a neighborhood that embodies the bartaco vibe; we are inspired by a healthy, outdoor lifestyle, combining fresh, upscale street food in a relaxed environment."

Valetta said the restaurant is known "for creating an escape for our guests through bold flavors, freshly juiced-to-order cocktails, upbeat music and coastal decor." The restaurant plans to reinvent the rooftop space as a "lush oasis" for guests.

The announcement for this new Oak Street tenant was reported last month, sharing details of an Instagram post by Colliers International.

bartaco has locations in 14 states, with five already in Florida.

This latest Five Points addition is expected to open in Spring 2025.

Painting Event Raises Funds for Weekend Nutrition

The Sanctuary on 8th Street's inaugural Paint & Sip event on Feb. 29 proved to be a success, raising funds for the launch of the organization's Weekend Nutrition Program: Bags of Hope Sponsorship Initiative. The program helps ensure that none of the Sanctuary families have to choose between putting food on the table and meeting other basic needs over the weekend by sending home bags of groceries filled with healthy, essential items each Friday.

The event kicked off with a tour of the Sanctuary's facility, hosted by Sanctuary graduate Coach Kiya, followed by a guided paint class with the theme of hope, in honor of their mission.

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Mark Rosener

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Dr. Tom Dragovich

Rosener to Direct Watson Realty Mergers, Acquisitions

Watson Realty Corp. has appointed Mark Rosener as its Director of Mergers and Acquisitions. Rosener will spearhead the company's efforts to identify and capitalize on growth opportunities, including acquisitions and strategic partnerships. He has been a part of the organization since 2005, serving on the leadership team since 2009 and as the Regional Vice President of the North Central Region prior to his new role.

"Mark's track record of success and his unwavering dedication to our company's mission and values make him the perfect choice to lead this important aspect of our growth strategy," said Ed Forman, president of Watson Realty Corp.

"I am committed to finding opportunities that will further enhance our capabilities and expand our reach. I look forward to working with our team to identify strategic opportunities that will position Watson for continued success in the years to come," said Rosener.

Dragovich to Head Cancer Division

Dr. Tomislav "Tom" Dragovich joined Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center as head of the Division of Cancer Medicine and medical oncologist-in-chief on March 11. He will also serve as medical director of the center's clinical research programs and hematology and oncology services. Dragovich brings extensive experience in medical oncology and clinical research, with an expertise in gastrointestinal cancer, clinical trials and cancer drug development.

"Dr. Dragovich has dedicated two decades of his career to advancing our understanding of cancer biology," said Dr. Bill Putnam, medical director of Baptist MD Anderson. "We are looking forward to sharing this expertise in clinical trials and cancer medicine with the Jacksonville community and beyond as part of our quest to offer tomorrow's cancer treatments, today."

Dragovich comes to the area from Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center in Arizona, where he was one of the founding oncologists and division chiefs of its cancer center.

"I'm honored to be joining Baptist MD Anderson," said Dragovich. "I look forward to collaborating with this talented team to offer innovative cancer treatments to the community."



Amy Crane



John Zell

Crane to Lead Foundation's Grantmaking

Amy Crane has been promoted to Vice President of Programs at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (TCF), where she will oversee the foundation's discretionary and donor-advised grantmaking. She succeeds Kathleen Shaw, who spent 22 years - most recently as senior vice president - in the role before leaving to be the inaugural Executive Vice President of the private Terry Family Foundation.

Crane steps into the position with more than 10 years of experience at TCF and more than 20 years of nonprofit arts management. She is a graduate of the Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2009, and currently serves on the Cultural Services Grant Program panel for the city's annual appropriations to the arts.

"I couldn't be more pleased to say that we have found that leader right here among our ranks," said Isaiah M. Oliver, TCF president.

As part of the transition, John Zell has been promoted to Senior Vice President of Development, having recently celebrated 27 years of service to TCF. In this capacity, he will oversee an expanded development team and partner with professional advisors in service of their clients' charitable and financial goals.

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The Davis Family

\$1.5M for New MOSH Building

The Museum of Science & History (MOSH) announced significant donations for the MOSH Genesis capital campaign totaling \$1.5 million from the Davis family. The donations include \$1 million from James E. and A. Dano Davis Family Charities and \$500,000 from Jill and Jed Davis. The combined gifts will be honored through the naming of the front lobby of the new museum upon its completion.

“As a multi-generation Jacksonville family, we take pride in supporting organizations that elevate the quality of life for all families in Northeast Florida,” said Jed Davis, president and CEO of the Davis Family Office.

The MOSH Genesis capital campaign supports plans for MOSH to relocate from the Southbank to a new 100,000-square-foot building on the Northbank of the St. Johns River in Downtown Jacksonville.

Jill Davis currently serves as the vice chair of the MOSH Board of Trustees and is also the chair of the MOSH Genesis capital campaign cabinet.

“Working side-by-side with Jill this past year on the MOSH Genesis capital campaign, I am inspired by her personal dedication to bringing a world-class museum to Northeast Florida,” said Maureen Mercho, Chief Development Officer of MOSH. “By supporting this capital campaign, the Davis family is breaking down barriers to lifelong learning.”



Chelly and Jeff Schembera



Pierre Allaire and Lynn Shad



Mindy and Lee Hanna

A Silver Anniversary for Land Conservation

The North Florida Land Trust (NFLT) celebrated its Annual Meeting and 25th Anniversary at TPC Sawgrass March 3. The event, presented by the Doolittle Family, provided an update on the nonprofit’s land conservation accomplishments and recognized honorees dedicated to land conservation.

President and CEO Allison DeFoor and Board Member Lisa Barton presented the inaugural Charlie Commander Land Conservation Award to Atlantic Beach Holding Co. and the Bull Family. The award is given to a landowner who is dedicated to conservation and was named after Charlie Commander, a longtime supporter of NFLT and champion for conservation who passed away last year. Two NFLT Legacy Awards were presented to NFLT Founder Bill McQuilkin and former NFLT President Jim McCarthy.

NFLT has protected more than 37,000 acres over the last 25 years. In 2023, they raised nearly \$2.5 million as a required match to state and federal funds for stewardship of conservation lands retained by the trust. These lands currently total over 17,000 acres with the balance of lands protected passed along to partners in conservation such as Florida Forever. They increased their prescribed fire capabilities and burned about 320 acres last year, along with 100 acres already this year, which helps restore habitats. They also planted 82,500 long-leaf pine seedlings.

“It is the urgent part that I try to stress; it is now or never,” said DeFoor. “It is a race between us and



David Strickland speaks at the North Florida Land Trust's 25th Annual Meeting.

the bulldozers for these vulnerable lands. We are all collectively going to have to work together to deal with that and make sure these natural spaces are preserved for future generations. We have big goals, and if we all join in, we can make it happen. It is now or never.”

DeFoor also announced some milestone gifts from supporter Delores Barr Weaver – a \$1 million pledge over the next ten years to support land-buying efforts and a \$25,000 matching 1:1 grant to create an endowment at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

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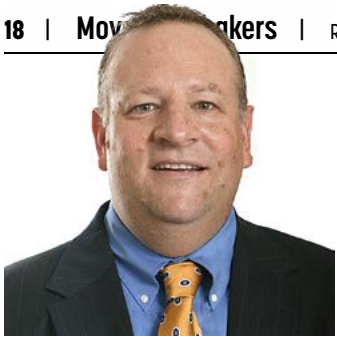
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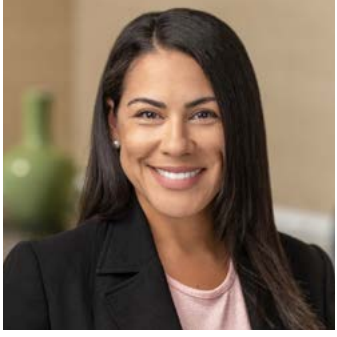
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Wiatt Bowers

New Additions to Scenic Jacksonville Leadership



Melissa Schmitt

Scenic Jacksonville announced three new board members, as well as the officers for its 2024 term.

Wiatt Bowers, Melissa Schmitt and Billy Zeits joined the board. Bowers is an urban planner with nearly 30 years of experience. Schmitt is a certified financial planner with the Sextant Wealth Advisory Group at Raymond James, and Zeits is a senior project manager at Corner Lot Development.



Billy Zeits

“As a Jacksonville native, I believe this is our time to create an intentional and beautiful river city,” said Schmitt. “Passionate people who care, are generous with their time and work towards a shared vision are powerful. It’s that combination that creates meaningful change.”

Current board member Michael Kirwan was elected as president for the second term, along with Bill Hoff Jr., vice president; Jim Overton, vice president; Laura D’Alisera, secretary; Tom Larson, treasurer; and Susan Caven, ex officio.

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



Michael Kirwan

Scenic Jacksonville is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the scenic character and beauty of Jacksonville. It believes in the power of community for constructive change and is a founding member of both the Riverfront Parks Now coalition and the Jacksonville Climate Coalition.



Alex Benavides, Julie Handley, Theresa Bennett Hill and Clay Meux recently rolled off the board at DESC.

Board Change for Downtown Ecumenical Services Council

The Downtown Ecumenical Services Council (DESC) elected its 2024 board officers: Board Chair Claude Moulton, Vice Chair Deborah Pierson, Treasurer Trista Carraher and Secretary Jesse James. Pamela Prier will shift to Immediate Past Board Chair.

DESC also offered gratitude to four directors who rolled off the board due to term limits: Alex Benavides, Julie Handley, Theresa Bennett Hill and Clay Meux. All four served more than 10 years in different leadership roles.

“These four leaders are irreplaceable,” said Prier at the annual meeting. “We owe them a tremendous amount of gratitude for all they achieved through their volunteer service.”



Newly appointed DESC Board Chair Claude Moulton

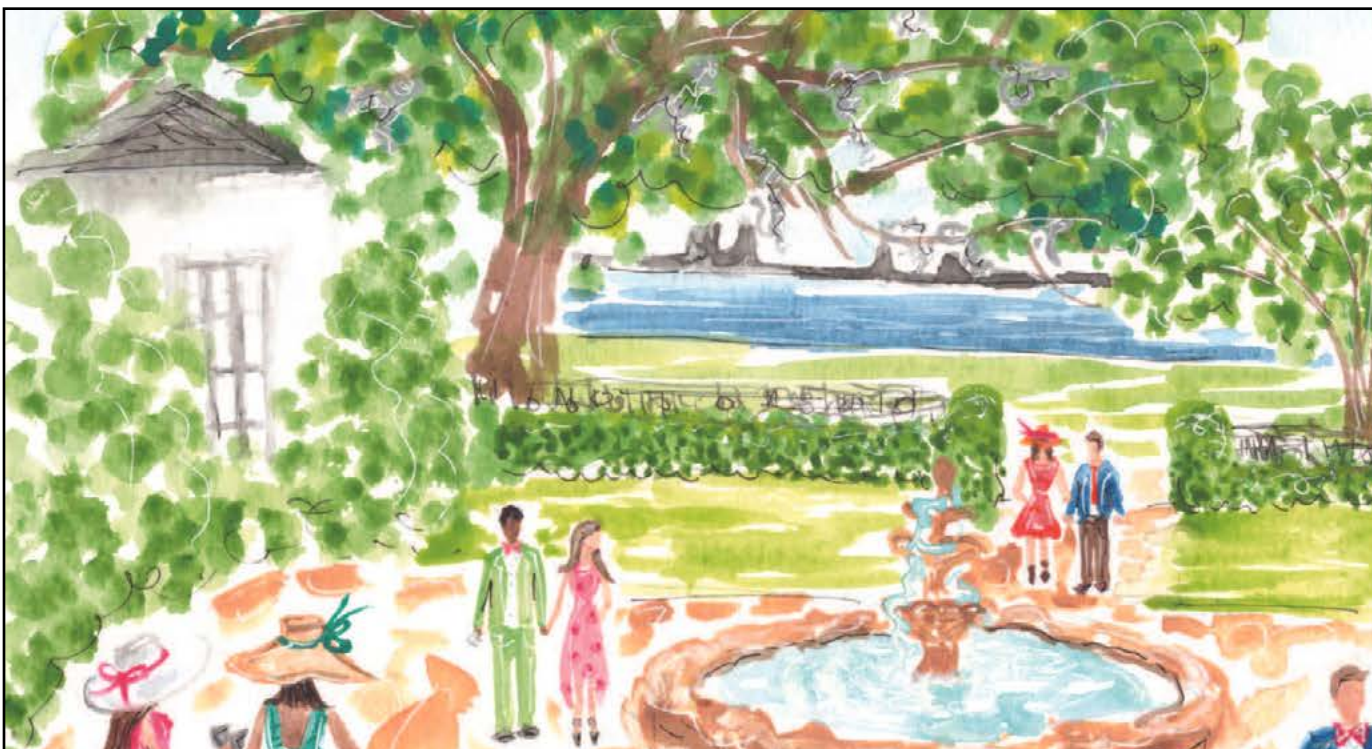
“These four leaders are irreplaceable.”

– Pamela Prier, Immediate Past Board Chair

Moulton said he is excited about the work ahead and looks forward to continued success at DESC, which seeks to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ by providing basic needs for those in emergency situations or experiencing poverty.

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Brittany Michael

Brittany McGuire

Brooke Michael

Coaching Double Play for Spartan Softball

St. Johns Country Day School scored a double play for its softball team with the addition of twin talents Brittany Michael and Brooke Michael. The sisters, graduates of Ridgeview High School, join head coach Brittany McGuire's coaching staff.

Brittany Michael was a triple-threat starter at Division 2 Georgia Southwestern State University after spending time at Tallahassee Community College (TCC), where she earned back-to-back All-Panhandle Conference Second Team spots, was a National Junior College Athletic Association's National Player of the Week and a two-time Florida College System Activities Association Player of the Week. She was a four-year varsity starting pitcher in high school and helped lead her team to the Final Four in the State Championships in 2019 and 2021.

Brooke Michael was also four-year starting catcher in high school and member of the team that made those deep Final Four runs in 2019 and 2021. She won a spot on the Times-Union's All-First Coast team before earning conference recognition and a Second Team All-Panhandle spot while at TCC. Following her career at TCC, she transferred to Georgia Southwestern State University, where she competed in the fall season of 2023.

"Brittany and Brooke Michael are two home-run hires, and I'm excited to welcome them to St. Johns Country Day School," said Director of Athletics John Sgromolo. "Both bring a lot of passion, energy and competitiveness to everything they do."



First Horizon Downtown Banking Center Associates Derrell Gibbs, Keith Rumph, Susan Newman, Debbie Coffman, Denise Akers, Cherie Dye and Jennifer Kirouac

First Horizon Foundation Launches Grants for Good

In honor of First Horizon Corp.'s 160th anniversary, First Horizon Foundation announced the launch of its Grants for Good campaign March 25. Grants for Good will provide \$1.6 million – 160 grants of \$10,000 – to nonprofit organizations dedicated to strengthening the communities it serves.

"We are honored to collaborate with organizations committed to uplifting those in need, fostering sustainable growth and fortifying resilience through impactful programs that strengthen the financial health and well-being of our beloved communities," said Bryan Jordan, First Horizon Corp. chairman, president and CEO.

Grants for Good is open to any 501(c)(3) organization eligible to receive funding from First Horizon Foundation. Nonprofits can apply through the First Horizon website and only one application per nonprofit organization is permitted. Photos are encouraged with submissions. Applications will be accepted until April 30, 2024, and recipients will be announced in June.



Rockwell "Rock" Pillsbury, Jr.

Pillsbury Named Bolles Athletics Director

Rockwell "Rock" Pillsbury, Jr. will join The Bolles School as its next athletic director, following a nationwide search.

"Rock has a track record of demonstrated athletic leadership in a variety of independent schools. He has thrived in high pressure environments, prioritizes building relationships, has experience

navigating the new challenges and opportunities of NIL, has worked closely with both admissions and advancement, and loves to help student-athletes pursue their dreams," said Bolles President and Head of School Tyler Hodges.

Pillsbury, who called the school's reputation "impressive," will bring his own

impressive 35 years of experience to the Bulldogs, including a record with 19 CIF-SS Championships, 13 state titles and 64 league championships. He was also named Nevada Athletic Director of the Year.

Pillsbury will take over for Matt Morris, who is retiring after 36 years with Bolles.

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Linda McMorrow and Selby Kaiser



Janine Richie with Raymond Lackie and Chante Potter



Clark LaBlond with Audrey Lackie



Deanna and Kareem Byfield

Real Estate Company Celebrates Legendary Anniversary

Legends of Real Estate celebrated its 10th anniversary with a night of awards and announcements at the WJCT Studios Feb. 28.

The evening recognized the company's top 20 producers, including top three Maria Pappas, Shannon Judge and Evelyn Martin. Buzz Thomas and The Collective was honored as the top-producing team. In addition to the awards, the company announced a rebrand and the launch of a short-term vacation rental division under its property management company.

It is the first time Legends had done a celebration of that magnitude, with owner Audrey Lackie noting

that more than 100 were in attendance for the "phenomenal" night. Attendees enjoyed tasting menu selections from Lemongrass Thai Bistro, Mandola's

“I wanted to own my own company and I had always loved their brand.”

– Audrey Lackie
Owner, Legends of Real Estate

Italian Kitchen and Gregory's Catering, while Bread & Board dished up a grazing table for the social hour.

"I think I've opened up Pandora's Box," joked Lackie. "I don't know that the agents will let me go back to a small group. It was a wonderful, wonderful event."

While Legends started in 2006, the 10 years marked the date that Lackie took over ownership. Lackie had opened her own branch of the company in 2014 before buying out the original owner in 2018.

"I wanted to own my own company and I had always loved their brand," said the 40-year industry veteran.



In addition to Solune Coffee, Stephen Ezell, right, is working with his friend and artist-in-residence Mark Montgomery to create a comic book about coffee.

Blending Better Beans, Businesses

At Solune Coffee, Stephen Ezell is blending two of his favorite pastimes – teaching and coffee roasting – as expertly as the blended coffees coming from his shop. He roasts his own coffee, Sequential Coffee, for wholesale and acts as a small business incubator to help educate and support other local roasters. In Solune Coffee, Ezell has found how to pay forward the help he's received from others in the past.

"I've always liked helping people. I've always had a lot of help in my projects and it's a hard business to get into," he said. "It's something that I chose to do because I really like interacting with people in that way."

Located in the CoRK Arts District, Ezell provides local roasters with the opportunity to roast their own blends or have him to do it for them. In addition to Sequential, he currently works with two other local labels, Young Buck and Loud House, and offers white-labeling options for local businesses. For Ezell, it's "the more the merrier," and he looks forward to welcoming new roasters to Solune.

Solune Coffee also offers a tasting café area where visitors can try some of the blends Ezell's working on. He has plans to transform the space into a gallery where visitors can purchase anything on display.

Solune Coffee is located at 2650 Rosselle St., #3B.

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Root Ball gala Co-chairs Erica Paul and Sally Baker Lee

Root Ball Gala Co-chairs Named

Greenscape of Jacksonville, Inc. announced its co-chairs of the 17th Annual Root Ball gala, Sally Baker Lee and Erica Paul. Lee is the daughter of Greenscape founder, the late Ann Baker, and is a past president and current board member. Paul has returned to Greenscape's board of directors and is a strong advocate for Jacksonville's tree canopy.

To celebrate another successful planting year, the Root Ball, themed "Celebrating Trees, Growing Community," will feature a Kentucky Derby race watch, casino games, frosty mint juleps, Southern fare, a silent auction and wine pull. The inaugural Canopy Champion Award will also be announced.

The event will be held May 4 at the Garden Club of Jacksonville. To purchase tickets, go to greenscapeofjax.org.

Jones to Head Junior Achievement Development



Priscilla Jones

Priscilla Jones has joined Junior Achievement of North Florida (JA) as the organization's Vice President of Development. She will be the driving force behind JA's fundraising initiatives and will work in concert with the president to execute a capital campaign to help bring a JA Discovery Center to North Florida.

"We have ambitious goals and are in a season of organizational growth where Priscilla's leadership will be critical to support an increased capacity for mission delivery," said Shannon Italia, president of JA.

Prior to joining JA, Jones worked with other local nonprofits like Rethreaded, Women's Giving Alliance, Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.



Amber Angeloni

Angeloni Receives National Museum Honor

Amber Angeloni, Manager of Visitor Experience at the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, has been named the 2024 recipient of the Nancy Hanks Award for Rising Stars by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). She was honored, in part, for her 2023 work to launch the Cummer's Gallery Host Program, which improved visitor satisfaction by transforming traditional gallery security positions into Gallery Hosts, trained to educate and converse with visitors about art, in addition to policies.

The award will be presented at the 2024 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo in Baltimore, Maryland, May 16-19.



Bill Schmidt with Claudia Hart Mally, Charlene Boggs Hughes, Cynthia Craig Bliss and Dee Ramsey Burnett



Bill and Mary Dudley Schmidt

Everybody's Boyfriend Celebrates His 80th



Bill Schmidt with Libby Girlinghouse

Bill Schmidt, jokingly referred to as "everybody's boyfriend," celebrated his 80th birthday as everybody's boyfriend should.

"We'll just invite your girlfriends," said Mary Dudley Schmidt to her husband.

The invitation to the simple, backyard celebration read "Girls Only." More than 40 of Bill Schmidt's girlfriends, several of whom have been part of his life since kindergarten in Mrs. Archebald's classroom on Edgewood Circle in 1949, enjoyed great food and reminisced about their Lee High School days.

Schmidt, a star athlete from the then-named Robert E. Lee High School, has been the mascot of his "Lee Lunch Bunch" girlfriends for 25 years. He is a graduate from the University of Florida and later founded William G. Schmidt Advertising and Public Relations.

Mary Dudley Schmidt, who spent many years flying internationally for Delta Airlines, teases her husband about his long-term relationships. She has had no worries about his "girlfriends" since he pledged 29 years ago, "I may not have been your first date, or first kiss or first love...I just want to be your last everything."

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Children line up for the 1924 Community Chest (later known as United Way of Northeast Florida) Kickoff.

United Way Celebrates Centennial with Community Concert

The United Way will ring in its 100th anniversary with "Uniting for Tomorrow: A Community Concert Celebration," presented in partnership with CSX. The event will be held on Saturday, April 13 from 4-8 p.m. and features live music from local bands like John Lumpkin and The Covenant, The Katz Downstairz, and

Cover of the 1983 United Way of Northeast Florida Annual Report



Tocqueville members David and Linda Stein partner with United Way to found the Stein Fellowship, a first-of-its-kind dual-mentoring program in Northeast Florida for young professionals and struggling middle school children (2006). Today, the program has more than 200 alumni creating change in their communities.



Wayne and Delores introduce Honor Rows students to NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue in the 90s.

Mama Blue, as well as speakers on United Way's century of impact in Northeast Florida. Activities include a kids' zone, virtual scavenger hunt, food, drinks and anniversary swag for sale.

The concert celebration will be held in James Weldon Johnson Park, 135 W. Monroe St., in honor of the location of the first-ever United Way rally

in April 1924. It is free and open to the public, and lawn chairs and blankets are recommended.

The United Way works to give hope and opportunity to those who need it most by providing basic needs, strengthening financial well-being and advancing racial equity in Northeast Florida.



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Mukti Gathers Fighters for Freedom

Rethreaded hosted more than 500 community members and business leaders at its 13th Annual Mukti Freedom Gala, presented by UPS, at The Glass Factory in Jacksonville on Feb. 24. This year's event theme was "Flourish," and it featured a champagne welcome, photo booth, hors-d'oeuvres, dinner, shopping, silent and live auctions, entertainment, music and a meaningful story from a local survivor of human trafficking.



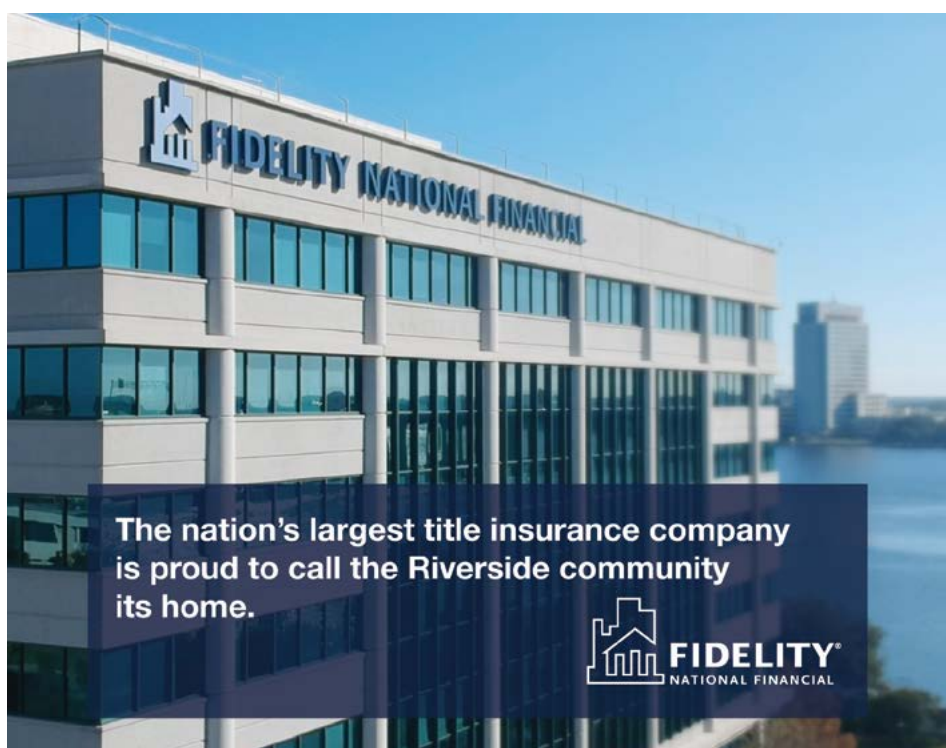
Mukti means "freedom" in Bengali, and the Mukti Freedom Gala is the largest annual fundraiser for Rethreaded. This popular community event raises a significant portion of the nonprofit's annual revenue, helping them provide employment, career development and supportive services for local survivors of human trafficking.

"We are tremendously grateful to everyone who participated in making this year's Mukti Freedom Gala such an impactful event," said Rethreaded's Founder and CEO Kristin Keen. "Thanks to the generosity of our Jacksonville community, volunteers, sponsors, and donors, our Survivor Development Program will help even more survivors of human trafficking to flourish in the year ahead."

Without support like a stable job, 85% of survivors of human trafficking will likely be trafficked again. Rethreaded was founded nearly 13 years ago by Keen and has employed 85 survivors locally, contributed to the support of over 4,000 women globally, and collaborated with over 349 companies.



Shirley Turner



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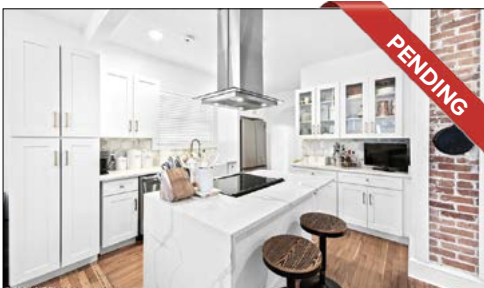
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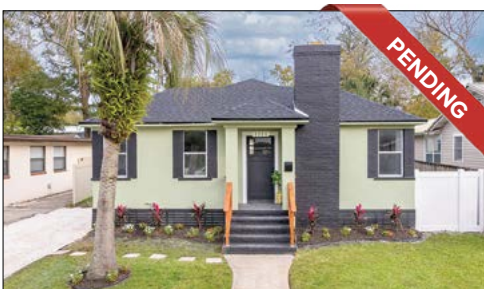
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The Winston Family YMCA welcomed guests, supporters and community leaders to the Jessie Ball duPont Center on March 9 for its annual Giving Tree Gala, remembering the contributions of W.W. "Bill" Gay and celebrating the donors and friends who help create its community impact.

Each year, the Winston Family YMCA and the YMCA of Florida's First Coast honor an individual who exemplifies that mission with the W.W. Bill Gay Community Impact Award. This year's 2024 recipient was Nathaniel "Nat" Glover, former Jacksonville Sheriff and past president of Edward Waters University.

"I would say that Nat Glover has probably been the most impactful citizen on Jacksonville and in Jacksonville in the last 100 years, if not forever," said Steve Pajcic in a video honoring Glover.



Jay Wright with Martha Barrett



RJ Añinon with Hanna Duncan

SYMPHONY BRINGS MUSIC IN VOGUE



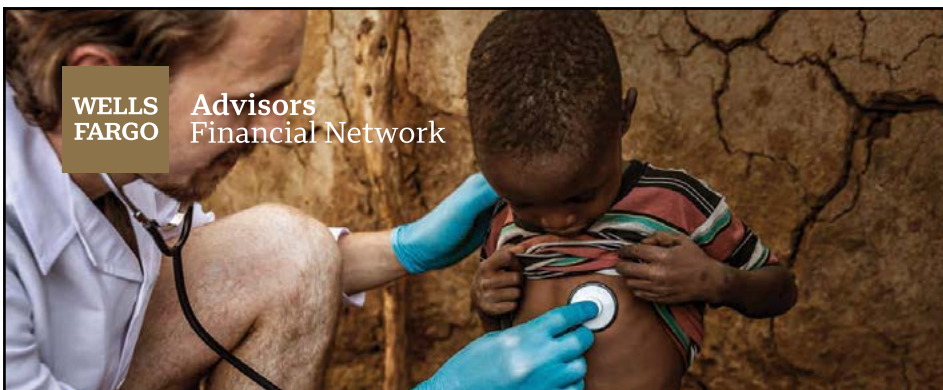
Vickie and Mike Cobb



Justin Stowell and Travis Joyal

Music was the new fashion at the 2024 Jacksonville Symphony Gala, Music in VOGUE, an evening celebrating music education and community engagement, with music by artists who have graced the cover of the iconic VOGUE magazine. The March 2 event kicked off with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner, a live auction and performance, before concluding with a dancing-filled afterparty.

Proceeds from the gala support the Jacksonville Symphony's school outreach, musical education and Jump Start Strings programs, and help bring once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to students to perform in Jacoby Symphony Hall. Tim and Evelyn Woodward served as the evening's honorary gala chairs.



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Jamie Sandifer served as the 2024 auction chairperson and will reprise her role in 2025.

\$2.2M RAISED FOR AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

The Leaders of Impact campaign, chaired by Kyle Dorsey, raised nearly \$100,000 during a 7-week blind competition. The First Coast formally awarded Jarret Dreicer as this year's winner.

The 2024 Heart of the First Coast Heart Ball, made possible by Life is Why sponsor Florida Blue, raised a record-breaking \$2.2 million to fuel the American Heart Association's (AHA) mission advancements across Northeast Florida.

Pat and Inger Geraghty served as the chairpersons for the March 2, 2024, event, alongside the AHA's Executive Leadership Cabinet and Century Club members. The AHA celebrates 100 years of service this year.

The 2025 event will be chaired by Anthony Hucker, CEO of Southeastern Grocers, and Elizabeth Thompson, founder and CEO of Intuitive Quest, LLC.



Retiring Founding CEO Cindy Watson and former Board Chair Tina Wirth share a hug onstage.



Current and former JASMYN staff at the Gayla



Cindy Watson with Krista Girty



Sandy and Bill Bond

GAYLA HONORS GROWTH, FOUNDING CEO

JASMYN marked its 30th anniversary with its Gayla fête March 2 at The Glass Factory. Themed "JASMYN's House" in honor of a time in the past when discretion was vital for LGBTQIA+ youth seeking support, the event featured JASMYN House "rooms," games, music, dancing, food and drink, and celebrated Cindy Watson, founding board member and inaugural CEO who retired in 2023.

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Handmade with Hope

Once Sharon Meehan's children were grown, her sewing equipment began drifting into disuse, and she slowly came to terms with the fact that something had to be done with it.

"You don't sew a whole lot for kids that are college age," she said. "You're finished with the pajamas and the Halloween costumes."

So, she reached out to her friend, Beth Wilson, who is the clothing director at the Downtown Ecumenical Services Council (DESC) and asked if she could make some dresses to donate to the nonprofit organization.

That was almost 10 years ago.

Today, Sewing Hope, the volunteer group Meehan founded to work with DESC, has grown to a group of approximately 12 volunteers who meet at Meehan's house every Tuesday afternoon, transforming it into a hub of measuring, cutting, sewing and ironing activity for DESC.

In addition to the handmade clothing, Meehan

also sets up benches outside her house every week to collect donations, be they shoes, clothing or fabric. Over the years, Sewing Hope has begun receiving fabric donations from businesses; they've even received a pair of sewing machines from a company in Texas.

What began simply as smock dresses for younger girls has also expanded to include skirts, headbands and ensembles, along with canvas bags that DESC's clients use to transport items home from the DESC closet and/or food pantry.



Sewing Hope founder Sharon Meehan with volunteers Betsy Miller, Paula Mathews and Betty Ann Gordon showcasing some of the items they made in just a single afternoon. They've made 450 pieces this year alone.

"We have a lot of clients that come on the bus or walk, or do a combination [of both]," Wilson said. "For the ones that don't come in a car and need to carry home groceries and clothing, [Sewing Hope] provides very sturdy strong canvas bags, which are something that we never had before. That is a wonderful service."

Wilson said DESC has received rave reviews about the items Sewing Hopes donates for their clients.

"Oh my gosh, those are the nicest things," she said. "They're made with love; they're special. [Our clients] are getting something that's brand new, nobody's worn before. It has been handmade, hand-sewn for them."

Sewing Hope has provided

collections for all occasions, seasons and holidays, in a variety of patterns and colors, so there's always a variety to choose from in their inventory.

"We're just so extremely grateful to them for their generosity, their hard work, their loyalty and their will," Wilson said.

Meehan is no stranger to volunteering. As a military wife whose moved multiple times from Navy base to Navy base, she found volunteering to be a way not only to give back but also to make friends and learn more about her community.



Paula Mathews working on a new dress for Downtown Ecumenical Services Council.



Betsy Miller at her sewing machine.



Betty Ann Miller Gordon during Sewing Hope's weekly volunteer sewing session.



Catherine Friedline with Avery Williams and Mercedes McGowan. Ariana Sybert with Sarah Stone

Frank Stella Headlines Project Atrium, Exhibit Opening

Mayoral proclamation included in patron celebration

Supporters, friends and donors of MOCA Jacksonville gathered in the museum's atrium Feb. 29 for the unveiling of the Frank Stella installation, Jacksonville Stacked Stars, as part of MOCA's 100th anniversary celebration.

MOCA's Executive Director Caitlin Doherty and Trustee Emeritus Preston H. Haskell spoke at the reception, along with University of North Florida President Moez Limayem and Mayor Donna Deegan, who presented Doherty and Limayem with a mayoral proclamation.

The exhibit opening drummed up excitement for MOCA's upcoming Centennial Gala April 6, themed "A Walk on the Wild Side" in honor of its current, '70s-reflective Norman E. Fisher Collection.



Isaiah Oliver with Mari Kuraishi



Jackie Cornelius with Ross Singletary, Britt Morgan-Saks and Andrea Barnwell Brownlee



Gabrielle Magid with Rikki and Chip Southworth and Claudia Baker



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A Presidential Look at Latin America and Mexico's Perspective on Hemispheric and Bilateral Relations

BY FRANK M. DENTON, BOARD MEMBER, WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF JACKSONVILLE AND RETIRED EDITOR, FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

Mexico has a unique, and intimate, perspective on the illegal immigration crisis that is roiling American politics, since millions of the immigrants from all over the world pass through that country to reach the U.S. border.

As a former president of Mexico and an expert on globalization, Ernesto Zedillo is expected to offer his own insights into the crisis when he speaks to the World Affairs Council of Jacksonville on April 9.

Zedillo will present on "A Presidential Look at Latin America and Mexico's Perspective on Hemispheric and Bilateral Relations" at 7 p.m. at the UNF Herbert University Center. The public is invited.

Zedillo can see both sides of the border: He is a Yale-trained economist who was president of Mexico from 1994 to 2000 and now is director of the Program for the Study of Globalization and professor of international economics and politics at Yale.

During his term of office, Zedillo is credited with controlling Mexico's foreign debt, reducing rampant inflation, improving public education and literacy and leading a major effort to restore public confidence in the country's government after a history of corruption scandals.

Still, since he left office, Zedillo has been openly critical of Mexico's development, particularly the crime and drug-cartel problems that have plagued the country and complicated the U.S. border crisis and relations with this country.

"Mexico is missing three things to be a fully developed country," Zedillo told the 2018 U.S.-Mexico Border Summit in El Paso. "The first is rule of law. The second is rule of law. And the third is rule of law."

"We have a long-standing problem of weak institutions" in Mexico, Zedillo said. "We have another problem: the pollution organized crime has created in my country."

Drug trafficking, he said, is linked to government policies from the early

20th century that seek punitive instead of social solutions to drug abuse, the El Paso Times reported.

"The policy has failed," Zedillo said.

Mexico's crime problem can be solved in part by having "stronger institutions and stronger human resources."

Zedillo's address in Jacksonville is part of the annual series of Global Issues Evenings sponsored by the World Affairs Council. Previous speakers this year included best-selling author Walter Isaacson on his new biography of Elon Musk, China expert Robert Daly, U.S. Russia Foundation president Matthew Rojansky, former Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren and U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Reuben Brigety.

In addition to the Global Issues Evenings, the World Affairs Council offers a series of Global Business Luncheons at The River Club, Leading EDGE Dialogues for young professionals, and the Great Decisions educational program in 20 high schools across the First Coast. Members can also take advantage of international travel opportunities.

To guarantee seating, general membership for the World Affairs Council is \$140 per year for an individual or \$225 for a couple, with lower rates for students, educators and military. Premier members are also invited to special events, including receptions with speakers.

To learn more about membership and to register for this event, please scan the QR code.



Ernesto Zedillo, President of Mexico (1994-2000)

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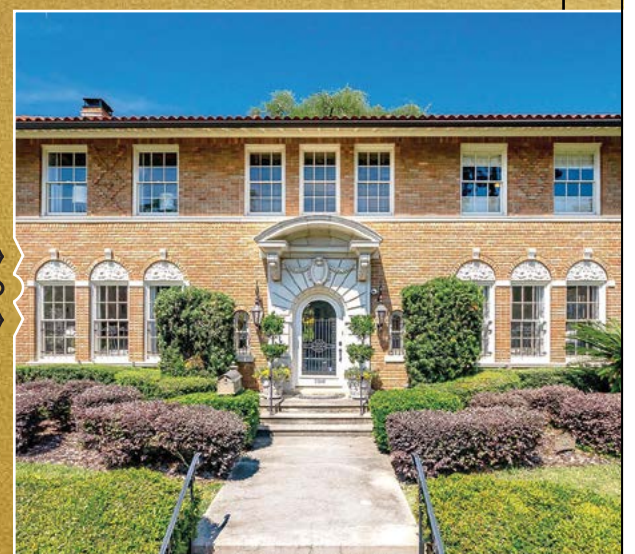
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I love that there are more bridges in our Resident Community than any other place in town. And when I say bridges, I don't mean stupid flyover, or access road, or highway ramp bridges, I'm talking about real, over-the-waterways bridges – the ones that provide connection to places we love and pristine views of our city in all its natural glory.

This is a unique point of gratitude, one not many people in Northeast Florida can claim. I'm bad with numbers, but I can count more than 10 real, actual, over-the-waterways bridges in our neighborhoods, from big ones like the Fuller Warren Bridge and the Henry H. Buckman Bridge to the Ortega Bridge and the stretch of San Jose Boulevard between Baymeadows and

Rubin roads. That's not even counting all the footbridges that provide safe passage over the small creeks and river fingers in our public spaces, like Brown L. Whatley Memorial Park and River Oaks Park in San Marco, and Boone Park in Avondale. Whether it's by foot, automobile or bike, ample bridge access is something for which we should all be grateful in our neighborhoods.

Beyond the obvious reasons – connection and perspective – bridges are wonderful resources, and here's why:

- Bridges provide helpful momentum if you happen to be on the right part of the slope. I learned this about 15 years ago while driving my RPDS carpool on an empty tank of gas one morning. Much to the embarrassment and horror of my passengers, the car

turned off and lost power steering at the highest point of the Fuller Warren Bridge right there in the Park Street exit lane coming from San Marco. They thought I was kidding. I wish I had been. But thanks to the bridge and my car's fortunate placement on its crown, I was able to float effortlessly down the exit ramp and wrench my car to the right and into the storage facility there on the corner. Thank you, bridge!

- Bridges sometimes have cool markets under them. I mean, aren't we fortunate to have the Riverside Arts Market (RAM) under the Fuller Warren in Riverside? You can get all sorts of goodies there – fresh food, fried food, art, music. It's all there. Plus, you can take your boat there to enjoy a Saturday under the bridge. And if memory serves, RAM will one day be connected to nearby Riverside Park with more cool, under-the-bridge, art additions.
- Well, I won't say this too loudly as not to inspire any ideas in the yoots out there, but let me just say that bridges were sources of horseplay back in the day. One of my brothers-in-law can tell you about his legendary Ortega bridge status. I however, will not.
- Bridges mean your friends in Ortega or San Marco or San Jose really are not that far away. You may think, because you have to use the bridge, that getting together is too hard, or too far or wah wah wah whatever. It's not. Bridges actually make it easier to see the people you love. Can you imagine not having so many bridge options? It'd be like living a "Little House on the Prairie" life or in more modern terms, an "Outer Banks" existence where you have to take wagons or john boats to have a mano-a-mano conversation with your buddies. Thanks to bridges, that isn't the case for us in the neighborhood. It takes 15 minutes – tops – to connect to your friends across the river.
- Beautiful, wild animals sometimes live under bridges in our neighborhoods. This fall, many residents who utilize River Oaks Park warned of the gigantic alligator that made its home under the footbridge. His name was Pennywise, for obvious reasons ("It"). People could actually see his beady little eyeballs warning everyone how they were "all the better to eat you with, my dear." Pennywise also may have been seen at a kinda-bridge there at old San Jose Boulevard and Rio Lindo Drive not too long ago. I'm not sure if I'm grateful for these sightings, but I'm definitely thankful no one got hurt or gobbled up by them.
- Bridges are great fishing sites! If you can't get out on a boat, weather the ocean waves or find a charter, you can always find a bridge nearby

that works hook, line and sinker. Personally, I have never caught a fish on a bridge, but I don't fish at all, so what do I know?

- You can work out under some of our bridges. Have you been on the North Bank Riverwalk between the YMCA and the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts? There's a place called Corkscrew Park, and you can get beefy and pumped up there with all the equipment. Plus, whoever mans the office on Sundays plays some seriously zesty beats that make you feel righteous and amped when you pass through.
- You can also walk the bridges, to boot. If you're ready to level-up your walking or running routine, hit the bridges! All of the major downtown bridges – Main Street, Acosta and Fuller Warren – have safe foot paths. The Fuller Warren is the newest, and though loud at the top, it is beautiful and takes you to some nice spots on the Northbank and Southbank riverwalks.
- Bridges make our running events unique. What's the best part of the annual Gate River Run? Dragging yourself up the Hart Bridge, known as the Green Monster, then flying back down the other side. Again, bridges provide momentum – and a sense of major accomplishment!
- I'm going to try to weave this one into a source of gratitude: we are fortunate to have train and draw bridges because they give us time to sit, often for excruciatingly long periods of time, and reflect on the important things in our life. We all need time to practice patience and peace. The train bridge, and the bridges that go up for boat passage, provide us an opportunity to do this – often.

Whether you're clicking your heels, buying fresh produce or going motor-off down the other side, bridges will get you where you want to go and connect you to what's good and healthy in our neighborhoods. Thank goodness we are long on them!

Susanna Barton did not enjoy that time she ran out of gas on the Fuller Warren at all, it's barely even funny. It was actually pretty scary. 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 encourages healthy conversations about aging and preparing for it on www.mygrandplans.com.



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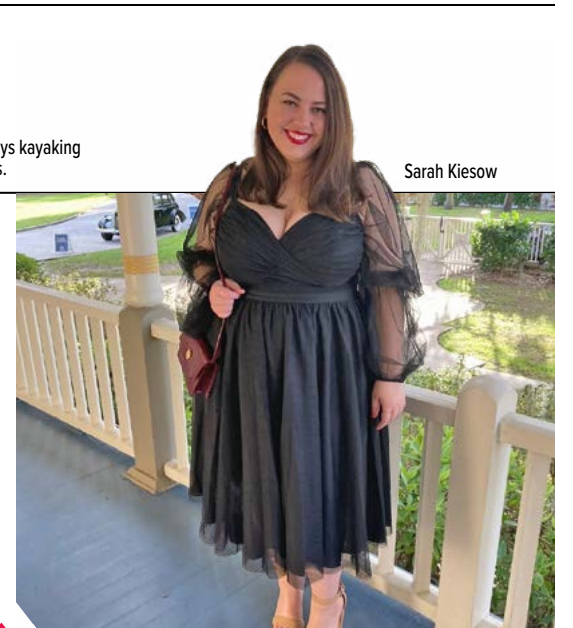
LOCAL FOLKS



Sarah Kiesow with boyfriend Steven Kahn.



Sarah Kiesow enjoys kayaking in Florida's springs.



Sarah Kiesow

SARAH KIESOW

BY JENNIFER JENSEN

Sarah Kiesow had long been flirting with Jacksonville before finally deciding to buy her home in historic Murray Hill in 2019. Her father is from Jacksonville, she has family in the area, and she visited here as a child.

Originally from Tampa Bay, Kiesow triple majored in Chinese, International Affairs and History at Florida State University (FSU) before earning her law degree from FSU's College of Law in 2018. Upon graduation, she knew she wanted to stay in North Florida; her parents had recently retired in Fernandina Beach. She joined the Saalfeld Shad Law Firm two years ago and began carving her way in general liability law, specifically insurance defense for slip-and-fall cases and pharmacy malpractice.

"This would probably be the closest thing to what I wanted to do in law school," she said. "I always enjoyed tort patterns and who's responsible for what."

Kiesow settled in Murray Hill because of its older homes, character and community feel, and has enjoyed watching it grow. She likes to walk to Spruce Jax – the closest spot to her house – and spend time at the "amazing" Casita Yoga Studio.

"It's like a village," she said. "I can go to Community Loaves or the yoga studio, and you see people that you know. I think things are, for the most part, changing for the better. I feel like whenever I go on Edgewood now, I see a new business opening up."

Kiesow finds the area's stray cats entertaining, although she knows others do not. She took such a liking to a particular large, Maine Coon-looking stray that she took her in and named her Ramona.

"She'd been coming up to my house for months. Then, in August 2020, smack dab in the middle of the pandemic, I came home, and she was curled up on my porch during a thunderstorm," said Kiesow. "I was like, 'Well, you're coming inside.'"

The "loud" cat with "a big personality" now lives with Kiesow and her partner, Steven Khan. Kiesow and Khan originally connected on a dating app, though Kiesow said she had recognized him before they matched. Both had gone to FSU for law school and he had been one of her recommended friends on Facebook.

When she first moved to Jacksonville, Kiesow joined the Junior League of Jacksonville.

"I joined the League to meet people because I was new to this area, and I didn't know anyone," she said. "It has been one of the best things that I have done. I wouldn't have nearly the depth of knowledge that I do about Jacksonville and issues in Jacksonville."

She has served as legal counsel for the Junior League for the past two years and was awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award for 2020-2021. Next year, she will assume the role of vice president of community where she will oversee the League's efforts through the Fresh Minds and Kids in the Kitchen programs, as well as advocacy efforts through the Public Affairs Committee.



Sarah Kiesow, second from right, volunteering with the Junior League of Jacksonville.

In addition to the Junior League, Kiesow "loves" to travel solo. She's studied abroad in London and China and sharpened her Chinese while living near Beijing. While she doesn't typically get homesick, traveling abroad does make her grateful for what she has in the U.S.

"What we have, it's so nice, she said. "The United States is a very nice place to live. We don't really have smog in Florida. Going abroad makes you realize what we have in terms of amenities."

She and Kahn, avid kayakers, are planning to hit up as many Florida springs as they can this year. Her favorite is Ichetucknee Springs.

"They're everywhere and sometimes you forget about it living in a coastal area," she said. "They're cool. It's like being in a different world."

Kiesow likes cooking, baking and finding vintage cookbooks for comparison recipes. Kahn is her taste-tester, but Kiesow said he's too nice and won't critique her dishes. Her current favorite is an old southern cookbook.

"It reminds me of my Aunt Connie's food and all the stuff she would make," she said. "It was horrible for you, but wonderful."



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Teresa Cook

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS

It's spring! The world is bursting with azaleas, camellias, dogwoods and flowers of every kind, enhancing the landscape with colors highlighted by a cerulean blue sky. A drive or stroll through local neighborhoods is a journey into a beautiful canvas worthy of Monet's garden. Vincent van Gogh once said, "I have nature and art and poetry and if that is not enough. What is?"

Jacksonville artists, buzzing like bees after nectar, have embraced the season with enthusiasm, producing work in multiple genres and exhibiting in various venues all over town.

- Ortega resident Dawn Montgomery took first place in the Jacksonville



Dawn Montgomery



Susan D. Brandenburg

Artists' Guild juried show at North Point Dental with her painting "Fences Make Good Neighbors." The exhibit is up through June 23.

- Lisa Lofton's painting of VyStar Tower, commissioned by the Jacksonville Children's Chorus as a surprise in appreciation for VyStar Credit Union's continued support of the Chorus, was revealed during March's Art Walk. Check it out during April's Art Walk, along with other paintings, near the SING sculpture at 62 N. Main St.
 - The First Coast Plein Air Painters are flitting around like butterflies capturing nature on their canvases. Check them out on Facebook for more info.
- Hope McGrath's "Legacy Interrupted" exhibit at the Yellow House on King Street was enhanced by her collaboration with Barbara Colaciello of Babs Lab for storytelling with the theme "Tethered."
- A crowd of art lovers, old friends, neighbors and former students buzzed into John Bunker's happy and colorful



Darren Daily, Jacksonville Children's Chorus president and artistic director, with Lisa Lofton

pop-up exhibit at the new Flip Flops Shops in 5 Points – a fun affair with a casual, celebratory vibe. How could it be anything but joyful with owner Troy Winn and Andrew Paul Williams in the mix?

- Teresa Cook was on hand at the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens to discuss her show "Women's Rights Movement," which is up through June 19. Put on your traveling pants to visit her Aug. 5 at the Turner Center for the Arts in Valdosta, Georgia, from 7-9 p.m.
- The Resident News writer extraordinaire, Susan D. Brandenburg – who is also teacher, publisher, biographer, board member of the Stetson Kennedy Foundation, the National League of American Pen Women and author of 80 books – was selected as one of eight "Women with Heart" honorees by Volunteers in Medicine.

"I am honored to be chosen for this award," said Brandenburg. "It is one more blessing resulting from using my God-given gift of words, which has taken me into the lives of remarkable people and given me a full and rewarding life."

- "Justice," Women Writing for A Change's exhibit at FSCJ South Gallery, showcased many noted local artists, including Annelies Dykgraaf, and invited writers to a reception and community read-aloud.



Troy Winn with John Bunker



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The Beat Goes On:

April 6 – Walk on the Wild Side, MOCA's 100th Anniversary Centennial Gala; moca-jacksonville.unf.edu/gala.

April 7 – Reception and opening of "Our Home" exhibit with Jacksonville Artists' Guild featured artists Leila Griffith, Peggy Harrell, Jennings and Lisa Lofton; Happy Medium Books Café, 2724 Park St., 2-4 p.m.

April 11 – Stellers Gallery is back in Avondale with featured artists from throughout the Southeast. St. Johns Avenue; 5-8 p.m.

April 12 – Riverside Presbyterian Day School's 75th Anniversary Gala at the Glass Factory. Visit rpsds.com.

April 13-14 – 50th anniversary of the Riverside Avondale Preservation Society's Home Tour. Visit the Art House at 1504 Barrs St. to see great art, chat with artists and see woodturning demos by Kat McCall and Don Penny. Riversideavondale.org/events.

April 19 – A Vision for Art event at Episcopal School of Jacksonville St. Mark's Campus. 7-10 p.m. Visit avisionforart.com for info and tickets.

Through May 10 – "In the Style Of..." exhibit up at TAC Gallery, 320 E. Adams St.

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*.



Families enjoy the museum gardens during Summer at the Cummer.



Barbara English

English Sponsors Summer at the Cummer, Free Fourth Fridays

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens announced the continuation of its popular Free Fourth Fridays and Summer at the Cummer programs, thanks to a generous sponsorship from Jacksonville businesswoman Barbara English. English's donation will provide for free public admission to the Cummer every fourth Friday of each month from 4-9 p.m. as well as every Friday from July 19 through August 9, as part of the museum's Summer at the Cummer program.

"The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is a tremendous gift to this city and Free Fourth Friday has become a longstanding tradition," English said. "I am so pleased to help ensure that all of Jacksonville experiences all that the Cummer Museum offers."

After a long and successful career with the Department

of Defense in Washington, D.C., English retired, moved to Jacksonville's San Marco neighborhood and started her own company, English-EI Enterprises, which she now leads as CEO.

She said she fell in love with the Cummer Museum about three years ago when she came to see the world-renowned exhibition "Zanele Muholi: Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness." Her favorite exhibitions are those that give unique perspectives on the Black experience.

Free Fourth Fridays and Summer at the Cummer Fridays include live music and the opportunity to purchase food and beverages to enjoy in the garden. During Summer Fridays, the museum also presents dynamic art experiences, outdoor games and activities for all ages. These programs have provided free admission to more than 100,000 visitors since 2019.

Cross-Stitch Artist Exhibits at Grace Gallery

Cross-stitch artist Terrie Lee has been selected for her first public exhibition at Grace Gallery, located at Riverside Park United Methodist Church, 819 Park St. The collection features detailed depictions of gardens and architectural buildings, with such intricate needlework that the stitches resemble painting strokes.

Ron Richardson is chairman of the committee that selects artists to exhibit at the Grace Gallery. He said Lee's talent provided an opportunity to present a unique and different type of art to the community.

In addition to cross-stitch, Lee also donates her time and talents as a volunteer quilter for Margaret's Memories, a nonprofit that provides bereavement memory boxes to parents who have lost a baby before, during or after birth.

Grace Gallery is interested in supporting and exhibiting support emerging and amateur artists of all ages, media types and styles. Potential artists should email Ronald.j.richardson@gmail.com for an exhibition interview.



Terrie Lee, cross-stitch artist, with her artwork.

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ANIMAL HOUSE

Michael Bricker: Animal Care & Protective Services' New Top Dog

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA

Florida newcomer Michael “Mike” Bricker’s optimism and positivity was as welcome as his arrival in September 2023 when he took over as the new chief at Duval County Animal Care & Protective Services (ACPS).

When Bricker first arrived, he noted the shelter’s lobby donation bins were often empty. While they are now overflowing with much-needed pet supplies, he still recognizes all of the work still to be done, including a need for transparency inside and outside of the shelter.

In other large cities, the best results have been achieved when the municipal shelter communicates and works cooperatively with its community and interested groups. Bricker said that citizens who feel informed will respond when their help is needed. He called Jacksonville’s caring, supportive animal community, city government, staff, volunteers and fosters the “invaluable” foundation upon which everything else must build. He said they are the resources ACPS needs to help as many homeless dogs and cats as possible.

With that in mind, a fresh start for ACPS is underway. Bricker is deploying new ideas to re-energize those working behind the scenes and encourage citizens to “get every dog and cat possible out of cages and into someone’s home.” His strategies have proven successful at previous shelters to increase live release rates and lower euthanasia statistics.

“When I arrived in Jacksonville and met people, I was surprised about one misconception. There is confusion about who ACPS is,” he said. “When I introduced myself, frequently someone would say, ‘I volunteered there. You’re on Beach Boulevard, right?’”

Bricker said his most important job has been implementing effective, consistent ways to distinguish ACPS and its downtown location from the Jacksonville Humane Society on Beach Boulevard. From a visual standpoint, ACPS can be identified by its use of bright red, from its volunteer and event t-shirts to its dog bandanas imprinted with “I am available for adoption.”

Local animal rescuers and advocates

Mike Bricker holding a kitten, Skittles, at the ACPS facility.



ACPS Chief Mike Bricker with Sleepy, who was adopted in 2023.

know how important it is that the community understands the differences between the local shelters. ACPS does euthanize when necessary, while the Jacksonville Humane Society is a no-kill shelter. Therefore, adoption and fostering are crucial at ACPS, which remains overcrowded and far above its capacity for dogs and cats.

The shelter has 264 kennels and more than 300 dogs. Additionally, every day, the shelter receives approximately 30 or more dogs brought for intake as lost, stray,

owner surrenders or abuse confiscations. Two dogs were already housed in single-dog kennels before its recent emergency confiscation of 56 abused dogs and puppies.

ACPS is located at 2020 Forest St., on the corner of Margaret Street in the Brooklyn neighborhood. The shelter has ample free parking and a large public reception area with spacious visitation rooms for meeting adoptable animals.

“We want the community to know that ACPS is the city’s downtown shelter

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35



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on the Forest Street exit off of I-95. Our website provides information, needs and ways to help," Bricker said.

Bricker hopes that better community awareness and outreach will help attract more adopters, fosters and volunteers, who are always needed. Volunteers can walk dogs, play with cats, or work on events, marketing or social media efforts, even if only for a few hours. While there are age restrictions for volunteers, free training and dog handling classes are provided, including ongoing support. ACPS will be holding special events during Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 21-27; details will be posted on the ACPS Facebook page.

Volunteers and fosters say Chief Bricker has brought fresh energy and a clear mission to make ACPS the best animal shelter it can be. His goal of high animal-save rates and obvious concern for people and shelter animals reminded volunteers of why they came to help ACPS in the first place.

"I started volunteering with the Kitten Army six years ago to bottle-feed orphan kittens during the spring kitten season,"

Pamela Love said. "Michael wants to bring everyone together. He wants people to feel like this is 'our shelter,' and we are truly welcome at ACPS."

While he readily acknowledges it will take time to achieve results, Bricker focuses on solutions. He has already taken decisive moves to implement improvements: the Duval Dog Adoption Squad visiting 8-10 events every weekend; an increased frequency at PetSmart and Subaru dealership pet showcases; Space Force volunteers holding space for high-priority fosters; and animal control officers providing more free, donated supplies to citizens.

Anyone wishing to get involved through adoption, donation, fostering or volunteering can visit the ACPS Facebook community page or jacksonville.gov/departments/neighborhoods/animal-care, call (904) 630-2489 or email acpsfosters@coj.net.

The shelter is closed on Mondays. ACPS provides all veterinary care for foster pets free of charge at the shelter by appointment.

ACPS Wish List

These supplies can be ordered online for delivery to ACPS or dropped off during shelter hours.

Dogs:

- Dry dog food
- Velveeta-style soft cheese (for giving medications)
- Spray cheese
- Soft or hard dog treats
- Adaptil spray/calming spray
- Adaptil/Sentry calming collars
- Large to extra-large Kong toys
- Medium to extra-large

- Nylabones
- Durable toys
- Edible chews: pork chops, collage chews, bully sticks (Please no rawhide as it is a choking hazard.)
- Medium and large quick-release collars
- Leashes
- Easy-walk harnesses
- Low-sodium meat broth

Cats:

- Dry cat food
- Cat treats
- Feliway cat calming spray
- Calming collars
- Catnip



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Colonial Dames Celebrate Continued Operation of Centuries-Old Ximenez-Fatio House

BY KAREN RIELEY

When the Florida Society of the Colonial Dames of America gathers May 1 for its annual fundraiser, it will celebrate 85 years of owning and managing the 226-year-old Ximenez-Fatio House Museum in St. Augustine. The house, one of the few coquina-and-tabby houses remaining in St. Augustine, is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Florida Heritage Landmark.

The historic Ximenez-Fatio house, built in 1798, at 20 Aviles St., sits on America's first platted thoroughfare, which was completed in 1572 under the auspices of King Philip II of Spain and in use 35 years before the Jamestown colony was founded in Virginia.

The Ximenez-Fatio House has a unique history of being mostly owned and managed by women. Margaret Cook purchased the house in 1830. Prior to that, its original owner, Don Andrés Ximenez, built the house in 1798 and lived in it until he died in 1806. From then until 1830, the house was rented to various tenants.

Cook converted the home into a boarding house and hired Eliza Whitehurst to manage it. In 1838, Whitehurst died, and Sarah Petty Dunn Anderson purchased the boarding house. She and her family lived in the house for more than 15 years and, when space was available, rented rooms to visitors.

In 1851, Louisa Fatio became the manager of the house, and in 1855, Anderson sold the property to Fatio, who is remembered for having kept the house afloat during times of economic uncertainty, secession from the Union, reoccupation by Union troops and Reconstruction.

After Fatio's death in 1875, the house remained in her family until 1939. The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Florida purchased it and began the decades long process of meticulously restoring and furnishing the home to become an historic house museum. While, historically, women have been



The "Dressing Louisa" exhibit, on display now through May 8, features 100 years of clothing fashion that Louisa Fatio would have worn.

the silent partners of the men who built communities, they have been at the forefront as owners, entrepreneurs and managers of the Ximenez-Fatio House.

The house has more than 3,000 artifacts, and all of the furniture is authentic, including three pieces that were actually owned by people who lived in the house. Each guest bedroom is decorated in a different fashion to celebrate the different types of people who stayed there, for example, an ailing woman, an author or a sea merchant.

"Every room has a story," said Payson Tilden, Ximenez-Fatio House executive director.

Visitors can view many interesting artifacts. Archaeologically, the house sits on one of the most frequently dug sites in St. Augustine. During a dig in 2002, a rare cross from Caravaca, Spain, was discovered and is on display for guests to view in the museum's Visitor Center.

"The Caravaca Cross was commissioned by the Spanish church in the early 1600s as a thanksgiving for the end of the Black Plague," Tilden said.

Two large, framed pieces of Punjab material from East India are hung in the dining room. Children used to gently pull the material back and forth to keep flies and other insects away from the food during meals.



Children enjoy the scavenger hunt at the Ximenez-Fatio House.



The 226-year-old Ximenez-Fatio House Museum is located at the corner of Aviles and Cadiz streets in St. Augustine.

The cheval mirror still seen today at the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum in the "owner's bedroom" is a piece originally owned by Anderson. Participants in the museum's monthly "A Night Among Ghosts" event are invited to stand in front of the mirror to see if one of the house's ghosts will appear.

The museum hosts a number of other events – in addition to regular viewing hours – such as student field trips and tours, scavenger hunts, holiday tours, "Everyday Life" audio tours and the "I Lived Here as Well" tour of those who lived and served in the house but were often unseen. It has an archeological table with screens and shovels for digging and a colonial garden that includes a monarch preserve. Every first Friday of the month, the museum hosts an artisan nights market in the house's courtyard.

“Every room has a story.”

– Payson Tilden
Ximenez-Fatio House Executive Director

The Colonial Dames will host "Belles, Beaux and BBQ" May 1 at Timuquana Country Club to raise funds to support the Ximenez-Fatio House. All Colonial Dames in Florida are invited to attend with their guests.

"The funds will help with the costs of restoring the pianoforte and L'Engle family portrait, as well as other projects in the house," said Ellen Stark, co-chairman of the fundraiser, who serves on the board of managers with co-chair and society historian Allison Crisp. Crisp is a fifth-generation native of Jacksonville who grew up in Ortega.

To learn more about the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum and various options for visiting or supporting the continued operation of the house, visit ximenezfatiohouse.org or call (904) 829-3575.

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THE WAY WE WERE



John Curington

Former San Marco Re-developer Finds New Passions in Croquet, Founding of Ponte Vedra Croquet Club

The side view of San Marco Theatre and the San Marco Square clock.



John Curington in front of the San Marco Theatre, circa August 1981.

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA

John Curington is a tall, athletic Southern gentleman whose intellect and CEO energy make it easy to imagine the drive he applied to his goals – first in San Marco, then in Ponte Vedra. From 1973 to 1993, his quiet intensity centered on investing and re-developing San Marco real estate with his business partner Keith Kimball, saving an iconic boulevard district. Since then, he has focused on the Ponte Vedra Croquet Club, which he founded in 2015, a world-class venue for the sport and Jacksonville.

Chapter 1: The Savior of San Marco

Curington was born in Riverside in 1949 but grew up in Neptune Beach. He attended St. Paul's Catholic School, then Bishop Kenny before graduating from the former Eckerd College with a business degree in 1971. He worked for Prudential Insurance Company's real estate department for three years. Then, after a year with a Jacksonville builder, he obtained his real estate broker's license.

Curington had moved to San Marco's River Road in 1973 because he liked the neighborhood and its proximity to his job at Prudential. He laughs now, recalling that he was unemployed after going into real estate until he discovered the immense satisfaction and pure enjoyment of investing, renovating and developing property.

It sounds almost accidental how he became a property owner, multi-business owner and single-minded community advocate for the next 20 years in San Marco. In 1979, Curington and Kimball bought most of the San Marco Boulevard buildings, including the Theatre and centerpiece St. Marks Building (a.k.a. the San Marco). The two-story Mediterranean Revival structure, designed by famed architects Marsh & Saxelby, was the boulevard's first commercial building. Its most famous tenant was the rowdy Town Pump Tavern (1933-1983).

The San Marco Theatre they bought from attorney Eli Fink was derelict; duct tape held the carpets together. The 1938 Art Deco single-screen movie theatre designed by nationally known architect Roy Benjamin was a marvel when it opened in 1938. Still, by 1979, it was a financially risky dinosaur in an era of multi-screens. Its location and potential, however, were five-star.

After a costly, six-month total renovation, Curington and R. Ward Lariscy – another longtime resident, merchant and San Marco advocate – resurrected the theatre's interior design. Other improvements included innovative amenities: at-seat tables, food, beer and wine. The transformation elevated the experience for movie-goers when the theatre re-opened on August 14, 1981.

"The buildings we bought were badly run-down. The theatre was terrible. Besides no maintenance, the Rocky Horror Picture Show fans had destroyed everything and damaged the screen," Curington said.

During the 1970s and early '80s, San Marco's challenges made news beyond the boulevard. Its regional reputation suffered from news reports that sometimes focused on the problems. Many Jacksonville residents thought San Marco's only shops were Pic N' Save and Peterson's Five & Dime discount stores.

"It was a worn-out strip center, not an inviting place where anyone wanted to go. Everywhere you looked, it appeared neglected," Curington said.

Commercial rent in San Marco in the 1970s averaged \$2 to \$5 per square foot, lower than elsewhere, Curington said, but affordability was irrelevant. There were few reasons to visit the area. Shops struggled as the storefronts and surroundings declined. Urban sprawl contributed, offering shoppers more options at Regency Square Mall (1967) and Orange Park Mall (1975).

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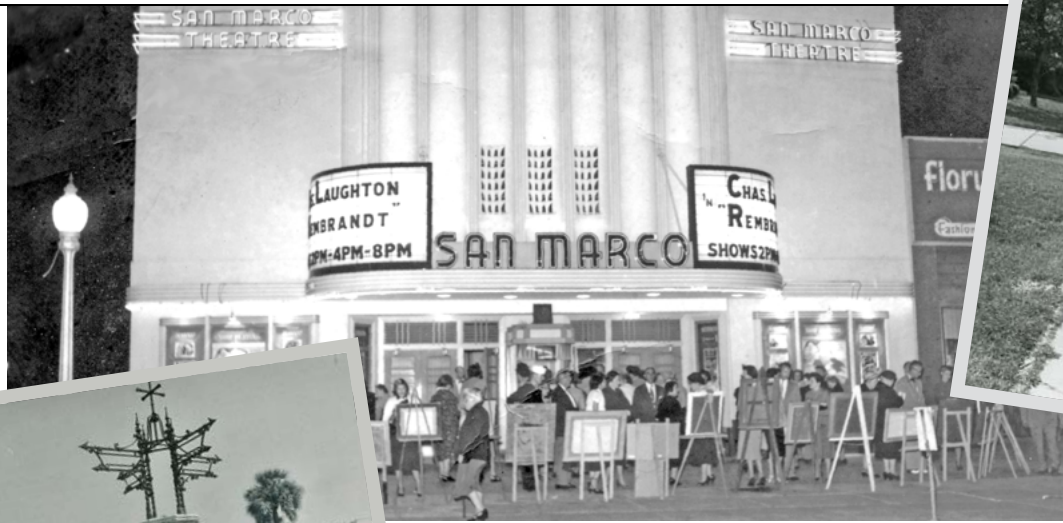
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John Curington and Helen Covington with the Ponte Vedra Croquet Club Flag



A historic photo of the San Marco Theatre lit at night.



San Marco Merchants Association member John Curington and San Marco Preservation Society Vice President Yvonne Corey inspecting broken sidewalks, May 1989.

San Marco's prime location at the juncture where Atlantic and San Marco Boulevards meet Hendricks Avenue, and the history and architectural importance of the area demanded better, Curington believed. He thought the boulevard's atmosphere should match the beauty of its neighborhood. He was convinced that San Marco could rival any other upscale retail center given the right opportunity.

"I wanted to improve San Marco by renovating one building at a time, including sidewalks and landscaping. There was so much to do," he said. "People wanted improvements; many merchants and residents helped."

Curington began renovating the buildings, working side-by-side with tenants who received a lease discount for their labor. His businesses opened in the St. Mark's building in 1984: Café on the Square downstairs and St. Mark's Restaurant above.

There were hiccups along the way, but the forward momentum continued. They sold the theatre after a year, and St. Mark's fine dining – despite earning rave reviews – proved unprofitable and closed. The Café, however, became San Marco's robust local hotspot. Curington sold it to Wayne Davis in 1992.

New businesses leased Curington's other freshly renovated spaces, including the flagship Peterbrooke Chocolatier. Founder Phyllis Lockwood Geiger was urged to open in Ponte Vedra and admits she knew nothing about San Marco.

"When I saw that quaint little village and John described its history, I loved everything about it. I bought my home nearby and opened my first shop in a 700-square-foot space, which I leased from him in September 1983. We were both there every day, renovating, covered in dust and dirt, working simultaneously. That's John, totally hands-on, doing whatever needs to be done," Geiger said. She also owned Café Carmon, another now-closed San Marco favorite.

Curington nurtured and valued that small-town atmosphere. He wanted residents to feel comfortable walking from their homes up to the square for dinner or shopping, with ample opportunities to mingle. He knew that various unique boutiques, quality services and excellent restaurants, all within a well-defined, appealing area, would draw people to San Marco.

While Curington is deeply respected, remembered with thanks and credited for many things he did in San Marco, it was his legal action stopping a 1985 public works project that may be most important. Public reaction was swift when the city announced plans to excavate the San Marco Square area and streets for a reconstruction and drainage improvement project. It was expected to last up to 18 months and would overlap the entire holiday season.

Merchants and residents were blindsided and concerned about the logistics of such a plan in an already tightly spaced historic area if the main thoroughfares were blocked and traffic re-routed. A year and a half of noise from heavy construction equipment and mountains of dirt and concrete in a retail area would compound the misery. Equally damaging was the proposed elimination of 35% of parking spaces when parking was already at a premium. Merchants protested and threatened legal action to no avail.

Curington filed a legal injunction against the city that stopped the project and forced a complete re-evaluation. Merchants credit him for saving them from what could have been a catastrophic loss of business for months during a successful redevelopment renaissance. That construction project would have also ruined the crucial holiday retail sales season in San Marco, a time of highest annual sales revenue for many businesses.

Today's thriving San Marco Square and environs owe much to those merchants and longtime residents who persevered during the challenging years. Curington commends the San Marco Preservation Society, San Marco Merchants Association members, Keith Kimball, the late Jim Rink, Lee Mercier, Zimmerman Boulos, and many other community and city supporters. Their dedication and critical improvements during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s paved the way and continue to champion San Marco.

Chapter 2: The Champion of Club Croquet

During his San Marco years, Curington usually said he had no hobbies other than his businesses; once, he mentioned sailing. Therefore, it is fascinating to learn that he had discovered the sport of club croquet and began lessons in 1989 at the age of 40. The man who never played organized sports, other than swimming in high school, said there was "no accounting for my fascination with and enjoyment of croquet."



San Marco's original concrete fountain topped with an ironwork motif.



San Marco Boulevard storefronts



The Town Pump



John Curington amid renovations.

Curington had played the typical backyard recreational croquet games Americans recall. But as an adult, three fortunate events led him to discover the sport of croquet. He saw a cast iron croquet wicket on the cover of Harper's Magazine and wondered why a kids' game was featured on a national magazine cover, sparking his interest.

Then, while visiting his sister in New York, he decided to find the U.S. Croquet Association's New York City headquarters. It was located inside founder Jack Osborn's advertising agency in a tiny office at that time. Osborn wanted to promote the sport and encourage new clubs in the U.S. He later sent Curington a letter inviting him to visit the West Palm Beach U.S. Croquet Association.

"Osborn invited me to the U.S. Croquet Association in West Palm Beach to watch 'real' croquet, and I went. I saw Nigel Aspinall play, one of the most successful croquet champions of the 1970s-80s. I didn't know how to play croquet then, but I began lessons," Curington said.

He began playing the sport of croquet as often as he could and wherever he could find a court. When Chester Stokes developed Deercreek, he included croquet courts, and Curington played there. His natural talent led to a passion for the game, where he worked his way to playing at the top level and won some tournaments. Because of his intellectual curiosity and focus on excellence, Curington studied all aspects of the game, becoming an in-demand croquet court consultant and designer.

In 2000, he moved to West Palm Beach for a year and a half when he was hired to apply his expertise to the planning, design and construction of the National Croquet Center. He was elected and served as the Croquet Foundation of America president from 2005-07. His achievements and definitive contributions to the sport led to his induction into the 2006 Croquet Hall of Fame.

Since moving to Ponte Vedra Beach in 1993, he repeatedly tried working with St. Johns County to fund a croquet facility through a public/private partnership. Those attempts all failed. He also approached private clubs without success, except for the Florida Yacht Club (FYC). There, in 2015, Curington designed and built two regulation-size waterfront croquet courts and began teaching lessons to residents like Avondale's Helen Covington.

Covington came from an athletic family and played tennis for thirty years at FYC before developing knee problems. The low-impact, non-twisting exercise of croquet drew her to the sport. She was in the original group of FYC members who started croquet lessons with John in 2015 and played regularly.

"John offered lessons, and designed and built those wonderful yacht club croquet courts. About twenty of us took lessons, played often, and we just kept getting better together. It's a very social sport where you make friends easily. We also met and played with people from other clubs during interclub play when we formed our league, Florida Yacht Club Croquet," Covington said.

Covington praised Curington as an ambassador of the sport and for his promotion of croquet in Jacksonville. She described Curington as a remarkable person and excellent teacher, who could teach anyone to play and love the sport. In fact, she stands as a shining example of it. Despite starting the game at age 60, she rose through the game, becoming the Female Golf Croquet Grand Prix Winner of the Year, ranking as the No. 1 woman golf croquet player in the U.S. and playing in the Women's World Golf Croquet Championship and the 2024 U.S. Women's Open Championship Semi-Finals.

When his attempts at a public/private partnership had failed, Curington finally had to proceed privately or give up his dream of a permanent club croquet facility. Buying land was the next obstacle because Ponte Vedra was already nearly 100% built out. Although it took Curington 20 years of searching for the perfect property, he found the ideal four acres just a mile from the ocean. There, he designed, built and founded the world-class Ponte Vedra Croquet Club (PVCC). PVCC is considered state-of-the-art within the sport and by professionals.

The PVCC club is a gem of a property, now home to seven impressive croquet courts, described as tennis-court-sized lawns, perfectly flat with a putting green surface. The South Lawn has four three-quarter-sized courts, and the North Lawn has three full-size courts.

The Players' Pavilion has 3,000 square feet of open air, a lounge and facilities. An outdoor deck overlooks the lawns, moss-draped oaks and picnic area. The club property is available after-hours as an event venue.

PVCC is a membership club with annual dues. It is open daily except Mondays, with free introductory sessions, beginner to advanced lessons, recreational and inter-club play, events and tournaments. PVCC is a member club of The United States Croquet Association and participates in the First Coast Croquet League interclub play.

Sensei Dedicated to Shaping Real Confidence

Colby Nelson is a 12-year, seasoned karate expert whose journey into martial arts began with his own personal story of defeat and triumph. During his sixth grade year at Arlington Middle School, Nelson struggled with being bullied before discovering a karate dojo just down the road from the school. He started competing in 2014, winning or placing in seven major tournaments along with numerous local and regional events. Now, this black belt international champion is returning his lessons to the community to offer every child and adult a sense of self-confidence and achievement that translates into all aspects of life.

Nelson opened Kolby's Karate Club in 2018, which currently meets at Unity Church at 634 Lomax St. in Riverside. He has shaped beginners through expert levels, including winners and finalists at the U.S. Open World Karate Championships in Orlando, Florida. While many karate schools might say they teach confidence, Sensei Colby emphasizes the difference between self-confidence and self-esteem in his dojo, understanding that there's more than just moves at the heart of karate.

"Too often we hear about the young people who are bullied and how bad they feel about themselves, and the negative stuff it could drive them toward," said Nelson. "I think it's important that we make people feel like they can be successful at something. I want them to come to the dojo and say, 'This is my area, this is my niche,' and then they can grow from there."

Kolby's Karate Club teaches what is called American Freestyle Karate, an eclectic mix of martial arts that blends traditional karate and Chinese Kenpo with elements of boxing, Wing Chun kung fu and jiu jitsu.

"If it works, we use it," said Nelson.

In addition to the customary weekly karate classes, Kolby's Karate Club offers self-defense seminars for women, "schoolyard" self-defense classes for kids to learn

how to effectively and ethically defend themselves against a school bully, as well as unique anti-abduction classes to teach viable techniques if a stranger is trying to grab a child walking alone. They serve children as young as 5 years old through teenagers and adults.

Nelson explained that people are interested in learning to defend themselves in a practical, simple way, which is why he makes sure his students understand why they're doing what they do.

"Each time somebody comes into class, they leave having felt like they've accomplished something," he said. "Unlike team sports, gymnastics or yoga, we can give your kids the ability to not only protect themselves but protect the life of another kid. We can give them real confidence."

But he assured that most people will never need to utilize their karate skills in that manner, being that those who start to train and get proficient in the arts "won't even walk like someone who's a target." Giving rise to that better sense of self is core to the principles at Kolby's Karate Club.

"You're going to feel better about yourself; you're going to notice you're stronger, you're in better shape. You're going to hang your head a lot higher when you're out there. You're going to speak a lot more clearly and a lot louder. That's something that I think everyone would agree is priceless and worth an hour out of your week," said Nelson.

Nelson's goal is to grow awareness in the area and increase his number of students in order to be able to open up a physical storefront for the karate school, which he said would be the only one in all of Riverside and Murray Hill.

"The more people we help, the greater we can grow and hopefully we can accomplish that goal of getting a storefront open for everybody in the community," he said.

To start gaining confidence and to schedule a free trial class, call Kolby's Karate Club at (904) 452-3194, or schedule online at kolbyskarateclub.com.



Two Kolby's Karate Club students demonstrate a side kick.



Sensei Colby Nelson in 2018 in his last tournament as a brown belt, the Pan-American Internationals in Miami, holding his brown belt mens fighting championship trophy and second-place trophy in the brown belt point fighting division.

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Liam Austin, who was born with spina bifida, spent four years working with Developmental Learning Center, left, to learn to walk. Today, right, he walks independently using only leg braces.

All Things Are Possible

Nonprofit, community bring awareness to developmental disabilities

George Liam Kohl Austin is an active, vivacious youngster who loves Rubik's cubes, collecting Pokémon cards, ziplining, basketball, hockey, golfing and running in the Junior Gate River Run.

Austin also has spina bifida. When he was in utero, four out of five specialists advised Austin's mother to end her pregnancy.

Instead, his mother chose to repair the open spinal cord in utero, which would stop further nerve damage and give Austin a chance to walk one day. At 18 months old, she brought him to Developmental Learning Center (DLC) in Jacksonville.

Today, thanks to the determination of Austin and his family, and four years of dedicated work at DLC, Austin walks independently with just leg braces and is on his own journey to becoming a surgeon. He feels sorry for people who look down on him for his disabilities and has but one message for those who hear his story:

"Never let your disability stop you from doing what you want to do."

DLC, which provides education, care and therapies to children of all abilities, celebrated successes like Austin's, and others, during March's Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. It launched a month-long, grassroots campaign

throughout Jacksonville, filling the community with awareness, special needs resources and opportunities, and DLC's signature orange T-shirts. Orange is the color of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

The organization recognized days of observance like the March 13 Good Samaritan Day, where it recognized the unselfish actions of those who provide help; March 26 Epilepsy Awareness Day, where it showcased the successes of a young man born with a seizure disorder; and March 23 National Puppy Day, in which it recognized the power of service dogs in assisting children and youth with developmental disabilities. It collaborated with local partners and celebrities to spread the word about the DLC programs available to the community.

"The Nonprofit Center believes in the good that DLC is doing to serve all children of all abilities so that families have the opportunity to reach their maximum potential. By providing support to these families, DLC is helping create a more vibrant and inclusive community to live in. I'm proud to support DLC and the work they are doing to raise awareness for Development Disability Awareness Month," said Dawn Lockhart, CEO, Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida.



Developmental Learning Center honored the importance of service dogs during its Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month campaign.

Kenneth Darity, the chief administration officer at Kids Hope Alliance, echoed the praise for the faith-based inclusion nonprofit.

"DLC has been providing invaluable support for children and families in Duval County for many years. The dedicated team at DLC provides hope and resources to our most vulnerable population. It is an honor to celebrate the great work of DLC," he said.



Dawn Lockhart



Kenneth Darity

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Aariz Zuberi, Charlie Russell, Adi Yadav, Aiden Pereira and General Grissom sported Shakespeare-inspired suitings for Bolles' annual eighth grade event.

Shakespeare is "To Be" at Bolles

Eighth grade students on the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus donned their best period costumes on March 7 for Shakespeare Day, an annual rite of passage filled with on-stage prose and friendly competitions between bitter rivals House Capulet and House Montague.



Morgan Fink, Lilybeth Posick and Zara West adorned maidenly attire for Shakespeare Day.

English teachers Deborah Carney, Tim Creter and Morgan Teichert organized the event, which, in addition to the themed competitions, included film adaptations, a trivia game show and theatrical performances of scenes from Shakespearean classics like "Romeo and Juliet" and "Macbeth."

"It was a phenomenal afternoon for our eighth graders," said Bolles Middle School Head Josh Bauman. "I know they will remember Shakespeare Day for many years to come."

RESIDENTS Junior



Ryan, Kate, Dean, Rory and Devon stand in front of the remembrance image of their daughter and sibling, Reese Avery Eberling (12.11.18-5.12.20).



Emily Webb, Finley's mom, with Sawyer Webb.



Finley's grandparents, Gary and Barbara Johnson, with Anne and Gary Emig, who volunteer and fundraise for SUDC.



Heidi Loughman, Alison Loughman and Maddie Webb tie their remembrance ribbons on Finley's tree in Boone Park.



Friends, classmates and family members remembered Finley by participating in this third annual fundraising event.

Remembering Finley

Webb Family holds third annual Finley's Fast Feet Walk/Run

Friends, family members and the community gathered at the Webb family home to kick off the third annual Finley's Fast Feet Walk/Run on Saturday, March 16.

Held in honor of Finley Webb, who passed away four years ago, the event raises funds for the SUDC Foundation. This nonprofit organization "is the only organization worldwide whose purpose is to raise awareness, fund research and serve those affected by sudden unexplained death in childhood (SUDC)."

SUDC is a category of death assigned by a medical examiner or a coroner for children ages one through 18 when no other cause of death can be found following an investigation, including an autopsy. Currently, there are no known causes of SUDC, nor are there known ways to prevent it.

Participants in Finley's Fast Feet walked to Boone Park, where they tied remembrance ribbons to Finley's tree.

March is SUDC Awareness Month. More information about SUDC and the foundation can be found at sudc.org.



Assumption Catholic School seventh grader Josie Kapadia shows off her dissection skills.

Dissecting Scientific Curiosity

Assumption Catholic School seventh graders got an opportunity to "stay curious" in science teacher Bill Hawthorn's biology dissection lesson in March. Known for engaging curiosity, Hawthorn emphasized to students that experience goes beyond science. The students worked collaboratively to guide each other through the dissection process and the discovery of biology and anatomy elements. Hawthorn hoped the lesson would inspire future doctors, veterinarians and scientists.



The Sanctuary on 8th Street girls basketball team, sponsored by Riverside Presbyterian Church.

Finding Hope in Hoops

For the first time ever, The Sanctuary on 8th Street was able to provide its mission of hope through girls basketball, thanks to a team sponsorship by the Riverside Presbyterian Church. The girls developed teamwork, leadership skills and showed emotional growth throughout the season. To celebrate the conclusion of the season, the team attended the River City Rumble for the Jacksonville University vs. University of North Florida women's basketball game before dining at Springfield locales Crispy's and Scoops.

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Deesha Philyaw



Nicole Sealey

Douglas Anderson Hosts Writers' Festival

Douglas Anderson's (DA) Creative Writing Department is hosting its biannual Writers' Festival Saturday, April 6, led by acclaimed authors Deesha Philyaw and Nicole Sealey. Philyaw is a New York Times bestselling fiction writer and Jacksonville native, and Sealey is an award-winning poet and author.

"The guest authors we have invited to this year's festival have a special tie to our writing community, either as current or former residents of Florida, or alumni of our creative writing program. Our goal is to provide access to artists working at the highest levels of their craft to be an inspiration to our young writers and to the writers of our community," said DA Creative Writing Director Tiffany Melanson.

The festival starts at 9 a.m. with readings, interviews, a Q&A with author Nikesha Elisa Williams and a full day of hands-on writing workshops that cover fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, playwriting and publication. Proceeds will support educational programming and guest artist experiences for the Creative Writing Department.

Creative writing student Lawson Lewis said, "I think a lot of the time we're told as young artists that the careers we see for ourselves aren't practical or possible, no matter how passionate we are. And what's valuable about events like Writers' Fest is getting to spend concentrated time learning from people who have achieved what we dream about and are doing it in a way that serves them and their goals while defying the starving artist stereotype. It makes it feel more possible."

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit dawriters.com/writers-festival.



Science teacher Kelsey Rapps with students Elissa Bozeman, Savannah Freeman, Viktoriia Galushchak and Nicholas Tichy holding their Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair blue ribbons.

St. Paul's Students Win at Junior Division Science Fair

Elissa Bozeman, Savannah Freeman, Viktoriia Galushchak and Nicholas Tichy, all from St. Paul's Catholic School, took the top spots in their respective categories in the junior division of the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF). Three also received special recognition awards, and two will advance to the state competition in Lakeland in April.

Science teacher Kelsey Rapps said, "I think what helped us this year was the kids picked real-world projects that they could relate to. No one just Googled 'easy science fair projects.' It's a lot of work for them, and while the awards are great, it is really about the learning experience. I'm very proud of them!"

For the second consecutive year, eighth grader Viktoriia Galushchak won first place in the computer science division, this year for her "Adoption of Computer Vision to Create Interactive Learning Experiences" project, which earned her The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers' Outstanding Project trophy.

Eighth graders Savannah Freeman and Elissa Bozeman partnered on their first-place award in medicine and health for the project "Can Ultraviolet Radiation Limit Growth of Cells Exposed to Nicotine?" The University of Florida College of Medicine and Health rewarded the pair with a special award, and they are continuing data collection in anticipation of the state fair competition.

Nicholas Tichy dreamt up his project with inspiration from his own cat and kitten. The eighth grader won first place in the zoology category for "Determining if Cats and Kittens Prefer Toys That Are More Similar to Realistic Prey."



Children from Ortega Playschool donate diapers during its annual Friendship Chapel.

Wiping Out Diaper Needs

Ortega Playschool, part of Ortega Church on Roosevelt Boulevard, held its annual Friendship Chapel on Feb. 14, along with a service project that allows the children to get involved and donate items to foster a sense of community belonging. The Friendship Chapel's 2024 beneficiary was The Diaper Bank of Northeast Florida, which provides diapers and wipes to local nonprofits that support low-income families with diaper needs. The event collected more than 1,200 diapers and 7 packs of wipes for the organization.

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| WEEK 2: June 10th - 14th <i>Ninja Warrior Week</i> | WEEK 7: July 15th-19th <i>Jump Ropes and Hula Hoops</i> | 6 HR CAMP 9pm-3pm \$50/day • \$175/week |
| WEEK 3: June 17th - June 21st <i>Nature Week</i> | WEEK 8: July 22nd - 26th <i>Super Mario Week</i> | 9 HR CAMP 9am-6pm \$65/day • \$225/week |
| WEEK 4: June 24th - 28th <i>Mythical Creatures Week</i> | WEEK 9: July 29st - Aug 2nd <i>Crazy Sports Week</i> | 9 HR CAMP with MORNING CARE 7am-6pm \$75/day • \$250/week |
| WEEK 5: July 1st - July 5th <i>Pirate, Prince and Princess</i> | WEEK 10: Aug 5th - 9th <i>Ooey Gooy Science Week</i> | MORNING CARE 7am-9am \$5/day • \$25/week |

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French, above, and Spanish language students from Episcopal School of Jacksonville competed in their respective state competitions, the Florida State Spanish Conference and the Congrès French, both held in Orlando.

Laurels for Linguistics Leagues

Two groups of language students from Episcopal School of Jacksonville (ESJ) competed at the state-level competitions in Spanish and French. The Florida State Spanish Conference was held in Orlando March 7-9, with 32 schools competing. All 15 ESJ students received awards for their performances in events like impromptu speeches, poem recitations and a play. The Spanish conference teams were led by instructors Lucia Allen and Carolina Collins.

The Congrès French competition was also held in Orlando the same week. The ESJ French language student team emerged as the first-place winners in their division. Federica Smith-Vicentini earned a spot on the board for the 2025 Congrès French competition. She was selected as a member-at-large, sponsored by Bouchra Benchaaboune, ESJ French instructor, who has also become a member of the Congrès.



Students from The Bolles School participated in the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair Feb. 12-14.

Students Advance in Science Competitions

Sixteen students from The Bolles School competed at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF) Feb. 12-14 at Episcopal School of Jacksonville with five advancing to the State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida April 2-4 in Lakeland: Christina Dovellos, Simran Naval, Sarah Park, Krish Patel and Dylan Schwartz. Naval and Park were also selected as International Science and Engineering Fair alternates.

Naval and Dovellos won first and second place, respectively, in the biochemistry category. Naval was awarded the Johnson and Johnson Outstanding Research Award and Dovellos the Johnson and Johnson Excellent Research Award and JU Excellence Scholarship.

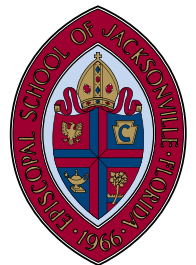
Park and Patel took home first and second place, respectively, in the medicine and health category with Park receiving a Johnson and Johnson Outstanding Research Award. Patel was also honored with a Johnson and Johnson Project Excellence, Regeneron Biomedical Science Award and UF College of Medicine First Place Medicine and Health Project Award.

Schwartz won the Johnson and Johnson Project Excellence Award, Society of American Military Engineers to a Project with Potential Military Application, Haskell Award for First Place Mechanical Engineering Project and an invitation to the Haskell High School Internship Program. Other winners included Thomas Catto, Inspiring Excellence in Physics; Sloane James, Society of American Military Engineers Award in Environmental Science; Madeline Kaiser, Florida Association of Science Teachers Award; and Riya Kar, Johnson and Johnson Excellent Research Award in zoology.

Bolles science teacher Brad Bullington was also honored with the NEFRSEF Inspiring Excellence award, which recognizes “untiring dedication, selfless commitment and continuing support of science.”



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The Torres family at the Chicago River on St. Patrick's Day.



Members of the water polo team enjoy dinner out after the game.

Torres Competes at Water Polo Nationals

Alex Torres was selected for the Olympic Development Program (ODP) Southeast Zone National Water Polo Team last month. He, along with 12 other players from Florida and Georgia, represented the Southeast Zone at the ODP National Championships March 15-17 in Chicago. The team finished with one win and four losses in the six-zone competition.

Torres tested his game skills against the elevated competition,

contributing scores, assists and steals. Outside of the pool, he was able to explore Chicago with his family, including the famed St. Patrick's Day-themed green dyeing of the Chicago River.

Locally, Torres and others hone their skills through the Jacksonville Water Polo Club, with upcoming competitions including the Rise Up tournament in Clermont, Florida, April 5-7 and the Florida International Tournament in Ocala, Florida, April 26-28.



Alex Torres with members of the Southeast Zone ODP Development Team.



Alex Torres with his Olympic Development Program certificate.



Cadets from Bishop Kenny's National Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps volunteer to feed the needy at Sulzbacher.

Cadets Commit to Lenten Service

The Bishop Kenny National Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) cadets started a new service endeavor during Lent. The cadets have dedicated their Tuesdays to preparing and distributing food to the homeless and needy for the evening meal at the Sulzbacher's downtown location. This is the second time the cadets have participated in this effort, and their plan is to make it a monthly endeavor.

"The BK cadets embrace service, and it is even more meaningful to provide for our local Jacksonville community in such a positive and impactful way," said retired U.S. Navy Cmdr. Brian Morrill.



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IN MEMORIAM

Linda Fontaine Crank Moseley

Linda Fontaine Crank Moseley of Jacksonville passed away on Feb. 28, 2024. Born Sept. 3, 1927, in Louisa, Virginia, to William Earle Crank and Phyllis Fry Collins, Linda graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1948 with a Bachelor of Arts in history and married Dr. Thaddeus Mortimer Moseley in Virginia in September of that year.

After moving to Jacksonville in 1950, she embarked on a dual career as a doctor's wife and community volunteer. She was instrumental in various charitable organizations, including the United Way, March of Dimes and the Women's Auxiliary at Duval County Hospital, for which she spearheaded fundraising endeavors to expand its mental health facilities. Her involvement with the Junior League led her to representation on the Speech and Hearing Clinic and Child Guidance board, eventually becoming president of the Jacksonville League and serving on the International Board

and as chair of the Regional Nominating Committee. She was the first woman vice president of United Way and provided caring guidance on the boards for the Women's Auxiliary, Jacksonville Symphony and Salvation Army, where she helped found the Salvation Army Auxiliary.

Linda's passions led her community work as well. Her love of flowers and environmental issues inspired a decades-long involvement with the Watsonia Garden Circle. Her dedication to literacy led her to become a tutor and founding member of Learn to Read in 1969, president of the board and a champion

for literacy throughout the community. She was actively involved with the organization and board of the Colonial Dames as well, utilizing her passion for

Florida history and historic preservation. A devoted member of Riverside Presbyterian Church since 1953, Linda served in various capacities including Girls' Choir Mother, committee member and Trustee.

Forever a loving matriarch, Linda was predeceased by her husband of 54 years, Thad, in 2002. She is survived by

their three children, Thaddeus Maury Moseley (Fiona Strathern), William Armistead Moseley (Margaret Cravey)

and Stacy Fontaine Moseley Scherer (Joseph Scherer); five grandchildren, Virginia Fontaine Moseley, William Walker Moseley, Robert Armistead Moseley, Thaddeus Nicholas Scherer and Fontaine Lillian-Laura Scherer; and four great grandchildren, James Armistead Moseley, Frances Claire Moseley, Thomas Walker Moseley and Natalie Rae Moseley.

Linda balanced motherhood, marriage and community service with a grace and mastery few can match. She was a brilliant beauty, a thoughtful host and unyielding champion for her family and those in need. Her ability to see and draw out the good in people around her made her a charismatic leader, and one that Jacksonville will not soon forget. Her legacy lives on in the loved ones she leaves behind and the countless people her kindness has touched.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to The Ximenez-Fatio House in St. Augustine, Florida.



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by Elainah Ehrlichman

Having a job in the funeral field can be a wonderful and rewarding experience. There are many benefits to pursuing a job with us at Hardage-Giddens, and countless reasons to do so! If you have ever thought about joining the ranks of our skilled and dedicated funeral professionals, keep reading!

Why choose this occupation?

- **You have personal experience.** Sometimes, experiencing a loved one's death and seeing the level of care that surrounds them is the catalyst for joining this field. Witnessing firsthand the extreme dedication and compassion that funeral associates provide can open the door to realizing that this is the right career choice for you.
- **You have a calling.** If you have a deep, insatiable desire to help others, you may have a calling for this line of work. At its very core, this profession centers around assisting grieving families through their hardest times. If you enjoy helping those in need, this career path presents an amazing opportunity for you.
- **You seek fulfillment.** Working in funeral service can be emotional, but it is also enormously rewarding. Knowing that you have done right by the families you serve is a notion that is difficult to put into words, but one that each of our associates can attest to. You are making a personal difference in others' lives during their greatest time of need.

Who is Hardage-Giddens right for?

- **You are curious about working with us, but are unsure where to begin.** If you have considered pursuing a job in this field but are uncertain where to get started, we encourage you to reach out to us! We can guide you and help you discover which position will be the best fit.
- **You know you want to work in the funeral profession.** If you already know that you want a career in funeral service, our tuition reimbursement program can help you reach that goal. Not all positions require a degree, but if your dream role does, we have remarkable employee benefits to help you get where you want to be.
- **You are creative, analytical, and caring.** Whether you are interested in designing funeral and memorial displays or you lean more toward assisting during funeral services, we will help you find the right placement. With our multi-department job opportunities, we know you will find a perfect fit!

What is the reality of working in this field?

- **It can be emotionally intense.** Of course, having a funeral career means being around death. Whether conceptually or literally, death is at the forefront of our work and is exactly why we approach our roles with such care and compassion. Though the nature of our work can be emotional, knowing that you have made a difference in a family's life is what will help guide you through the harder days.

- **Having a flexible schedule helps.** Working in the funeral profession means having a schedule that best suits the families we serve, and that means you may not always have standard working hours. This element does not apply to all roles, but it is something to keep in mind.

- **You have a direct impact.** It is essential to remember that your actions will have a direct impact on the families you serve. This is why we take painstaking care to ensure that all of our associates are respectful, informed, and thoroughly prepared to handle assisting families in need. Remember that when you go home for the day, you have had a positive impact on a family who may be experiencing one of the most difficult times of their lives. You helped them through that.

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