

SAN JOSE · SAN MARCO · ST. NICHOLAS



# Resident

COMMUNITY NEWS

Happy Valentine's Day



## Planning Commission GREEN LIGHTS Park Place at San Marco



### Mixing in the Moonlight

Robert Harris and his wife, Paola Parra Harris, enjoy libations and laughter as they mix with members of the San Marco Merchants Association and the San Marco Preservation Society during a joint social event on the roof of the Southbank's Museum of Science and History Jan.16.

READ MORE, [PAGE 22](#)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- P.10 | Historic fire station demolished in Brooklyn
- P.11 | Carlucci to chair new City resiliency committee
- P.38 | Arts school leaders impressed with Jacksonville's ASN Conference
- P.46 | San Marco student climbs Mt Fuji

### READERS SHARE OPINIONS

Residents, business owners and others express their views on Park Place at San Marco, a new housing development slated to be built on property owned by South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church in San Marco Square.

READ MORE, [PAGE 6](#)

## Publix shopping center crosses the finish line

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Bulldozers will soon be arriving to East San Marco to build a new Publix at the corner of Hendricks Avenue and Atlantic Boulevard.

On Jan. 14 the Jacksonville City Council pushed Regency Center's plans to build a new shopping center, anchored by the long-desired grocery store, on its East San Marco property over the finish line with a unanimous vote of approval. The Planned Unit Development (PUD) plans, with two new conditions, had been previously approved, 7-0, by the Council's Land Use and Zoning (LUZ) Committee Jan.7.

The project has had several false starts over the past decade with its most recent disappointment coming in March 2017 when a long awaited development comprised of 239 residential units, 46,000 square feet of retail space, a 33,000-square-foot Publix and a six-story parking garage fell through.

CONTINUED ON [PAGE 12](#)

## SMPS & RIGHT SIZE SAN MARCO VOICE OPPOSITION TO HEIGHT AND DENSITY OF PROJECT

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

In January South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church moved one step closer to receiving approval to have its nearly three-acre San Marco Square property rezoned so that a developer

can purchase and build a multi-family apartment complex and parking garage on the site.

After receiving approval from the Jacksonville Planning Department to transform its zoning into a Planned Unit Development (PUD) with the more intense land-use designation CGC-1 Urban Priority, Harbert Realty Services of Birmingham, Ala., received a unanimous vote in favor of its plans from the Jacksonville Planning Commission Jan. 23, in spite of concerns voiced by the San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) and Right Size San Marco, a neighborhood group that boasts more than 650 members.

CONTINUED ON [PAGE 4](#)



## Trauma responders celebrated

Honoring the men and women who serve UF Health's TraumaOne were Landon Strickland and his wife, Co-Chair Kate Strickland, who joined Leslie and Brian Lynn and Penny and Mike Lynn at the 13th Annual Night for Heroes gala Jan. 25 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront Hotel.

READ MORE, [PAGE 24](#)

### Pulitzer-prize winning author wows Forum

Carolyn Jennings and Ryan Schwartz joined the large crowd who listened to Pulitzer-prize winning historian and author John Meacham speak during the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital's Florida Forum speaker series Jan. 22 at the Times Union Center for the Performing arts.

READ MORE, [PAGE 25](#)



### Historical Society welcomes J.F. Bryan

Barbara Harrell, Suzanne Perritt and Susan Caven learned about the rise and fall of Jacksonville's insurance industry during a lecture by J.F. Bryan IV, which was offered by the Jacksonville Historical Society Jan. 23 in Old St. Andrews Church.

READ MORE, [PAGE 18](#)

### Jacksonville impresses global arts community

Jacksonville's reputation as a thriving center for the arts soared among arts community leaders when the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Foundation hosted the prestigious annual Arts School Network Conference for the first time. Using the St. Johns River as a backdrop, visitors were enthralled by the well-run, informative, and inspiring conference that included keynote speeches and panels from Jacksonville notables and performances from local arts students.

READ MORE, [PAGE 38](#)

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# Veteran editor, reporter joins The Resident

Just after the start of a new year, we would like to introduce you to our new Associate Editor, Jennifer Edwards, an author, veteran journalist, and editor at several daily papers in New York, Texas and Florida. Edwards' articles have regularly been published in dozens of papers across the country including the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, *Orange County Register* and the international edition of the *New York Times*, to name a few, via the Associated Press. Although you will see her byline in both papers, Edwards' focus will be the Riverside-Avondale-Ortega-Murray Hill edition.



Jennifer Edwards

Publishers' Association first-place award for team sports coverage. She later returned home to raise her daughters, Autumn and Chloe, and to report on the courts for the *Daytona Beach News-Journal* and *The St. Augustine Record*, where she was also a weekend editor.

During Jennifer's tenure as both editor and reporter, she received specialized

training from the Washington, D.C.-area based American Press Institute, University of Missouri School of Journalism's Investigative Reporters and Editors, and the Wake Forest School of Medicine. She has also co-authored seven travel guides for the Random House imprint Fodor's, including two editions on Florida. Her first guide, *The Complete Guide to the National Parks of the West*, took home third place nationally in the Society of American Travel Writers' Lowell Thomas Award competition.

By coming home to the Jacksonville area, Edwards returned to her roots and her alma mater. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of North Florida's communications program with a degree in print journalism and went on to be selected for two highly competitive national internships – one at the Washington, D.C. headquarters of National Public Radio and one funded by the Washington, D.C. think tank, the Institute for Humane Studies. She continues to be deeply committed to the values and mission of journalism and believes firmly in reporting on the issues that matter to communities. If you would like to say hello, please feel free to email her at [jennifer@residentnews.net](mailto:jennifer@residentnews.net)



Workmen installed a new pedestrian crosswalk on Hendricks Avenue just across from Turner Plumbing and Bold Bean Coffee House.

## New Hendricks crosswalk brings safety to coffee café patrons

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Pedestrians hoping to patronize Bold Bean Coffee Roasters and other neighboring businesses on Hendricks Avenue north of Atlantic Boulevard will soon be able to cross the busy San Marco thoroughfare more safely. In October, the Florida Department of Transportation installed a mid-block crosswalk near the entrance of the popular coffee house.

Wheelchair accessible ramps have been constructed and signs with flashing beacons have been installed in the busy segment alongside Southside Baptist Church. The Jacksonville Electric Authority provided electrical service to the devices, while FDOT took care of striping the crosswalk across Hendricks and completing the concrete restoration work on the east side of the street, according to FDOT Community Outreach Specialist Sara Pleasants. Last summer, Pleasants estimated the cost of the crosswalk to be \$53,160.

When he first learned about the crosswalk last summer, Zack Burnett, a managing partner at Bold Bean Coffee Roasters, said the news was exciting. "We believe it will

increase the walkability, safety and success of San Marco as a whole," he said. "The crosswalk will improve the connectivity between all of the business in our mid-block area to all of the other businesses and residential areas in the Hendricks/Landon/San Marco triangle," he told *The Resident*.

When Bold Bean first opened in October 2016, its owners had an arrangement with Southside Baptist Church so that its customers could use the church's Hendricks Avenue parking lot across the street from the coffeehouse. However, under the advice of attorney Robert Harris of Harris Guidi Rosner P.A., next door to the coffee café, the church decided it was too much of a liability to allow Bold Bean customers to continue to park in its lot without the safety of a crosswalk nearby.

With the crosswalk in place, the church is now willing to allow Bold Bean employees to park in its lot, however it is not yet willing to allow Bold Bean customers the same privilege because it is still not clear on what the church's liability would be, said Southside Baptist Senior Pastor Dr. Gary Webber. "We want to wait to get more information on the liability issue before we give the go ahead," he said.

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

**PUBLISHERS**  
Seth Williams - [seth@residentnews.net](mailto:seth@residentnews.net)  
Pamela B. Williams - [pamela@residentnews.net](mailto:pamela@residentnews.net)

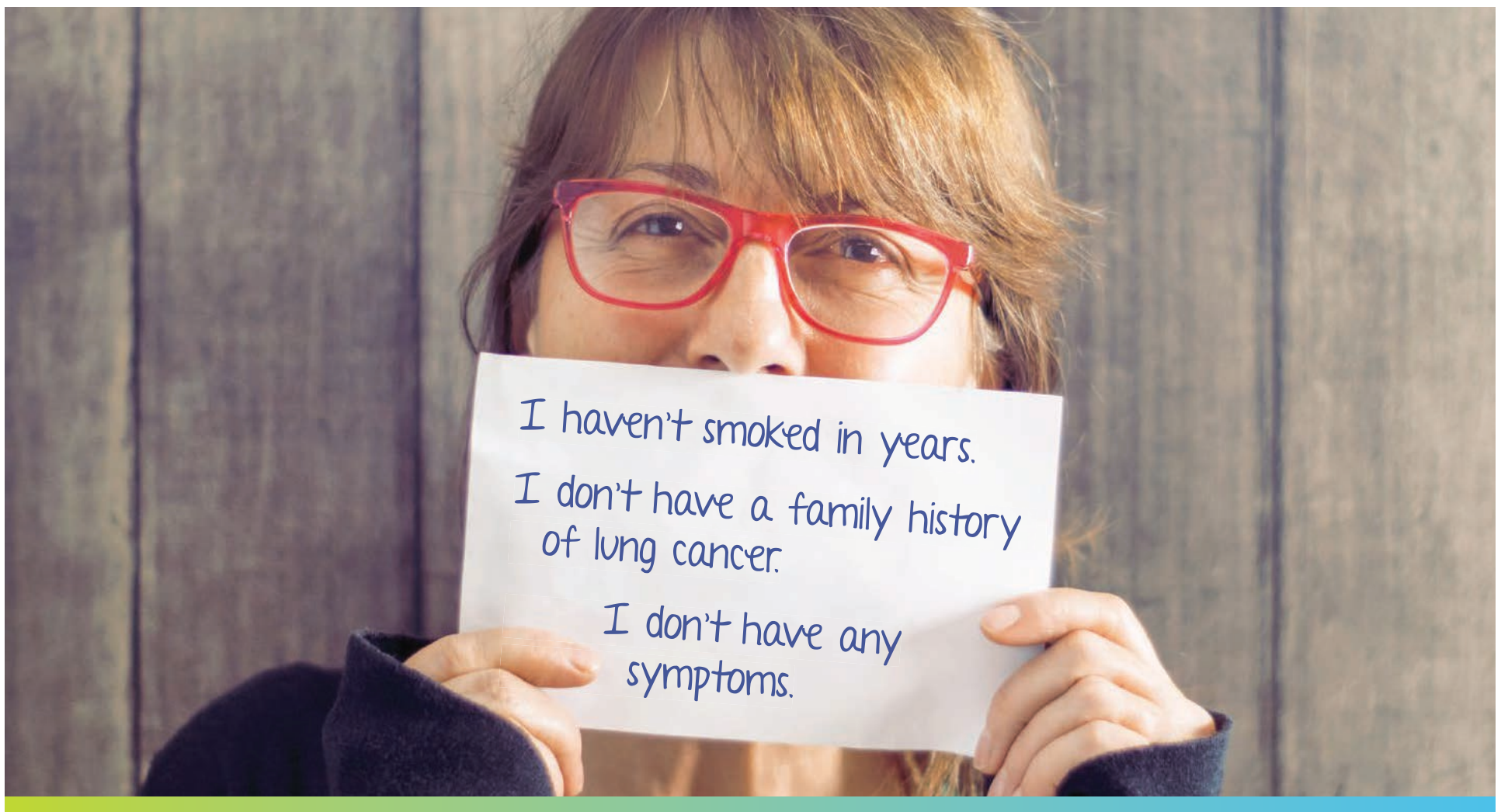
**EDITORIAL**  
Marcia Hodgson - Managing Editor  
[marcia@residentnews.net](mailto:marcia@residentnews.net)  
Jennifer Edwards - Associate Editor  
[jennifer@residentnews.net](mailto:jennifer@residentnews.net)

**SALES**  
Debra McGregor - Director of Sales  
[debra@residentnews.net](mailto:debra@residentnews.net)  
Andrew Majewski - New Business Development  
[andrew@residentnews.net](mailto:andrew@residentnews.net)

**DESIGN**  
Joshua Garrett - Art Director  
[josh@residentnews.net](mailto:josh@residentnews.net)  
Danielle Smith-Boldt - Designer

**GOT NEWS? EMAIL US AT** [editor@residentnews.net](mailto:editor@residentnews.net)

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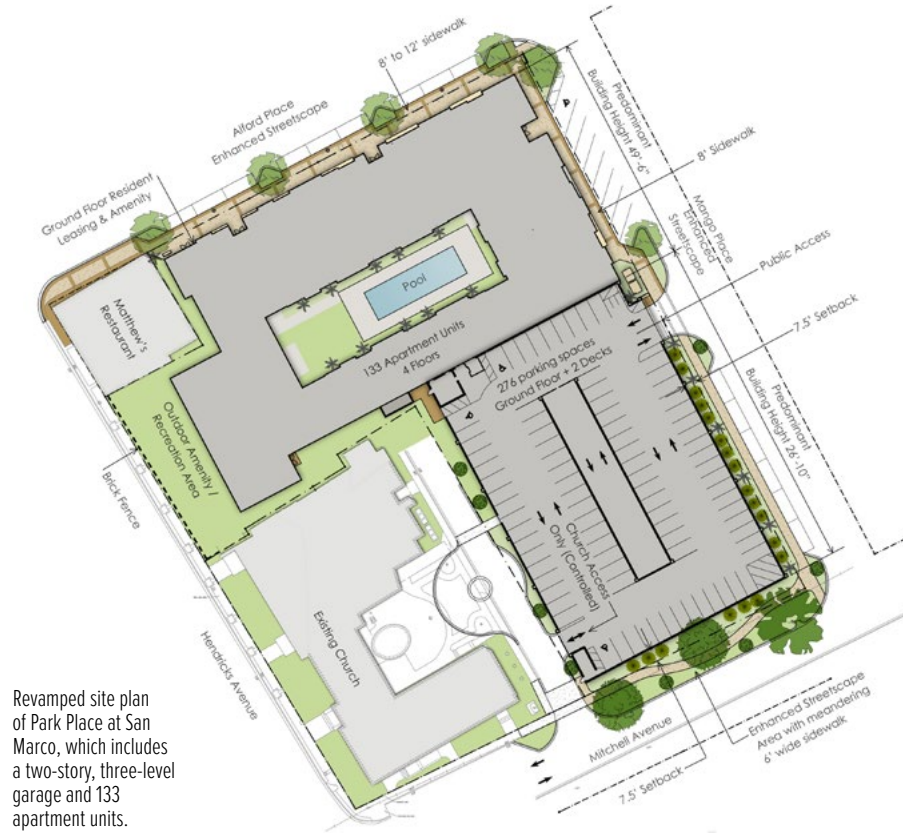
# Park Place at San Marco

FROM PAGE 1

With the Planning Commission's approval in hand, the new zoning legislation will be forwarded to the Jacksonville City Council's Land-Use and Zoning Committee, which will allow the public to comment on the legislation before it votes on the measure Tuesday, Feb. 4. City Council is to allow for public comment before it finally votes on the matter Tuesday, Feb. 11.

To try to appease neighborhood opposition, representatives from the church's development team, Harbert Realty Services, Corner Lot Development, EnVision Design + Engineering and Group 4 Design, have met with representatives from Right Size San Marco, the San Marco Preservation Society, District 5 Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber and others to work out a more palatable plan for the property.

The church submitted an amended application to the city planning department Jan. 15. Its new proposal calls for 133 units – a reduction from the original 143 apartments it had planned – and a slimmed-down version of its parking garage, which has been reduced from a Three-story, four-level structure, to a two-story, three-level structure with 276 parking spaces. Provided for each unit will be 1.3 parking spaces, and 100 spaces will be set aside for use by members of South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church. On-street parking will be provided also. The amended application removed 10 apartments from the south side of the garage bordering Mitchell Avenue, allowing for a wider setback from the street and 30-feet of increased landscaping between the side of the garage and Mitchell Avenue to help screen the garage.



Revamped site plan of Park Place at San Marco, which includes a two-story, three-level garage and 133 apartment units.

By incorporating suggestions from Architect Bill Jaycox, who was hired by SMPS to submit suggestions so that the architectural plan might fit better with the neighborhood, Group 4 Design has modified the façade of the apartment building that stretches along Alford Place. During the meeting, Group 4 architect Matt Snyder described three 8-foot-by-8-foot “niches” that will be integrated into exterior design of the apartment complex to help “break up the massing of the building so it doesn’t appear as one large building that takes up the entire block from Matthews to Mango Place.” The niches go up the building and provide “shadowlines,” allowing the structure to visually be broken into three pieces, he said, while adding that there will be “related

architectures” so that the three niches will have a different appearance as well. Also included will be a different base façade that breaks up the first level from the upper stories, he said. Additional landscaping will surround the ground floor “balconies” that will be equipped with lockable gates to give apartment residents privacy, as they will border the pedestrian walkway.

As engineer for the development, Doug Skiles of Envision Design said the developer recognized that Alford Place will serve as a continuation of San Marco Square and so require a larger pedestrian walkway. Desiring to enhance the streetscape while making it safe for the public to walk to the new parking garage, the developer included additional setbacks and shade trees, he said.

## Concerns from SMPS

Meanwhile, SMPS forwarded its list of concerns to the city with a letter from SMPS President Linzee Ott dated Jan. 22.

SMPS favors having a multi-family residential development built on the church property as well as the parking garage but opposes several aspects of the church's amended PUD application. On the top of its list is its disapproval of the requested land-use reclassification of the entire property from CGC-Community General Commercial (CGC)—Urban Area and RPI- Urban Area, which allows for 40 units per acre to the denser CGC – Urban Priority Area, which allows for 60 units per acre. It also objects to the way the height of the proposed apartment building was calculated by developers using a weighted averaging method in an effort to have it conform to the San Marco Overlay, which mandates buildings in the overlay zone will not exceed 35 feet.

The church's request for rezoning does not adhere to certain criteria in the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element Policy that determines the appropriate maximum density for the rezoning in PUDs, according to SMPS.

“The up-zoning to Urban Priority Area land development designation into the historic Village District of San Marco would be incongruent with the spirit of transition of density,” SMPS wrote, adding that the development as it is planned currently does not provide a proper transition between the East San Marco PUD in the north, where a Publix and other stores will soon be under construction, and the low-density, single-family homes that abut the property on the south.

“According to page 52 of the 2018-684E North San Marco Neighborhood Action

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 5**

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Plan (NSM NAP) Revised Exhibit 1, 'a gradual transition of intensities and densities should be implemented and enforced in order to ensure neighborhood protection. This transition will help to maintain the balance between residential and commercial uses and prevent encroachment of commercial uses into residential areas,' according to SMPS. "The NSM NAP cautions on page 53, 'up-zoning' requests along the commercial corridors should be carefully reviewed with consideration for existing residential uses, and existing commercial uses should be evaluated for appropriateness and compatibility.... Increasing the intensity of residential uses that are commercially zoned could be detrimental to the quality of life in the neighborhood.' The extension of the urban priority development area to this property abutting the (Low Density Residential) LDR-UA area is unsupported by the NSM NAP," according to the SMPS letter.

The preservation society also opposes the height of the proposed four-story apartment building, which will tower 49.5 feet, 14.5 feet above the limit of 35 feet mandated in the San Marco Overlay. In the letter sent to the city, SMPS stated: "The SMPS disapproves of the use of a weighted averaging method as a means of establishing height calculations for this project. Typically, a maximum weighted average method is used to calculate the height of a building where ground elevation changes or undulates. Such is not the case for this property."

SMPS also had concerns the exception the developers are seeing for parking in the smaller garage. "The application seeks an exception to the City's code requirement of 1.75 parking spaces per bedroom over 500 square feet to a reduction of 1.3 spaces per unit," said the letter, noting that the San Marco Overlay states, "parking deviations as part of a PUD may only be granted if 'all

other standards' are met by the Overlay. The PUD does not meet the Overlay's height standards, and therefore no parking deviation should be granted."

The society also commented on the public parking being offered through shared use with South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church. Referring to the San Marco's neighborhood action plan, which states, "requests for intensifications of zoning ... should not be supported by the Planning and Development Department unless it can be demonstrated that there will be a benefit to the neighborhood." In its letter SMPS wrote, "the proposed development would include 276 total parking spaces with 100 total spaces (87 vehicular, 3 motorcycle) that would be owned by South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church for its particular use. The Church has pledged the shared use of those spaces to the public during hours when they are not being used for church functions." It also said the shared use was consistent with the recommendation of the neighborhood action plan.

Initially dissatisfied with the architectural renderings for the apartment building that were presented in Oct. 2019, SMPS said it appreciated the developer's willingness to modify the renderings and requested that the new proposed architectural drawings be attached as a condition to the ordinance approving the PUD. It also requested plans for the landscaping be included as conditions to the ordinance in the form of "lists of materials and labeled depictions on the site plan."

**Comments pro and con**

During the public hearing that was held before the planning commission took its vote, 12 speakers addressed the panel expressing views both for and against the project. Attorney Paul Harden, who represents



New rendering of the improved design of the apartment building Harbert Realty wants to build on land currently owned by South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church.

the developer, joined several residents – a few who identified themselves as church members – in speaking in favor of the project, while Lauren Carlucci and others joined Jon Livingston, founder of Right Size San Marco, in discussing neighborhood concerns.

Jill Campbell, a San Marco resident and church member, said South Jacksonville Presbyterian is "in the hole" by \$2 million due to deferred maintenance on its buildings, which is why it was forced to put its property up for sale. "We can't continue the way we are. If we can't sell this piece and still have the church and fellowship hall and the parking they have promised us, we will not be able to continue to exist in San Marco, which will break all our hearts," she said.

Carlucci, a neighboring resident whose property abuts the project, brought in a 3-D model demonstrating how the weighted average used to determine the height was "highly unusual" and set a "dangerous" precedent. "The developer is only measuring one side of the building, and by leaving out the other sides of the building, effectively they are calculating the height of the façade of one side, not the height of the entire building. This is an important distinction because it opens the door to a dangerous precedent. If we allow this calculation in

lieu of the traditional measurement of height, it means that in the future, someone could build a home with a single-story garage on one side and build their house as high as they would like it on the other," she said after the meeting. "This precedent will affect the entire city of Jacksonville."

Livingston made it clear his group was in favor of having a parking garage and apartments on the site. He said he was happy with the change in the size of the parking garage and felt it would be a fair compromise if the developer would consider limiting the apartment building to three-story, 114-unit apartment building, which would only sacrifice 19 units. "To achieve this win-win, the City Council needs only to keep the land use the same. By continuing to have it classified as urban, everyone benefits," he said, noting the developer originally sought to build 100 units from the church in exchange for \$2 million while offering an extra \$20,000 for every apartment over 100. "Keeping the land use the same allows them to get an extra 14 apartments over their initial ask," he said, adding that the church wins because they get a new parking garage and an additional \$280,000 for the apartment incentive. "Let's get it right and make this a win for all," he said.

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# Letters TO THE Editor

Readers share views on Park Place at San Marco

**Editor's Note:** *The Resident* received a flood of letters both pro and con to South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church's request to change the zoning on its property in San Marco Square so that 133 apartments can be built within a four-story apartment building with a three-level, two-story parking garage. All letters that are received by press time will be published by *The Resident*, either in these pages or on-line. A sampling fills this page and the rest may be found on our website [www.residentnews.net](http://www.residentnews.net) under the Letters to the Editor tab at the top. We want to thank all our readers for supporting the paper, and we are grateful for those who chose to share their feelings about this important issue with us and the community.

I wanted to share my confusion on the vocal minority who are resistant to the Park Place development in San Marco. I think it is an effective re-use of a property that could very well sit vacant and unused like East San Marco has for the better part of a decade. Experienced developers who care about our city (and specifically San Marco) want to be a part of the positive growth and transformation of that area, yet some are attempting to halt the progress through fear and misinformation. From what I have read, the developers have been very open to community feedback, and it seems like the resistance would prefer to kill the project rather than have it improved to the point of acceptability. To my knowledge there has been little to no resistance to other projects in the area such as San Marco Promenade, San Marco Crossing, or The District which would all impact resident density and traffic in the same way, if not more. If we want to stop the flood of residents to St. Johns, Nassau, and Clay County then we need to continue to develop more residential housing options throughout Jacksonville and especially near the city center of Downtown, for which San Marco is one of the prime adjacent neighborhoods.

— THOMAS LEE

I wanted to express my support for the Park Place development.

The addition of these types of dwellings in San Marco will be great for us in the long run; it'll create more demand for better retail stores, restaurants and entertainment venues.

We are all concerned about setting precedents that would harm our community. I really hope that a responsible middle ground will be found.

It's clear that our community is growing, and I am excited to see this finally happening!

— GRAHAM RILEY

After reading the second consecutive front-page story in *The Resident News* regarding the new Park Place Development in San Marco, I wanted to reach out to voice my support for the project.

As a former resident of San Marco (and a current "San Marco adjacent" resident of the San Jose neighborhood), my family regularly frequents the shops and restaurants in San Marco Square. What was once a quick walk to our favorite spots is now a short drive that requires an often frustrating search for parking. The fact that Park Place addresses significantly enhancing parking for the Square while minimizing traffic impacts is a huge plus for the community.

It's an added benefit to know that the church will benefit and be able to continue serving the community as a result of this development as well. As a deacon at Riverside Presbyterian, I know all too well the challenges that face a large historic church in the urban core. It seems apparent to me that if South Jax Presbyterian isn't able to move forward with Park Place, they'll eventually be forced to move forward with some other developer as financial pressures continue to mount. It's reassuring that Corner Lot is a local presence not only in Jacksonville, but in San Marco specifically, and it's clear from their efforts to engage all parties that they want what is best for the long-term growth of the community.

I think it's also important to voice a vote of confidence for South Jax Presbyterian. The article in *The Resident* made mention of Right Size San Marco accusing the church of being financially motivated to make decisions that weren't in the best interest of the community. I feel confident that the Elders of SJPC have pursued a prayerful and purposeful approach to reach a solution to their challenges that allows them to survive while benefiting and enhancing the community.

We've seen several businesses in the square move or shutter because of financial pressures and lack of density. I can't imagine a day when entering the square from the south isn't accompanied by the welcoming visual of South Jax Presbyterian. I am in favor of Park Place.

— RYAN D. ASHLEY

As a member of South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church, I support the current plans for the Park Place development. They have worked hard with us to develop an upscale, nice complex. Our church had no choice but to sell. We hope we will survive the construction. The neighbors need to realize that a horrible development could be put there. If we sold the whole property after getting a historical designation, they could turn the church into a restaurant/bar or something worse. The exterior is the only thing that needs to stay the same. Our current plan is to keep a smaller property as the church in the middle of this development and next door to Matthews. We will lose the preschool that has been there for over 60 years. However, we hope it will continue as San Marco Preschool at the Baptist church. I support the current plans for Park Place.

— ELLEN LEIGH

I am under the impression that you have mostly heard from people representing opposition to the Park Place development, however I would like to reach out and voice my support. Right Size San Marco does not represent a majority of residents, and they do not represent me.

I am very concerned about the manipulation of information they have used to convince others to support their cause. And as a resident I am concerned about the risk to San Marco if they are successful in killing this deal. The church will be selling this property, whether it is to this developer or not.

While Right Size says they are "pro-development," I've yet to hear a viable alternative for the land use. I fear that there will not be another developer to step up if this does not pass and the church will sell to someone that will develop it under its current zoning use. I do not want a gas station, medical building or any other commercial building placed on this valuable property. This is our one chance to get it right for San Marco. There is no other location to build a parking garage that will forever SUPPORT the vitality of our Square.

To be transparent, I am a member of the church. However, I am not an elder, involved in the decision-making process or privy to any of the details. I only know what others do, based on public record. I am advocating for this project primarily as a resident of San Marco. I am disappointed that shops continue to close in the square and believe that higher density within a walkable radius of the Square is the only way to revive our commercial district.

I wanted you to be aware that I am not alone in this. In a week, using only word of mouth, I have gathered over 100 names of people in 32207 that support the Park Place development.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss further or have any questions regarding why we believe this is right for San Marco.

I appreciate *The Resident's* role in our community and the work that you do.

— MORGAN ROBERTS

When the community comes together, great things can happen. In this case, San Marco Preservation Society and Right Size San Marco group both agree that the proposed Park Place development shouldn't be built as proposed. From the calculation in height that somehow determined 50 feet equals 35 feet, to thinking that transition means low density straight to high density, or that no one would notice that zoning code says deviations for parking are only to be allowed if asking for no other deviations, this proposed development is asking San Marco to ignore all its faults. Because hey, we could be offered a lot worse!

However, that's not true. Current zoning doesn't actually allow "terrible things" to go in the lot. There are 21 permitted uses for "CRO," and they are all perfectly acceptable and fit the area. Well, maybe not a fraternity house, but I'm willing to take my chances.

San Marco is a desirable area and this is a desirable location. It's not acceptable in a dating relationship to be told "Hey, I don't do the bare minimum, but it could be a lot worse" and it's not acceptable here. There is an opportunity for the developers to take this project and make it great. For the church, for the community, and for the developers. San Marco, let's know our worth and stay strong.

— LIZ FORAKER KLEIN



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I am a San Marco resident, property owner and business owner. I do not support the Park Place development as it is currently designed. Those that stand to gain financially from this project (the developers and the local companies involved in building this project) seem to be able to turn a blind eye to what's best for our beloved San Marco neighborhood, but the truth is, if this project was being built literally behind their single family homes and they didn't stand to gain financially from the project, they would be against it as well.

This development as currently outlined requires a zoning change that is not in keeping with the recently ratified San Marco by Design overlay. It's too dense and too big to be built where it will abut single family homes on two sides. Additionally, the developer is using fuzzy math to try to get around height limitations in their PUD application.

The design of the apartment complex looks like any other cheaply, quickly constructed apartment complex you see anywhere else in Jacksonville. You could pick this building up and put it next its identical twin at the Town Center. There is no San Marco character to the current design renderings. The developer did NO community outreach for this project until they were forced to by the neighborhood's vocal concerns. That's either because they knew the majority of San Marco residents would be against this and they thought they could sneak it by under cover of the wanted Publix project OR they are so blinded by their own motivations that they didn't realize this project would be a detriment to the neighborhood. Neither possibility reflects well on them.

There is NO community benefit to the Park Place project. They're going to be charging \$1,700/month for small 1 and 2 bedroom "luxury" apartments overlooking what will be the Publix dumpster area. Who would rent those when you can get a mortgage for less for a bungalow with more square footage nearby? Besides, there's already plenty of apartments going up in San Marco. This out-of-town developer is looking to profit off the appeal of San Marco in a way that devalues current San Marco residents' property values and will negatively impact all that live in San Marco (except of course those that stand to gain financially from being involved in this project.) For all those that are writing you in favor of this project, I would ask, how are they tied to this project?

The appropriate residential project for this land would be townhomes, that would provide the appropriate transition from commercial to single family homes. But the out-of-town developer is only concerned with maximizing their profits at the expense of San Marco homeowners and residents. That's their prerogative to attempt to do so as a business, but they shouldn't be granted the zoning change they require to build this overly dense eyesore at the expense of San Marco as a whole. They can simply walk away from this project if an appropriately scaled development that fits within the current zoning doesn't provide them with their desired profit margins.

— KATIE MCNEAL

As a third-generation San Marco resident, local business owner and commercial property owner, I am opposed to the zoning reclassification currently under review for the property behind South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church. I live on Alexandria Place and my neighborhood is directly adjacent to the planned Park Place development. This development and its proposed land-use changes are not in keeping with the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element Policy nor the San Marco Overlay across several key points that include density, height, and parking.

I feel very strongly that the developer should be required to work within the constraints of the property's current zoning designation or walk away from the project. This property was given its current zoning for a reason - it's meant to be transitional from single-family residences to general commercial along one of the main corridors leading into the heart of historic San Marco Square, and the proposed reclassification of this property to CGC-UPA seeks radical exceptions that obliterate any sort of reasonable transition of densities in an effort to maximize their profitability at the expense of the existing neighborhood and community-at-large.

Their calculations for density "borrow" the footprint of the sanctuary property to maximize the allowed number of units, they've asked for exceptions for setbacks and a reduction in green spaces that are not in keeping with San Marco by Design or the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element Policy, and their height calculations seek to use a weighted averaging method typically reserved for communities with hilly and/or mountainous terrain as a subversive way to get around the 35-foot maximum allowed height.

Additionally, while they continue to tout the benefit of public parking on the bottom floor of their planned garage, they're also asking for a concession within the PUD that would only require them to provide approx. 1.3 spaces per unit instead of 1.7. Even with the recently proposed reduction of 10 units and removal of one level of the garage, that many households, even the young professionals who they claim are their target audience, are two-car households, and it's very likely that any "additional" parking slated for public use, will actually be snatched up by the residents themselves, along with any of the friends, family, etc. who visit them. This doesn't even take into account the fact that 100 of those spaces are meant to be allocated to the church for use as well. Furthermore, their original calculations for spaces included on-street parking in order to make up the requisite number of spaces in an area where on-street parking is already limited due to use by the existing neighborhood and businesses.

If allowed, the Park Place development will become the tallest building in historic San Marco, towering over the adjacent single-family homes and serving as a perpetual reminder that we as a community allowed an outsider to profit from the devaluation of the character and charm of an area that we've long worked together to protect.

San Marco is a vibrant collective of residents, business owners, families and professionals who are passionate about our community. That doesn't mean we're against new developments or modernization - we believe change and growth are good when done right. However, those changes need to be planned carefully with consideration to how they will weather over time and affect existing landmarks, residences, and green spaces. Our community was built to last - as evidenced by our many historic homes and green spaces - and any new developments need to be planned with longevity and sustainability for the community in mind, not just short-term profitability.

I'm concerned that much of what I and others love about San Marco is threatened by this proposed development in its current iteration and that it will also set a precedent for future projects, not only for San Marco but for Jacksonville as a whole.

— ALIERA PETERSON

Math matters. Especially when it comes to development. You've got all kinds of numbers floating around our conversations regarding Park Place - calculations of area, density, and profit, percentages, and perhaps the most basic of them all: measurements of length, width, and height - and the height is a big one, literally and figuratively speaking.

The San Marco Overlay sets the standard for height as a maximum height of 35 feet. The applicant is attempting to circumvent this standard by using a weighted average to calculate the height. Nowhere in the Overlay does the requirement change to a maximum weighted average height. In fact, the entire zoning code does not mention this idea of a maximum weighted average. That is why when I asked Bruce Lewis, the planner in charge of reviewing the rezoning, if he has ever seen a weighted average used to calculate height, he gave a resounding answer of "No."

The fact that the planning department is allowing the applicant to use this type of calculation to determine height is highly unusual and, dare I say it, disturbing. When I asked the director, Bill Killingsworth, why they were allowing the calculation instead of the simple measurement defined in the zoning code, he said it is up to the City Council to decide if this is an appropriate way to measure height. The planning director is deferring to the City Council and has said this weighted average measurement is not a matter of his interpretation of the code; rather, it is a matter of determination from the council of whether or not the calculation is appropriate.

Furthermore, if we explore the calculations, we find that even the way they are calculating weighted average height doesn't make sense. The developer is only measuring one side of the building, and by leaving out the other sides of the building, effectively they are calculating the height of the facade of one side, not the height of the entire building. This is an important distinction because it opens the door to a dangerous precedent. If we allow this calculation in lieu of a traditional measurement of height, it means that in the future, someone could build a home with a single-story garage on one side and build their house as high as they would like on the other. They could choose to measure the garage side of their home, and the precedent would be set to exceed the 35-foot height restriction on all other sides by as many feet as suits the homeowner. We might as well throw the height restrictions out of the Overlay, and out of the zoning code while we are at it, since the Overlay points to the zoning code to define height of a building. This does not only affect the neighbors adjacent to the development or within the San Marco Overlay. This precedent will affect the entire city of Jacksonville.

I am counting on the City Council to hold developers to the standards developed to protect our beloved neighborhood. I am calling on them to vote based on the standards and criteria set forth in the San Marco Overlay and the underlying zoning code. Right Size for San Marco, Right Size for the City.

— LAUREN CARLUCCI



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# FIS headquarters, Florida Blue Parking garage moving toward construction

**FIS TO EMPLOY UP TO 1,800 WORKERS WHILE NEARBY GARAGE WILL OFFER 750 MORE CITY SPOTS**

By Jennifer Edwards

Resident Community News

The new \$145 million world headquarters of Fidelity Information Services – FIS – is well on its way to starting construction, with developers working with the City of Jacksonville to iron out some final details, such as sidewalks and the kind of trees City officials would like to see around it. At the same time, Florida Blue is set to construct a parking garage nearby that will allow it to add employees and offer non-employees 750 parking spaces on nights, weekends and holidays, said Downtown Investment Authority Executive Director Lori Boyer.

The 12-story, 350,000-square-foot office tower is set to bring up to 1,800 employees to the Brooklyn area by 2029. Of those jobs, 1,216 are current Jacksonville FIS employees, city documents show, with an average salary of \$85,000. Lane Gardner, senior managing director for Hines, a Houston-based real estate development firm, said the headquarters would include a wellness center, have a high LEED rating and a top-notch cafeteria as well as a 70,000-square-foot parking garage and urban open space with public art and street furniture such as benches. The City Department of Public Works meanwhile is moving forward with plans to realign Forest Street to provide accessibility to the

buildings, future riverfront development and Sidney J. Gefen Riverwalk Park.

“They are making a very significant capital investment by bringing this to Jacksonville and bringing jobs as well,” Gardner told the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) in January, adding that the development would convert an existing surface lot. “We believe (it) will enhance the Jacksonville skyline.”

The board voted unanimously in January to approve conceptual plans but gave the developers some aspects to tweak, including adding much wider sidewalks, and changing the landscaping. No date palms, Board Member M. Christian Harden urged.

“Date palms aren’t even native to Jacksonville,” Harden said.

“(DIA operations manager) Mr. Parola and I have had a long conversation about date palms,” Gardner replied. “We would be happy to change them. We only kept them so we wouldn’t be inconsistent with what is already in the area.”

Board Chair Frederick Jones, an urban planner, quickly replied.

“You should be inconsistent so other people can start being inconsistent,” he said to laughter.

Boyer was enthusiastic about the projects, saying they both offered significant benefits for downtown, especially the Brooklyn area. “The FIS in particular is a major win,” she explained. “This is a major company, they recently merged/acquired Worldpay and it was a big win for us to keep them here. This is potentially a Fortune 100 company that is of great significance. It is a growing industry; it is something Jacksonville has a lot of. We have workforce development that feeds people into that field. That headquarters in and of itself is a major success for us.”



Conceptual renderings of Riverside’s latest sleek modern skyscraper, a \$145 million headquarters for FIS.

The newly combined FIS and Worldpay have more than \$12 billion in revenue and employ more than 55,000 people, according to information posted on the FIS global website. “With a best-in-class portfolio of solutions for payments, banking and capital markets, FIS is positioned to accelerate its growth and advance the way the world pays, banks and invests,” said the website.

At the end of January, FIS had 106 job openings posted on its website for its current Jacksonville location, in categories ranging from sales to procurement, IT to finance.

## Florida Blue garage may drive development

The \$22.5 million Florida Blue garage, meanwhile, is to allow Florida Blue and parent company Guidewell to add more employees and will help development on Park Street, Boyer said. The company currently uses a surface lot, but the Forest Street garage is set to be four stories high and is to be used by both employees and residents who want to go out to dinner or spend time

downtown. There might be a cost to park, but if so, it would go toward the cost of security and lighting. Public parking begins after 6 p.m. on weekdays and all weekend. The city gave the land to Florida Blue at no cost, along with a more than \$3 million grant. It will have 869 spaces total, with 750 available to the public.

“I think that garage will help not only Unity Plaza from an activation nights and weekends standpoint but also the future development planned on Park Street,” Boyer said. “I really like the idea of shared-use facilities. Something’s sole use isn’t corporate that sits vacant in other areas. I really appreciate Florida Blue’s willingness to make this available for us nights and weekends.”

The city is also realigning Forest Street. “Part of Forest was wanting to align the road all the way to the river and have all those nice wide sidewalks go down to the river,” Boyer said. “And there is Gefen Park down at the end of it. Right now, it is almost like an alley and the intersection doesn’t line up.”

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# TAKING ACTION TO PRESERVE SAN MARCO

Thank you San Marco Preservations Society for taking a stand against developers trying to skirt around zoning codes, saying NO to fuzzy math building height formulas that will set a precedent for all city districts and standing firm in protecting the San Marco Overlay. Right Size San Marco is in full agreement, and we applaud your definitive vote against the land use change to South Jax's property and the developer's tactics to relax the standards in the San Marco Overlay.

**We completely agree. This development can be a win-win for everyone, if done right. Just say no to the land use change and stop the new formula for calculating height. It's that simple!**

## Here's how all of San Marco can win:

Developers would have a 3-story, 114 unit apartment complex with a 3-level, two-story parking garage. That's only 19 units less than what they are asking. The church will be able to sell its property and stay in the community. The community will continue to thrive with more density than is currently allowed on the site, but still have the protection of the San Marco Overlay. Let's Get It Right!



## THIS IS NOT OVER. YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED.

Legal representation has been acquired to maintain the character of the area and make developers follow the San Marco Overlay as intended. Please consider donating at [RightSizeSanMarco.com](http://RightSizeSanMarco.com).

## SAVE THE DATES. YOUR VOICE NEEDS TO BE HEARD!

February 4th at 5 PM, LUZ Vote

February 11th at 5 PM, City Council Final Vote

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## THE SECURE ACT

“Man plans, and God laughs” is a repeatedly pertinent Yiddish adage which, as of January 1st, could be downgraded to “You plan, Congress chuckles.” The Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act, aka the SECURE Act, provides plenty of positive changes to retirement savings, but it does require many plans to be revised. The Act includes significant changes for IRAs, earned and inherited, as well as adds new abilities for 401k and 529 plans. While most legislation makes its way into the marginal minutia bin, the SECURE Act demands changes to most estate and financial plans.

Immediate changes will be felt in traditional IRAs with the delay in required minimum distributions (RMDs) to age 72 and the immediate removal of the age cap for contributions. Aside from your privately enjoyed half birthday cupcake, 70 ½ no longer calls for celebration. Continue contributing to your IRA and the RMD ball won't drop for another year and a half. Although, you may have to eat that cake a little quicker if you inherit an IRA. Previously, distributions from an inherited retirement account could be “stretched” across a beneficiary's lifetime but the SECURE Act removes this provision and requires all distributions to be taken within 10 years. Whether personally better or worse, most situations are grandfathered in. If you are already taking RMDs, you must continue, and if you inherited an IRA before January 1st, you can continue to stretch the distributions over your lifetime.

The Act also changes 401k and 529 plans. Money strapped millennials can withdraw up to \$10,000 to pay for student loans from a 529 plan or pull out \$5,000 of penalty-free distributions for child related expenses from any retirement account within a year of birth or adoption. Any generation pining for a pension plan can remodel their 401k into a lifetime annuity creating their own personal pension if they desire something other than traditional investments. There are many exceptions and nuances within the SECURE Act but if you haven't taken the new changes into account, it is worthwhile to review your financial and estate plan with your advisor....And if you do not have an advisor, there is a pretty good looking group in the ad below.

Caleb Cronin is a financial advisor with Raymond James & Associates, Inc. Opinions expressed in the attached article are those of the author and are not necessarily those of Raymond James.

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## Historic fire station razed to make way for corporate headquarters

By Jennifer Edwards  
Resident Community News

Jacksonville's old fire station No. 5, located on Riverside Avenue and vacant for years, was razed at the end of January. The City efficiently demolished it over a few days to make way for road construction that will ease access to a new corporate headquarters for financial services giant Fidelity Information Services (FIS) and a new parking garage for Florida Blue.

Luring FIS headquarters to Jacksonville was a coup for the City, and its move to the First Coast brings 1,800 jobs downtown. The City is currently working with FIS on the last details of the headquarters, so that construction may commence. The City is also committed to a realignment of Forest Street in order to make access easier and is planning road renovations by the river.

The modest fire station, which was constructed less than 10 years after the Great Fire in 1901, housed generations of people who fought blazes many years after. There were plenty who cared about the old building, which had few embellishments but housed decades of first responders. More than 3,100 people signed an online petition on Change.org, and nearly 2,000 followed Old Fire Station No. 5 on Facebook. Even so, no concrete plan materialized that addressed practicalities, such as how to pay for an expensive move, where to move it to, or how to pay for maintenance bills and showcase it once it got there.

That doesn't change the fact that it is gone now.

“If you drive down from Riverside and Avondale, you see it every day,” Warren Jones, Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) executive director, said in January. “To know that building is not going to be there, it's like losing an old friend. That in itself is very sad. Certainly, there were quite a few people who really wanted to make it work where we were able to move that building and save it. The economics apparently did not work for that to happen.”

In its most recent pictures, the station looks as nondescript as any other ubiquitous modern block building—angular, painted in a forgettable and faded shade of beige, with its long-unused maroon bay doors the only eye-catching part of the building. At the end of 2019 the station was flanked by portable toilets to one side, a weedy unkempt parking lot on the other, and it was impossible to miss the contrast between the squat building and the towering, glass fronted corporate offices behind and adjacent to it, including the glassy and polished Florida Blue offices located catty corner. But the façade belied a long history and was significant for many reasons, including its longevity



Fire station 5 was vacant for years before the City moved forward with plans to demolish it in order to update the roads leading to a planned corporate headquarters for FIS; no firm plan emerged from the neighborhoods to preserve the station.

and its geography. In its heyday, it was the pride of the neighborhood, equipped with early 20th century firefighting equipment that surpassed what was available in most of the city. It had more men, more horses to pull more equipment and thus, provided more protection from the kind of fire that had devastated the city less than a decade before. The station also served more than one neighborhood.

“This fire station was located exactly on the boundary line between the suburbs of Brooklyn and Riverside – Forest Street was the historic boundary line, which emphasizes that this fire station was constructed to serve both neighborhoods,” said Wood, a founder of RAP.

A newer station was constructed years ago to service the area and is in operation at 2433 Forest Street. The old station was boarded up and had been vacant for years. And while Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) Chief Executive Officer Lori Boyer told *The Resident* in January that a lot of community members and groups had expressed interest in preserving the old fire station, only one responded to a request for proposal the DIA put in November 2019 with a deadline in early December 2019 for the building to be moved by March 1. That's probably due to the sheer amount of money it would have taken to relocate the building, renovate and maintain it. Each of those tasks carried a huge price tag, even if land were donated for it to occupy, which was an idea floated before the end of the 30-day proposal period.

### The cost of preservation

The cost alone of moving the building would weigh in the range of \$500,000 according to estimates, Boyer said. Then, there was the small radius of potential sites to consider. According to City documents, the aim was to keep the historic building in its native Brooklyn or neighboring Riverside. Even if that wasn't the preference, logistics spoke. In order to move the building, the mast arms would have to be removed from traffic signals in order for the multi-story building to travel along the streets of the Brooklyn neighborhood, and the height of highway overpasses – which could not be changed – would have prevented it moving farther afield efficiently. There was also the question of whose lot it would be moved to, and while Boyer (and City documents) indicated a potential donor had come forward to suggest his site be used, there were concerns about who would maintain the building and what it would be used for. The donor did not want a derelict building on the site and did not submit a final proposal.

“That station was going to be very, very difficult to move,” Jones explained. “It wasn't a contributing structure, meaning not a historic structure that people really, really wanted to preserve. In some cases, you are able to preserve those locations,” such as the Laura Street buildings in downtown Jacksonville. The fact that the Laura Street buildings are being rehabilitated was also a coup; repurposing historic buildings almost always comes with huge cost overruns and take a lot of capital to back.

In the Fire Station 5's case, a plan did not appear and so the Forest Street alignment goes on.

In the end, DIA turned the building over to the City Department of Public Works for demolition. City spokeswoman Marjorie Dennis wrote in an email that the building would be demolished by the end of January, and demolition would take about a month at a cost of \$50,000, a fraction of the price tag it would have taken to move it. Still, preservationists count it a sad day to see an historic structure demolished.

“People come to Riverside and Avondale to live because of the historic architecture we have here. That is something people are attracted to,” Jones said. “That's our job, to show the value of maintaining those structures. Certainly, there were quite a few people who really wanted to make it work where we were able to move that building and save it. The economics apparently did not work for that to happen.”



Fire Station 5 was vacant for years before the City moved forward with plans to demolish it in order to update the roads leading to a planned corporate headquarters for FIS

# With new City resiliency committee, Carlucci aims to mitigate flooding

**By Marcia Hodgson**  
Resident Community News

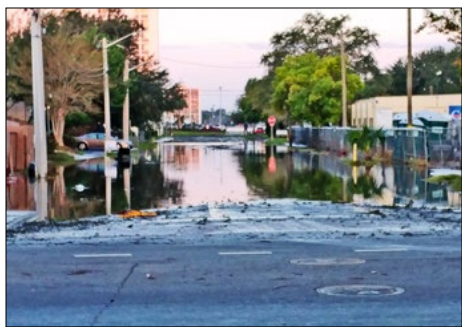
It's no secret Jacksonville is a city that is dangerously flood prone. In many areas of the historic districts, summer showers cause nuisance flooding. Even a weak hurricane can cause potentially catastrophic damage.

In 2013, a Duval County report showed a 20-foot storm surge along the St. Johns River could be caused by a Category 3 hurricane. Even a Category 1 tempest could force six feet of water into downtown. Yet, in 2015, more than half of all active projects aimed to help Duval County survive such storms were unfunded, according to information obtained by *The Resident*.

At-Large Group 4 Councilman Matt Carlucci wants to change all that.

In November, City Council President Scott Wilson named Carlucci chair of the Council's a Special Committee on Resilience to address the city's ability to swiftly recover after being struck by severe weather and flooding. Joining Carlucci on the committee will be Council members Michael Boylan, Aaron Bowman, Randy DeFoor, Garrett Dennis, Joyce Morgan and Wilson. Advising the committee will be City officials, members of the nonprofit and business communities, all of which will be asked to help to develop a resiliency strategy for the county.

"If we get hit by a Category 3 hurricane, the people of Jacksonville are going to be stunned," said Carlucci. "We need to be ready to handle that."



Flooding in North San Marco due to Hurricane Irma.

The committee held its first of seven monthly meetings Jan. 27. The theme of the meeting was "Setting the Scene of Climate Change and Sea-level Rise," and Glenn Landers of the Army Corps of Engineers and Whitney Gray of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection were guest speakers.

The second meeting to be held in February will discuss, "City Efforts to Date," with speakers Bill Killingsworth, City director of Planning and Development and John Pappas, director of Public Works. That meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, Feb. 27 at 2 p.m. in the Lynwood Roberts Room at City Hall, 117 W. Duval St.

The March meeting, with date and time to be announced, will feature speakers Dr. Adam Rosenblatt from the University of North Florida, Dr. A. Quinton White, of Jacksonville University, and a presentation by the St. Johns Riverkeeper. The topic will be, "Problems and Solutions."

In April, Florida's Chief Resilience Officer, Dr. Julia Nesheiwat, will be featured and in May a community discussion will be

facilitated by Steve Halverson, president and CEO of Haskell Company.

The committee will discuss and try to find a "consensus on initial priority actions and assignments for implementation" in June, and July's meeting will involve releasing a report and discussing ways to introduce the first round of legislation it wishes to have implemented.

The committee has been established on the heels of two previous city resiliency study groups: The Adaption, Action Area (Triple A) Workgroup, which was headed by Emily Pierce of Rogers Towers P.A., and the Storm Resiliency and Infrastructure Development Review Committee, an ad hoc advisory group established by Mayor Lenny Curry and former City Council President Aaron Bowman and led by Curry's former Chief Administrative Officer Sam Mousa and former District 5 Councilwoman Lori Boyer. Mousa and Boyer's committee developed Ordinance 2019-331, which amended Chapter 652 of the City's Floodplain Management Ordinance with new infrastructure rules that apply to all of Duval County. The current special committee may also consider the valuable work done by the Northeast Florida Regional Council on resiliency and sea-level rise.

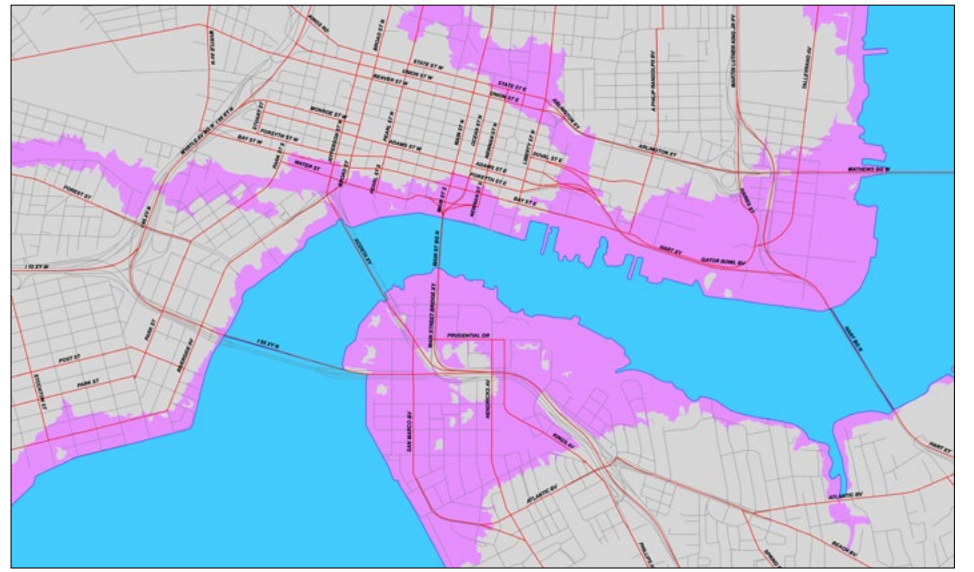
"What I'm trying to do is pick up where these two committees left off and bring together all these other organizations, individuals and consultants on the environment. I want to incorporate a lot of the ideas out of the two studies and be a conduit for those recommendations into the City Council to make council policy so that when rezoning comes up, some of our policies may direct that rezoning," Carlucci said.

"I want builders' groups to be involved because I don't want our committee to introduce any legislation that may hinder development or have unintended consequences on the building community," he continued. "The building community can be part of the solution. We are all going to have to give and take here, and the only way to play give and take is to have everybody at the table."

"With resiliency, we're going to need some short-term solutions and some long-term solutions. Perhaps one of the most critical issues of our time is to begin trying to leave our city more livable for future generations," he said.

An insurance agent who has handled more than 1,000 flood claims in his career, Carlucci wants to explore having the City hire a resiliency officer with staffing to help drive the process. He also wants to set up a city relief fund to help people with flood damage who are living in the poverty range and may not have flood or home insurance or can't meet their deductible. "The state of Florida and the City of St. Augustine have resilience officers. We need one," he said. "The relief fund is important because FEMA doesn't cut you a check overnight."

Other ideas the committee may discuss are encouraging practical individual resilience measures such as having homeowners in flood-prone areas put outside air-conditioning units and water heaters on stainless steel pedestals, planting more



City planning map of Downtown, San Marco and Riverside where the purple delineates areas that are more at risk of flooding due to sea-level rise, storm surge and coastal overflow.

trees, and dredging back to their original depth St. Johns River tributaries such as Craig Creek, Christopher Creek, McCoy's Creek and the Ribault River among others.

"If Craig Creek is dredged back to its original depth it might hold more water back to keep from going into people's homes. We need to think a little differently about this. If you dredge out Craig Creek, that's not just going to help people on the creek but also other people as well. We are going to have to look for grant money from the federal government and the state government, anywhere we can find the additional dollars needed to strategically – and I'm not sure which tributaries will need it – dredge them back to their original depth," he said.

Recognizing that some homeowners, such as those in the Millers Creek Special Tax District, have paid thousands of dollars individually to have the creeks

near their homes dredged, Carlucci said the city may in the future have to step in and dredge waterways for public safety and the public good.

"Some people will say, 'How come we had to pay for ours and now you are doing it for free?' Well, because there was a day when you were dredging, and it was only to better your quality of life. Now these creeks may need to be part of a city-wide policy to mitigate flooding throughout the whole county. It's just different," he said, adding that dredging helps increase property values and make creeks more navigable. "I'm not saying that having people help with the cost is not part of the solution. I just don't know. I just think if dredging some of these rivers is an important part in making our city more resilient, then as a county-wide public policy, it may lend itself to the public, as a whole, paying for it."



Flooded Landon roundabout on San Marco Boulevard after the waters from Hurricane Irma have receded.

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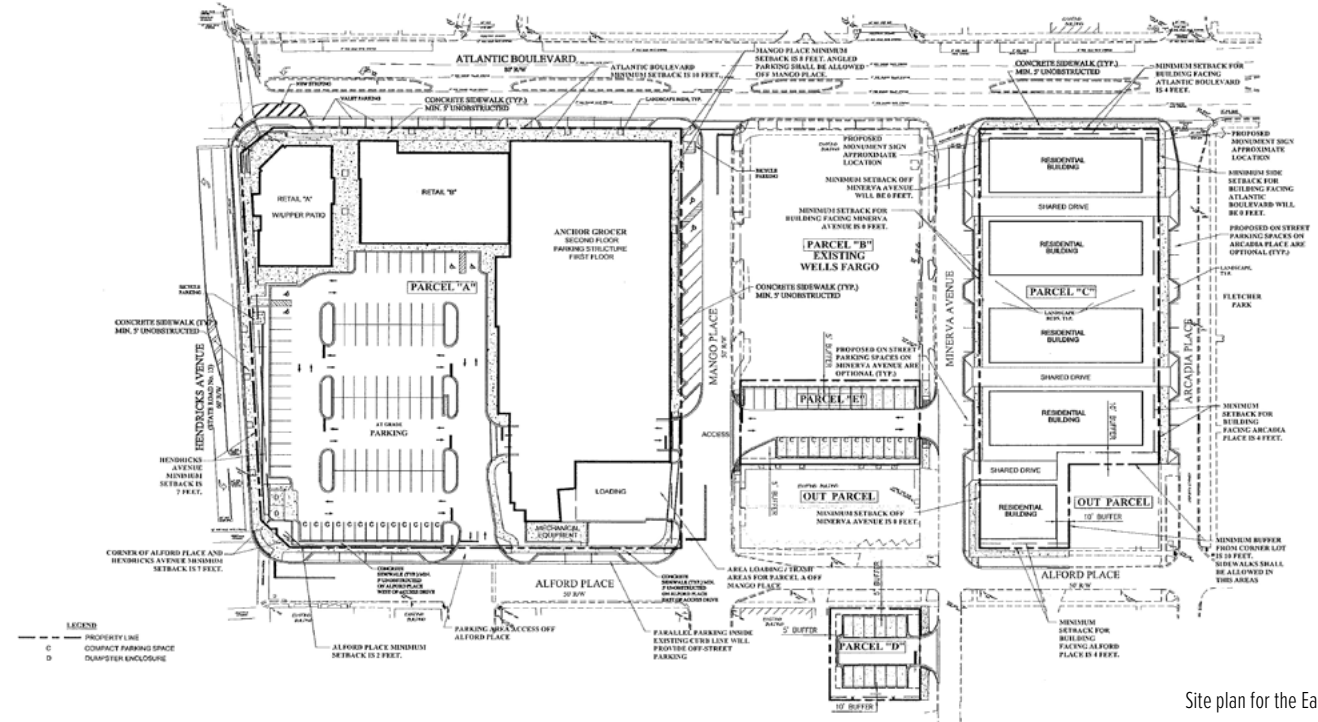
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# Publix PUD FROM PAGE 1

The current plan, which was heavily vetted and approved by District 5 Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber and the San Marco Preservation Society, will be much less intense. Requesting to rezone their 4.3 acres from PUD to PUD, Regency Centers intends to build 62,000 square feet of commercial space and 35 townhomes on the property. Bulldozers should arrive in the Spring 2020, and the plan is for the first restaurants and retailers to be open in the fourth quarter of 2021, said Patrick McKinley, during a town hall meeting sponsored by the SMPS in October 2019.

Speaking at the January LUZ meeting was Staci Rewis, a lawyer with Gunster Law who represents San Marco LLC, a subsidiary of its parent company, Regency Centers. She said the company plans to build the shopping complex as planned and include two new conditions: 1.) a turning lane will be constructed at the intersection of Atlantic Boulevard and Mango Place and 2.) Regency Centers will contribute \$10,000 to the city so that a crosswalk can be built somewhere on Atlantic Boulevard between Hendricks Avenue and the railroad tracks.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Jon Livingston, a spokesman for the grassroots community group Right Size San Marco, requested that more conditions be added specifying that the developers of East San Marco work with the developers of neighboring Park Place at San Marco to ensure that the landscaping and streetscape be pedestrian friendly and consistent with the San Marco neighborhood. He mentioned that the traffic study submitted by Regency Centers noted that there would be an estimated 5,180 new daily



Site plan for the East San Marco PUD

trips to the shopping center on San Marco streets. He also said the development would be the second largest in San Marco history, and that the largest development would be multi-family apartment complex and parking garage on the Park Place at San Marco PUD, which will encompass much of the land next door currently owned by South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church.

“It’s great to hear about the left turn lane onto Atlantic Boulevard, but one of the things I would like to propose is that you look at the traffic patterns for Landon Middle School and how they come in and come out. Right now, there is a tremendous issue in the morning and evening with Atlantic Boulevard being backed up. Maybe they could look at Landon and see how they can move their traffic, so it won’t affect the area as much,” he said. He also expressed concern over the number of palm trees, not

shade trees, that are to be planted according to the PUD’s plans.

Rewis said Regency Centers has worked “tirelessly” with Cumber, SMPS and others who have supplied feedback on the project and has tried to accommodate their concerns. “The fact is, this site is not a typical suburban site, it’s an urban priority area,” she said. “It’s a tight site and in order to built this Publix, the parameters are as much as we can do with the landscaping and the sidewalks.” She added that if Livingston had reached out earlier the developer would have been able to discuss it with his group. “Right now, the plans are in, and we are ready to move forward, and I think the community is ready for this Publix. I don’t know what the timetable is for Park Place, but we don’t have the time to sit around,” she said. “There is a lot of momentum right now as well as money on the table, and we need to move forward.”

Several City Council members indicated they understood Livingston’s concerns but expressed a reluctance to insist that Regency go back to the drawing board. “It sounds like they are going across the finish line and I don’t want to stop it,” said District 2 Councilmember Al Ferraro. District 11 Councilman Danny Becton agreed. “Tonight, we are on the one-yard line trying to push it into the end zone, but it doesn’t mean communication has to stop tonight,” he said.

Vice President and Market Officer for Regency Centers Patrick McKinley agreed it was a good idea for his company to coordinate with the developers of San Marco Place on the sidewalks and landscaping. “Can we coordinate with them on what our sidewalk and landscaping will look like? Absolutely,” he said. “We want a harmonious look for San Marco as well.”

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# Organizations find ways to rescue historical record

## LOCAL HISTORY THREATENED BY DUMPSTER

By Jennifer Edwards  
Resident Community News

As information sharing becomes ever-more digital, historians worldwide are contending with the problem of how to preserve the historical record. That problem is no less pressing than in Jacksonville as print newspapers and photographs and their negatives are threatened with the dumpster.

In November, *The Resident* published a story about longtime San Marco photographer Curt Coenen and his attempt to preserve old photo negatives of the City from the 1940s through the 1970s, which was a period of intense growth for the area. The negatives were passed to him from another photographer who no longer wanted the cumbersome collection. He's kept it about 40 years and at 3,000 negatives and counting, Coenen is still trying to scan and digitize the photos by himself.

"I'm still in the process of cataloging and doing that sort of thing," Coenen said in mid-December. "Right now, it is just a matter of keeping it organized. They are available if someone wants to take a deeper dive into it."

Meanwhile, earlier in 2019, Gatehouse Media purchased the *Florida Times-Union* (T-U) and donated its extensive archive of print news stories, photographs and negatives to the Jacksonville Historical Society (JHS) and the Jacksonville Public Library after the paper was moved to a smaller space in the Wells Fargo building downtown. JHS

Executive Director Alan Bliss said the archives dated back at to the 1920s and occupied at least 3,500 feet after being condensed and were too expensive for the T-U to house. Now, Bliss is trying to raise funds to renovate and expand the Casket Company Building in order to archive and digitize the society's collections. He said the first phase would cost about \$300,000, and he's been offered a challenge grant by the Delores Barr Weaver Foundation of \$50,000, which means her foundation will match up to that amount. The grant was in honor of his predecessor, former Historical Society Executive Director Emily Lisska.

Bliss said the story archives, the photo library and the photo negatives used to be a major resource for the T-U staff, but the metropolitan daily has, like many newspapers, continued to shed staff.

"There used to be six librarians there, and then there was one, and then there was no one curating it," he recalled. In the end, JHS and the Public Library split the collection, with the photos and negatives going to the Historical Society and the textual copy going to the library. Bliss described the collective trove as "many shelves of manila file folders that were organized to the peculiar protocol of a newsroom. It is not a conventional protocol that any archive would use."

"That was a big rescue. It was a surprise," Bliss said. "Both of us (the Historical Society and library) determined we would keep it from going to the Dumpster or taken out of Jacksonville. I know there was some out-of-town interest in it."

The photos are now housed at the Society, and the Jacksonville Public Library now houses the printed stories.

Laura Minor, manager of special collections at the Public Library, said her department's role is to preserve the city's history so it can be available for generations to come. The materials are now available in her department, the fourth floor of the main library downtown. Many of the files have been digitized and are available at [www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/research/collections](http://www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/research/collections). Careful consideration was given to which organization would house which materials.

"The Historical Society as a preservation organization was best suited to take the negatives as these are the kinds of things that aren't regularly accessed, but preserved for when someone needs them," she explained. "They also are better equipped to turn negatives into photos. The library – while it also preserves local history – is all about providing ready access to information and had an available climate-controlled area available to the public. The library does currently have the 1979-2002 portion of the negatives for viewing and is working on a plan to digitize all the archives. If this hadn't worked out, we would have found a way to preserve this extremely valuable collection, but we thank Alan for making this happen!"

Paul Bourcier, Museum of Science and History curator is part of a local History Consortium task force trying to develop an overall plan for protecting the collective local record. The consortium is a loose affiliation of several local organizations working together to drive preservation, awareness and tourism. He said the task force was trying to find a way that member organizations could work together toward a common goal, one that included acquiring,

*"We're always looking to expand our collection of yearbooks, photographs, documents, books, recordings and other materials that complete the timeline of our city."*

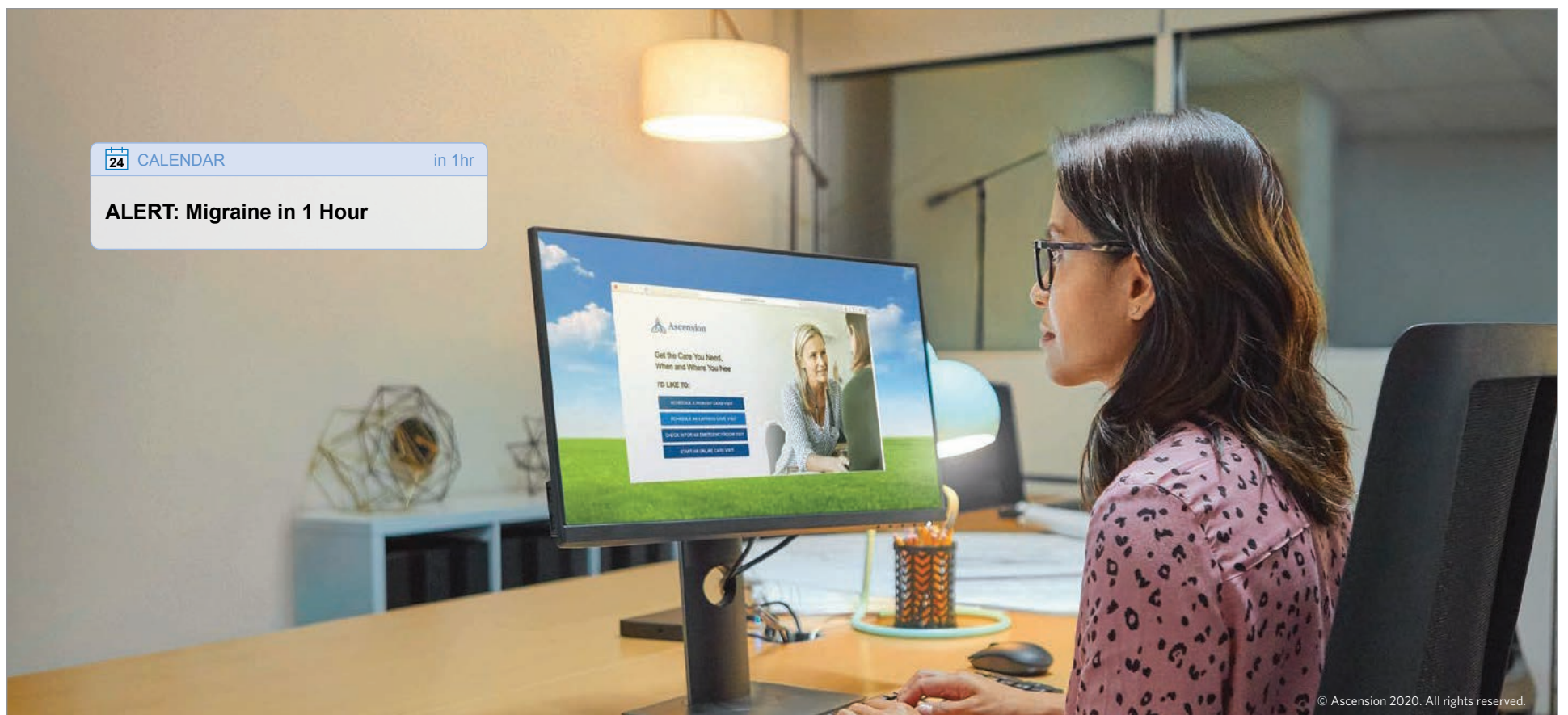
— Chris Boivin, library assistant director of community relations and marketing

preserving, sharing, and sometimes disposing of collection material.

"We feel that, through such a collaborative approach, we can identify areas worthy of preservation, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make better use of limited resources. It's not advisable for any one of our organizations to chart a course for future collecting without knowing what our colleagues are doing," Bourcier said. "It's taking time, but I think we're moving in the right direction."

In the meantime, residents with a piece of the historical record to donate are encouraged to contact the library downtown on Laura Street.

"No matter how small or large, people can contact us about donating pieces of Jacksonville history to the library," said Chris Boivin, library assistant director of community relations and marketing. "We're always looking to expand our collection of yearbooks, photographs, documents, books, recordings and other materials that complete the timeline of our city. If anyone has collections or tips on collections of local history that need a home, call Special Collections at 904-630-2409, or contact us through our website, or stop by."



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# First Coast Home Pros: The pros you can depend on

## JAX FAMILY BUSINESS OFFERS BEVY OF HOME SERVICES

When Josh Kennedy got a job cleaning windows in the summer of 2002, he couldn't have foreseen that he would later found a family business in Jacksonville that by 2020 employs 65 people, all of them specialists in household services like pressure washing, upholstery cleaning and home repairs. While the window washing job helped him pay his way through college at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, it also netted him a promotion to project manager at the same company after he graduated in 2005.



Josh Kennedy

"I really started to learn the business. That was helpful to gain a broader understanding of how this business works," he explained. "They have different locations in the U.S., so I was able to get involved at another location in its early, developmental stages."

In 2008, he followed his family to Jacksonville and stayed when he met his now-wife Rachel. He used what he'd learned to start a full service cleaning business here, his first, and later spun off other businesses, including Jax Furniture Refinishing &

Upholstering, managed by his father, master craftsman Bill Kennedy, The Painting Craftsmen - managed by his high school friend Chris Arnett and specializes in interior and exterior painting and Cabinet Refinishing - RugPro Oriental Rug Cleaning and GrillsOS, a grill cleaning service. Rachel joined the business in 2009, adding maid services to the lineup. Now, First Coast Home Pros offers all those services and many more under one banner.

"Our maid service is one of the larger parts of our business," Josh said. "She still works in the business, but now puts her accounting background to work doing our bookkeeping and payroll. We've got a really great staff, great managers who do a really good job running their respective divisions. That's one of our major strengths, the quality of our team. Everybody throughout the organization, we have a really great team, which helps us be successful." Angie's List seems to agree; it bestowed on First Coast Home Pros its 10th consecutive Super Service Award in 2018, the same year the business added its latest offering, handyman services. Last year, the company also netted a Bold City Best award for Best Cleaning/Maid Service. And, in 2013, 2014 and 2015 the Jacksonville Business Journal named it one of the 50 fastest growing privately held companies in Northeast Florida.

"We're a full-service cleaning company," Kennedy explained. "We have teams of specialists in different areas of the business



that really focus on and specialize in their various trades. It's a wide range of services but everyone specializes."

The company also has the knowledge and experience to fix, clean and preserve older historic homes, which he said takes experience.

"We really got our start in the historic neighborhoods - San Marco, Avondale, Ortega and Springfield. Working on historic homes is really something that is a specialty of ours, something that we really take a lot of pride in because it is a different level of care. You've got simple issues like windows being painted shut. You have old, original glass in windows that require a different level of care when cleaning. Even pressure washing a home is different. You have concern with lead-based paint. We have a special EPA certification when you are dealing with that. When you are working with these older homes, you have to watch out for asbestos

roofs, slate roofs, and tile roofs. There are even some roofs that shouldn't be cleaned at all. It's just a totally different ball game dealing with the older homes."

Still, the most unique thing about the business is that it is a one-stop shop. Customers can call and talk to the same people on the phone to arrange all needed home services through just one account.

"The beautiful thing about it is, we have teams of specialists. Even though we are a one-stop shop, we are not a jack of all trades," he reiterated. "That's really important from a customer perspective. In all the different things we do, we have true expertise. Say someone is buying or selling a home and they have 15 projects they need done to the home, it's really helpful to have just have one company to coordinate everything, do things in the right order, to have one partner in these projects who will be accountable and who really values your business."

For more about the business or to see the full list of services it offers, go to [FirstCoastHomePros.com](http://FirstCoastHomePros.com) or call 383-7721.

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## NAI Hallmark Promotes Daniel Burkhardt to senior vice president

Daniel Burkhardt, a Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) who holds a Master of Science in real estate, has been promoted to the role of senior vice president of NAI Hallmark. Burkhardt specializes in investment sales of office, retail and industrial assets.



Daniel Burkhardt

He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in finance from the University of Florida in 2011 and a Master of Science in real estate from UF in 2012. He is active in several business and civic organizations and serves as the 2020 National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) Developing Leaders Chair for Northeast Florida and 2020 CCIM North District President. He is also involved with ImpactJAX and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville.

"Daniel epitomizes the core values that guide our company," said Christian Harden, managing partner at NAI Hallmark. "Since joining NAI Hallmark seven years ago, he has quickly risen to become one of our top performers year after year. His outstanding work ethic, passion, and humble commitment to our clients has made him a great example for our younger producers starting a career in commercial real estate."

Since 2012, Mr. Burkhardt has represented clients in more than 200 transactions totaling over \$275 million in value and has assisted in developing NAI Hallmark as a market leader in investment sales. His most recent transactions include Belfort Office Park, Wells Lake Commerce Center, Fleming Island Business Park and the Bankers Life Building. In 2017, he was awarded the NAIOP Developing Leader of the Year for Northeast Florida.

NAI Hallmark is a full-service commercial real estate company specializing in sales and leasing brokerage, property management, corporate services and development in Northeast Florida. Established in 1993, NAI Hallmark is currently involved in the leasing and/or management of a portfolio in excess of 6.5 million square feet of office, industrial and retail properties in the Jacksonville market.

## Family honors daughter's memory with gift of music

To honor their beloved daughter, a Lakewood couple has donated the gift of a music to the new Fine Arts Center at North Florida School of Special Education.

Although her time on earth was short – only two months longer than doctors thought possible – Katie Slotkin's life was a miracle. Born on March 4, 2002 to Elisabeth and Steve Slotkin, Katie had Trisomy 13, a genetic difference very similar to Down Syndrome, which was discovered during a prenatal screening.

The doctors said Katie would not live past birth, so her parents went to the hospital on what should have been the happiest day of their lives prepared to meet and say good-bye to their precious baby girl. They brought no car seat, no cute onesie for the ride home. As it turned out, they would need both. Katie defied her doctors. She took her first gasp of air and followed by her first gulp of milk. And so, the doctors sent the new family home.

Katie's parents loved on their daughter for two months before her time on earth passed. Today Katie's memory lives on three ways – in her families' hearts, in a musical composition that her grandfather wrote and dedicated to her before birth, and in the piano that he gifted to their family.



Melanie Slotkin and her baby, Xander, Elisabeth and Steve Slotkin, Colin Horn and Evie Schellenberg watch as Cole Parris and his music teacher, Ciaran Sontag, play the piano the Slotkin's donated to new Fine Arts Center at North Florida School of Special Education to honor their daughter, Katie, who passed away when she was two months old.

If she had lived, today Katie would be 17 years old. Her parents decided it was time to share the gift of her memory and the piano to children who would have been her friends, students at North Florida School of Special Education.

Days before the opening of the school's new Fine Arts Center, gifted by Jill and Charlie Arnold, excitement mounted as

the piano arrived. Children gathered to see it, touch it, play it. "The piano will be an instrument of joy for all the students at North Florida School of Special Education," said Head of School Sally Hazelip. "It will always be a celebration of a friend our students never met, but who has touched their lives just the same."

## Junior Achievement receives grant to fund JA Work\$ and JA Girl\$

Junior Achievement of North Florida has received a grant from the Arby's Foundation, the charitable arm of Arby's in December 2019. JA of North Florida will receive \$33,600 to help fund their work readiness programs. \$30,000 will be applied to the *JA Work\$* program and the remainder of the money will help fund the *JA Girl\$* at work program.

"Arby's Foundation is a wonderful partner, not only for their monetary contributions to our organization but for their volunteer efforts as well," said Steve St. Amand, president of JA of North Florida. "Having partners like Arby's in our community is why we have been able to reach more than 62,000 students in a year. We look forward to continuing the partnership with hopes to reach even more youth in the future."

Recently, volunteers from the Arby's Foundation taught the *JA Career Success* program at Westside High School. The volunteers taught two sessions of the program in four classrooms with a focus on skills the students need to get and keep their dream jobs. The students used communication skills to resolve conflicts in work-based scenarios and practiced



Volunteers from the Arby's Foundation taught the JA Career Success program at Westside High School

collaboration skills by using team building to complete work-based challenges.

*JA Work\$* is designed for high school students of all genders to get them ready to enter the workforce. The program focuses on earning money, spending wisely through budgeting, and saving and investing money. The students also learn how to use credit cautiously and are taught the tools and skills they need to earn and keep

a job in high-growth career industries. The students are exposed to hands-on learning experiences that help them develop who they want to be and what they want to accomplish and also heightens their understanding of the role education plays in their future success. *JA Girl\$* teaches the same skills of financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship but within an all-girl setting.

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## Seth Roebuck joins Coker Law



Seth Roebuck

Coker Law is pleased to announce the addition of attorney Seth Roebuck as the newest member of the firm. He will focus on plaintiff's personal injury law, including motor vehicle crashes, trucking crashes, personal injury, slip and fall, brain/spinal cord injury, wrongful death, premises liability, construction accidents, general negligence, and dram shop laws. Roebuck is no stranger to Coker Law, having spent his summers during law school as a clerk at the firm.

"Seth's commitment to excellence was apparent during law school and we are thrilled to now have him as a permanent member of our team, as one who shares our Coker Law values," said Howard Coker.

Prior to receiving his Juris Doctorate degree from Florida Coastal School of Law in May of 2019, Roebuck was a proud Florida State Seminole. He received a Bachelor of Science in Finance from FSU in 2016 before moving back to his hometown of Jacksonville to attend law school. Roebuck is excited to be back in Jacksonville and follow in the footsteps of his attorney father, Raymond Roebuck.

In September, Roebuck was sworn in by longtime mentor and family friend, Judge James Daniel, at the Duval County Courthouse, where he was surrounded by family, friends and fellow Coker Law team members. Roebuck clerked for Judge Daniel throughout his time in law school and now serves as a pupil at the Chester Bedell Inn of Court. He will go on to be admitted to the Florida Bar and use his knowledge, skills, and tenacity to serve the clients of Coker Law.

"Having the ability to help those in need always made the idea of becoming a lawyer a dream to me," said Roebuck. "After clerking for Coker Law throughout law school, it is now truly an honor to be able to work at a place that I know has the amount of experience, guidance, and passion for the law that Coker Law does. Those qualities are what allow us to give our clients the representation they need and deserve."

## THE PLAYERS Championship honors babies at Baptist

In celebration of tournament week, every baby born at a Baptist Health hospital between March 11 and 17 will receive an "Island Time" baby onesie from THE PLAYERS Championship. This includes newborns being cared for in the Wolfson Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Units at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Baptist Medical Center South. Moms can post pictures of their newborn wearing the onesie on social media using the hashtag #THEPLAYERS.

Also, for moms and dads with babies, Baptist Health is sponsoring a complimentary Family Care Center during the tournament as a respite for parents and their little ones. The center has four private breastfeeding rooms, changing tables with diapers, a



Baby Myles dons an "Island Time" onesie

refrigerator and waters. The center is located near THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience behind the Island Green 17th hole.

Baptist Health is also the official First Aid care provider at the tournament. First Aid stations, staffed by members of Baptist Health's medical team, will be located throughout the tournament course.

## Disco and Warhol shine at the Cummer

Art fans ushered in 2020 with a disco-themed dinner party, the Art of Pop, at the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens Jan. 16. Guests were encouraged to time warp back to 1977 and dress accordingly – disco, big pant legs and vintage Halston, if you please. During the event, dinner party guests were treated to libations, hors d'oeuvres and dinner, a private art tour and themed music. Doing the hustle was optional. The event celebrating the Cummer's recent acquisition of works by legendary pop-culture figure and artist Andy Warhol.



Kerrie Slattery and Tracey Westbrooke



Rick and Amy Morales with Preeti Swani



Barbara Colaciello as Andy Warhol



Neely Towe, Barbara Ketchum, Joan Haskell, Rolf Towe, Preston Haskell, Frank and Sally Surface, Bill Ketchum



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Project Cold Case Executive Director Ryan Backmann with Atlantic Beach Mayor Ellen Glasser and Daisy Glasser

### Project: Cold Case celebrates five years

Families of homicide victims, members of law enforcement and community supports gathered to celebrate the Project: Cold Case's Year of Hope 5th Annual Fundraiser at Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Legacy Lodge Event Center Jan. 25.

The well attended early afternoon event included a presentation by Project: Cold Case Executive Director Ryan Backmann as well as informational talks by members of the Southeastern Homicide Investigators Association (SEHIA) and Innovative Forensic DNA, an organization that provides investigative genetic genealogy services to law enforcement. The three organizations have formed a year-long partnership called Upload for Justice to encourage law enforcement officers, families of victims, survivors, advocates and the public to upload their DNA to databases for use in cold case investigations.

DNA testing was offered to guests of the event, and home DNA testing kits were available to those who wanted to provide a DNA sample at a later time.

During his presentation, Backmann said that his nonprofit currently has 23,000 cold cases in its database making it the "most comprehensive data base in the world." Even with the large numbers, the data base still represents less than 10% of the unsolved murder cases in the United States, he said.

Although Backmann is quick to point out that Project: Cold Case's mission is not to solve old homicide cases – that's the job of law enforcement – he is proud his nonprofit can shine light on the unsolved mysteries behind the cases and that 18 of the cases featured on its website have been solved.

He also said the Finker-Frenkel Family Foundation has offered to pay a \$10,000 reward for information that solves any cold case listed on the nonprofit's website.

# Thomas to chair first Go Red for Women luncheon

Baptist Medical Center South Hospital President Nicole B. Thomas is chairing the 2020 Go Red for Women initiative, with a goal of raising \$475,000 for the American Heart Association (AHA) to end heart disease and stroke in women. Thomas, a San Marco resident, was the first woman to head Baptist Medical Center South, the second-largest hospital in the Baptist Health system.

As chair, Thomas will work diligently with community members and executive leaders to support the First Coast Go Red for Women Luncheon, scheduled for Friday, May 15, will welcome a crowd of 400 local business, healthcare, civic, and philanthropic leaders to raise funds for continued research, education and outreach. In the meantime, participants are encouraged to select a goal that fits their lifestyle and pledge to make a change over the next several months.

First Coast American Heart Association Executive Director Amber Wilson said her organization was thrilled to have Thomas on board. "We are thrilled to have



Nicole B. Thomas

American Heart Association  
**Go Red**  
for women



Ashley Pratt, Mayo Clinic; Kristi Garside Circle of Red Chair; Dr. Pamela Rama, Baptist Heart Specialists; Christina Stallings, CSX; Jessica Cummings, Brooks Rehabilitation; Nicole Thomas, hospital president Baptist Medical Center South; Susan Walker, Bank of America; Dr. Simone Nader, Baptist Heart Specialists; Heather Quick, Florida Women's Law Group; Jessica Williams, The Adecco Group; Deirdra Johnson, Duval County Public Schools; Monique Brown – Batson-Cook Construction.

Nicole's experience, conviction and passion help to drive Go Red in Jacksonville and surrounding communities. Together, we know that we will have a positive impact on the lives of women and the families that depend on them," she said.

Fighting the dread disease, which is the No. 1 killer of women in the United States, is a cause that is close to Thomas's heart.

"Heart disease is prevalent in my family. My grandmother has survived both stroke and heart attack, my mother suffers from high blood pressure, and my sisters and I have decided we want to do what it takes to live long healthy lives. It is an honor to serve in this way, raising awareness and doing whatever it takes to help us reduce our risk of cardiovascular disease."

Heart disease claims more lives each year than all forms of cancer combined, according to the AHA. While nearly 80% of cardiac events can be prevented, cardiovascular diseases claim one in three women.

"I am honored to chair the 2020 Go Red for Women movement here in Jacksonville. Thomas said. "Go Red, Get Fit Jax is about empowering the entire city of Jacksonville to prioritize their health. This fun and interactive challenge will help people from all walks of life to get started with one healthy lifestyle change to help lower their risk of cardiovascular disease," she said adding that as part of the Go Red, Get Fit Jax Challenge, she has chosen to add fruits and vegetables to every meal.

"One of the things that's really important for us to do is to know our numbers (cholesterol, blood pressure, BMI and more). Every first Tuesday you can go to a Y Healthy Living Center and get to know your numbers for free 30-minute health assessment," she said.

For more information about the Go Red, Get Fit Jax Challenge visit [www.baptistjax.com/juice/Stories/heart-vascular/go-red-get-fit](http://www.baptistjax.com/juice/Stories/heart-vascular/go-red-get-fit)

## San Jose Catholic School benefits from golf tourney

San Jose Catholic School held its 29th Annual Golf Tournament at San Jose Country Club Dec. 2. The Knights of Columbus and the tourney's presenting sponsor, Walsh Investment Consulting Group, raised over \$50,000 for the school.

The fundraiser provided golfers with the opportunity to patronize many vendors at each hole on the golf course. Included in the participating vendors were Bread & Board, Carve Vodka, Good Chi Coffee, 4 Rivers, and Renna's Pizza. Golfers also enjoyed lunch and an award ceremony dinner.



San Jose Catholic School supporters competed in the school's annual golf fundraiser.

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## RV MegaShow rolls into town, caters to demand for recreation

More than 300 new RVs will be on display, with more than 30 vendors on hand, when the 2020 Jacksonville RV MegaShow takes place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6 through Sunday, Feb. 9 at the Jacksonville Equestrian Center on Normandy Boulevard.

Hosted by Florida RV Trade Association members in Northeast Florida, the February event marks the 11th straight year the show has been held at the equestrian center. Last year, about 8,000 people attended the show.

Although RV sales are down this year compared with 2018, the Florida RV Trade Association's Northeast Florida Regional Board President Ken Loyd says it comes after nine years of steady increases.

"Over the last 10 years, the industry has actually tripled in size," Loyd said. "During the Great Recession of the late 2000s, RV companies only shipped out 165,700 new units a year – compared to 2018's total of over 482,000 units. We have about 40 million people throughout the United States going camping, and millennials make up about 38 percent of the total."

Loyd also notes that RVing "isn't just a lifestyle for retired couples" anymore.

"The average RV owner is 48 years old, and households in the 35-54 age range are the most likely to own an RV right now," he said.

Based on the attendance at the RV SuperShow in Tampa in January, which broke a record for a second consecutive year, Loyd expects some strong attendance at the Jacksonville Show.



Guests check out recreational vehicles on display at last year's Jacksonville RV MegaShow. Roughly 8,000 attendees enjoyed four full days of activities for the entire family.

Participating dealers include Campers Inn, Creative RV, D&H RV Center, General RV Center and RV One of St. Augustine. Regular admission is \$8 for adults and children 12 years or younger are admitted free. All active and retired military and first responders who attend will receive half-off the regular admission price throughout the show. On Thursday, Feb. 6, the opening day of the show, all seniors will receive half-price admission.

"It's a very family-friendly atmosphere, with a DJ playing music throughout the event, a concession area is there, and people can bring their dogs if they are on a leash," Loyd said. "Also, parking is free, a tram will be operated in the parking lot to transport guests to the entrance... and a \$250 gift card will be awarded as a door prize for a lucky guest each day of the show."

"For those looking for a deal, there are many manufacturers' rebates and special pricing that's only available at the show," Loyd said. "Even for folks who aren't planning to buy anything, it's a fun event where they can take a look at all the new units and the newest technology, too."

## Bryan recalls heyday of insurance industry in Jacksonville

Over 70 members of the Jacksonville Historical Society and other guests gathered Jan. 23 at Old St. Andrew's Church in downtown Jacksonville to hear the story of the rise and decline of insurance companies which were headquartered in the city. The guest speaker, J.F. Bryan IV of Ortega, serves on the Society's board of directors and was a third-generation executive of Independent Life Insurance, founded by his grandfather, J.F. Bryan II, and six other life insurance agents in 1920 with \$10,000 in capital.

Bryan recounted how there were once 16 insurance companies with headquarters in Jacksonville until the early 1980s, but after a series of mergers, acquisitions and consolidations, most of the headquarter offices were moved to other cities. Florida Blue – comprised of Blue Cross, founded in 1944, and Blue Shield, in 1946 – is the only major insurance company still headquartered in Jacksonville, in the Brooklyn-Riverside area.



Dr. Alan Bliss, Jacksonville Historical Society executive director, with guest speaker J.F. Bryan IV, at the Society's January 23 Speaker Series program. (Photo courtesy of Jacksonville Historical Society)

The Jacksonville Historical Society will hold its next Speaker Series program at Edward Waters College, Monday, Feb. 3, at 6 p.m. The March program will be a Lunch and Learn on "Remarkable Women in North Florida History," Wednesday, March 18, at 11:30 a.m. at Old St. Andrew's Church. Details for both programs can be found at [jaxhistory.org](http://jaxhistory.org).

## Munoz joins Burdette Ketchum

Kristyna Munoz, an experienced public relations professional, has joined the team at Burdette Ketchum in the role of director of strategic communications.

"Kristyna is a proven PR strategy and media relations leader. She brings major market, blue chip experience to our client base. We're thrilled to have her on board," said Will Ketchum, president and CEO of Burdette Ketchum.

Munoz brings 15 years of high-level experience to her new position. Although the bulk of her career has taken place in Chicago, she has worked in Jacksonville since 2017, when she came to the First Coast to work with TIAA Band, where she was most recently AVP of Global Media Relations.

After receiving her master's degree in public relations from DePaul University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism and public relations from Baylor University, Munoz worked for an agency in Chicago.

"I'm pleased to join Burdette Ketchum and look forward to partnering with clients to achieve their communications goals," said Munoz. "I am excited about approaching client work in a collaborative and creative way and am honored to be part of such a strong and diverse team."



Kristyna Munoz

## RPDS Counselor attends conference

Jan Reeder, director of Diversity and Inclusion/Counselor at Riverside Presbyterian Day School, is serving as a leader of affinity groups to thousands of educators at the National Association of Independent Schools' People of Color Conference in Seattle, Wash. This commitment to equity and justice in teaching, learning, and organizational development will be the foundation of Riverside Presbyterian Day School's Diversity Initiative with nationally known diversity trainer Rosetta Lee in July 2020.



Jan Reeder

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## San Jose resident named Elementary Music Educator of the Year



Virginia Dickert

Virginia Dickert, a resident of San Jose, has been named the 2020 Elementary Music Educator of the Year. The Florida Music Education Association (FMEA) recognized Dickert's outstanding merit in music teaching and her service to students, the community, and her profession. She received the FMEA Elementary Music Educator of the Year Award during the FMEA Conference in Tampa Jan. 10.

Dickert has been the Music Specialist at Jacksonville Country Day School (JCDS) for 25 years. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education and a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Jacksonville University. Virginia has spent over 39 years teaching in both the private and public school systems of Jacksonville and conducting choirs in several local churches. In 2018, the University of North Florida recognized Dickert with the Gladys Prior Award for Career Teaching Excellence.

Dickert has been active in FMEA for many years. She consistently has students who participate in the All-State Elementary performing groups and assists with logistics each year. Always seeking to help those less fortunate, Virginia has successfully written grant projects through FMEA and the Jacksonville Symphony Guild, bringing instruments and collaborative music experiences to Title I public schools in Duval County.

"Virginia Dickert's unselfish drive and enthusiasm for bringing high-quality musical experiences to all children that define her professional career," according to a FMEA news release.

# Teacher of the Year crowned Eddy Award gala

Leena Hall-Young, a 10th-grade language arts teacher at Raines High School was named the 2020 Florida Blue Duval County Teacher of the year Jan. 17 during the 29th annual EDDY Awards hosted by the Jacksonville Public Education Fund (JPEF).

JPEF facilitates the Teacher of the Year awards in Duval County and has developed a yearlong program to celebrate, elevate and empower Duval County's top teachers from traditional and public charter schools.

Hall-Young is one of approximately 8,300 teachers in the Duval County Public School System, and was one of 182 teachers – 16 that hail from Jacksonville's historic neighborhood schools – that were named as Teachers of the Year for their individual schools and were nominated to compete for the top award. Fifteen were named as semi-finalists, including Marie-Andree Escriba of Fishweir Elementary School.

Hall-Young survived the cut down to five finalists competing for the top honor. Also selected as finalists were Michael Ham a sixth-grade math teacher at Matthew Gilbert Middle School, Renee McNulty a geometry teacher at Jean Ribault High School, Carol Thomas, a first-grade teacher at Dinsmore Elementary School and

Leslie White, a science and biology teacher at the Leadership Academies at Eugene J. Butler.

One of 15 semi-finalists and the only one to advance from Jacksonville's historic communities, Escriba is a K-5 art educator at Fishweir Elementary School in Avondale. Her impact as a teacher is evident in her students' artwork: she starts and ends the year with a self-portrait assignment, and students can see how much progress they've made.

Also named as 2020 Teachers of the Year from Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods were: Jessica Sotomayor, Alfred I duPont Middle School; Miranda Vega, Central Riverside Elementary; Kinsey Gulamali, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts; Joy Kettel, Hendricks Avenue Elementary; Lindsay Volk, John Stockton Elementary; Petika Tave, Julia Landon College Preparatory and Leadership Development School; Monica Satterlee, Lake Shore Middle School; Abbie Malkewitz, LaVille School of the Arts; Gail Hadden, Ortega Elementary; Natasha Morrison, Robert E. Lee High School; Tina Runkles, Ruth Upson Elementary; Mia Rankine, Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies; and Caran Mullins, San Jose Elementary.

## Cummer Museum appoints new director of community development

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens will welcome Wanda Willis as Director of Community Development, a significant appointment that will support the Museum's vision of being one of the country's most relevant and accessible art museums. Her tenure begins on February 3, 2020.

Strengthening the Museum's efforts to be an inclusive arts and culture institution for all, the director of Community Development will be the Museum's senior outreach officer, and will be responsible for extending the Museum's brand, mission and identity into the Northeast Florida community — and, in collaboration with the CEO, inviting the community into the Museum.

"Ninah Cummer imagined that the Museum she founded would be a 'center of beauty and culture for all of Jacksonville,'" said the Cummer Museum's George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director & Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Adam Levine. "The Director of Community Development is a structural addition to the Museum's staff that ensures we achieve our founder's inclusive vision, and there is no person better-suited for this role than Wanda Willis. Her reputation and accomplishments in this community speak for themselves,

and her dedicated track record of strengthening some of Jacksonville's anchor institutions will add tremendous value to the Cummer."

A leader with extensive experience in relationship development and strategic planning, and a supporter of arts and culture in Jacksonville, Willis will lead the Museum's efforts to cultivate meaningful partnerships with various stakeholder institutions and promote strong community engagement. Most recently, Willis worked at the Florida State College at Jacksonville Foundation as Associate Director of Development for Major Gifts; previously, she served Edward Waters College as Assistant Vice President of Institutional Advancement. She currently is president of the Bold City Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, and has served on numerous boards and committees for organizations that include WJCT, Teach for America, Women's Giving Alliance, Junior League of Jacksonville and the Bridge of Northeast Florida.

"The vision of the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is to be a vital partner that connects diverse audiences and is inclusive and representative of our community," said Willis. "I am both honored and thrilled



Wanda Willis

to be a part of the team, enhancing the work they already have done to enrich our community and create an institution for all to enjoy and experience. I look forward to fostering a sense of belonging among our audiences, connecting visitors to the arts, gardens and each other, creating new relationships with engaged partners and, most importantly, welcoming everyone to the Museum."

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## St. Nicholas couple wins author's giveaway

Thanks to their grateful daughter, a St. Nicholas couple received a check from one of the most popular fiction authors in the United States.

In December, Mike and Janet Molyneaux, parents of San Marco Bookstore Owner Desiree Bailey, were one of 500 couples to receive a \$500 check from famous fiction author James Patterson. The windfall was part of a \$250,000 giveaway that Patterson extended to independent booksellers throughout the United States, with 100 of the bonus gifts given to children's booksellers, according to Patterson's website. The recipients were chosen from a pool of more than 2,500 nominations, with applications based on the question, "Why does this bookseller deserve a holiday bonus?"

The giveaway program was administered by Patterson and the American Booksellers Association, which represents the country's independent booksellers. Over the years,



Mike and Janet Molyneaux receive a surprise check for \$500

Patterson has donated millions of dollars to bookstores, school libraries and literacy programs, according to his website.

"I thought it would be neat to nominate my parents in recognition of 20 years in the business and their ability to continue to grow and adapt - new website, etc.," said Bailey. "Well, they won! I told my Dad earlier yesterday, but I waited to tell my Mom until I snapped this picture. It's now my new favorite picture of my parents. So please join me in congratulating them," she said.

## Lutheran Social Services appoints new executive director

Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida recently appointed Bill Brim as executive director. Brim has been involved with Lutheran Social Services for more than 11 years, starting as a volunteer and then becoming a staff member, where he worked across multiple departments including AIDS Care and Education, Refugee Services, and most recently as director of development.

The organization, which provides hunger relief, homelessness prevention, HIV care, refugee services and financial and career planning programs to those in need, recently celebrated 40 years of service in the Jacksonville community. For more information, visit [LSSjax.org](http://LSSjax.org).



Bill Brim

## Toastmasters speak to compete

Most people know that Toastmasters is about public speaking and leadership, but four members of Top o' the Rock Toastmasters Club in San Marco recently discovered Toastmasters can also be a competitive arena as well.

In December, Bob Warren and Adamou Siddou won the club's Evaluation and Humorous contests, respectively, and will now compete at the Toastmaster Area Contest March 21, 2020.

Warren is an award-winning commercial real estate professional. "My seven years in Toastmasters has improved my confidence in speaking with clients and in front of groups. But the whole area of speaking in competition has really helped me sharpen my critical thinking and organizational skills," Warren said. "Plus, I discovered new talents that didn't know about before!"

The Humorous Speaking Contest provided Adamou Siddou an opportunity to reach way beyond his comfort level as he told the audience about his dream girlfriend from adolescence. His use of descriptive narrative, vivid imagery, and facial expressions conveyed his "first love" in a manner that everyone could relate to and created on-going shared laughter.

There were also two contestants who made their competitive debuts. Nina Frank, contract manager with Consolidated Refugee Services at Lutheran Social Services, challenged herself to organizing her thoughts under pressure in the Evaluation Contest. After only five months of membership in Toastmasters, Debra Burns, pastor of Community Care for Christ's Church, said competing in the



Bob Warren, Adamou Siddou, Nina Frank, with Contest Chairman Wanda Brown and Debra Burns

Humorous Contest showed her how far she has come in dealing with stress and fear when speaking.

While Toastmasters is about public speaking, it is much more. "Yes, we become better speakers," said Club President Elly Liao. "But we also improve our listening skills, and we learn to provide constructive feedback to others. Toastmasters is also about cultivating leadership skills, and all of this results in personal growth. It's all done among friends who are members of our club, and we have fun doing it. The experiences we have, and the skills we develop in Toastmasters, help us professionally and personally."

Toastmasters is a worldwide organization dedicated to helping individuals improve their public speaking and leadership skills. The local group, Top O' The Rock Toastmasters, meets in San Marco every Wednesday from noon to 1:15 pm at Beaver Chevrolet, 3494 Philips Hwy. It is open to the public and serves all surrounding areas. More information can be found at [www.Toporock.com](http://www.Toporock.com).

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- She encourages those with disabilities to accomplish anything
- Her Service Dog, Harvest, is a New Horizons Graduate

Please visit her website at [www.rachelbarcellona.com](http://www.rachelbarcellona.com)



"I show people that I can do anything despite my disability. Be yourself no matter what and don't let others define who you are."  
—Rachel Barcellona

# Turner: Why Jacksonville has so many crawlspaces problems

## Your crawlspace could be making you sick

Jacksonville may have some of the worst crawlspaces under homes in the country. Chris Turner, owner of Turners Underseal, has been in the indoor air quality business for over 30 years and his company has treated damp crawlspaces in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee for 17 years. He said the spaces, which are found mostly in older and historic homes like Riverside, Avondale and some other Jacksonville neighborhoods, were a feature of historic homebuilding, built to keep the home safe from flooding and to allow access to plumbing and electrical lines. They were a smart idea, but they can also become a toxic mold breeding ground.

“Mold can grow in all the wood, send spores into the house and spread bacteria,” he explained. “It’s like a toxic soup. People get sick.”

This is why Jacksonville is so unique: Several area conditions compound the

problem. They are: a high-water table, crawlspaces that are close to the ground, ever-present humidity and lots of annual precipitation. All those conditions make it more imperative for Jacksonville homeowners to take action to keep the space dry.

Some homeowners have elected to encapsulate the crawlspace rather than use Turner’s dry system. Encapsulation involves wrapping the ground and walls with plastic. Because these are not sealed, they create a toxic stew underneath that can go right into the house. This can also trap mud and debris on top of the plastic, which causes mold to grow. Turner’s dry system allows for proper drainage so if there is a flood or a pipe bursts, the water isn’t trapped. He also uses a permanent, commercial dry system that spreads dry air through the space, and when the humidity goes up, the dry air starts pumping.

The key to all of the crawlspace issues is to keep them dry all the time. That means wood floors won’t warp, mold won’t grow, and most importantly, homeowners breathe clean air.

### What the experts say

Experts at the 2019 Indoor Air Quality Association annual meeting in Atlanta also confirmed that many toxic buildings become that way from problems in the crawlspace under the first floor.

Turner met with Jeff May, certified indoor air quality professional, licensed mold assessor and author of “My House is Killing Me!” at the conference to get May’s opinion about crawlspaces.

“Crawlspaces can be a real nightmare,” stated May. “Rarely is the humidity controlled, so there’s a lot of moisture. It’s even worse if there is no moisture barrier.”

May said crawlspaces are the perfect place for growing mold – on the subfloor, the floor joists, even in the insulation.

Rich Johnson, CEO, Air Allergen & Mold Testing, also attended the conference and spoke with Turner, confirming what experts say about moisture and mold. “We definitely think the crawlspace is an important part of the health of the home and it should be kept dry and mold-free,” Johnson said.

Turner also spoke with Bill Sothern, a certified industrial hygienist and chief investigator with Microecologies, who added weight to what Turner has been preaching for years: “You have to keep the crawlspace dry at all times or it becomes a toxic stew,” Turner said.

An article in the December 2018 issue of Healthy Indoors magazine stated “Well-conducted epidemiology studies in several countries have consistently shown that exposures from building/house dampness and mold have been associated with increased risks for respiratory symptoms, asthma, hypersensitivity pneumonitis, rhinosinusitis, bronchitis and respiratory infections,” according to the American Industrial Hygiene Association.

The solution is clear.

“Eliminate the moisture and all kinds of good things happen,” said Turner. “Dry, healthy air comes into your house and you breathe clean air. Your doors and windows don’t stick, and your wood floors don’t warp.



A professional dry system solves Crawlspace problems.

The bottom line is it really is all about breathing healthy air in your home. Crawlspace moisture is your enemy – you need to stop it,” he said.

“Just about the only way to maintain a dry crawlspace year-round is to use a permanent, commercial dry system.

“Don’t get fooled by offers to encapsulate the crawlspace. They are not sealed so they end up trapping water, mud and even sewage above the liner. I recommend never to encapsulate, but keep the crawlspace dry year-round,” he added.

Why wait for mold to appear before your eyes? Start the war against toxicity in your home with an inspection to determine whether it has elevated moisture conditions. Call Turners Underseal today.



Rich Johnson and Chris Turner

In addition to the Turners Underseal Dry Crawlspace System, Turners Underseal also does sub-floor sanitizing, permanent wood sealing and home air quality inspections. For \$300 off installation services, contact Chris Turner at (904) 903-9569, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., or check out Turners Underseal at [turnersunderseal.com/](http://turnersunderseal.com/)



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# SMMA, SMPS members mingle amidst twinkling city lights

The weather could not be more perfect when more than 100 members of the San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) and the San Marco Merchants Association (SMMA) gathered for a social early evening get-together on the rooftop of the Museum of Science and History Jan. 16.

Twinkling city lights and soft, unseasonably warm winter breezes surrounded the group as they enjoyed libations and light hors d'oeuvres.

It was the second time the two San Marco groups have decided to mingle in a social setting and the event was a great success said SMMA President Joe Carlucci. SMPS President Linzee Ott concurred. It was a night to have fun, socialize and not to discuss official business, she said.



Eric Yi with Tracy Thompson, Jr., Allie Pheiff, Tori Thompson, Tracy Thompson, Sr. Jane Thompson and Emily Yi



San Marco Preservation Society President Linzee Ott with Leah Roesler



Robin and Jay Robinson with Denise Kowkabany



James Cook, Lauren Carlucci, Camille Ott with Melody and Bob Bachman



Karen Schrader with Mary and Bill Jaycox and Margie and Jorge Morales



At-Large, Group 4 City Councilman Matt Carlucci with Geddes Anderson



Cindy Chomiak with Diane Martin, Lauren Carlucci, Katie Huntley, Victoria and Joe Carlucci and Sharon Frieses



Bryan Mickler with Jarrod Huntley

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Nellie Mazur with Rob Carpenter, Michael Mazur and Christa Carpenter



Greg and Shannon Griffing with Chris and Aly Leeper



Rebecca Rymes with Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation President Virginia Hall, and Alexandria Midthun



Sarah Lane and Melinda Powers



Charles Duss with Ascension St. Vincent's Shircliff Society President Ty King and Ellie King and Matt Obringer

### Shircliff Society Bowtie Ball bittersweet this year

It was a bittersweet occasion when party goers gathered for the 3rd Annual Shircliff Society Bowtie Ball Jan. 11 at the Burlock and Barrel Distillery. The event, which included dancing, live entertainment by DJ Vic Micolucci, hors d'oeuvres, signature drinks and a silent auction was held a week after the death of its namesake, Robert "Bob" Shircliff, a faithful and generous supporter of Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside Medical Center. Known for his bowties, Shircliff established the ball to raise money to buy bassinets and a Panda Warmer for high-risk babies at the hospital.



Dr. Leon Haley and Dr. Sally Henin with Dr. Kenneth Ngo and Anh Vo



Davis Bean with Averi Welborn



Event Co-Chair Tammy Kerwin, her husband Dr. Trey Kerwin, and daughter Courtney Kerwin



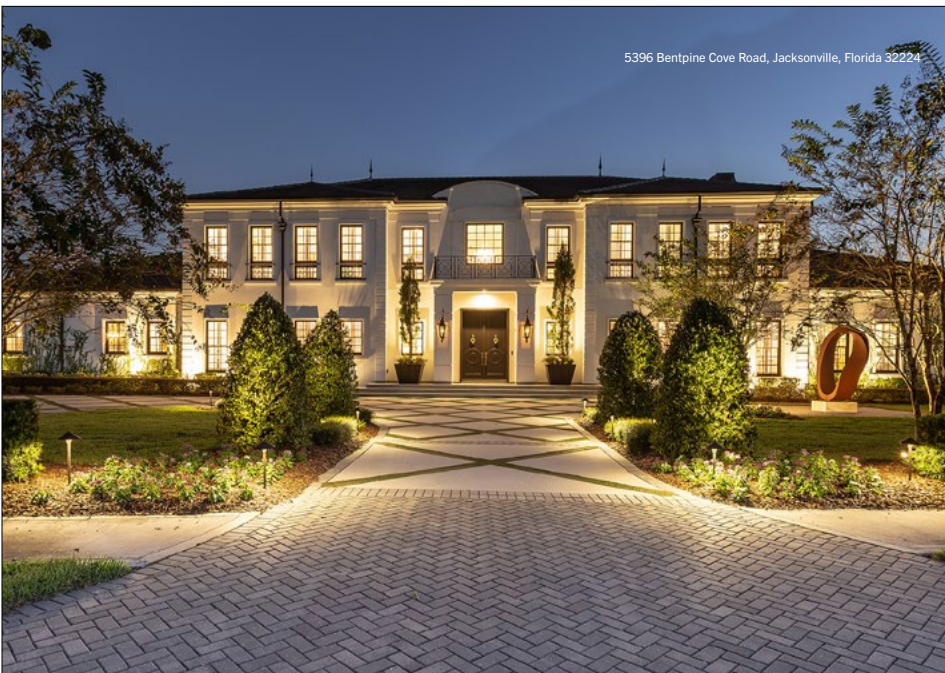
Dr. Jim Aiello and Kristi Aiello with Honorary Chair Darnell Smith, market president Florida Blue



Thomas and Lauren Lee

### Night for Heroes celebrates TraumaOne's service to community

Black ties and beautiful gowns were on full display to honor and support the men and women behind the familiar blue and red TraumaOne logo during the 13th Annual a Night for Heroes gala and wine tasting Jan 25 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront. The gala coincided with the anniversary of UF Health Jacksonville's 150th year of service to the community. Guests attended in full support of TraumaOne, the only adult and pediatric Level 1 trauma center in the region, known for its life-saving helicopters and 24/7 staff of health care experts in specialties including orthopedic trauma surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery and oral and maxillofacial surgery.



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Anne Hicks with Mary Love Strum, Mary Love McArthur and Carolyn Houston



Sarah Small with Charlie Ward and Kimberly Patterson



Bentley Forrester with Dr. George Armstrong, Women's Board President, Katherine Forrester and Marcia Morales



Poppy Clements with hostess Anne Hicks and Rob Clements



Stephanie Cost with Gilchrist and Amy Berg and Tim Cost

Tales of orange crunch cake highlight Women's Auxiliary kickoff event

Chef Dennis Chan of the Blue Bamboo restaurant shared mouth-watering tales about his national prize-winning Sunshine State Orange Crunch Cake with 40 ladies from the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary during a kickoff brunch meeting Jan. 27 at the Mandarin home of Marilyn Carpenter. The purpose of the gathering was to plan the Auxiliary's 34th Annual Celebrity Chef fundraiser, which will take place at the Prime Osborn Convention Center March 26. Chan, who has signed on to be one of 10 celebrity chefs to participate in the tasty fundraiser, is the first professional chef to ever be featured at the event.

Crowd gathers to hear Pulitzer winner discuss history

Hundreds gathered to hear Jon Meacham speak during the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital's Florida Forum 2019-2020 speaker series Jan. 22. Meacham is a presidential historian and public intellectual who gave the eulogies for both President George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush. His books include "Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power," "Franklin and Winston," "American Gospel," and "American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House," which won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in biography. His current *New York Times* bestseller is "The Soul of America: The Battle for our Better Angels," and he is currently at work on a biography of James and Dolley Madison.



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# Robert T. “Bob” Shircliff

May 20, 1928 – Jan. 2, 2020

Ascension St. Vincent’s joins our community in mourning the loss of our dear friend, Bob Shircliff. His legacy continues with the thousands of people who knew him and were impacted by his generosity through his service to our community. Mr. Shircliff helped transform Jacksonville with his servant leadership and tireless philanthropic work spanning more than a half-century. He made a remarkable difference that will last for generations to come.

Mr. Shircliff loved Ascension St. Vincent’s and was part of our family. It’s why the street leading into our Riverside hospital is named after him and our primary address is “1 Shircliff Way,” recognizing his special way of getting things done.

He won many awards for his work, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2016. Despite this public recognition for a lifetime of servant leadership, Mr. Shircliff was humble and credited having a circle of leaders around him for these accomplishments. He was a self-described catalyst who encouraged others to support the causes he believed in, further expanding his impact.

Mr. Shircliff is noted as saying his idea of a perfect day was doing something for someone without expecting anything in return. May we all strive to live by his example and work to carry on his legacy for decades to come.



**Ascension  
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# Summer scholarship winners, donors dine at Douglas Anderson



Major General John Fryer with Susan DuBow, Gary McCalla, Jackie Cornelius and Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Principal Melanie Hammer



Extravaganza Sponsor Gary McCalla with Kaityn Griffin, Sarah Mills, Mason Hunn, Noah Arcenas and Douglas Anderson Foundation Board Member Erin Skinner

Sixteen seniors from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts had the opportunity to say a very personal thank you when they gathered for lunch in the school's recital hall with several donors who contributed to the DuBow Family Summer Scholarship program Jan. 15.

The seniors had auditioned and been carefully selected to receive scholarships to attend world-class programs all over the world during the summer between their junior and senior years. In the past, students have studied writing at Oxford University in England or at the Grammy Foundation in California, learning how to put music to movies, said Jackie Cornelius, executive director of the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Foundation.

"The key for me with the summer scholarship program is it provides a way for all the top arts institutions and conservatories to be aware of Douglas Anderson School of the Arts," she said, noting she started the program with five students 25 to 30 years ago.

"I wanted to get our kids underwriting so they could participate in top programs. I wanted students who might never have traveled on a plane or have the funds, but are very talented and had been selected by audition, to be able to go even though they might not be able to pay the tuition or get a scholarship. The department selects the one or two kids that have an incredible passion or talent and we send them somewhere in the world. The experience opens them up to all kinds of possibilities because they are able to work with renown artists in their fields. Not only does it benefit them, but they come back and share their experiences with other students in their department and it enhances the DA program," Cornelius said, noting many students in the summer program are offered scholarships on the spot to use after they graduate from DA.

Joining the students for lunch were program supporters Major General John Fryer, Susan DuBow, Gary McCalla and Sally Lee. Lee said she was thrilled to dine

with the two students who received the Ann Baker Summer Scholarships, a program funded by her family and named for her mother – Kaimyn Graham, a visual arts student who attended the School of Art at the Institute of Chicago and Gracie Mixon, a dance student who studied with the Joffrey Dance Program in San Antonio, Texas.

Several students from Jacksonville's historic communities were included among the scholarship recipients. Noah Arcenas (Orchestra) of Ortega attended Brevard Music Center in North Carolina; Sarah Mills (Musical Theatre) of Ortega attended UNSCSA Summer Drama Institute in Winston-Salem, N.C.; Mason Hunn (Piano) of Murray Hill attended Cleveland Institute of Music in Ohio and Kaitlyn Griffin (Visual Arts) of Lakewood attended Maryland Institute College of Art. Also, in the program were Kennedy Richardson (Dance), Earl Mosley Summer Intensive 2 in New Milford, Conn.; Glen Dizon (Orchestra) and David Duong (Guitar), Brevard Music Center, Brevard, N.C.; Ethan Venzon



Kaimyn Graham with Sally Lee and Gracie Mixon

(Theatre), Powerhouse Theatre Program, Vassar College, New York; Adreanna Pulliam (Vocal) and Mia Melanson (Vocal), University of Central Florida Summer Opera Institute, Orlando; Janae Yates (Jazz Band), Mannes Summer Jazz Institute, New York City; Allison Jenkins (Band), Kinhaven Music School in Maplewood, N.J.; Ethan Chene (Cinematic Arts), California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles; and Alexa Naparstek (Creative Writing), Iowa Young Writers' Studio in Iowa City.

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# Special education school celebrates campus expansion

Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry and his wife, Molly, joined more than 40 generous donors, students and families in celebrating the new Christy and Lee Smith Lower School Campus and Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the North Florida School of Special Education Jan. 16.

In fact, three ribbons were cut simultaneously by selected children from the school as more than 40 donors proudly looked on. The ceremony celebrated a 32,000 square-foot expansion that included the Linda and David Stein Academic Complex, the DuBow Family Physical Education Complex, the Chartrand Family Culinary Complex, the Fine Arts Center Gifted by Jill and Charlie Arnold and the Dostie Family Basketball Court. The Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Jacksonville's only urban equestrian center, will provide equine therapy and therapeutic horseback riding for the students and will open in the spring of 2020.

Speaking at the event were North Florida School of Special Education Head of School Sally Hazelip, Curry and his wife, John Macdonald, and NFSSE board president,



Christy Smith with Susan DuBow

Bert Brown, NFSSE vice president. Alicia White gave the invocation and LeRoyal Chieves led the Pledge of Allegiance. Both are students at the school.

The expansion was made possible by private donations as well as \$500,000 in State of Florida appropriations, New Markets Tax Credits from CAHEC, in which Chase's Community Development Banking group invested, resulting in a net benefit of approximately \$2 million to the capital campaign. Delores Barr Weaver, the school's first "trailblazing" philanthropist having given the school its first \$1 million donation, named the equestrian center and provided a challenge grant of \$500,000.

"My heart is so full, and I am so thankful for the countless number of people who have walked alongside me and my staff to help provide the best education and therapeutic programs possible for our students," said Hazelip in her closing remarks. "I believe that the main purpose of 'our children' is to make better people of the rest of us...witnessing their genuine care, love and affection for one another and others is a testament of how we all should live our lives."



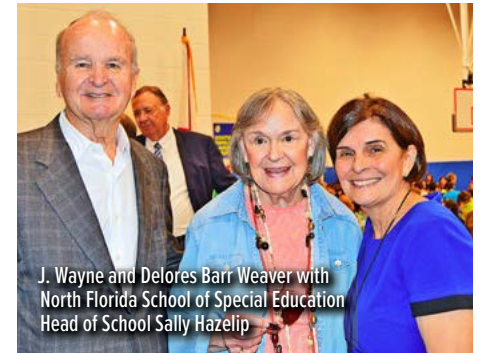
Ray Van Landingham, Luke Steinkamp, Jake Jenkin, Caleb Prewitt and Don Hinson cut one of three ribbons as more than 40 generous donors look on during a special ceremony at North Florida School of Special Education Jan. 16.



Brian Oxford, Courtney Nolan with Head of School Sally Hazelip and Ray Van Landingham



North Florida School of Special Education Board Vice President Bert Brown with Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry and First Lady Molly Curry



J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver with North Florida School of Special Education Head of School Sally Hazelip



Doug and Nora Milne with Linda and David Stein



Rhoda Richardson with Lee and Ann Sory Meadows

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# Animal House

By Julie Kerns Garmendia Resident Community News

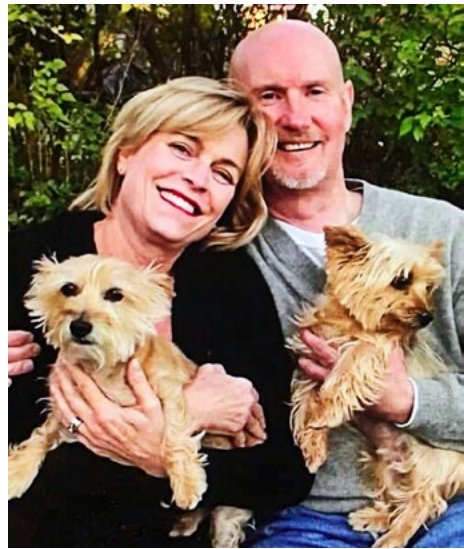
## ACPS Foster Appreciation Evening unites animal lovers at Fishweir Brewery

Animal Care & Protective Services (ACPS) Kitten Foster and Volunteer Transporter Pamela Newby Love, an Avondale resident, hosted a foster appreciation evening at Fishweir Brewery on Edgewood Avenue on Nov. 24. Fishweir Brewery bartender Ryan Parker said that he and the brewery owners, Broc and Stacey Flores care about animals and were pleased that Love chose to hold the event at the brewery.

A diverse group of fosters enjoyed the social and informational gathering. There were 20-somethings to retirees, animal care professionals and many other careers represented, drawn together by their shared passion for animal welfare and volunteering as fosters. Love, an energetic 60-year-old, grew up on a rural Tennessee farm that permanently shaped her concern for animals and wildlife.

“I was in the dental field for 30 years in Nashville where I was also an active animal rescuer and volunteer for the local animal shelter. That’s where I first saw foster appreciation events and how well they were received. I wanted to expand that idea here for our ACPS fosters who do so much good,” Love said. “My husband, Russell and I also want to support local businesses like the Fishweir Brewery in Murray Hill, and this was a great way to combine both ideas.”

Jen Walter, a ACPS shelter manager since 2014, attended and gave a slide presentation with updates and news from the shelter. She compared shelter animal statistics from 2007 to 2018-2019 that showed encouraging and extremely positive improvement. In 2007, the shelter animal intake was 24,243, the euthanasia rate was 19,663, owner surrenders were 5,951 and animals in foster care numbered 456. As of 2018-2019 those



Pamela Newby Love and her husband Russell with their two rescue dogs, Ivan, a Hurricane Ivan survivor, and Jenny, who was rescued from a Fort Myers puppy mill.



Animal lovers gathered at the Animal Care & Protective Services foster appreciation event held at Fishweir Brewery Nov. 24. Pamela Newby Love, an ACPS kitten foster/volunteer transporter who lives in Avondale, organized the event.

painful statistics had decreased down to 8,184 shelter intake animals, 663 euthanasia and 732 owner surrenders.

Most remarkably, 3,072 animals were released from the shelter to foster care, an initiative of the shelter that has successfully recruited, trained and retained a growing army of volunteer fosters. Those 3,072 animals represent fully one third of all animals that entered ACPS, who were able to go into foster care through the 2019 year. Walter said that best of all, a large percentage of those volunteer fosters found adopters for the animals in their care, a trend that dramatically impacts adoption rates.

Walter cited other causes for celebration including national recognition for the success of the shelter’s foster program in an important book published in 2019, *Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters*, by Dr. Sara Pizano. ACPS also completed a comprehensive foster manual, saw a 42% decrease in the shelter cat population and created the Conquering the Kittens Campaign to keep kittens out of the shelter.

“In 2018, ACPS took in 3,323 kittens under five months of age and in 2019, that number dropped to 2,518. That is a 24% decrease,” she said. “The strong push to define, publicize and discourage ‘kitten kidnapping’ is yielding results. We are working to encourage the public to be certain kittens are abandoned before bringing them in, when they may actually be left alone temporarily by a feral mom who will return to nurse and care for them. Secondly, if the kitten(s) must be rescued, we ask that the rescuer attempt to care for or foster the kittens instead of bringing them to the shelter.”

Upcoming plans to further foster initiatives include a foster mentor program and/or foster teams. ACPS also plans to add additional staff coverage, although Walter acknowledged that staffing is among the

greatest challenges facing city shelter budgets. Walter thanked all the fosters who she said, “extend our lifesaving capacity far beyond the number of kennels at the shelter”.

She especially thanked the non-profit group Friends of Jacksonville Animals (FOJA) for their crucial support providing supplies and volunteers above and beyond what shelter funding can cover. She also introduced and welcomed the new ACPS Foster Coordinator Nicole Newman of Riverside, who previously worked as an assistant vet tech, and thanked the outgoing foster coordinator, Melissa Eaton Sheffield who moved back into a vet tech position.

ACPS foster volunteers donate their time and often much more, to help homeless dogs and cats by temporarily caring for them in their homes until they are ready to be placed for adoption. Fostering an animal is a basic commitment to feed and give medications if needed, which are provided. The foster agrees to socialize, nurture and take the animal to required veterinarian appointments for check-ups and vaccinations at regularly scheduled ACPS Veterinarian Clinics that are free to the foster, until it is in good health and has reached normal weight and age. Once the animal is spayed or neutered and is completely healthy, it is ready to be placed for adoption.

For more information regarding how to become a volunteer foster, visit the ACPS website, [coj.net/acpsfoster](http://coj.net/acpsfoster) or directly contact the foster department at [acpsfosters@coj.net](mailto:acpsfosters@coj.net). Potential fosters can complete and submit the Foster Pet Volunteer Profile form online or in person at the shelter, 2020 Forest Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204. Shelter hours are Tuesday – Friday, 12 – 7 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, 10 – 6 p.m. The foster department hours are Tuesday – Friday, 12 – 7 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, 10 – 6 p.m. ACPS is closed on Mondays.

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# Schools, country club celebrate San Jose Estates 90th birthday

*Editor's Note: The San Jose Estates referred to in this article differs from the small housing development, San Jose Estates LLC, currently in litigation on San Jose Boulevard, which is owned by Feras Mouded. Mouded's small housing development, which he coined as San Jose Estates, is comprised of six parcels covering just under two acres of land that borders San Jose Boulevard and lies adjacent to Nathan Krestul Park. Mouded's planned housing development fronts the San Jose Forest development.*

Submitted by **Susanna Barton**

The Bolles School, San Jose Episcopal Day School and San Jose Country Club are celebrating 90 years of San Jose Estates, the 1920s-era Southside development in which all three neighboring organizations continue to flourish. The groups plan to mark this anniversary year with special programs and opportunities to recall the project's historical significance.

"San Jose Estates is such a special area – both 90 years ago and today," said Bolles President and Head of School Tyler Hodges. "As a historian, I look forward to honoring this milestone by reflecting on our neighborhood's past."

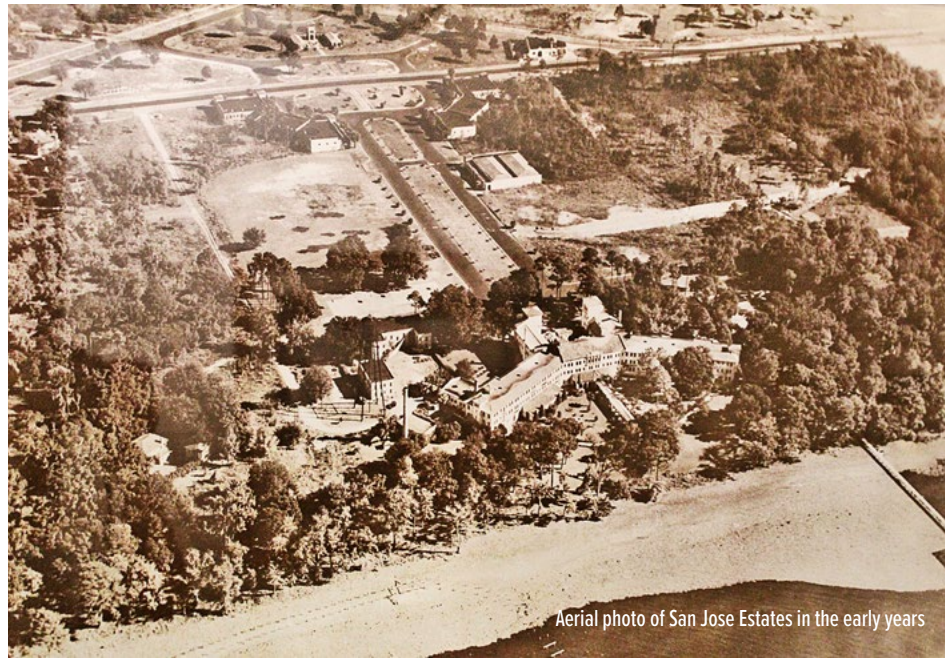
San Jose Episcopal Day School Head of School Lori Menger has been deeply engaged in research of San Jose Estates' fascinating history. This fall, she shared some of her findings at a community gathering and is eager to put additional focus on the area's past in 2020.



Advertisement for the former San Jose Hotel, which is now a main building of The Bolles School

"While researching the history of the church and day school, I realized how rich the narrative of our community is," Menger said. "I felt inspired to share the story of San Jose Estates and knew that this story would be appreciated by others in our community."

Historical documents show plans for San Jose Estates began in 1914. However, the start of World War 1 delayed construction commencement. The project gained momentum on Jan. 25, 1925 when the San Jose Estates Company purchased 1,000 acres of the former San Jose Plantation during the height of the Florida land boom. The company hired noted city planner John Nolen to lay out innovative designs for a suburban community that would include churches,



Aerial photo of San Jose Estates in the early years

schools, country clubs, hotels and shops – reflecting the advent of the suburban development and the automobile. The Mediterranean inspired project included plans for 1,911 lots and streets were named for Spanish places. Jacksonville-based architectural firm Marsh & Saxelby began work on the development's landmark structure – the San Jose Hotel, now known as The Bolles School.

The main building on the campus of what is now San Jose Episcopal Church and Day School was built in 1924 as the administrative building for the San Jose Estates Development Company. The San Jose Country Club next door was designed by Harold F. Saxelby and built in 1927 by O.P. Woodcock Company for the enjoyment of guests at the San Jose Hotel. The original 18-hole golf course was designed by Donald Ross and was completed at about the same time.

Developers eagerly awaited visitors from the north to arrive by railcar to the sunny Florida coastline. Lots sold quickly and San Jose was fast becoming a destination for many. But this hope and anticipation did not last. The Florida land boom quickly became the Florida land bust.

Construction at San Jose Estates came to a halt. At the time, the community included 37 structures: 30 residences, three public buildings and four gatehouses. Plans for a second hotel, called The Vanderbilt, were scrapped and industrialist Alfred I duPont and wife Jessie Ball duPont purchased the site. Later, the duPonts hired Marsh & Saxelby to design their winter home on the property. Called Epping Forest, the 15,000-square-foot, 25-room home was completed in 1927 and has since been the host site for U.S. presidents and visiting royalty among other guests. It is now Epping Forest Yacht Club. The duPonts also purchased the club property and the main administrative building, now San Jose Episcopal Church. In the early

1940s, Jessie Ball duPont allowed a group of neighborhood Episcopalians to use it for worship. They called it Grace Chapel. Mrs. duPont later bequeathed the property to the Episcopal Diocese of Florida and in 1971, the name was changed to San Jose Episcopal Church. San Jose Episcopal Day School was first established in 1950 as a ministry of Grace Chapel Parish.

Only open for a brief two-year period, the San Jose Hotel forever closed its doors until reopening as a military school for boys in 1933. The hotel was purchased by Florida land tycoon Richard J. Bolles, who later passed away and left his fortune to secretary, Agnes Cain Painter – the original Headmaster of the School. Today, The Bolles School is a thriving day and boarding school for children from all over the world and like the San Jose Episcopal Day School main building, it is on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, more than 1,600 students attend Bolles.

In 1946, Stockton Whatley & Davin Company acquired the golf club property from the duPont Estate. There was a keen awareness of the need for a modern country club to serve the families of the expanding area of South Jacksonville. Financing for the new club was obtained through the formation of the San Jose Investment Company, which issued 300 20-year, 3% bonds. These were promptly bought at \$750 each. With the proceeds, the Investment Company acquired the club property from Stockton Whatley & Davin and leased it to the country club organization for 20 years, with purchase options included in the lease agreement. The property was 135 acres plus the golf course. Many additions and enhancements have been made over the years. Today, the club is a thriving destination for members to enjoy community, golf, tennis, swimming and other club amenities.



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# THE WAY WE WERE: HARRY FRISCH

SUSAN BRANDENBURG  
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

At age 96, Harry Frisch rides five days a week from his San Jose home to his office at Beaver Street Fisheries, where he climbs two flights of stairs at least twice a day and maintains a busy schedule of conference calls, luncheons and meetings. He jokes that he plans to take a day off on his 100th birthday – July 5, 2023.

Harry and his brother, Fred, founded Beaver Street Fisheries in 1955. It has since expanded from a small fish market on West Beaver Street in Jacksonville to an internationally acclaimed company with several brand names, including Sea Best, a brand carried by Walmart's across the nation. When adding Tropic Seafood in the Bahamas, with brands Island Prince and Island Queen, Beaver Street is now one of the world's largest lobster processing plants in the world.

Born into a prosperous Jewish family in Vienna, Austria, the Frisch brothers narrowly escaped the Nazi's in 1938 when Hitler claimed Vienna for Germany. "March 13, 1938 was the day my childhood ended," says Frisch, remembering the morning following Hitler's takeover of Vienna. "When I entered my school, nearly all the teachers were wearing Nazi uniforms. That was my last day of school."

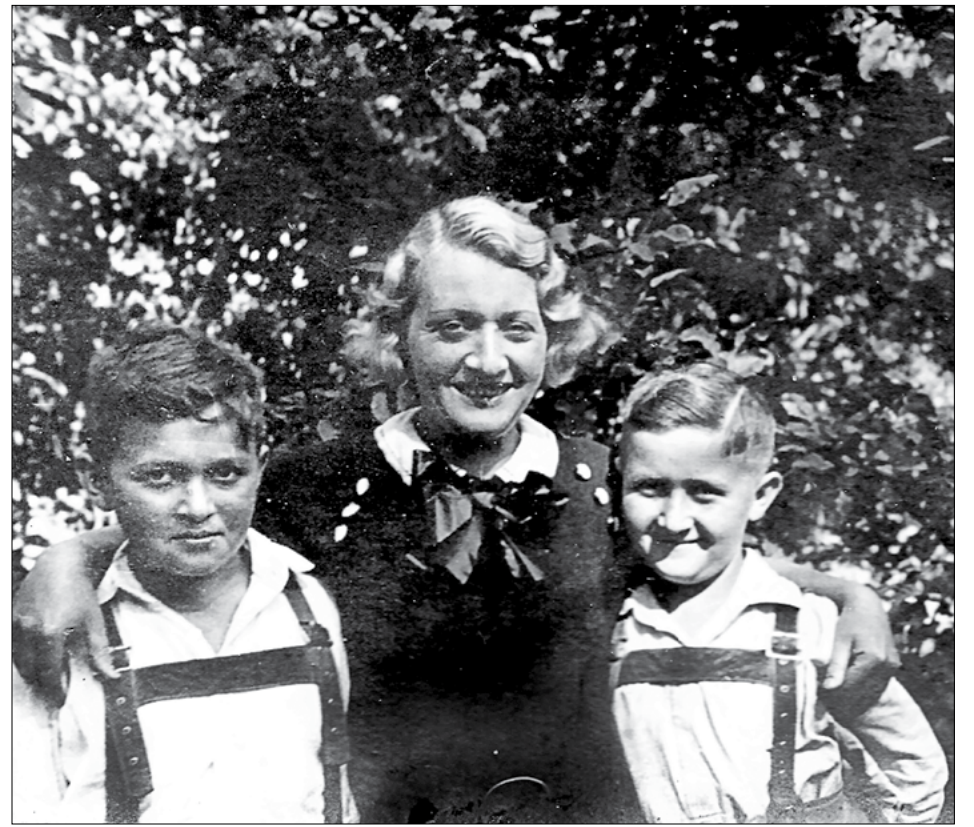
Harry and members of his family fled their former life of privilege in Vienna to seek temporary refuge in Czechoslovakia. There, the Frisch brothers, ages 15 and 16, boarded a transport down the Danube River to the Black Sea, where they joined 800 other illegal refugees on a small Greek Coal Ship, Agios Nicolaos, for a three-day trip to Palestine that was destined to be remembered as "The Voyage of the Damned."

Upon entering Palestinian waters, the ship was machine-gunned by a British patrol boat, resulting in death and injury. Escaping back out to sea, the Agios Nicolaos made it to the Port of Kea, a small Greek Island, but no Jews were allowed to come ashore. For nearly four months, the passengers languished just outside the Port of Kea, nearly starving to death until a small wooden fishing boat was hired to tow the ship to just outside the Port of Haifa. When hundreds of ravenous, filthy, terrified passengers piled aboard the fishing trawler, it began breaking apart under the weight, and as it sank, Harry, his brother, and other passengers jumped into the murky waters and finally made it ashore.



The Voyage of the Damned fishing boat

Harry and Fred settled in the village of Petah Tikva near Jerusalem and Harry earned his living as an auto mechanic. There, he met and married Lilo Senkpiel, a nurse who had escaped to Palestine from her village in Kurtwitz, Germany. Harry and Lilo had two sons, Ben and Karl, when they came to the United States in 1953. Brother Fred had come earlier to join their



Fred Frisch with his mother, Nellie, and brother Harry in 1933

mother and step-father, Nellie and Sigmund Rappaport, who had purchased the small fish market on West Beaver Street in Jacksonville. It was when their step-father died in 1955 that the brothers united to help their mother and established Beaver Street Fisheries. While both brothers had vowed to one day be affluent again, it would take many years of hard work and determination to achieve that goal.

At Beaver Street Fisheries, everyone in the Frisch family worked every day. Lilo came in and worked with Nellie in the fish market, and after Nellie passed away, Lilo Frisch became known as "The Fish Lady." At 5 a.m. daily, Harry drove the truck to New Berlin and Mayport to buy fish and shrimp for local restaurants. In the meantime, Fred relentlessly called customers and potential customers. Harry recalls just one example of Fred's determination. "Every day, he called the chef at the Ponte Vedra Inn and every day, he was told never to call again. There was no caller I.D. back then,



Lilo and Harry Frisch

so the chef had to answer. Fred told him he would call him every day for the rest of his life. One day, the Ponte Vedra Inn called, needing an order in one hour. They became our best account. Persistence works. Never give up."

Eventually, Beaver Street Fisheries bought fish all the way down state and continued to expand. "Sunday was the time to fix and repair our trucks," recalls Harry. "That was where my auto mechanic skills came in. We didn't have any new trucks, but I knew how to fix the old ones. We never had a 40-hour week here – our values were different at Beaver Street. It was important that we get the most out of our time and money, but we were always fair. Everybody knew that." Those basic family values remain at Beaver Street Fisheries, where Ben and his sons, Mark, Adam and Stephen, now run the business. Karl Frisch retired several years ago.



Lilo and Harry Frisch

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 33**



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Harry Frisch with Governor Rick Scott and his grandsons, Adam Frisch, Mark Frisch and Steven Frisch.



Harry Frisch, and his sons, Ben and Karl Frisch, when Frisch received the Junior Achievement award

The patriarch of the company, and the man who is still visibly present there on a daily basis, Harry Frisch was once asked to speak to a class of entrepreneurs at Jacksonville University. He sat down at his kitchen table and wrote a list of Points of Good Business Practices. Among those are: Be punctual; Treat employees with respect; Don't lie, steal or cheat; Live humble (not above your means); Don't criticize your competitors; Every customer is your sweetheart; Pay your bills on time; Don't make commitments you can't keep; Your place must be clean, neat and pleasant; Give back.

"God has been so good to me that I do all I can do to give back," said Frisch, who has become one of Jacksonville's most generous philanthropists, having earned a place in the First Coast Business Hall of Fame, a OneJax Humanitarian Award, and has been recipient of many other awards from organizations such as Junior Achievement, the Jacksonville Jewish Federation, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and, most recently, READ USA, which gives three free books to children in Title One Elementary Schools throughout Duval County. He has been instrumental in saving Jacksonville's River Taxi and the Alhambra Dinner Theatre, and the Frisch name graces a café at Florida Community College Jacksonville and a building at Jacksonville University, among many other places throughout the city.

Lilo Frisch passed away in 2016 and the Frisch Family Holocaust Memorial Gallery was established at the Jewish Family and Community Services headquarters in her honor in 2017, and also as a tribute to the

few Frisch family members who escaped the Holocaust and a memorial to those who did not.

As one of Jacksonville's most revered businessmen and philanthropists, Harry Frisch can certainly rest on his laurels, but he is still vigorously active at age 96 and eager to continue making a positive difference in the world. Recently, Frisch has expressed great concern for the plight of fatherless children in today's society. Having researched the disturbing statistics on fatherless children (90% of all homeless and runaway youths and 71% of high school dropouts are fatherless), Frisch is determined to address the problem by partnering with local law enforcement and several already established organizations such as The National Fatherhood Initiative, All Pro Dads and others, as well as encouraging adherence to the Ten Commandments. Frisch's new initiative, which he calls RESPECT, is based on the Ten Commandments. "We must respect God's commandments," he says. "They are not requests, they are commands."

In his biography, *USE YOUR HEAD, Lessons of a Lifetime*, Harry Frisch talks of his deep love for God, family and the United States of America, and his hope that others will acknowledge the Biblical wisdom that has been handed down through the centuries. "In the Bible, the definition of an orphan is a fatherless child," he notes. "With the privilege of becoming parents comes the responsibility to care for our children. When we neglect to care for our children, all of us suffer the consequences."



Harry Frisch



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## In Memoriam

## Robert Thomas (Bob) Shircliff

May 20, 1928 to January 2, 2020

Bob Shircliff, the man known for saying, “there is no right way to do the wrong thing,” peacefully passed away January 2 at age 91, leaving Jacksonville without one of its greatest philanthropists and civic leaders.

“Others have said it and I concur, Bob Shircliff really was Jacksonville’s leading citizen, both in business, philanthropy and culture,” said Richard Sisisky, his business partner and long-time friend. “He really was the go-to guy in town if you needed opinions or needed to raise money. He was an indispensable resource for Jacksonville.”

A longtime Riverside resident, Shircliff grew up in the small town of Vincennes, Indiana. He received his education at Culver Military Academy and Indiana University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in marketing and wrote about sports for the *Indiana Daily Student*. He also learned about business early at the elbow of his father, who purchased a Pepsi-Cola bottling plant when he was young. Throughout high school and college he worked for his father’s company part-time and during the summer.



Carol and Robert Shircliff

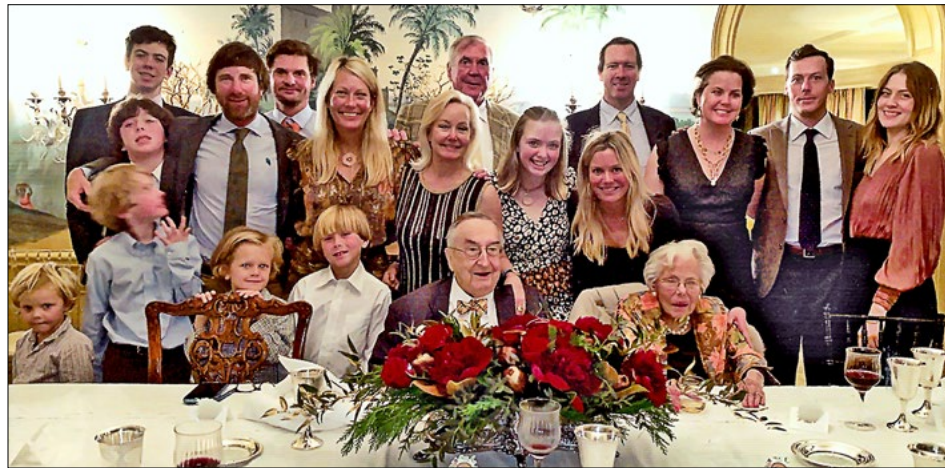
A member of senior ROTC both in high school and college, Shircliff joined the United States Army Reserve in 1950 during his senior year in college and served in the military until 1963, when he retired as a Captain in military intelligence. After graduation, he joined his father’s company and began his long career in the beverage industry.

It was Pepsi that led Shircliff to Jacksonville in 1967, when he purchased the bottling plant in the city. During his tenure with the soda manufacturer, Shircliff was elected as president of the Pepsi-Cola Allied Bottlers, Inc., and also president of the National Pepsi-Cola Bottlers Association, a position that had previously been held by his father.

Shircliff ultimately sold his bottling company to General Cinema Corporation where he served on the board and oversaw 12 of its subsidiaries for nearly six years before starting his own consulting firm, Robert T. Shircliff Associates. Later his business was renamed The Shircliff Group, and then later as The Shircliff-Sisisky Company. Shircliff met his partner, Richard Sisisky, when he did some work for the Sisisky family in Petersburg, Virginia, and eventually lured him to Jacksonville to join him in business. “He’s the one who sang the siren song, but it didn’t take much convincing,” Sisisky recalled. “I was 32 years old and ready to go.”

Shircliff served on the boards of numerous business entities, including Shoney’s Inc., Alliance Mortgage Corporation, Atlantic National Bank of Jacksonville and Everbank Financial Corporation. He was a proud Rotarian for more than 60 years and a charter member and former president of the Rotary Club of West Jacksonville. He also served as the youngest Rotary International District Governor.

But that was not all. He served as “Mr. Chairman” or “Mr. President” to so many groups, said Sisisky, and it is hard to think of a civic or philanthropic organization he was not involved with. A few that he worked



The entire Shircliff family. Front row: George Pope, Max Collie, Billy Pope, Patrick Collie, Robert Shircliff, and Carol Shircliff. Back row: Judson Collie, Graham Roberts, David Collie, Luke Pope, Tricia Collie, Laura Howell, Bill Howell, Caroline Roberts, Caroline Pope, Brad Roberts, Reed Roberts, Alden Howell and Meghan Green

tirelessly for included the River Club, Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center, the American Red Cross of Duval County, the United Way of Northeast Florida, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Advisory Board of I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless, Jacksonville Symphony Association, the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, and Jacksonville University, where he spent 23 years on the board and was chairman of two successful capital campaigns. At one point, Shircliff estimated that he helped to raise nearly \$300 million to benefit the Jacksonville community over a period of 45 years, while always stipulating that each campaign was a “group effort.”

“He had a very diverse portfolio, but it was always about helping people that needed help. It wasn’t charity for its own sake,” said Sisisky.

“His legacy was the way he thought about everyone. He always saw the good in everyone,” said his longtime friend, Jane Lanier. “One time in an interview, he said that one of the best kept secrets in Jacksonville was that there are so many kind and generous people living here. He was always turning



Former St. Vincent’s Foundation President Jane Lanier with Robert Shircliff

any accolades away from himself and onto other people. He really felt that way. He saw the best in everyone.”

Sisisky agreed. “His legacy for the community was that you really can do well while doing good. When he was talking to you, Bob made you feel like you were the most important person in the world. It’s a great gift. I wish I had it,” he said, noting that Shircliff loved to give and loved helping others to give.

Many people in Jacksonville considered Shircliff to be their best friend because he made people feel that way, said Lanier. “He was a great listener. For so many people, no matter what career they had, they would come to Bob for advice, and Bob would really care and help them to succeed.”

“Bob led an exemplary life and if you did it the Shircliff Way, which is the right way, then you would be a better person,” Sisisky said. “Everything about him made him special. He was smart, honest, ethical.

He led a just and righteous life. He was a great example of how to move gracefully throughout your life. He was considerate of others and very good in business. He taught me an enormous amount, both personally and professionally.”

A devout Catholic, Shircliff’s faith proved to be his lifelong compass, directing him to do God’s work throughout his life, said Lanier. “Bob lived his faith in everything he did. His Catholic faith was just a part of him. The right thing to do was what he always did.”

Shircliff was a member of St. Matthew’s Catholic Parish for 53 years. He worked tirelessly for St. Vincent’s Healthcare in Riverside, which is now known as Ascension St. Vincent’s, giving and raising millions for the hospital. He served as chairman of St. Vincent’s Health System and its Medical Center Advisory Board, was founding chairman of the St. Vincent’s Foundation, vice-chair of Baptist St. Vincent’s Health System, and was director of the Daughters of Charity National Health System.

He also founded the Order of Malta Federal Association in Jacksonville and was its very first hospitaller. “The organization is a Catholic lay organization where you take formal vows, and you belong for only two reasons, to serve God and to serve the sick and the poor,” Lanier said. As part of the order, Shircliff also took great joy in serving gravely ill “maladies” during its yearly pilgrimages to Lourdes.

In addition to chairing the Catholic Foundation and the Diocesan Stewardship Committee of the Diocese of St. Augustine, he played a role in founding both organizations and co-chaired a capital campaign to build two new Catholic high schools in the diocese. He also supported Guardian Catholic School and its predecessor, Guardian of Dreams.

Although Shircliff appreciated receiving many awards during his lifetime, including Philanthropist of the Year and National Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year from

the National Society of Fundraising Executives, perhaps the most meaningful was when he and his wife, Carol, were inducted as affiliates of the Daughters of Charity, said Lanier. He also received a Heritage Award from the Daughters of Charity National Health Systems, and in 2001, Pope John Paul II presented Shircliff with the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross, a decoration of the Holy See conferred for distinguished service to the Catholic Church.

When the City of Jacksonville renamed the street in front of St. Vincent’s Medical Center in Riverside Shircliff Way, it had a double meaning, said Lanier, who retired last year as president of the St. Vincent’s Healthcare Foundation. She noted that Shircliff was never seen without his bowtie, and when the street in front of St. Vincent’s Medical Center was renamed in 2007, every celebrant donned a bowtie, including the Daughters of Charity nuns, and a bowtie was imprinted on the street sign.

“The street is named Shircliff Way because there is only one way and that is the right way,” said Sisisky. “Bob didn’t take ethical short cuts. Even when it was difficult, he always told the truth.”

It is for that reason Shircliff Way continues to provide inspiration to patients and staff at St. Vincent’s, even though its namesake is no longer here. “We saw his love and support for St. Vincent’s as ‘The Shircliff Way,’” said Lanier. “That street reminds us every day how we should act and who we should care for – the sick and the poor – because that was the Shircliff Way.”

Shircliff is survived by beloved wife, Carol, with whom he shared two daughters, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren during his 67-year marriage. “He was the example of a great husband and a great father,” said Lanier. “He often said his proudest accomplishment was marrying Carol.”

And Carol often worked alongside him when he made it his mission to help others. During a hurricane a few years ago, Shircliff and his wife headed to St. Vincent’s where they folded laundry and put up food trays to assist the staff, when so many employees were unable to make it to work, Lanier recalled.

Every Christmas Eve, he made a point of stopping by each nurses’ station at St. Vincent’s so he could greet the nurses and wish them a Merry Christmas. “He would thank them for coming to work on Christmas Eve. He would say that ‘it means so much to have a great nurse and thank you for being here,’” she remembered.

Perhaps Bishop Felipe J. Estévez of the Diocese of St. Augustine said it best when he recalled, “Bob Shircliff was so admirable. He radiated true love as he was so selfless and caring. His heart reached so many in a most gracious way.”



Carol and Robert Shircliff with the Daughters of Charity at St. Vincent’s

## In Memoriam

## Raymond Knight Mason

February 28, 1927 to January 2, 2020

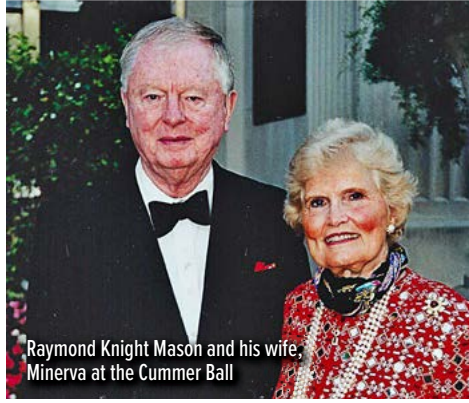
One of Jacksonville's most creative business leaders – a man who rubbed shoulders with presidents, world leaders and Hollywood celebrities and had the gumption to cut in on President John F. Kennedy so he could dance with Jackie at JFK's inaugural ball – has passed.

Raymond Knight Mason passed away on the day after New Years at the age of 92. His death came less than a year after the passing of his beloved wife of 71 years – Minerva Rogers Mason – last spring.

The son of Varina Knight and William Marcy Mason, he was a native of Riverside and grew up on Post Street across from Riverside Park and the Riverside Presbyterian Church, where he was a lifelong member. He attended West Riverside Elementary, John Gorrie Junior High and Robert E. Lee High School. After serving in the Merchant Marine during World War II, he went on to graduate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After he was married in 1948, he and his wife remained in Riverside/Avondale, moving to Richmond Street, where they built two homes in succession as their family grew before moving to Epping Forest in the 1970s.

Mason was a creative businessman and deal maker with broad interests in many industries. Under his leadership, he shepherded the Charter Company, a small mortgage firm, into a diversified Fortune 500 company with acquisitions in the oil and gas, insurance and communications businesses. He was also active in Jacksonville's financial community, serving as a board member of Florida National Bank and American Banks of Florida.

"My father was an idea person. He loved business and was a creative thinker," said his daughter, Marcy Moody of Riverside. "He loved all types of businesses from mortgage banking to insurance to publishing to oil and gas to radio and TV – you name it, just fill in the blank. The business transactions Daddy put together were often so complicated one wondered how he



Raymond Knight Mason and his wife, Minerva at the Cummer Ball



Raymond Knight Mason and his wife, Minerva, all decked out and ready to attend the Ascot races in London, England

dreamed them up. He enjoyed buying and selling things, but he left the day-to-day management of his various businesses and investments to others. I think this made it great for others to work for him because he always delegated the day-to-day management. He attracted bright, ambitious people because of his creativity and because he gave them more opportunities at younger ages than more traditionally run business might have done," she said. "I think this is his biggest legacy to Jacksonville, attracting bright young people who thrived in his orbit and went on to be very successful businesspeople afterwards."

Arthur L. Cahoon, CEO of Rock Creek Capital, said he learned much from working under Mason's tutelage. "Mr. Mason was quite a dynamic businessman, and I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with him, especially in his later years," he wrote in a letter to Moody. "By creating the Charter Company, he gave many young men, including me, the opportunity to flourish by tackling challenging business situations well beyond our experience and training. These sink-or-swim experiences allowed us to develop skills and insights that prepared us to succeed in our own business careers. His unique perspective and always positive view of what could be possible was vitally refreshing in a world often limited by negative thoughts and tunnel vision. I will forever owe Raymond a great debt for the

environment he created and his valuable contribution to my business experiences."

Mason's mentor and great friend was Edward Ball, brother of Jessie Ball duPont, and through his acquaintance with Ball, he purchased Epping Forest, the former home Ball's brother-in-law Alfred I. duPont and his wife. Mason lived at Epping Forest for 11 years and during that time, he and his wife hosted many national and international dignitaries at the riverfront mansion, including President Gerald Ford, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, King Hussein of Jordan, the Shah of Iran, and Comedian Bob Hope, a man Moody remembers fondly. "Bob Hope was a wonderful man, just as warm and approachable as he seemed on the big screen," she said.

In 1984, after he sold the duPont mansion to Gate Petroleum so that Herb Peyton could develop it into the Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club, the Masons moved to Orange Park, where they lived for more than 30 years. During the summers, the Masons spent time in a home they built on the grounds of Ballynahinch Castle in Ireland, a property that Mason had purchased and his wife operated as a first-class hotel that was visited by many notable public and private figures.

"Daddy loved to travel. He particularly like cruises and sponsoring family group trips where we could all be together. Ireland was his favorite vacation spot, and he built a vacation home over there on the grounds

of Ballynahinch Castle, which he owned control of. He and Mama vacationed there for 45 years until declining health caused them to stop," said Moody.

Mason's favorite hobby was reading, and he especially enjoyed devouring history books, biographies, political works, romance and crime thrillers. "He particularly liked books by Stuart Woods and Tom Clancy. He even wrote a book about his friend and mentor, Edward Ball. His home library of hard-copy books was extensive. Someone once asked him if he had read everything there. He responded, 'yes, but not all of them were particularly good. Some of them were really kind of trashy.' And he would say this with a very gentlemanly air. His vocabulary was pretty tame. 'Hot dog' and 'oh boy' were two of his most colorful expressions," Moody recalled.

Although Mason did not personally become involved with local charities, he was known to support many nonprofits such as Jacksonville University, Riverside Presbyterian Church and others with very generous financial gifts, including a \$5 million to the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens in 2006.

In 2017, Mason and his wife moved from Orange Park to Riverside. While Minerva resided at St. Catherine Labouré Manor nursing facility, Mason lived across the street in Villa Riva enabling the couple to daily enjoy lunch and dinner together.

"I will remember my father most for his love of business and his love of reading," said Moody. "I will miss his enthusiasm and optimism for the next big deal and the next great read."

Predeceased by his wife, Minerva, his brothers John Dunham Mason and William Marcy Mason and two of his four children, Walter Rogers Mason and Varina Mason Steuert, Mason is survived by his daughter Marcy Mason Moody (Tom) of Riverside and son Raymond Knight Mason, Jr. (Cabeth) of Riverside; five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

## In Memoriam

## Thomas Vernon Bowyer

January 9, 1948 – October 1, 2019

The owner and renown cake decorator of the former Bowyer's Bakery, which was once a Lakewood institution, is gone.

Thomas Vernon Bowyer, 71, a San Marco-area resident and former co-owner of the Bowyer's Lakewood Bakery & Catering service, passed away unexpectedly October 1, 2019. Bowyer was a man of many experiences, interests and talents, according to those who knew him best.

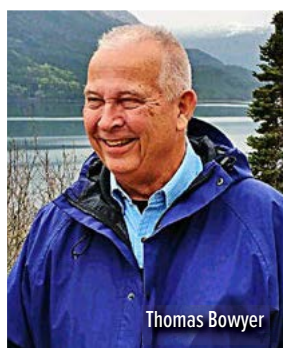
Bowyer, a Jacksonville native, was born Jan. 9, 1948 to Marlboro Thomas Jr. and Pam Fleming Bowyer. He was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in 1978 with the rank of Staff Sergeant with an Outstanding Marksman (rifle expert) distinction, having served 12 years. Family members said he was a proud Marine for the rest of his life, but he was perhaps best known as one of the owners of the bake shop, which his parents had operated for more than 35 years before its sale in 1984. He excelled in cake decorating.

"Bowyer's Bakery was the best in Lakewood," Minnie Acosta recalled in his online guestbook. "I remember going there all the time. Mr. Bowyer made my

wedding cake, and it was so beautiful. My husband Mark worked there and loved it. My deepest sympathy to all of Tom's family."

His sister, Debra Higgins, said that her brother left the Marine Corps in order to help their father and mother run the bakery and, later, its catering service, after the grandfather who created the business passed away.

"It was a family-owned business, a bakery and catering service and they also had a restaurant in the later years in Lakewood," Higgins recalled. "It started out with my grandfather and then my father, and the bakery was on Main Street downtown and they moved it to Lakewood – I don't know what year. Tom took the part of decorating the birthday cakes and wedding cakes. He was very artistic. Then, it was several years later that they expanded the business and moved across the street on the Winn Dixie side and that's when they opened the restaurant, serving breakfast and lunch.



Thomas Bowyer

Tom continued with the cake decorating and my Dad was the baker. My father and mother coordinated the catering. He was a very generous, giving person, a very good listener."

Baking and cake decorating were only two of Bowyer's great many talents, his wife Carolyn Bowyer said. He was also widely known for

his kindness, generosity, friendliness and the meticulous attention to detail he brought to the trim carpentry that brought the family its living.

"He did all kinds of things – trim, crown molding, doors, he worked on windows," Bowyer explained. "He and his very dear friend, they did some remodeling together, bathrooms as well. He'd been doing that for a number of years. He was very meticulous and very patient. He worked by himself unless his friend Tony Dye was involved. Tony is a custom builder, and they would feed off each other on ideas and things like that."

Bowyer was also a Master Mason and a Shriner and had a love of hunting, especially quail and dove, although in his earlier years he also pursued deer and wild turkeys. He was also a member of Jacksonville Skeet & Trap Club, Gateway Pistol and Rifle Club and the NRA as well as a member of San Jose Episcopal Church.

"He was a family man," she said. "There are so many words I could use."

Carolyn and her husband met on a blind date set up by their friends. "Back in '74 that was unheard of," Carolyn said with a laugh. The rest is family history. The two were married for 44 years and among the first words his widow used to describe him was "family man."

Bowyer is survived by his wife, daughter, Sarah Leigh Lake, granddaughter, Georgia Caitlyn Lake, mother-in-Law, Naomi Duke, sisters Debra Higgins and Cathy Bowyer, and sister-in-law LeAnne Duke. Visitation was held in October and a graveside service with military honors was conducted Oct. 11, 2019, at Oaklawn Cemetery with reception following in the chapel.

In Memoriam

# Joshua Joel Nugent

May 29, 1977 – Jan. 10, 2020

The real estate agents at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices/Florida Network were shocked to learn of the passing of their 42-year-old colleague Joshua Joel Nugent on Jan. 10.

Linda Sherrer, founder and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices/Florida Network Realty, said her business and the community have a void due to Nugent's passing. As a Realtor®, he specialized in historic neighborhoods such as Avondale, Ortega and San Marco as well as many others in the area and, was known as the "condo king" because of his extensive expertise. Sherrer, friends and coworkers remember him as a loving, active person who derived great joy from anonymous acts of kindness.

"He would pick up tabs, he would bring you random gifts, he helped his family financially quite a bit. He was always willing to help, to answer questions," said Josh Cohen, a managing broker and friend. "He was a leader and people respected him because of his knowledge and because his experience."

Sherrer had employed and worked with the Jacksonville native for more than a decade. "It's a real loss to the community as well as our company. It's so sad when a young person like that passes away so suddenly, but (his memorial service) was very uplifting because of the way he lived his life. He was with us 11 years and that was a long time in that young life. We were



so close to him; he exuded that kind of energy and respect," Sherrer said. He was respected for his expertise and for his heart; the more than 350 people that attended his service remembered him most for those random acts of love, she said.

"At the service, I challenged all of us, including myself, to choose the trait of Josh we liked the most and live it in their lives, and people overwhelmingly chose those anonymous acts of kindness. He did anonymous thoughtful things for people all the time, and he got a lot of joy from it.

He was always reaching out to people who might need a pat on the shoulder or a positive word. We have an advisory committee, and he was on that committee for seven years. He was huge in giving back. I think he had more hours in the day than most of us," Sherrer continued.

Berkshire Hathaway Realtor® Anita Vining said Nugent was a dear friend and colleague. She remembers him as a quiet and compassionate man who loved to work out and didn't burden others with his problems.

"He was always the silent person when there was a meeting in the company," Vining shared. "One of the people in the administrative office had a family member that was very ill, and he quietly took up a collection, silently signed the card. I sit on a board for the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and he was always willing to ask questions about it, he made donations, he attended some meetings to learn more. He was that way with others. He was a very good friend, wonderful business partner. In our business of real estate, you don't always find a lot of camaraderie or sharing of business, but our company is a little bit different in that aspect, it is a different culture. Josh and I shared business Together, and we had an appointment the day he passed away."

Nugent grew up in the real estate business, according to his website. His father and aunt developed and bought condos and single-family subdivisions throughout Northeast Florida and he started his career in 1999 working for a local homebuilder. He had been with Berkshire Hathaway since 2009, when it was then Prudential Realty. He was honored that year with the Prudential Network Realty of Northeast Florida's Rookie of the Year Award. He went on to become one of the top producers in the Avondale/San Marco market.

He is survived by his mother, Martha Nugent.

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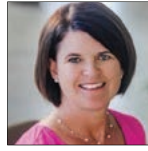
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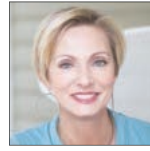
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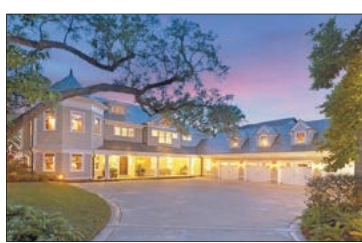
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# Rave reviews for ASN Conference from arts community

By Marcia Hodgson  
Resident Community News

Jacksonville's reputation as a thriving arts community climbed substantially in the estimation of many arts school educators and leaders from around the world when the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) Foundation hosted the four-day 2019 Arts School Network (ASN) Conference in late October.

A nonprofit organization, ASN was founded in 1981 as an association of arts leaders and educators – artists/teachers and administrators from specialized arts schools (elementary, middle and high school), conservatories, colleges and programs at universities. Although ASN has sponsored a conference annually for the past 38 years, 2019 was the first time Jacksonville was selected as the venue by ASN leadership.

"It took me 10 years to convince them to have the conference in Jacksonville," said Jacqueline Cornelius, executive director of the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts



Gary McCalla, Douglas Anderson Foundation Executive Director Jacqueline Cornelius, Gail and Dr. Stephen Trigg of the Mayo Clinic

Foundation and an event organizer. "It's always in either New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Miami or Seattle. Never here. They'd ask, 'What's in Jacksonville?' And they laughed at me, although they liked me, just because they couldn't imagine what the heck you could do in Jacksonville, Florida. With this conference, we blew them away! My goal was to ensure whoever attended this conference would leave with new innovative ideas, strategies, an expanded network, new friends and a greater appreciation for our community in Jacksonville," she said. "A lot of people said they didn't know Jacksonville was so beautiful – that it was amazing with its river, art and museums. They couldn't believe how kind the people were and the interesting collaborations here. It was meaningful. I didn't want this to be just another conference. Until they came here, the majority of participants had no idea of the depth of the arts opportunities in Jacksonville."

The theme of the conference was creative arts collaborations among businesses, art institutes and schools, partnerships, leadership development and innovative best arts practices, said Cornelius, and its action-packed four-day schedule did not disappoint.

Headquartered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel downtown, the "Creative Arts and Collaborations" conference included three different tours with destinations that incorporated local arts schools such as Fishweir Elementary, LaVilla School of the Arts, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, the Museum of Contemporary Art downtown, the Cathedral Arts Project, art at the Mayo Clinic, a private tour of Preston Haskell's home art collection, the CoRK Arts District, and Space 42, a unique industrial art gallery. It was attended by 380 ASN members from all over the United States, Canada, England, Vietnam and Singapore.

Most of the activities took place in venues along the St. Johns River, including receptions at the Granada riverfront mansion of Arts Patron Gary McCalla as well as the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, hosted by Museum Director Dr. Adam Levine and Patron Sponsors Ann Hicks, Joannie Newton and Helen Lane, and the Museum of Science and History (MOSH) hosted by Executive Director Maria Hane and sponsored by Smith Gambrell & Russell LLP. A luncheon on the green at Jacksonville University was also hosted and sponsored by Patron and DA Foundation Board Member W.C. Gentry.

Throughout the conference, participants had the opportunity to enjoy performances by student artists from Douglas Anderson, LaVilla and other Florida arts schools. A "mini Extravaganza" was held by students from Florida arts schools outside of Jacksonville, such Harrison School for the Arts in Lakeland, A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach and Sarasota School of the Arts/Sciences. "It showcased the arts in Florida," Cornelius said.



Preston Haskell with Caitlin Doherty and Sally Larkin Hall



During the conference's first day Susan Towler of Florida Blue facilitated a panel consisting of Jacksonville philanthropists Michael Miller, Preston Haskell and Delores Barr Weaver, who shared their insights on giving.

Meanwhile, the DA strings ensemble serenaded visitors at McCalla's grand riverfront mansion in a lavish affair that was catered by Biscottis, and the DA Guitar Ensemble provided entertainment during the ASN Board of Directors dinner at the duPont Mansion at Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club, an affair that was sponsored by Lawrence DuBow, a Jacksonville arts patron.

The Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestra played during the Cummer reception, an event that offered each visitor a creative cocktail from the St. Augustine Distillery. Conference goers were ferried to the Cummer via river taxis supplied by Heather Surface. "I'd like to say I'd planned it, but dolphins followed the riverboats to the Cummer," Cornelius said. "People were amazed that there were dolphins playfully following the riverboats. Then LaVilla students in costumes welcomed them to the museum. It was a beautiful day in the gardens there."

The meat and potatoes of the conference offered keynote speeches by several well-known locals from the Jacksonville arts community as well as arts experts from out of town and break-out sessions that covered all areas of arts education and administration. ASN awards were presented on the last day, with Lavilla School for the Arts receiving the Arts Integration Award.

On the first day, "A Case for Arts and Medicine" was the topic of keynote addresses by Jill Sonke, director of the Center for the Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida and assistant director of UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine and Hope McMath, former executive director of the Cummer Museum, adjunct professor at Jacksonville University and founder and director of Yellow House, a place where art and action creates change through thought-provoking exhibitions, public events and community dialogue.

Sponsored by Full Sail University in Orlando, Chance Glasco, co-founder of

Doghead Simulations and co-founder of the Virtual Reality collaboration app rumii and Call of Duty, gave a speech entitled "The Impact of Virtual & Augmented Reality on the Classroom and the Arts," which was especially popular with the California crowd, said Cornelius. Other keynote addresses were by Jacksonville University President Tim Cost, entitled "The Changing Face of Art in Higher Education," and DA Alumni Ulysses Owens, a Juilliard faculty member and founder of the nonprofit, Don't Miss a Beat, who spoke on the topic of "Entrepreneurship & Serving Marginalized Communities."

In addition, a fundraising workshop was offered by champion fundraiser Chuck Loring, past president of the Indiana Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and a senior partner of Loring, Sternberg & Associates.

Cornelius also included something no other ASN conference had tried before – panel discussions by local philanthropists and successful business leaders who shared their first-hand experience in supporting the arts.

One panel was comprised of nationally recognized philanthropists Delores Barr Weaver, former co-owner of the Jacksonville Jaguars and managing partner of John Gorrie Investment Group, Preston Haskell, founder of The Haskell Company, and Michael Miller, co-founder and CEO of Brightway Insurance, and was facilitated by Susan Towler, vice president of Florida Blue Foundation and a San Marco resident. "I thought it would be beneficial to leaders of the arts schools to hear from people who give away millions of dollars talk about why they give, why they don't give and what they look for when they are giving," said Cornelius. "Arts schools are always looking for funding. This was never done before, and it was all about giving"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

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*“I have never seen an entire city, arts community, and school system open its doors, welcome (visitors) and produce high-quality interactive sessions as well as donate the time, money and resources the way Jacksonville did.”*

— Amber Amerson, theatre instructor,  
LaVilla Middle School of the Arts

The second panel was comprised of chief executive officers, presidents and founders of companies and included Hap Stein, chairman and CEO of Regency Centers, Gary Chartrand, executive chairman of Acosta, Inc., Phillip R. Cox, president and CEO of the Cox Financial Corporation of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Barbara Drake, who had a long career in the recycling industry and was the founder of the commercial recycling business, Covenant Paper Stock. Darnell Smith, market president of the North Florida Region of Florida Blue, was the panel facilitator. “I wanted them to speak because leadership is leadership, and when you are the head of a top art school or university arts program, there are different leadership styles that are successful. I wanted them to leave with new ideas, strategies and friends. It was very successful,” Cornelius said.

Amber Amerson, a theatre instructor at LaVilla Middle School of the Arts, said she has attended nine ASN conferences in far-flung locations such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Minnesota, Charleston, New York, Orange County, California, and Seattle, but was most impressed by the conference in her hometown.

“Our conference blew the others out of the water,” Amerson said. “I have never seen an entire city, arts community, and school system open its doors, welcome (visitors) and produce high-quality interactive sessions as well as donate the time, money and resources the way Jacksonville did. The arts educators, professors, advocates and board members were truly in awe of the

support our students and schools received and expressed interest in collaborating with our arts community further. Plus, it’s great for universities like NYU, Webster, USC and others to understand that our students, who will audition for their programs, come from a community of sustainable art and that provides them with an accelerated arts context.

“I benefited from meeting other arts educators from all over the world. I had one-on-one time with admittance directors from prestigious private and public arts schools as well as universities. We had intimate talks about process and the future of the arts. I learned different skill sets and concepts from leaders in my own community as well as other regions, she said.

A letter written to Melissa Ann Brookes, managing director of the Arts School Network, by Theresa West-Taylor, arts director for the North Fort Myers Academy for the Arts perhaps sums up the appreciation of the conference by the out-of-town visitors. “I wanted to send a reply directly to you about how incredible this conference was,” West-Taylor wrote. “I have attended multiple ASN conferences in multiple cities. This was VERY well run, very informative, and most of all, very inspiring. The city of Jacksonville made me feel valued as a professional art educator. The venues and break-out sessions were valuable and on point for our organization. My team had a great experience, and I shared many photos and valuable tips with our school administration and our school foundation. Thank you for a great experience!”



Arts Conference participants enjoyed a water taxi ride from the Hyatt Riverfront Hotel downtown to the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, where they were greeted by students in costume from LaVilla School for the Arts. (Photo courtesy of laird/blac palm inc.)



Musicians from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts perform during a reception at the Granada Riverfront home of Jacksonville Arts Patron Gary McCalla.



Jeffrey Dunn, Anne Hicks, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Executive Director Jacqueline Cornelius and Cummer Museum Director and CEO Dr. Adam Levine



Students of LaVilla School of the Arts greeted ASN Conference participants at the docks at Riverside Arts Market as they made their way to the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens. From left, Ayviana Singh, Carolina Baldwin, Elijah Simms, Abby Harrell, Dakota Burton, Ava Clark. Front: Riley Gittens and Owen Betancourt.



ASN Conference Organizer Jacqueline Cornelius, executive director of the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts Foundation



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Grace McCormick

## Bishop Kenny senior places in high school sweetheart pageant

Representing Bishop Kenny, Grace McCormick, a senior at the Catholic high school in St. Nicholas, competed in the 2019 High School Sweetheart Pageant on Dec. 7 at Stanton College Preparatory High School.

McCormick was one of 27 contestants in the pageant and was proud to be selected as the First Runner Up. Crowned with a tiara, she received a \$600 cash scholarship and plaque. McCormick is also the reigning Miss Freedom U.S.A. Ambassador, and a Miss BK Sweetheart.

McCormick has a very strong academic schedule and a passion for serving others. She has accrued over 335 service hours through her work with organizations including Night to Shine, Hope Haven, and the Ronald McDonald House. She is currently the Theatre Department president, Anchor Club convention chair, a member of the BK Ambassadors, the National Honor Society, and the Science and Thespian honor societies.

McCormick hopes to attend Florida State University and pursue a degree in communications while continuing her involvement in musical theatre. "Through the world of theatre, I have been able to discover the power of my voice, and I realize that I always want theatre to play a part in my life," she said.

## RPDS LEGO teams win trophies at LEGO League Jr. Expo

Three teams of budding engineers from Riverside Presbyterian Day School took home much of the winning hardware during the LEGO League Jr. Expo held at Edward Waters College Dec. 14.

The students have been learning and working since August on the Boomtown Build season. They learned about the importance of making buildings durable, accessible, and environmentally friendly. The RPDS teams also utilized LEGO WeDo 2.0 to create motorized aspects of their builds with programming! At the EXPO they showed off their posters and LEGO builds to other teams in attendance and presented to a panel of judges.

Six first graders made up the RPDS Legends. They created a hospital that included a check in and waiting room floor, a surgical floor with an x-ray machine, and a roof



RPDS students compete in the LEGO League Jr. Expo



RPDS students show off their LEGO builds in the LEGO League Jr. Expo at Edward Waters College in December.



RPDS students show off their trophy at the LEGO League Jr. Expo at Edward Waters College in December.

complete with solar panels for green energy, a helicopter landing pad, and a rooftop garden to grow medicinal plants. They made sure their building was durable by creating double walls. This team took home the Construction Innovation Award trophy!

Five second graders made up the RPDS Second Grade Super Builders! They created a multi-level Welcome Center building. Their build had a diner on the first floor called Bob's Place, a two-floor mall on the second and third floors, and a rooftop

playground. Their building is powered with clean energy by a windmill. This team took home the Teamwork Award trophy!

Four third graders made up the RPDS Builders. They created a multi-purpose building with an arcade, lounge, restaurant, and rooftop that housed their solar panels and windmill for clean energy sources. They also had a parking garage with an automatic door powered by LEGO WeDo. This team took home the Amazing Movement Award trophy.

## Episcopal singers perform at Disney World

Members of the Episcopal School of Jacksonville's Concert and Honors Chorale performed Dec. 11 during Disney's Candlelight Processional in EPCOT, a tradition started by Walt Disney over 60 years ago. During the holiday celebration, the students were accompanied by the Disney Orchestra, celebrity narrator Isabella Rossellini, Disney's professional choir, the cast of Voices of Liberty, and conductor Dr. John V. Sinclair, a master teacher and director of music at Rollins College. During two evening shows, the students performed 14 pieces of music.

The Concert and Honors Chorale of Episcopal School of Jacksonville performed at Walt Disney World Dec. 11.



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*Bolles Club lights up doors at Ronald McDonald House*



Counter-clockwise from front: Katie Fites, Meghan Shaffer, Kallie Pearson, Anneliese Foltz, Sophia Stromberg and Jessie Pearson

Kallie and Jessie Pearson of San Jose assisted as The Bolles Ronald McDonald House Club sold paper lights for \$5 each to raise money and support for a special holiday project. The students and their schoolmates, Katie Fites, Meghan Shaffer, Anneliese Foltz, and Sophia Stromberg sold 150 lights, which were later affixed to patients' doors at the Ronald McDonald House in San Marco. The cheerful decorations warmed up the entry and brought holiday cheer and love to each resident experiencing a challenge with their health during the holiday season.



The Bolles Ronald McDonald House Club decorated residents' doors to raise money and bring cheer during the holiday season.

# Wolfson Freshman has football season to remember

Wolfson High School Freshman Michael Weidle emerged from his football season with some statewide victories, countywide recognition, and a team of new friends who weathered the ups and downs in a hard-fought football season. Only it wasn't a typical football team or an everyday honor, and Weidle isn't your everyday player.

Weidle bypassed the Wolfpack locker room and instead traveled five miles down the road to North Florida School of Special Education (NFSSE) where he practiced and played as a unified partner on the NFSSE Eagles Special Olympics flag football team. "I didn't know what to expect when I signed up" he said. "I didn't expect to enjoy the experience as much as I did."

Weidle began partnering with NFSSE Eagles flag football teams in 2018. Special Olympics area organizer, Sue Scovill believes that he embodies everything good about being a unified partner. "His interaction is fabulous. He makes sure everyone on the



First row: A.J. Anderson, Jake Scovill, Josiah Middleton. St. John Bargas, Madeline Hickey, Christian Roberts, Anna DeStefano, Michael Weidle, Brandon Ordile. Last row: Coach John Roberts.



Christian Roberts, Jake Scoville and Josiah Middleton



Michael Weidle and AJ Anderson

team is involved on the field, and he socializes with them off the field." Weidle's leadership caught the attention of others as well, and he was recognized at the Special Olympics Statewide Games as the Duval County Inspirational Partner in November 2019.

NFSSE teammates agree that Weidle deserved the honor. "Michael is an awesome leader. He makes me feel good about myself," said Jake Scovill and his friend, George, agreed, "Michael is kind, thoughtful, and cares." AJ Anderson summed it up, "He is my friend."

Weidle shrugs off the accolades and instead shares about the friendships he developed with the team. He was especially inspired by the players' extraordinary sportsmanship. "Even if the team was losing, it's players would high-five each other and lift each other up. It was really cool."

As Weidle closes the chapter on the 2019 flag football season, he smiled as he reflected

on the lasting impact that his teammates made in his life. Weidle will continue his studies at Wolfson High School in the IB program and plans to play on the NFSSE Eagles team until he leaves for college. In the distant future, Weidle may be in the position to employ Jake, George, AJ, or another person with intellectual differences. Through this experience he has learned the many strengths and contributions they bring to a team, especially the sportsmanship and ability to lift up others, even in the face of adversity.

"Michael Weidle's story is a shining example of the positive, life-changing impact that can follow when one steps out of one's comfort zone. The result was a win-win," said Connectable manager, Sarah Troup of North Florida School of Special Education. "Jacksonville is a strong community of people and organizations that come together to make connections like this one happen."

# Starting here creates confidence there.



**Ben Barton**

Bolles Class of 2018  
Washington & Lee University  
Sophomore  
First Trumpet, Wind Ensemble  
Major: Business Administration

Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society Inductee  
Virginia outdoor sportsman in hunting and fly-fishing



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# Science students benefit from modeling method

## Episcopal to add new science building on campus

Honors Biology students at Episcopal School of Jacksonville are benefiting from a new teaching method instructor Megan Wickenden has instituted on campus, called “modeling.” In fact, the high school’s honors biology class has been redesigned around the modeling framework, which Wickenden learned how to implement during a professional development opportunity.

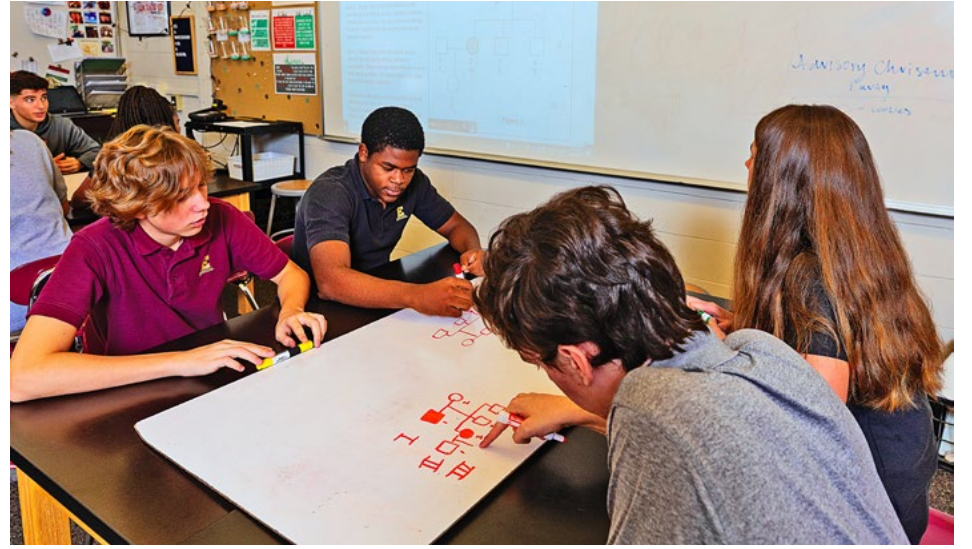
Modeling is a form of student-centered teaching that emphasizes small groups working to discover models of understanding using data and then synthesizing that data

into a consensus with the entire class. The process requires collaboration much like the Harkness Method, but the results are different – the entire class works together to create a consensus on a model that explains the data and problem presented.

“A common misconception about modeling is that the students are making a physical model. The model they make is usually a conceptual model,” said David Wandel, science instructor. “For example: A unit on evolution would start with a question such as, ‘How do organisms change?’ The students use simulated data that mirror the original data that the actual scientists used to create an explanation.”

Typically, biology is a field in which students are required to memorize a high volume of content like all of the parts of a cell, steps of protein synthesis, or the classification of organisms. “While a class that gives students information to memorize is easy to teach and pretty straightforward for students, it was frustrating that students were not gaining insight into the real process of scientific discovery or critical thinking,” said Wickenden.

Although lab work typically fills those gaps, labs had students following a plan that led them to “right” answers or data that supported something that they already understood. “While a lab experience can be helpful, it takes the student out of the driver’s seat. They become used to looking for the right answer instead of following the patterns of evidence to come to their own conclusions, which is the most exciting part of studying science!” she said.



Episcopal Science students practice a new modeling method in Honors Biology.

Modeling Instruction is an evolving, research-based program that was developed through funding from the National Science Foundation. Initially developed for physical sciences, modeling emphasizes the construction and application of conceptual models of physical phenomena as a central aspect of learning and doing science.

### New science center in works

Episcopal is currently exploring the addition of a new building on campus that would possibly include new facilities for science classes, allowing for expansion of the modeling method in science courses. A new science center would improve flexibility for teachers, as modeling would run more smoothly with furniture designed to move. For example, small groups could get together for the initial breaking down of the data and then quickly shift desks to a full class discussion on the model.

Having the space for classroom layouts that are more mobile would allow Honors Biology classes the space to set up their

own long-term data collecting projects for their modeling process such as Mendel’s pea plant experiments, genetics with drosophila, and biotechnology experiments using PCR and electrophoresis.

Another major improvement that is in discussion should the new science classrooms be built is having classrooms that are linked. This would allow biology teachers to have a shared prep area where they could collaborate on modeling lessons and house the equipment needed to run the investigations to collect data.

“My role as a teacher has become asking questions that make students explain their thought processes and helping them work through the tension of solving a problem. It is thrilling to see students working through the same questions that scientists asked as they discovered key patterns and processes,” said Wickenden. “By the end of the year, students are strong collaborators and problem solving comes more naturally. They ask questions and follow their curiosity when they are given the space and means.”



Episcopal Biology teacher Megan Wickenden explains a biology concept.



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*Two from Bolles receive year-end swimming honors*



Carly Schwab and Coach Peter Verhoef

Carly Schwab, a senior at The Bolles School, and her swim coach, Peter Verhoef, were honored during the 2019 Class 1A Florida Dairy Farmers Sports Awards.

Schwab, a San Jose resident, was named Class 1A Girls' Swimmer of the Year. Verhoef, was similarly honored when he was named Class 1A Coach of the Year.

Verhoef led the Bolles girls to the program's 29th consecutive state title and 33rd overall and the boys to the 32nd consecutive state title, extending the national record for straight titles, and 41st overall.

Schwab won the state title in the girls' 100 breast in an All-American time of 1:01.76 and helped the girls' 200 medley relay team to victory in an All-American time of 1:43.43.

Since 1992, the Florida Dairy Farmers High School Sports Awards program has recognized all 30 FHSAA-sanctioned and recognized sports and has honored more than 5,000 of Florida's top student-athletes and coaches. Past winners have gone on to star at the collegiate and professional levels, and some have even represented their country in the Olympic Games, according to the Florida Dairy Farmer's website.

# Episcopal swimmers receive regional recognition

The Florida Times Union has recognized two swimmers from the Episcopal School of Jacksonville (ESJ) Swimmers of the Year in consecutive years. ESJ senior Jace Crawford was named Swimmer of the Year for 2019. In 2018 Cole Crane, who graduated from Episcopal last year, was also recognized as *The Florida Times Union* Swimmer of the Year.

Jace Crawford is the ESJ school record holder in the 200 free, 500 free, 200 individual medley, 200 medley relay and 400 free relay. The school has had a swimming program for almost 50 years. Crawford was also the 2019 1A state champion in the 200 freestyle, 100 butterfly and the 400 free relay and was the 2019 Junior National East runner-up in the 200 butterfly in Atlanta, Georgia. He is also the 2019 News4Jax High School Swimmer of the Year. Crawford has already committed to swim for the University of Florida next year.

Both Crawford and Crane qualified for the 2020 USA Olympic Trials in the 200 butterfly next summer in Omaha, Neb. The two Eagles could potentially swim against each other in Omaha this year.

Crane currently competes for the University of Texas. He is the ESJ school record holder



Jace Crawford



Cole Crane

in the 50 freestyle, 100 freestyle, 100 butterfly, and the 200 freestyle relay. Crane is also a two-time 1A state champion in the 50 free (2017 and 2018), and the 1A State Champion 100 fly (2018). He is the 2018 Junior National East Champion in the 100 butterfly, which was held in Greensboro, N.C. Cole also qualified for the 2018 Junior Pan Pacific Championship in Fiji representing Team USA in the 200 butterfly.

Both swimmers train under ESJ Head Swimming Coach and Olympic Gold Medalist, Martin Zubero. Under Zubero's tutelage, Episcopal's swim teams have been state-runner ups for the past two years.

In addition, Coach Zubero's Episcopal Amberjax swim program was recently recognized by USA Swimming's Club Excellence Program as a Silver Medal Club. They were one of 100 clubs in the country and one of only seven clubs in the state of Florida to receive this distinction. In addition to recognizing high-performing teams, the program provides grant funding that enables clubs to expand and enhance the services already provided to athletes. A total of \$400,000 in grants will be distributed to the 100 Gold- and Silver-level clubs this year.



San Jose Catholic's Brain Brawl team was comprised of Thomas Cratem, Sean Madigan, Maddox Fox, Anna Bass, Lily Brady and Maura Madigan

## San Jose Brain Brawl team comes in second

Six students from San Jose Catholic School placed second overall during the Annual Diocesan Brain Brawl competition held at Bishop Kenny in November 2019. San Jose Catholic competed against 16 other grade schools within the Diocese of St. Augustine. Competing on the brainy squad were Thomas Cratem, Sean Madigan, Maddox, Anna Bass, Lily Brady and Laura Madigan.

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## Young graduates from Jacksonville's Joe Berg Seminars



Mary Alice Young of San Marco graduates from the Joe Berg seminar series

San Marco's Mary Alice Young, a senior at Bishop Kenny High School, graduated from the prestigious Jacksonville Joe Berg academic seminar series Jan. 9. The series offers 12 seminars between September and May in each of the humanities and sciences. Membership in the organization is very selective and extends from the middle of the high school student's sophomore year to the middle of their senior year.



Mary Alice Young

After she graduates from Bishop Kenny this spring, Young plans to attend Florida Institute of Technology on a Presidential Scholarship, where she intends to study aerospace engineering.

## UT band chooses to practice at Wolfson High

The University of Tennessee marching band chose Wolfson High School as its two-day practice location as they prepared for its pre-game and halftime performances at this year's TaxSlayer Gator Bowl. The band director and his staff commented to Principal Christopher Begley that Wolfson's facility was beautifully maintained and that the school's hospitality was outstanding. The band's hard work at Wolfson paid off as their Gator Bowl halftime performance was flawless and well received by all.

The University of Tennessee marching band practices at Wolfson High School during the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl.



## Gingerbread man seen running halls of San Jose Episcopal Day School



### San Jose Catholic celebrates Colonial Day

Just before Thanksgiving 2019, second graders from San Jose Catholic School dressed up as Pilgrims and enjoyed a special feast with their classmates as they participated in the school's Colonial Day celebration.



San Jose Episcopal Day first graders perform the play, "Gingerbread Man Kid Caper."

San Jose Episcopal Day School students were in search of a gingerbread man, who ran through the school's hallowed halls in mid-December 2019 while first graders performed a play entitled, "The Gingerbread Kid Caper." The plan was a take on the classic story of a gingerbread man on the run. The students narrated and sang songs like "Gingerbread Kid," to the tune of "Jingle Bell Rock," and a school administrator even had a cameo role to remind the students and the gingerbread cookies that there is supposed to be no running in the halls!

## Riverside Presbyterian Day students recognized at City's MLK breakfast

Riverside Presbyterian Day School students Stella Herford, a sixth grader, and Grace Christy a fifth grader, were both awarded the honor of runner up for the essays they submitted to the City of Jacksonville's 2020 Martin Luther King Jr. Tomorrow's Leaders contest.

For this year's contest, students were asked to reflect on Dr. King's statement, "no person has the right to rain on your dreams." The essays are reflective of the shared values of respect and perseverance exposed in Dr. King's life work.

Herford and Christy were recognized at the 33rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast presented by Florida Blue on Jan. 17. The event commemorated the 91st anniversary of Dr. King's birth by honoring his life-long commitment and achievements toward his dream for social change.



Ben Ketchum, Head of School, Suzanne Byerly, Sixth grade language arts teacher Stella Herford, Grace Christy, Fran Wulbern, Fifth grade language arts teacher

"At Riverside Presbyterian Day School, we are proud of these students, who reflect our commitment to diversity, global competencies, and deep-thinking practice," said Michelle Provan, a spokesperson for the school.

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## Wolfson High welcomes alumni speakers

Samuel Wolfson SAS welcomed graduates Danny Felton, Rick Plotkin and Andy Allen to speak in its inaugural Alumni Speakers Series.

Allen, a San Marco resident, is a graduate of the Wolfson High Class of 1999. After high school, he graduated from Jacksonville University with a degree in finance. At JU, he was named a Cleveland Golf Academic All-American and received the President's Award. He is currently CEP of Corner Lot Development Group and Breeze Homes, which is headquartered in San Marco. He develops both residential and commercial properties throughout Northeast Florida.

Felton, a graduate of the Class of 1969, holds a degree in finance from the University of Florida and a graduate degree from the University of Georgia. He has retired from a long career in sales and marketing working for large companies such as Xerox and Bausch and Lomb Medical Supplies. Fifty years after graduating, he has been reunited



San Marco resident Andy Allen addresses the freshmen and sophomores at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies.

with the former Miss Wolfson 1969, and they are dating.

Plotkin, a graduate of Wolfson Class of 1988, is also a graduate of the University of Florida and the University of Miami School of Law. He served as assistant state attorney in the Jacksonville State Attorney's office and is now in private practice focusing on commercial litigation.

All three speakers spoke about how their time as students at Wolfson prepared them for future success.

The Alumni Speakers Series will continue through April.

## Bishop Kenny Interact Club Embraces Best Buddies Program

The Bishop Kenny Interact Club celebrated an early Christmas with students at the North Florida School of Special Education through a new partnership with Best Buddies. This is the inaugural year of Best Buddies being identified as a "premiere program" supported by the Interact Club. Senior Katie Vossman of San Marco serves as chairman of the initiative.

Club members gathered together on December to stuff more than 175 stockings for the students at the North Florida School of Special Education. The Bishop Kenny students raised money through candy sales to fund the purchase of the stockings and gift items. The stockings were hand delivered to students in grades K-12 at the North Florida School of Special Education by students in the Interact Club.

Vossman has a personal passion to help kids with special needs. "My cousin, McKenna, was born with Down's syndrome and passed away soon after her birth. My family has made it a mission to honor her life by giving love to other special needs children and adults," she said.

Best Buddies is an organization that is dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Anna Grace Shoemaker shares a stocking with her best buddy



Katie Vossman, chairman of the Bishop Kenny Best Buddies initiative, shares a stocking with her buddy

## Students perform Christmas plays at San Jose Episcopal Day School



San Jose Episcopal first, second and third graders perform "The Brightest Star."

In a long-standing tradition, San Jose Episcopal Day School (SJEDS) celebrated Christmas with three different pageant performances in December 2019. This year, the school's youngest students in Pre-K3, Pre-K4 and kindergarten performed "The Christmas Story" through traditional and spiritual songs to narrate the Nativity Story. "The Brightest Star," was performed by first through third-grade students and included solos and choral singing. The fourth through sixth-grade students performed "Meanwhile, Back in the East...A Christmas Nativity" told from the perspective of the three wise men.

"As a Christian school, we look forward to celebrating Advent and Christmas with our students every year," said Lori Menger, SJEDS Head of School. "It was such a joy for parents, fellow students and faculty to watch the children shine on stage -- they are all so talented. We are also extremely proud of our Fine Arts department, led



San Jose Episcopal fourth, fifth and sixth graders perform the play, "Meanwhile, Back in the East... A Christmas Nativity."

by Katie Bennett, Kathy Dozier and Judy Bryan -- they overwhelm us every year with their dedication and creativity!"

San Jose Episcopal Day School is a private, Christian elementary school founded in 1950. The school is known for its engagement with the community and academic rigor. San Jose Episcopal Day School is committed to educating the mind, body, and spirit.

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# Words Count: Justin Shrader

By Christina Swanson Resident Community News

## San Marco student learns respect for world while conquering Mt. Fuji

Mountain hiking during daylight amidst calm weather can have its erratic, exciting moments. Hiking Japan's Mt. Fuji, a sacred, stratovolcanic structure of basaltic lava and rock resulting from sequences of volcanic activity, in the dark wee hours during typhoon season, tends to heighten the hiking experience to a whole other level.

Between periodic rain, 60 mph gusts of wind, dense fog and shifting terrain full of switchbacks, the experience took on a "surreal" quality of physical and mental significance, a kind of right-of-passage for Justin Shrader, a curious 21-year-old college student from San Marco, whose thoughts on the trip prove an understanding beyond his years.



After hiking off and on for two days, Cheyenne Shrader, left, Mynor Urrutia, Justin Shrader and some of the others in the group, take a moment to record their accomplishment of reaching the peak of Mt. Fuji, Japan's highest strato-volcanic mountain at 12,389 feet tall.

Mt. Fuji, Japan's tallest peak at 12,389 feet is still considered an "active" volcano (although the last eruption was in 1707). Shrader, a University of North Florida (UNF) student, first contemplated the idea of climbing the beast when he heard from his mother, Rachel Shrader of San Marco, that his sister, Cheyenne, who was teaching English to children in Japan, wanted to climb the famous mountain with her brother for her 23rd birthday.

Rachel, a successful real estate director with the Adecco Group and triathlete, has always encouraged her children to follow their heart. She talked with her son about the possibilities, and suggested he ask his best friend, Mynor Urrutia, if he'd like to accompany him. "Within a week we were fulfilling my sister's birthday wish, researching Japan and booking flights," recalled Shrader.

There was a lot to consider as Mt. Fuji, or "Fuji-san" as it is commonly called by the Japanese, has been a popular pilgrimage and recreational site for centuries. It is one of three sacred mountains and is climbed by more than 300,000 people every summer. Located 60 miles southwest of Tokyo, there are four major trails to choose from that offer different approaches to the summit, with rest areas, or "stations," along the way providing amenities and lodging. Also, of interest are the numerous shrines at the base of the mountain, another testament to Mt. Fuji's spiritual and historical significance.

Cheyenne, Justin and Mynor chose the Yoshida trail that leads to the summit (the 10th station) from the north side of Mt. Fuji. Like many climbers, they took a scenic toll road up Mount Fuji's lower northern slopes starting at Kawaguchiko Town that took them to the start of their hike at the Fuji-Subaru Line Fifth Station.

"The fifth station was basically a crowded marketplace with restaurants, gear shops and a big open plaza where all the groups met to start the hike," said Shrader. Part of a guided group of 15, they hiked the most popular trail for about eight hours before bunking down at a hostile in station eight where they had dinner and story-telling amongst a group of locals, Americans and Germans. "With all the fragmented volcanic rock the entire way up, it felt like hiking inclined gravel," said Shrader.

The group started the next day at 1 a.m. with misting rain and ended up arriving at the peak before sunrise so they toured a volcano's crater. "Touring the crater was breathtaking and despite the fog, being on the peak was a surreal experience," said Shrader. He even shared the experience with his parents by face-timing them with a tiny WIFI router which "amazingly worked on top of the mountain."

Because the trip to Japan was his first as an adult, it represented an occasion for self-growth for Shrader, who learned that the world was more integrated than he thought and to not miss out on opportunities no matter how far-out or scary they may seem. "Don't think about it, just do it," he said.

"I learned that when you push yourself your concept of the world grows and your



The Cheyenne—Justin—Mynor team chose the Yoshida trail that leads to the summit from the north side of Mt. Fuji. Here they're at the start of their hike at the Fuji-Subaru Line Fifth Station.

ability to more fully relate to others grows, too," said Shrader. He also discovered a respect for another culture, history and environment, and the meaning behind John Updike's words, "You cannot help but learn more as you take the world into your hands. Take it up reverently, for it is an old piece of clay, with millions of thumbprints on it."

The experience also heightened his desire to one day hike other major peaks of the world and reinforced his ultimate goal of giving back by starting or helping fund an environmental conservation foundation focused on marine animals, a passion that began after visiting Sea World as a young kid.

This desire to help animals, especially the over-fished and endangered shark species, was followed by a fascination with chemistry in high school and how chemical combinations create our world. Actually, it was his 10th grade chemistry teacher, Mr. Hervig, who turned around his drudgery of the subject along with a new understanding of why chemistry was important for his future. "Because of his enjoyment and application of chemistry, it went from my worst to my favorite subject," said Shrader.

"Being on a STEM path, chemistry gave me a deeper understanding of how the universe works involving the most basic units of matter of what everything is comprised of," said Shrader. "I find I can take principles learned from chemistry, the mechanics of it and apply it to physics, calculus, biology and even psychology to

bring it to real life. Once you realize that this is something happening every day, you can break down the steps to what is happening in reality – from boiling water, to why a car accident happened, to understanding a friend's angst might be a hormone imbalance."

Having attended several community colleges and changed majors in the engineering field, Shrader is now a junior majoring in information technology at the University of North Florida because it's applicable to any field. At only age 21, he continues expanding his awareness and goals. "It would be difficult to live every day without having the knowledge of chemistry and other subjects because they're how the world works," he explained. "We're so caught up in social media, but none of this is significant when you look at the bigger picture through physics and mathematics, the language of the universe."

"No matter your age, we all have experiences that teach us who we are, what we're made of, what we want to be and what we need to do to get there," Shrader continued.

Perhaps in American journalist Sydney Harris, said it best in his syndicated column, "Strictly Personal."

"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows," wrote Harris.

With his love of the environment, chemistry and adventure, Shrader is ahead of most young people in knowing himself and what he really wants, before taking on the world to do it.

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3. **Lose weight (if you need to).** When you shed extra fat and unnecessary pounds, you reduce the burden on your heart, lungs, blood vessels and musculoskeletal system.
4. **Live smoke free.** Cigarette smokers and other tobacco users have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease than non-smokers. If you smoke, quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.
5. **Break up with salt.** Extra sodium in your diet can cause your blood pressure to rise, increasing your risk of cardiovascular disease.
6. **Stay hydrated.** Keeping your body hydrated helps your heart pump blood more easily through the blood vessels to the muscles.
7. **Eat better.** A healthy diet is one of your best weapons for fighting cardiovascular disease. When you eat a heart-healthy diet, you feel better and improve your chances of staying healthy for life.
8. **Manage your stress.** Long-term activation of your body's stress response system can lead to many health troubles, including cardiovascular disease. Take a self-care day to recharge!
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