

RIVERSIDE · AVONDALE · ORTEGA · MURRAY HILL

Poet honored nationally

A high school poet wins a national contest.
READ MORE, PAGE 33

Resident

COMMUNITY NEWS

Riley Cox and Stephanie Keith, with their instructor, Jessica Grotberg (middle)



Creativity abounds!

The results of *The Resident's* "Masks for Aid" contest are in.
READ MORE, PAGE 39



Circles – Social Datebook & Charity Register

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Purrrfect therapy



Lorri Reynolds and her rescue cat, Sooshi, have the perfect cure for what ails a child in one of Jacksonville's hospitals. **READ MORE, PAGE 28**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- P.6** | Neighbors gather to maintain Avondale median
- P.10** | Jaguars owner heads back to the drawing board
- P.23** | Hometown hero seeks to help community through nursing
- P.27** | Private school receives historic gift

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Road construction ahead

Pedestrians can look forward to safer crossings on San Juan Avenue.

PAGE 12

Saving local music

As part of a new campaign a local nonprofit adopts Central Riverside Elementary.

PAGE 25

Settling into a new normal

COVID-19 has forced hyper-change in the way nonprofits do business.

PAGE 20

5G poles crop up in Riverside

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Tall, black, monolithic poles are starting to crop up in Riverside, and members of Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) are not happy about it.

In January, residents driving along Riverside Avenue at Copeland Street noticed a new black utility tower with a large box attached a third of the way up from the ground. Soon many of these towers, which bring 5G capabilities to the neighborhood, will be proliferating on city-owned easements throughout Duval County.

To work effectively, the towers must be spaced close to each other, approximately 200 feet apart, said District 14 City Councilwoman Randy DeFoor. DeFoor had been alerted about the black utility tower on Riverside Avenue by RAP. A few days before the tower appeared, RAP Executive Director Warren Jones had attended a City of Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission meeting to speak about another 5G tower proposed by Verizon to be located at 1113 Margaret Street in 5 Points. The proposed location is directly across from Forbes Street and in front of the entrance of an office building.

"There was a notification that a tower was going to go in on Margaret Street. It was not going to go in front of a historic building, but it was going to go in front of an office building with some very unique architecture," he said. "The plan is for the very tall, black pole to be placed right in front of the front door, and if you drive down Forbes Street toward Margaret Street that pole is what you would see. It will block the view of the building."

RAP, Scenic Jacksonville, the owner of the building, and a nearby resident have requested that the placement of the tower in front of the building be moved to another location. After the public hearing, Commissioners debated what legal authority they had to

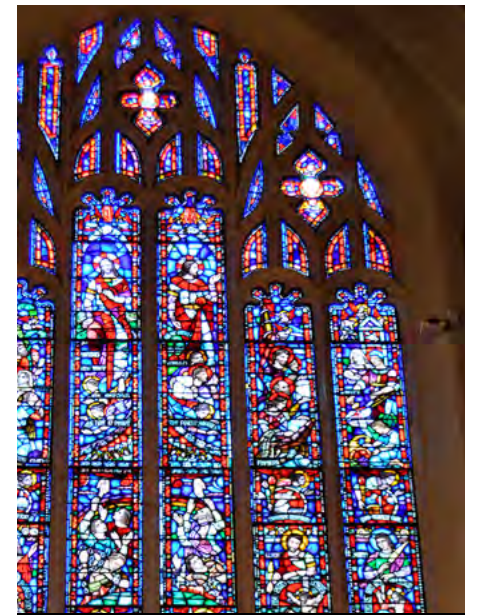


A 5G pole along Riverside Avenue near Copeland Street

make any changes regarding the placement of the tower and decided to defer a decision to allow a permit until they receive word about the legality of their authority by Jacksonville's Office of the General Counsel.

RAP is concerned that the appearance of towers in front of historic homes and businesses in its historic district will drive down property values and increase blight, said Jones, who suggests residents and business owners pay attention to blue signs posted at the locations where the poles are to go in. The signs are meant to inform the community that a permit application is being heard by the Historic Preservation Commission. A few other towers have been approved for locations near the Fuller Warren Bridge, Jones said. The city has also permitted two other towers, one slated for the city easement at 721 Post Street and one at 809 College Street, said Marjorie Dennis, a city spokesman.

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



Thru a glass clearly

Sister Diane Couture and her crew clear years of grime to ensure the stained-glass windows at Riverside Presbyterian Church shine more brightly.

READ MORE, PAGE 26

Construction proliferates on Southbank Riverfront

From the east end near the Fuller Warren Bridge to the west boundary near Reed Subdivision and South Shores, a variety of construction projects may begin this year that will change the face of the Southbank forever. **READ MORE, PAGE 8**

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What's Love Got To Do With It?

In the September 2019 issue of the *Canadian Family Physician* journal, one of the three things a doctor prescribed for happiness was to surround yourself with supportive people – in other words, to foster a sense of community, which is defined by a feeling that members matter to one another. During this trying time, living through a pandemic, this has never been truer.

Turning the clock to 2021, we at the *Resident* have served as conduits for the community for 14 years, channeling quality press to Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods on both sides of the river. Our goal from the beginning has been to support every resident, from all walks of life – including our youth and our elders – by being your cover-to-cover, good-news source. Each month, we deliver the facts that affect our market, powered by advertising. We've defined our papers by delivering fiercely local news that cheers, inspires, and engages.

Though our first focus is on sharing uplifting stories as they unfold in our community, we are also committed to bringing attention to local matters of healthy debate. While mainstream media often fans the flames of divisiveness, the *Resident* aims to shed light on all sides of an issue. We believe that a variety of viewpoints lends to Jacksonville's unique color. So, we make room for the voices of those who want to rename schools, and those who want to preserve history; those who believe in wearing masks of protection, and those whose believe in herd immunity; those who push to develop our land, and those who push to protect it.

Although, we, as a staff, hold diverse opinions, just as the public does, we endeavor not to carry our personal views into our newspapers. We're proud circulate community journalism based on facts. You can be assured that we will continue bringing balanced reports of what is happening in our region as we intentionally attempt to leave bias behind.

And we strive to do a little more. We keep our fingers on the pulse of how folks are supporting their neighbors in the most tangible of ways— by giving of their time, talent, treasure, and ties. We also bear witness to and then share with you

the ability of our community to come together and help organizations develop sustainable behavior changes that lead to improved mental health and positivity. And we are sure to share and curate stories of elders that have helped to shape our community. History is always a part of our papers – from homes and buildings – to our local faces and unique places.

As the doctor said, maintaining a sense of community is key to experiencing a greater level of happiness, and so is maintaining a positive mindset. In turn, feeling happier leads to people becoming more positive. It's a cycle. We at the *Resident* are honored to be a trusted part of that cycle with you. None of it would be possible without the support of advertisers, those that help to deliver your paper also play a vital role.

We hope you'll support us by advertising in an outlet that is delivered to 15,000 homes, per market, for free and in full color. In addition to our home delivery, our distribution includes several thousand papers placed in boutiques, restaurants, and other community locales. Every. Single. Month.

We couldn't do our part, dear reader, if we didn't have you. We are so grateful for how supportive you have been of our efforts. Rely on us to continue encouraging yours. Share with us your organization's news, upcoming events, press releases, and public announcements. Send a letter to the editor, whether expressing a concern, airing a grievance, applauding an accomplishment, or simply to share much you enjoy the paper and its content.

As readers, please become a mainstay in patronizing the local businesses that appear on our pages, which range from education to exercise, health to recreation and from investment to worship, to include a spectrum of sectors in between—the *Resident* displays it all and then some!

Part of keeping a community close is reminding members that they matter. So, for this, our February issue, in traditional Valentine's Day tradition, we would like to say WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOU, our reader, our neighbor, our advertisers. You are at the heart of this publication.

With sincere gratitude for your loyalty,

The Resident Team



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LETTER to the EDITOR

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Letters to the Editor are submitted as OPINION. The Resident Community News does not stand behind these statements as accurate or factual.

School PTA thanks generous donors

Dear Editor:

West Riverside Elementary School's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) would like to thank four of its major sponsors, VyStar Credit Union, Coldwell Banker Vanguard (CBV) CARES of Avondale, Cowford Realty & Design, and Cady Realty for their generous contributions to our annual Fall Fundraiser. Also, we would like to thank READ USA for its generous donation of a book for every student, which went home in the students' Fall Festival at-home bags. Along with several local businesses, we could not have exceeded our goals without these sponsors, bringing school improvements and programming to West Riverside Elementary School's children!

Jennifer Sanderson
West Riverside Elementary School PTA

Carlucci casts hat into 2023 Mayor's race

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Although the next Mayor's race is two years away, Matt Carlucci has already cast his hat into the ring. The Group 4 At-Large Councilman, who has lived in San Marco all his life, announced his bid to replace term-limited Mayor Lenny Curry Jan. 14. He is the first candidate to declare his intention to go after the top spot in the 2023 race.

Carlucci, a Republican, said he believes he can lead Jacksonville in a nonpartisan way. In 2019, he won his At-Large seat with 72% of the vote, and his past experience shows he is no stranger to Jacksonville politics. He has held a seat on the Jacksonville Council four terms and 16 years – once as District 5 Councilman and three terms – 12 years – in At-Large positions. He has also run for mayor once before, in 2003, when he finished third against Mayor John Peyton and Nat Glover.

In a way, running for office is a Carlucci family tradition. His late father, Joseph Carlucci, Sr., was elected to the first consolidated Jacksonville City Council and eventually the Florida Senate. Carlucci, like his father before him, owns a State Farm Insurance Agency in San Marco.

"I think the City of Jacksonville is looking for a change in its city leadership," Carlucci said. "I think our government needs a new direction, and I feel that for the people I talk to because they no longer trust our leaders to make decisions in their interest. Part of the reason for that is they have seen big issues where the policies and procedures have been ignored or circumvented and so much goes on behind closed doors. It seems like the city has gone from ditch to ditch, drama to drama,



Matt Carlucci and his wife, Karen

with the people always being left out of the equation. I just think it is time to get out of the ditch, to get the drama out, and put the people in."

If he wins, Carlucci said his administration would be a "bottom-up" style government as opposed to a top-down form of command. "We will have a big emphasis on what the people want and what they think," he said.

Organized community conversation is important to Carlucci. He has been the Jacksonville City Council Finance Chairman four times. His community approach was reflected in the way he set up the city's new Resiliency Committee, allowing for residents who were interested to volunteer and take part on various subcommittees.

"No voice will be silenced," he said, adding that his leadership will stand on four pillars – integrity, transparency, public involvement, and action. "By action I mean that I am going to surround myself with some really smart people, and it will be a diverse group of people so that it looks like Jacksonville," he said.

"We're going to start building this city up. And when you use that approach, it dovetails into the overall theme of my campaign, 'Jacksonville is better when we move together.' I want to move us into the future by being guided by those principles."

Valentine's Day tree planting in Willow Branch Park

On Valentine's Day, members of the AIDS Memorial Project of Northeast Florida will continue "Love Grove," the group's annual tree-planting project within Willowbranch Park.

Scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 14 at noon, 40 out of a collection of 76 trees will be planted under the watchful eye of Wally Ericks, an AIDS Memorial Project board member. The trees will create "Oak Alley," a colonnade of live oaks, running the length of the long path that traverses the park.

A gift to Willowbranch Park and the Riverside community, Oak Alley will result in a spectacular canopy that will make the beloved neighborhood park one of the truly

beautiful parks in North Florida, said Richard Ceriello, board chairman of the AIDS Memorial Project of Northeast Florida.

"It is also our intention to ensure this island of green in an urban ocean will remain a viable habitat and stop over for the migrating birds that visit this area yearly. Plant Parenthood of Jacksonville has offered to assist us in planting this first installment of 40 trees," Ceriello said. "We welcome everyone to be a part of this historic beautification project, either through a donation in memory of a loved one, or by helping us with planting these trees on Valentine's Day. What a sweet thing to do alongside someone you love."

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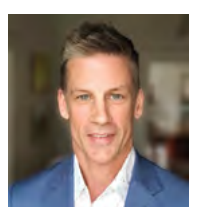
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Neighbors keep Avondale median nice and tidy



Luca Pinto, Livia Pinto, Olivia Raker and Sebastian Raker

Inspired by a park clean-up event sponsored by Riverside Avondale Preservation, Avondale residents with homes fronting the median between Edgewood Avenue and St. John's Avenue rolled up their sleeves and spent two weeks cleaning up the grassy expanse in November.

"The median is not considered a park, however, but I was inspired by the RAP event and engaged our neighbors on a much needed clean up of our median," said Zuleika Raker, who organized the massive effort. Also assisting in the clean up was Raker's husband, Mark, and her children, Olivia and Sebastian, who joined with neighbors Beth and Michael Kirwan and son Stuart; Sara Pinto with her daughter Livia and son Luca; and Norm Anderson, who brought "amazing tools" to make the work easier for everyone, said Raker.



The Edgewood Avenue median near St. John's Avenue is clean and tidy thanks to the efforts of several nearby residents.

The group worked tirelessly to remove cinder blocks that surrounded the crape myrtle trees. They also cleaned up dead branches and excess tree growth to open up the area. The clean up took two weeks to complete.

"We were very thankful that the City helped clear out the debris in a prompt manner," Raker said.

Community Foundation fund helps compensate nonprofits for COVID-19 costs

Thanks to The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida's Respond/Adapt/Recover Fund, 117 local nonprofit organizations received a total of nearly \$1.2 million to help offset the costs they incurred trying to re-open and continue serving clients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grants, which ranged from \$500 to \$50,000, helped cover agencies' purchases of personal protective equipment, Plexiglas and similar materials, COVID-19 training, and health testing of staff, and necessary items for social distancing and sanitation. Program transition support costs—such as those necessary to deliver services online—were also eligible for reimbursement.

The Respond/Adapt/Recover Fund, which was established at The Community Foundation this fall, was made possible with a significant gift from the Lucy Gooding Charitable Foundation Trust, as well as additional gifts from individual donors and The Community Foundation's discretionary funds.

"These nonprofit organizations, many with limited budgets before the pandemic, suddenly were faced with overwhelming, unplanned costs that were essential to continuing to serve their clients," said Kathleen Shaw, vice president of programs at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, who led the vetting of nearly 150 applications. "We saw them make the anguishing decisions to ensure a safe environment for staff and clients, and we know these grants will help ease some of the financial burden that the pandemic created."

The 117 agencies who received the grants operate across a wide spectrum of focus areas, and throughout The Community Foundation's six county (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns) service area. Nearly a third of the recipient agencies have annual budgets of less than \$200,000.

Agencies providing mental health services, which became even more crucial to the community during the pandemic, received grants to reimburse them for costs associated with making in person mental health services possible (Plexiglas, HEPA air filtration, deep cleaning) as well as other costs incurred to deliver some services virtually. Clay Behavioral Health, Epic Community Services, Gateway Community Services, and Stronger than Stigma are just a few of the mental health agency recipients.

"As an essential behavioral healthcare provider, it was critical that we continue to offer our counseling and treatment services to our clients with substance use and mental health disorders," according to a spokesperson from Epic Community Services in St. Augustine. "Yet we also had to consider the safety of everyone and mitigate the potential spread of the virus."

Safety net agencies like Barnabas in Nassau County were on the front lines for so many residents whose jobs vanished during the pandemic. Barnabas received a grant to help with the cost to transition to a cloud-based IT system, the purchase of critical PPE supplies, and the purchase of air sanitizing systems.

"When the pandemic began, we pledged to help as many people for as long as we could," said Barnabas President and CEO Wanda Lanier. "Infrastructure support of our organization with this unique and critical funding is making that happen."

Agencies such as The Arc, Pine Castle, Hope Haven, Downs Syndrome Association, BASCA, and others, often have clients with compromised health issues that need increased safety precautions. Individual contact is also extremely important to many of their clients. More than \$110,000 was made available from the fund to help these organizations recover some of those critical expenditures.

"The safety and well-being of our program participants and members of our staff drives every decision we make," said Jim Whittaker, president and CEO of The Arc Jacksonville. "Because of this generous support of our work, we are in a position to continue our services safely for individuals with intellectual and developmental differences and maintain our staff."

"The safety and well-being of our program participants and members of our staff drives every decision we make."

— Jim Whittaker, president and CEO of The Arc Jacksonville

Another part of the nonprofit sector devastated by the pandemic were arts and cultural nonprofits, whose live performances and in person events were halted and their traditional business models were undermined. The Respond/Adapt/Recover Fund made grants to 19 arts organizations in our area, for a total of more than \$225,000.

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens was one of those arts organizations that received a Respond/Adapt/Recover grant to help broaden accessibility during the pandemic. "Access to the arts has the power to provide people with positive and restorative ways to express themselves through conversation, creativity and collaboration," said Kerrie Slattery, chief advancement officer. "Through our work, we will continue to serve as a safe place that promotes our community's health, happiness and well-being."

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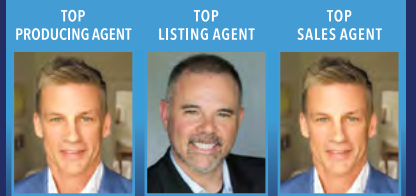
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Southbank to bloom with construction projects

By Lilla Ross
Resident Community News

From the east end of the Southbank to the Fuller Warren Bridge, 2021 will be a year of change.

Construction on the long-awaited District development will get underway. Plans for new apartments on the site of River City Brewing are being finalized, as new apartments emerge west of the Acosta Bridge take shape. Friendship Fountain and the Riverwalk will be expanded.

The District

Preston Hollow Capital LLC of Dallas took over The District – Life Well Lived development in October from the original developers Peter Rummell and Michael Munz.

The Texas-based company closed on \$35.56 million in bonds in December that will pay for the infrastructure. It also transferred four acres of land to the city for riverfront parks and a Riverwalk extension.

Lori Boyer, CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority, said Preston Hollow has hired a French artist to design a sculptural node on the theme of health and wellness that will identify the development.

She also has been meeting with the company to discuss matters such as JEA easements and submerged land issues for the marina.

Boyer said she expects groundbreaking during the first quarter of the year. “They’re moving quickly,” she said. “They’ve got the money, and it’s waiting to be spent.”

The District is located on 32 acres of what was formerly the JEA Southside generating station. Plans are for Preston Hollow to build a multiuse development with residential, hotel, office space, retail, a marina, and park space.

School Board

Next door, the Duval County School Board is exploring the sale of its riverfront property.

The School Board owns the property at 1701 Prudential Drive and is considering consolidating its offices at another location.

Boyer said there are parties interested in the property, which has the potential for adaptive reuse.

She said the School Board would benefit from a third-party developer, who could provide a new location for the offices and take over the riverfront Prudential Drive site in exchange.

The board approved a resolution in December to consolidate its offices but has not put the property on the market yet.

Friendship Fountain and MOSH

Farther down the Southbank, work on Friendship Fountain could begin this spring. The City has set aside \$1 million to renovate the fountain, which is in poor repair, and add technology to give it a multimedia function.

District 5 Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber said the walls of the fountain will be lowered so that people will have better access to the water.

“It will be illuminated and much more inviting,” Cumber said. “People will be able to sit and have their lunch.”



Rendering of a new eight-story apartment complex that was proposed to be located on the Southbank where River City Brewing is located. This rendering was rejected by the Downtown Development Board as a design that does not fit in well with Jacksonville's downtown riverfront.

A playground will be added that will feature a ship modeled on the Peter Pan ship at Kensington Palace. Cumber said the city has hired the same company to build a ship based on French explorer Jean Ribault's ship. The theme of the park will be exploring the St. Johns River.

“Everything is going to tie into the city's history. It will give families a great place to be,” Cumber said.

The park originally was to tie into the adjacent Museum of Science and History that was planning an expansion. But late last year, the museum's board announced it was planning to build a new museum at the Shipyards on the Northbank.

The board renamed its capital campaign MOSH Genesis with plans to build an \$80 million to \$90 million museum on four acres at the Shipyards to open by the end of 2024.

CEO Bruce Fafard said the museum still plans to make the move even though the National Park Service rejected the city's request to swap the Shipyards for Metropolitan Park.

The city used federal money to build the Metropolitan Park in the 1980s, which required that the land be used as a park in perpetuity. The city had sought the swap to allow Jaguars owner Shad Khan to build a Four Seasons hotel, residences and a medical complex at Metropolitan Park and turn the Shipyards property into a park.

River City Brewing

Next to MOSH, a proposed redevelopment of River City Brewing is moving forward. The land is owned by the city and leased to Maritime Concepts, owner of the restaurant.

Related Group of Miami plans to buy out the lease, which expires in 2027 and build a 335-unit apartment building with a restaurant and parking garage.

The company submitted conceptual plans for the \$92 million project to the

Downtown Development Review Board, but the board rejected the plan for the eight-story building, saying it didn't contextually fit Jacksonville's riverfront.

While the company revises the design, the DIA approved an additional \$500,000 grant to help offset the costs of stabilizing the subsurface soil. Soil borings found 15 to 30 feet of fill that will require remediation before the foundation can be laid.

Related Group will now receive \$15.94 million in incentives for the project, which is expected to be complete by 2025. The incentives include an \$11.9 million Recapture Enhanced Value Grant; \$3 million for upgrades to the Riverwalk, boat ramp parking and marina, and a \$500,000 grant upon completion of the restaurant.

The DIA has sent the new term sheet and details of the disposition of the property to the City Council for approval. Boyer said DIA is now drafting a redevelopment agreement that will be sent to the mayor's budget review committee. Once it is approved, legislation will be filed on the project. DDRB needs to sign off on the new conceptual design and give the project its final approval.

Cumber said she likes the overall concept of the project. “It's a great use of that land. We need more people living down there, and there's a restaurant component to it,” Cumber said. “I think it's going to be great.”

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Acosta Bridge near Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville, construction is under way on the Southbank Urban Residences. The eight-story, 185-unit building, a project of Ventures Development, is expected to be open by 2022.

The Southbank Riverwalk will be extended from Friendship Fountain to the Fuller Warren Bridge. Boyer said it is in the design process and will link up with the multi-use path currently under construction on the Fuller Warren Bridge that is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

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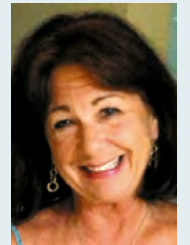


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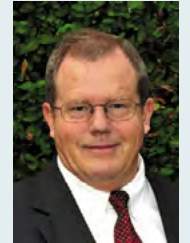
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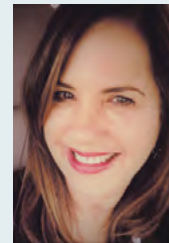
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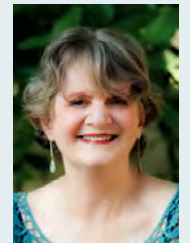
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Northbank construction projects in flux

SHAD KHAN AND HIS DEVELOPMENT TEAM HEAD BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

By Lilla Ross
Resident Community News

Recent turn of events has put more than one Northbank construction project in flux. A no vote on Lot J by the Jacksonville City Council sent Jaguars owner Shad Khan and his development team back to the drawing board. Khan and the city also received bad news when the National Park Service rejected the city's request to swap land within Metropolitan Park with acreage in the Shipyards to allow Khan's group to build a new hotel on park land.

As far as other projects pending on the north side of the St. Johns River, the city is actively seeking designs for a park at the former site of the Jacksonville Landing, and the demolition of Berkman II is awaiting a greenlight from the city.

To the surprise of many, the City Council failed to find enough votes on Jan. 12 to approve Khan's plan to redevelop the Lot J parking lot at TIAA Bank Field. The deal failed by one vote. Those who voted against it, who are now known as the Lot 7 Seven, included District 14 City Councilwoman Randy DeFoor and At Large, Group 4 City Councilman Matt Carlucci.

District 5 City Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber, who supported the deal, said she was surprised when the vote fell short.

"I think there were people who had talked about how they were going to vote, but you never know when it comes to the final vote how it goes," Cumber said.

The legislation was amended several times and was debated during numerous public hearings. Prior to the final vote, Cumber introduced an amendment to send the legislation to the Downtown Investment Authority for review.

The \$450 million deal, which was negotiated by Mayor Lenny Curry's office, included a Live! entertainment district, office space, residential and retail. The project was a partnership between Khan's Gecko Investments, the Cordish Company of Baltimore, Maryland, and the city.

The city was expected to invest more than \$200 million in the deal, which would have required a bond issue that ultimately would have cost taxpayers almost \$400 million. The city also would have retained ownership of the property, keeping it off the tax rolls.

The developer also would have gotten a 50-year, interest-free "breadbox loan" worth \$65 million.

The city auditor estimated that the city's return on investment would have been 44 cents on the dollar. But the deal did not include any assurance that the NFL team would remain in Jacksonville when its stadium lease expires in 2030.

The public's reaction was swift and negative. A University of North Florida poll found more than half the respondents opposed it.

In addition, the accountability group OurJax and the NAACP spoke out against it, calling it a bad deal for the city. "We're not afraid to dream big as long as we dream smart," said Audrey Moran, a director of OurJax.

"There was a lot of pressure on council to pass the deal. The Lot J Seven who stood up for taxpayers should be commended. It took a lot of courage. They stood their ground. It was a victory for the people," Moran said.



Due to a decision by the National Park Service, the Four Seasons hotel proposed to be built on Metro Park land may have to be built elsewhere.

The deal had been negotiated by the mayor's office, circumventing the Downtown Investment Authority, which by city code is required to negotiate all downtown development deals.

Michael Ward, president of OurJax, said a lack of transparency was one of things that killed the deal.

"We're hoping that lessons will be learned and that next time things will go through the normal process. DIA knows how to negotiate those deals," Ward said.

After the vote, Jaguars President Mark Lamping said the Lot J deal is dead and that the focus was shifting to the development of Metropolitan Park.

Metro Park and the Shipyards

Khan, through his company Iguana Investments, wants to build a Four Seasons hotel and apartments, a medical complex and parking garage at Metropolitan Park, which is south of Lot J. The \$535 million project would also include \$151.2 million in incentives from the city.

But Metropolitan Park was built in the 1980s with a federal grant that requires the land to be used as a park in perpetuity. The city asked the National Park Service for permission to swap the Metropolitan Park with the Shipyards. But the federal agency notified the city in December that it would not approve the swap.

Khan has not announced how that will change his plans, but Boyer said she is in conversation with Khan about the project.

"I want to see how flexible they are about location," Boyer said. "There needs to be a decision made about Metro Park. Do we leave Metro Park alone and move the development closer to downtown? Maybe you put another park closer to Hogan's Creek or Berkman."

Metro Park is designed to be a festival lawn and was a popular venue until its stage was damaged and torn down. Boyer said downtown needs a festival lawn and the Metro Park site is well suited because of its proximity to the parking at the stadium.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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The Peyton administration had a plan to revamp the park, but then the Great Recession of 2008 hit, scuttling the plans.

The city owns the Shipyards, which is a former industrial site that would need environmental remediation before it could be developed.

The Museum of Science and History announced plans in November to relocate from its Southbank location, which it has occupied since 1967, to the Shipyards. Khan welcomed the move and pledged \$5 million to the museum's \$20 million capital campaign.

Since the Park Service's decision became public, MOSH CEO Bruce Fafard said the museum's goal of moving into a new \$80 million museum at the Shipyards site by 2024 had not changed.

Berkman II

The unfinished Berkman Plaza II, adjacent to the Shipyards, is getting closer to disappearing from the riverfront.

Developer Jacksonville Riverfront Revitalization LLC has applied for a demolition permit to tear down the building at 500 E. Bay St., which has been vacant for 13 years. A construction worker was killed and several others were injured when the parking garage collapsed during construction.

An initial application for a permit to demolish the building by implosion was rejected by the city over concerns that debris could damage the adjacent Berkman Plaza I. Park Beeler, a principal of JRR, said JRR has now contracted with Pece of Mind Environmental Inc. of Orlando to demolish the building from the top down, a process that could take about six months at an estimated cost of about \$1 million.

JRR is in the process of purchasing the property from 500 E. Bay LLC so that it can begin construction on a \$50 million



Grass and trees now cover the site where The Landing once stood

multi-use project, designed by KBJ. The first phase of the project would be a low-rise building with retail and commercial space on the first floor with luxury townhomes with private garages on the second floor. Condos or apartments could be built above the townhomes. The pool and other amenities would be on the roof.

The second phase would be a high-rise hotel or apartments or combination.

Beeler said an important piece of the project is the public space along the river that includes the Northbank Riverwalk and an expansion of the Berkman Plaza Marina. The green space would be adjacent

to the Shipyards property and could form a natural link along the river all the way to Metropolitan Park.

The Landing

The DIA is seeking proposals from three firms for the design of a public park at the site of the former Jacksonville Landing that is described as a "vibrant and iconic public space on the premier waterfront site in Downtown Jacksonville."

Since the old riverfront mall was demolished last year, the six acres have been covered in grass and trees.

About 4.5 acres are designated for park space while the rest near Water Street and Independent Drive could be redeveloped. The city also plans to demolish the on-ramp to the Main Street Bridge, which will add another 1.6 acres to the site.

The city has not set a budget for the project, but expects to award a contract by September.

The floating docks at the Landing and Friendship Park, which were damaged by Hurricane Irma in 2017, have now been replaced.

Boyer said she wants the old Landing to become a destination park that will attract people from all over the city.

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San Juan road improvements focus on pedestrian safety

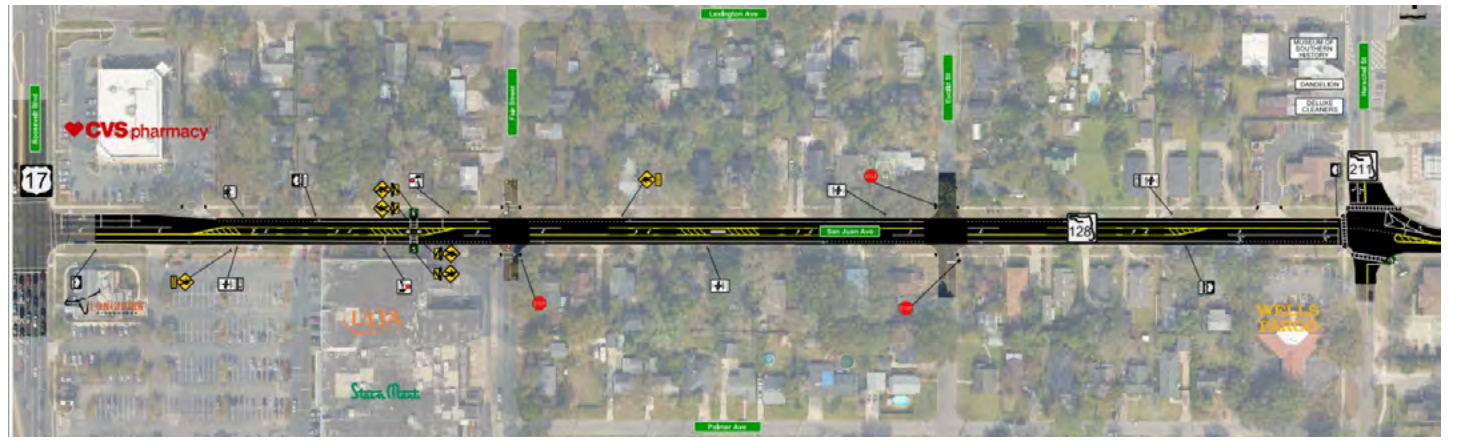
By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

One local businessman had harsh words for the Florida Department of Transportation's plans to install a mid-block median and pedestrian crossing near his business on San Juan Avenue (State Road 128) near the Ortega neighborhood.

Viktor Gjergji, owner of Viktor's Payless and Groceries, which is located at 6612 San Juan Avenue, was the only member of the public to comment during two back-to-back hybrid public hearings sponsored by FDOT at its Edison Avenue offices Jan. 12. During the hearings, FDOT spelled out two specific sets of road improvements that it plans to make to San Juan Avenue between Lane Avenue South and Herschel Street.

Gjergji had plenty to say, and none of it good, about FDOT's plans to build a mid-block pedestrian crossing and median in front of his commercial establishment. "This project, which is in front of my businesses, is interfering with daily parking and daily deliveries to my business," he said, during the second of the two public hearings. "I think that this project is nonsense. It is not worth it and is a waste of taxpayers' money. It is jeopardizing my business. I've been there for years and there is never anyone crossing there," he said.

In the area on San Juan Avenue near Noble House Assisted Living facility and Westside Methodist Church, FDOT plans to install a mid-block pedestrian crossing and median, complete with a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) and updated striping, signage, and lighting to alert drivers to the crossing. The project is planned to be built directly across from where Gjergji's shop is located and will require the closure of a portion of



FDOT's proposed safety improvements on San Juan Avenue between Roosevelt Boulevard and Herschel Street

median on San Juan Avenue to allow for construction of the "traffic separator."

The purpose of the "traffic separator" is to provide a pedestrian refuge for protection and additional crossing time as part of a two-stage crossing. The existing 11-foot travel lanes in both directions will be maintained as will all driveways and sidewalks. Pedestrian lighting will be updated within the project corridor.

The cost of the median project is estimated to be \$308,170. Construction was slated to begin in the summer of 2020 and completed in the spring of 2021. To minimize the effect on residents and business owners in the area, lane closures will not be permitted between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. during construction, said the FDOT representative.

In the hearing, a 2017 traffic study found a "high level of pedestrian traffic including seniors, disabled residents, and children" traversing the road at that point. Most of the pedestrian traffic occurred in the late morning hours, and three pedestrians were struck by cars between 2012 and 2016 at the location.

A 2018 traffic study recommended installation of the mid-block crossing based on five-year crash data, existing site conditions, and the fact that the nearest crosswalk is more than 1,000 feet to the east and west of this section of road, said the FDOT representative.

Pedestrian safety, crash reduction

Crash data was also a factor in FDOT's desire to improve San Juan Avenue between Roosevelt Boulevard (U.S. Route 17) and Herschel Street (State Road 211). A total of 50 vehicle crashes have occurred along that stretch in the four years from 2013 to 2017, according to FDOT. "The crashes often occur near the entrance to the Roosevelt Shopping Center (Ortega Park), Fair Street, and the intersection with Euclid Street," said the FDOT representative, who noted that 31 crashes were related to access and involved either angle crashes, vehicles being rear-ended, or drivers attempting to make a left turn.

To make the roadway safer, the FDOT plan includes a reduction in the number of lanes

from four to three and the installation of a center-turn lane for residents and business clientele to use near the shopping center. Studies by the Federal Highway Administration have shown that reducing the number of lanes will cut the number of crashes by 47%, said the FDOT representative.

Also included in the project will be the construction of a crosswalk, pedestrian refuge median, and RRFB signal at the intersection of San Juan Avenue and Fair Street. Having fewer lanes to cross and the opportunity to have a refuge island installed will be a boon for pedestrians, according to FDOT. The study concluded that the yielding rate by drivers for pedestrians increases 20% to 80% when an RRFB signal is installed, said the FDOT representative.

The design enables bike lanes to be striped along the roadway in the future. The estimated cost of the project is \$420,000. Construction is expected to start in the summer of 2021 and be complete in the winter of the same year.

No residents or business owners spoke during the first public hearing.

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New construction abounds in Murray Hill

Construction is well underway for two developments that will change the landscape of Murray Hill. A new retail storage complex is starting to take shape on land located on Plymouth Street that is near Edgewood Avenue South, which was once occupied by the Jones College Edgewood campus. The three-story, 97,000-square-foot building will eventually house 788 storage units with plans to create new retail space fronting Edgewood Avenue that will be filled with local business tenants. Meanwhile, The Lofts at Murray Hill, a four-story, 117-unit multi-family residential complex is rising on land at 840 Edgewood Avenue South, former home to Bank of America. The new workforce housing project is being developed by The Vestcor Companies. The building



Much headway is being made in building the new Lofts at Murray Hill on Edgewood Avenue South in Murray Hill.

will include 11,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor with studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments above in the heart of Murray Hill's historic downtown.



Progress is being made on the building of a new storage facility on the old Jones College campus in Murray Hill.

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Stasi takes helm as City Rescue Mission celebrates 75 years

The City Rescue Mission (CRM) began the New Year by celebrating 75 years with a new executive director.

Paul Stasi, a long-time employee of the mission, was named executive director Jan. 1. He takes over the position from Penny Kievet, who retired Dec. 31, 2020.

Stasi has been with CRM for six years and previously served as director of Resource Development as well as the director of Social Enterprise. Prior to his time at the mission, Stasi served as the director of Social Services for the Northeast Florida Area Command with The Salvation Army.

"I am honored and energized by the opportunity to assume leadership of this great organization that plays such a vital role in our community by helping people in desperate situations go through a life transformation," said Stasi. "City Rescue Mission has a robust future continuing to reach out to some of Jacksonville's most needy citizens, and I am excited to see how God will work through us."



Paul Stasi



The new year marks a significant milestone for CRM. Started by a small group of Christian businessmen with its original mission of "soup, soap, and salvation," City Rescue Mission has expanded its services to maximize its benefit to those experiencing homelessness, hardships, and addiction in Jacksonville. Today CRM offers a number of services to fulfill basic needs such as daily meals, overnight

shelter, laundry services, hygienic facilities, and a clothes closet as well as LifeBuilders, a long-term residential addiction recovery program that includes workforce development, and transitional sober living housing. All of CRM's programs and services are provided at no cost to the recipient, giving them the opportunity to focus solely on transforming their life.



Bruce Fafard

MOSH names Fafard as CEO

The Museum of Science & History (MOSH) has appointed Bruce Fafard as CEO.

Fafard joined MOSH as chief operating officer in May 2020 and was appointed as interim CEO in August 2020. The Board of Trustees Executive Committee confirmed his appointment as permanent CEO on October 15, 2020, after observing the immediate and positive impacts of his leadership on the museum's operations.

Fafard brings more than 30 years of executive leadership experience from numerous industries to the role, including the aerospace, insurance, manufacturing, and retail industry. Prior to joining MOSH, Fafard served as president and CEO of 121 Financial Credit Union, CEO of Scient Federal Credit Union and held a variety of positions at Connex Credit Union. He earned his Master of Business Administration from the University of New Haven and his Bachelor of Science in economics from Southern Connecticut State University. He also earned the Certified Innovation Executive designation from the Credit Union Executive Society.

In addition to his position at MOSH, Fafard currently serves on several boards and committees including Leadership Jacksonville, Northeast Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), and the JAX Chamber.

San Marco Chamber Music Society raises \$3,461 for JDRF



Bernadette Tasher, San Marco Chamber Music Society board member; Eric and Ellen Olson, founding members of the San Marco Chamber Music Society; Leslie Burkhalter, JDRF board member; and Brooks Biagini, market director for JDRF.

Members of the San Marco Chamber Music Society raised \$3,461 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) during their annual virtual benefit concert Oct. 18. For more than 10 years, San Marco Chamber Music Society musicians have performed in a special benefit concert to raise money for JDRF in honor of the daughter of Society Founders Ellen and Eric Olson, who lives with type 1 diabetes.

Playing in the benefit concert were Les Roettges, flute; Scott Watkins, harpsichord and piano; Eric Olson, oboe; DJ Cheek, viola; and Ellen Olson, viola. They performed music by Johann Janitsch, Howard Hanson, Paul Coletti, and Alyssa Morris.

Over 14 years, the San Marco Chamber Music Society has raised well over \$25,000 in support of diabetes research in search of better treatments and a cure for type 1 diabetes.



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Fraz Ahmed



Janeen Kirch



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David Thompson



Stefano Portigliatti

As the New Year begins, Coker Law continues to be recognized as one of the top law firms in Jacksonville. Not only did the firm make the 2020 list of “Best Law Firms” selected by U.S. News and Best Lawyers, but also Coker Law attorneys were selected to join prestigious law societies or boards.

On the 2020 “Best Law Firms” list, Coker Law is regionally ranked tier one in two practice areas, medical malpractice law and personal injury litigation. This designation is based on a rigorous evaluation process that includes evaluations and reviews from leading attorneys in the field. At least 22,000 firms were evaluated this past year, the highest on record.

Coker Law shareholder Fraz Ahmed and trial attorney and personal injury litigation authority Chelsea Harris were selected for membership to the International Society of Barristers (ISOB). ISOB supports the retention of trial by jury, provides training in advocacy, encourages civility, and supports and improves the justice system. As membership comes by invitation only, it is a

prestigious honor to be included, as members undergo a rigorous screening process that considers the lawyer’s ability, experience, accomplishments, and ethical standards.

Other Coker Law attorneys that have been recognized in the community are David Thompson, Janeen Kirch, and Stefano Portigliatti. Thompson, a trial attorney, has been accepted into the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), a national association of experienced trial lawyers and judges where members are selected by their peers. Kirch, an experienced personal injury trial attorney, has been elected to serve on the board of the Jacksonville Justice Association (JJA). Portigliatti, a lawyer who is considered a trucking crash expert, was the winner of the Michael Bailey Trial Lawyers Email List Award. He was selected for his outstanding contributions to all of the lawyers on the email list throughout the state of Florida, and the list’s membership is currently in the thousands.

Coker Law also generously contributed to The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida’s Angel Tree Program this year.



Dr. Irvin “PeDro” Cohen

Cohen named LISC executive director

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) has named long-time community leader Dr. Irvin “PeDro” Cohen as executive director of LISC Jacksonville, the local arm of the nation’s largest community development organization.

Cohen succeeds longtime Executive Director Janet Owens, who passed away earlier this year.

As executive director, Cohen will lead LISC’s local staff and programs, which focus on catalyzing economic opportunities for Jacksonville residents. He most recently served as vice president of operations for YMCA of Florida First Coast, with 19 facilities in and around the city. Previously, he worked as executive director of New Town Success Zone, a community-based organization providing a diverse range of services focused on raising up children and families.

Cohen earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of North Florida (UNF), an MBA in marketing from Pfeiffer University in Charlotte, N.C., and a doctorate in organizational leadership and nonprofit management from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale. He currently serves on the advisory boards of UNF’s College of Education, the University of Florida’s Clinical Translation Science Institute, Vanderbilt University’s Recruitment Innovation Center, and JASMYN, Inc.

As executive director, Cohen will be involved with key national LISC initiatives such as Project-10X, a \$1 billion plan to close racial health, wealth, and opportunity gaps. He will also head locally designed efforts to address racial injustice, invest in resilient communities, and fuel inclusive economic growth.

IBERIABANK-First Horizon appoints Lanahan as regional president

First Horizon Bank and IBERIABANK announced Jan. 11 that San Marco resident Marty Lanahan has been appointed as the new regional president for North, Central and Southwest Florida regions. In her new role for the merged company, she will lead a team of banking professionals and oversee business development across several of Florida’s largest markets, including Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, Fort Myers, and Naples. She will also leverage IBERIABANK and First Horizon’s resources to lead the bank’s growth strategy of building strong community teams within each of the market areas.

“Marty has been a tremendous contributor to the success of IBERIABANK since she joined us in 2019,” said Michael Brown, president, Regional Banking for First Horizon. “Marty has a proven track record in Florida as a business and community steward. Throughout her banking career, she has built diverse teams and driven business

results. In her new role, she brings momentum and expertise to guide our banking division to its next successful chapter.”

Lanahan has achieved significant professional recognition in her 30 years of experience as a prominent banking leader. Most recently, she served as the executive vice president and Tampa Bay market president of IBERIABANK, having joined the company after 18 years of service at Regions Bank.

Throughout her career, Lanahan has received several awards and accolades for her business acumen, including being inducted into the First Coast Business Hall of Fame and being named Jacksonville Business Journal’s Woman of Influence, as well as Girls Incorporated’s Woman of Vision and the Women Business Owners’ Corporate Leader of the Year. Statewide, she has served as chair of the Florida Transportation Commission. She is currently a board member of JEA, one of the nation’s largest municipally owned electrical and water/



Marty Lanahan

sewer authorities, where she has also served as chair during a previous appointment.

A firm believer in community service, Lanahan holds leadership positions on several boards to advance health care initiatives, develop programs for underserved populations and expand significant work for cultural arts organizations. She currently serves as board chair of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund; board member of the Tampa Museum of Art; and board member of Moffitt Medical Group.

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Peña honored with 2021 Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award

Jorge Peña, veteran member of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and artistic director and co-founder of the St. Augustine Music Festival, was presented with the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award in early January. The presentation was made in front of his colleagues in the Jacoby Symphony Hall as they prepared for the Florida Blue Masterworks Series performance. Peña has performed with the Symphony for 23 seasons.

“Jorge’s mastery of the viola and contributions to the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra are notable in themselves, but he has gone on to share his passion for classical music well beyond traditional audiences,” noted Martha Frye Baker, Ann McDonald Baker’s daughter-in-law and chair of the board of trustees of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. “His generosity of spirit is exactly what we had in mind five years ago when we established this award to honor Ann’s devotion to making our community a better place through the arts, and Jorge is a significant contributor to that model.”

Peña also serves as conductor and music director of the Golden Isles Youth Orchestra,

and General Manager of the Coastal Symphony of Georgia in Brunswick. He has conducted master classes and coached at LaVilla School of the Arts, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, and the University of North Florida. He is an instructor for the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestra and was on the faculty of Prelude Chamber Music Camp.

The Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award recognizes an artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida, and is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker, whose leadership helped create and nurture such vital cultural gems as The Community Foundation’s Art Ventures Fund, the Arts Assembly (now the Cultural Council), Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, and Greenscape, among others. As this year’s Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures award recipient, Peña received a \$15,000 unrestricted grant.

The selection process for the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award includes a knowledgeable, anonymous panel of advisors who put forward a short list of finalists after considering a wide range of deserving artists in all disciplines throughout the year. A selection committee, which includes



Tom Baker, advisor to the Baker Family Advised Fund; Martha Frye Baker, chair of the Board of Trustees for The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida with Jorge Peña and Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

a member of the Baker family, a trustee of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, a representative from the advisory panel and The Community Foundation

president, reviews the finalists and names the winner. Past recipients include Terrance Patterson, David Engdahl, Jim Draper, Louise Freshman Brown, and John Bunker.

Baptist Health launches campaign to meet challenge grant from The Jim Moran Foundation

The Baptist Health Foundation has begun a fundraising campaign for a challenge grant award by the Jim Moran Foundation to launch and sustain a care coordinator to serve young adults with mental illness and their families as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

To commemorate its 20th anniversary, The Jim Moran Foundation offered to match, dollar for dollar, all gifts made towards the Alex’s Dragonfly Endowment for Young Adult

Behavioral Health, up to \$750,000, as part of more than \$10 million in special grants that reach beyond its traditional funding priorities to support nonprofit partners in Broward, Duval, and Palm Beach counties.

In 2019, Sheryl and Todd Johnson established the behavioral health endowment in memory of their son, Alex. The Johnsons wanted to ensure that other young adults with mental illness and their families had a resource

at Baptist Health to guide their transition from pediatrics to adulthood.

The potential impact of the grant is significant. Baptist Behavioral Health projects that the care coordinator position will develop and implement plans that will integrate physical and mental health for 225 young adults in 2021, and at least 300 young people per year after it is fully funded in 2022.



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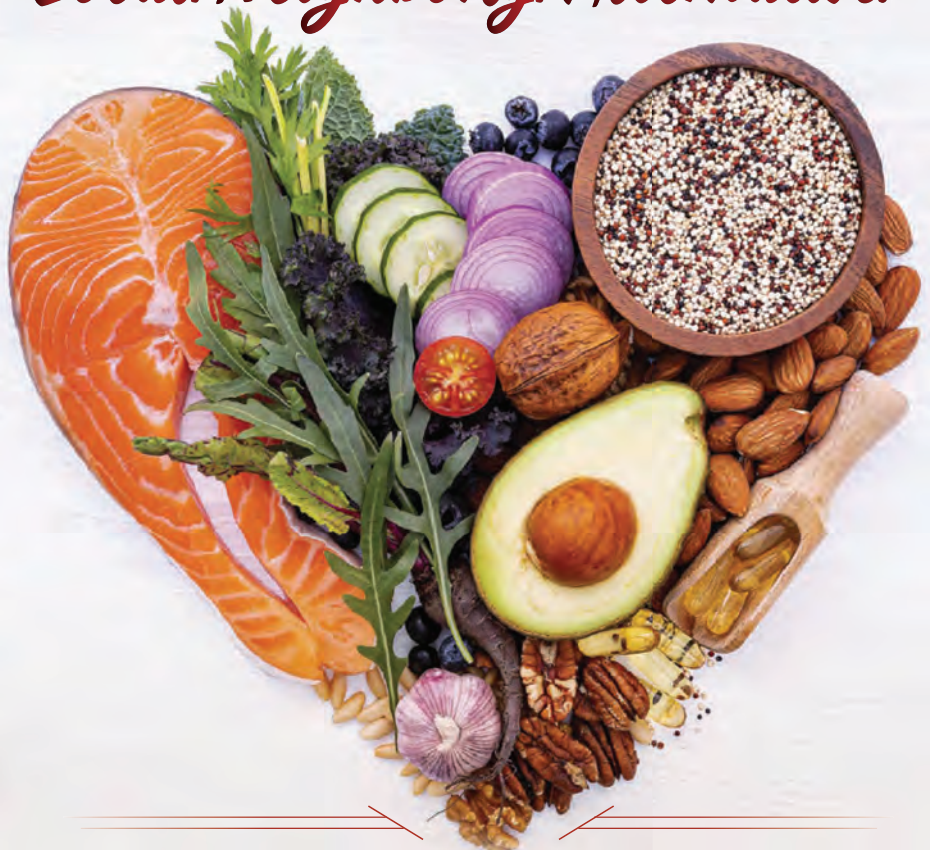
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Author hopes book will relieve children's fear of the unknown

Riverside resident Matt Dobbins recently published his first children's book entitled, "Duncan's First Flight" which is a No. 1 new release on Amazon. The book follows Duncan who is nervous to get on an airplane for the first time, but with the help of his kangaroo sidekick, Ridley Roo, he gets on the flight and is off to his next adventure!

Dobbins, a Jacksonville University MBA graduate, hopes that his book will inspire people to have just a little bit of courage needed to face their fear of doing something they've never done before. "Duncan's First Flight" will be the first book in a three-book series starring Duncan and Ridley Roo.

Hopkins joins Episcopal Children's Services

Lauren Weedon Hopkins signed on as the new chief development officer for Episcopal Children's Services in late November.

Hopkins brings a wealth of knowledge to the nonprofit. Most recently, she served as Regional Director for Catholic Charities Jacksonville Regional Office, raising more than \$1 million for a Catholic Charities capital initiative in just one year.

"We are delighted to welcome Lauren to the ECS team," said Episcopal Children's Services CEO Connie Stophel. "Her experience in the nonprofit industry and commitment to improving the lives of North Florida children will be an asset to our mission."

As Chief Development Officer for ECS, Hopkins will provide leadership and support to development, grants, community outreach and volunteer efforts, as well as oversee the non-federal match requirements for the agency. Hopkins will also lead the agency's



Lauren Weedon Hopkins

fundraising efforts as ECS prepares to launch a new, innovative, virtual event in the Jacksonville community, Wine Women & Shoes, in May of 2021.

"It is so important for children to build a solid educational foundation early in their lives," said Hopkins. "I am honored to join the ECS team, which provides quality early learning opportunities for children and their

families. I am excited to grow community support for these vital programs."

With more than 14 years of nonprofit experience in development, Hopkins is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and is a Certified Fund-Raising Executive (CFRE). She is a graduate of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors in English and print journalism. Hopkins is a Jacksonville native and a San Marco resident.



Gordon Bailey



Greg Haile



Brittany Perkins Castillo



Mark Barnes

Pace Center for Girls selects new board officers

Pace Center for Girls elected four new officers – Gordon Bailey, Brittany Perkins Castillo, Mark Barnes, and Greg Haile – to its 2021 Board of Trustees.

Bailey, who is vice president of Public Affairs and Community Engagement at Florida Blue, was named as chairman of the board. In his day job, he is responsible for leading and managing federal and state government relations, the Florida Blue Foundation, Corporate Social Responsibility, and the Florida Blue Center for Health Policy. He previously served

as the chair of the Pace Center for Girls, Jacksonville Board of Directors.

Castillo will serve as vice chair. She is CEO for AshBritt, a U.S. disaster response and logistics services company. She has a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin and maintains an active pro bono legal practice to serve refugees and survivors of domestic violence.

Barnes, who will serve as treasurer, is the Independent Review Partner at DiBartolomeo, McBee, Harley & Barnes, PA. In addition to being a trustee, he serves on the board

of Pace Center for Girls, Treasure Coast in Port St. Lucie.

Haile was named as secretary. He is the seventh president of Broward College, where he serves approximately 60,000 students. He received an undergraduate degree from Arizona State University and a law degree from Columbia University School of Law. He also holds an honorary doctorate from Nova Southeastern University and teaches a self-designed four credit course at Harvard University Summer School.

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Virtual

You are invited to Riverside Avondale Preservation's Annual Meeting to be held Thursday, February 18, 2021, at 7 pm. The meeting will be held on the Zoom platform.

The Riverside Avondale Preservation Annual Meeting is a celebration of our historic built environment and those who have worked to preserve the diversity and integrity of our architecture which is a distinguishing hallmark of our neighborhood.

Through our preservation awards, we also celebrate those who through their actions have been good neighbors and supported individuals and institutions in our community. During this past year, so many have given their time and resources to help others successfully navigate through the devastating effects of COVID-19.

The meeting will provide attendees with the opportunity to talk virtually with RAP's committee members and chairs after the general meeting in Zoom breakout rooms. There you will be able to learn more about what the committees are doing, ask questions and offer suggestions.

The list of RAP committees include:

Anniversary Celebration, Community Garden, Development, Zoning and Historic Preservation, Home Tour, John Gorrie Dog Park, Parks, Transportation and Infrastructure.

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Dr. Catherine Baker Simms

Simms elected president of Sanctuary on 8th board

Dr. Catherine Baker Simms has been elected to serve as the president of the Sanctuary on 8th Board of Directors for 2021. Sims founded the Florida Children's Institute in 2014 to make a difference for children and families coping with a wide range of behavior issues and learning disabilities.

Other newly appointed board members include Bernard Augustine, Christina Padilla, and Nathan Renstrom. Retiring from the board are Robert George and Laura Renstrom.

Goetz to retire after 43 years at River Garden



Martin A. Goetz

Martin A. Goetz, chief executive officer at River Garden Senior Services, will step down from his position in March 2021 after 43 years with the company.

The announcement of Goetz's retirement was made by Gloria Einstein, president of River Garden Senior Services, on Jan. 5. Mauri Mizrahi has been tapped to succeed Goetz as River Garden's CEO in late March 2021. Mizrahi has served as association administrator at River Garden since 2017.

Goetz joined River Garden as an associate administrator in 1978 and assumed the role of CEO in 2004. During his tenure, River Garden has grown to include a 180-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility as well as The Coves, an 80-unit independent living community, a Medicare-certified home health agency, adult day care, and a foundation.

Goetz has received many honors over the years including the "Young Executive of the Year" award in 1994 and "The Dr. Herbert Shore Award of Honor" award in 2016 from the Association of Jewish Aging Services. Leading/Age Florida also awarded him its "Distinguished Service Award" in 2003 and the "Chairman's Award" in 2007.

He served as board chair of the Association of Jewish Aging Services from 2011-2013 and has also been a board member of OneJax. In the spring of 2021, he will be honored with the OneJax Humanitarian Award.

Goetz holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kent State University in Ohio, a Master of Science in Health Services Administration from SUNY at Stony Brook, and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Florida.

Goetz and his wife, Susan, have two adult children.

Community support helps city retain no-kill animal shelter status during pandemic

Thanks to the unwavering support of the local community, the City of Jacksonville has again earned the no-kill designation for the year 2020, in spite of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"A no-kill community is a city or town in which every brick-and-mortar shelter serving and/or located within that community has reached a 90% save rate or higher and adheres to the no-kill philosophy, saving every animal who can be saved," according to Best Friends Animal Society.

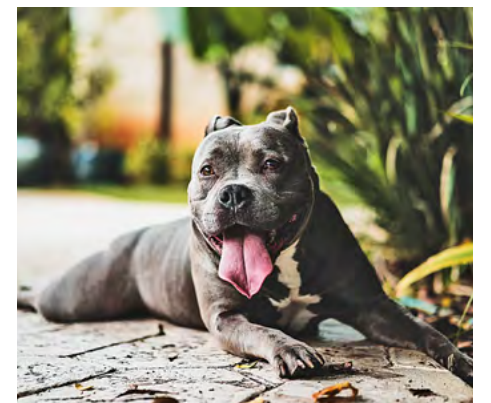
In 2020, the save rate for Animal Care and Protective Services (APCS) was 91%

and 94% for the Jacksonville Humane Society (JHS), for a citywide save rate of 93%.


In total, 13,217 animals entered Jacksonville shelters in 2020. This was a decrease of 3,677 animals compared to 2019, which was likely a result of Animal Care and Protective Services being closed due to a viral outbreak among their canine population in February of 2020, and then closing for general intake in March through May of 2020 due to COVID-19. During that time, JHS remained open. Community members and local veterinary offices helped shoulder the burden to alleviate pressure on JHS, particularly with kittens.

Denise Deisler, CEO of Jacksonville Humane Society, credits the historic year of lifesaving to the community's continued support of new initiatives and answering the call.

"Jacksonville is, without a doubt, one of the country's most compassionate cities for pets and the people who love them," said Deisler. "Whether we needed support for our Kitten Krusader program that keeps baby kitties out of the shelter, temporary foster homes to help us empty the kennels, or donations to help bridge the gap when our major fundraisers were cancelled – the people of this city came through in a major way."



Community help saved animal lives during the pandemic



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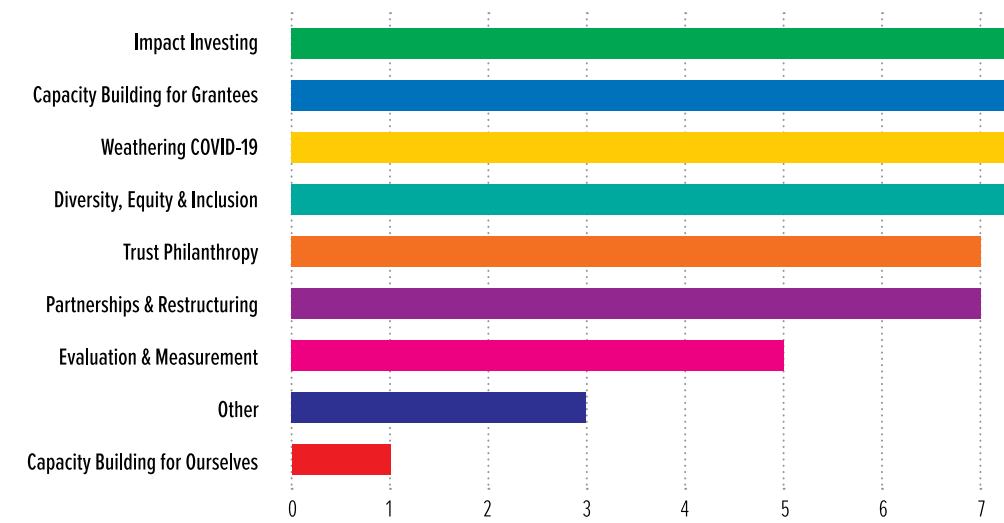


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Forecast murky for nonprofit sector in unsettled times

IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR LOCAL GRANTMAKERS

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PANDEMIC FORCES 'HYPER-CHANGE' IN THE WAY NOT-FOR-PROFITS CONDUCT BUSINESS

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Northeast Florida's nonprofit organizations have found it hard to regain their footing from nearly a year filled with major disruptions caused by COVID-19. The continuing slow roll-out of Coronavirus vaccines, rocky economy, and transfer to a new regime in Washington, have made it difficult for organizations within the sector to "catch their breath" as they endeavor to adapt to "hyper-change," while serving the community during such unforeseen circumstances.

In a Jan. 14 update of the State of the Sector talk she gave before the Planned Giving Council of Northeast Florida in May, Rena Coughlin, CEO of the Nonprofit Center, discussed the hardships and necessary adaptations nonprofits have faced during the pandemic. She also suggested several ways the sector can reposition itself for strength as it attempts to settle into a new normal.

"We are talking about major disruption and hyper-change, the speed and the pace of which is only equaled to the length and duration of this disruption," said Coughlin. "When we talked in May, there was still this sense that 'Wow, we are just catching our breath.' Organizations report all the time that just when things are settling there is another surge,

or regulations change, or the economic outlook changes. There never seems to be any settling for most organizations that gives them time to regroup," she said.

According to surveys done by the Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida, the pandemic has forced 28% of local nonprofits to cut their worker's hours or lay off staff. Yet 31% have experienced an increased demand for services while more than half have lost revenue due to cancelled fundraisers, and 28% have lost revenue due to a reduced demand for services. Eight in 10 nonprofits have found it necessary to apply for PPP grants/loans or some other COVID-19 relief funding. And one third reported difficulty operating in a virtual environment.

What the Nonprofit Center is seeing is a "trifurcation" in the sector, said Coughlin. "One group has had a huge increase on their demand for services with a lack of resources to deliver. Then some organizations have a huge demand for services and have been able to marshal the resources so they can meet capacity. Then there is a third group of organizations that are still struggling to reenter the community and workforce at the level that they had been," she said referring to civic and cultural organizations that need to convene big groups of people to get their work done. For those organizations, the pandemic has severely impacted earned income and how they deliver on their contracts because it affects the way they are reimbursed or earn revenue.

Many organizations report they are struggling with the conversion to either hybrid or virtual ways of doing business. "It is not just the

cancelling of fundraisers that is really hurting organizations, it's access to unrestricted dollars," Coughlin said. Many nonprofits were successful in obtaining PPP during the first round, and at least 60% have said they will be applying for PPP grants/loans in the second, even though there will be slightly different requirements. "There is a significant need to shore up the bottom line for nonprofits when it comes to paying for what is usually the most expensive line item in the budget – people, human capital," she said, adding that those applying for the second round of PPP need to prove they have a 25% reduction in revenue in comparable quarters.

When the Nonprofit Center sent out a recent survey asking how organizations thought they would "come out of 2021," the response was largely positive. At least 20% were confident they would be fine, while 65% checked the box as "cautiously optimistic." Only 12% were "uncertain – too many unknowns," and 3% were "very concerned – unsure if we will be open." Yet, none checked the box saying they were "gloomy."

However, in speaking with nonprofit leaders one-on-one, most indicated they are "very exhausted," said Coughlin. "The words I kept hearing were 'saturation level.' They are so worried about their teams, and they are pessimistic about so many things – whether they will raise enough money, whether they will hold their programming – yet when you ask them how they will be at the end of 2021, they will say, 'We're going to be all right.' I don't know whether it comes with the territory of the nonprofit sector, but I believe there is an optimism bias."

Repositioning the Sector

Several lessons have been learned as the nonprofit sector struggles to survive the pandemic, the first being that many nonprofits have not closed revealing to the community just how essential they are, she said. A big part of this lesson is a thorough consideration of who, exactly, is an essential worker. Going forward it will be important, perhaps, to redefine

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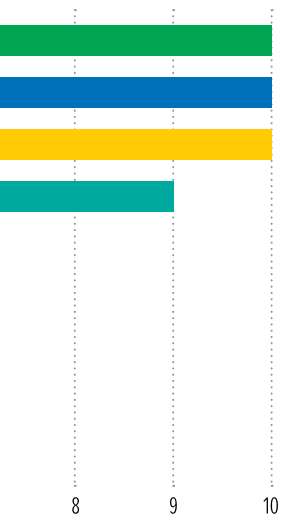
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It comes to planning
 coming years?



Local Nonprofits After COVID-19


8 in 10

Have applied for the PPP or some other COVID-19 relief funding

31% 
 experienced increased demand for services

ONE THIRD

reported difficulty operating in a virtual environment

28% 
 lost revenue due to reduced demand for services

MORE THAN HALF

lost revenue due to cancelled fundraisers

28% 
 had to cut hours or lay off staff

just who is essential, and this may differ from the workers who keep the community afloat during a hurricane and those who help distribute food, clean hospitals and buildings, and provide transportation during a pandemic.

The current “dreadful” economy with 10 million unemployed, shows the value of the nonprofit sector as it fills community needs for childcare, healthcare, elder care, and disabled care, she said, adding that nonprofit organizations that supply essential services are necessary in making an economic renaissance possible.

“Think about how dependent we are on our institutions of faith, of art and culture, of dance, and theater. These things we have gone without for a very long time. I don’t think that we will feel like we are back to normal until these things are functioning,” she said.

Big reveals

The pandemic has disclosed several inequities – specifically who has access to healthcare, childcare, technology, and the internet

– embedded in our economy and institutions, Coughlin said. These inequities were compounded when the social justice movement exploded in the summer of 2020. “So many leaders in the nonprofit community have said to us that this is a top priority,” she said. “One of the few bright spots in this pandemic is this that this disruption exploded a lot of business and cultural norms that had kept organizations from being flexible, creative, and innovative in how we work, how we serve, and how we live.”

Also revealed were gaps in technology, logistics, partnerships, protocols, funding mechanisms, and leadership. “I think what everyone keeps saying is, ‘Let’s not forget this.’ We shouldn’t go back to thinking we fixed it when we haven’t,” she added.

Positives revealed by the pandemic include discovering that virtual work can be effective. Using new technology to break down barriers in service delivery is possible. “We’ve seen huge, positive increases in how organizations deliver, particularly in healthcare, telemedicine,

telehealth, and counseling. Even an organization like The Literary Alliance has changed how they work and who they work with. Play therapy for young kids obviously does not translate well on Zoom, but there are other ways we can start thinking of to address things,” she said.

Also, important is to focus on team well-being and fair compensation as well as trust philanthropy, where donors feel comfortable in allowing the nonprofit unrestricted management of their gifts.

Throughout the pandemic it has been apparent the boards of many organizations do not fully understand their organization’s business model, or their role in assisting the executive director when making critical decisions, Coughlin said. “Getting a PPP loan is a perfect example. The boards of some organizations said that they could not apply for loans because they were a nonprofit. They had so little understanding of the essential meaning of a nonprofit. They thought it was illegal for them to have a loan,” she said.

COVID-19 has also showed that operating reserves are critical to the an organization’s survival. “We are hoping that we can, with non-pejorative language, help organizations think about new business models and partnerships on a spectrum from cooperative partnerships to mergers,” she said.

Important issues for local grantmakers

Coughlin said she was recently in a meeting where she had an “out of body” experience. “I was the only nonprofit representative on the call and there were a lot of people with a lot of wealth talking about how great a year it was,” she remembered. “How do you reconcile what truly was for so many investors a very good year with the reality of the situation for the majority of the rest of the universe?”

Local philanthropists have continued to make major contributions during the pandemic,

but at some point, they will be stretched thin, she said. Meanwhile, a fair portion of everyday donors has diminished. “We lost some 30,000 people who contributed small, itemized deductions to the recession. It is a big question as to what the impact will be after this pandemic is over.”

In a recent Nonprofit Center survey, philanthropists noted the top issues they consider when giving. At the top of the list were impact investing, capacity building for grantees, and weathering COVID-19. Slightly below was bringing diversity, equity, and inclusion to the organization. Trust philanthropy, and partnerships and restructuring also got high marks.

As the pandemic drags on in 2021, Coughlin had three points of advice to share with nonprofit leadership: 1) Stay hyper-relevant; 2) Be willing to develop and pivot operations; 3) Capitalize on new initiatives and partnerships.

“Stay hyper-relevant. You have to communicate and advocate and make sure people know you are still here, and you are still working – that you are still delivering on your mission,” she said, adding it is important organizations expand hybrid, synchronous service, learning, to examine infrastructure needs and to prep for the future minimum wage when it goes to \$15 an hour.

Capitalizing on new initiatives and partnerships is also imperative. “Are there opportunities to right-size your organization? Are there merger opportunities for you as a strong organization to initiate or is there a need for you to think about being absorbed into another organization?” she asked.

Investing in diversity, equity, and inclusion to enhance competitiveness in the marketplace is also important, which dovetails with prioritizing staff care and staff development. In a 2019 survey, the Nonprofit Center asked whether organizations were supporting their executives with at-home technology or internet access. None were. “That has to change,” she said.



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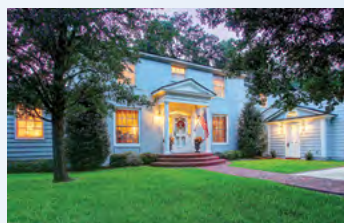
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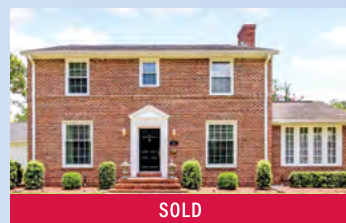
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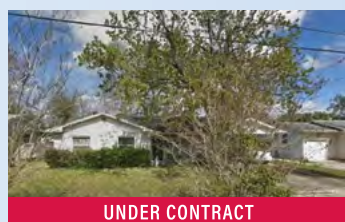
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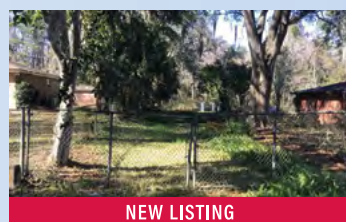
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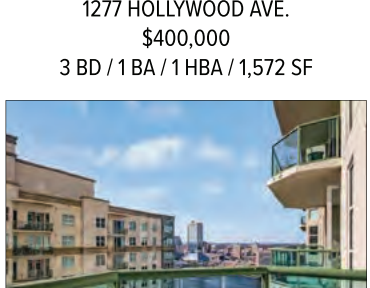
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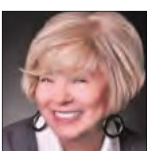
1431 RIVERPLACE BLVD. 2602
\$350,000
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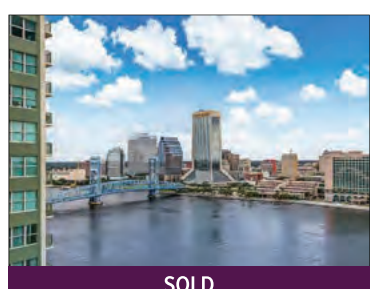
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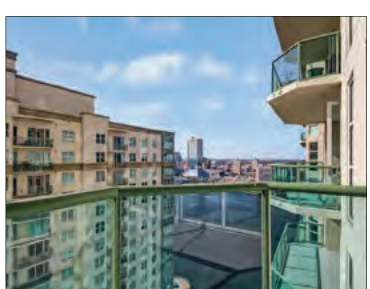
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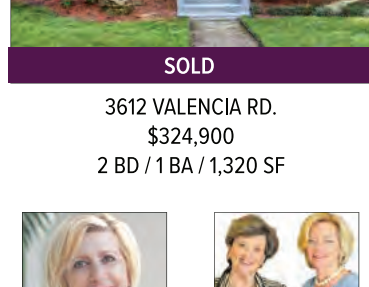
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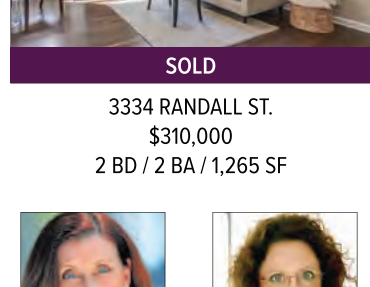
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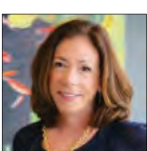
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HOMETOWN HEROES: ELLEN SULLIVAN

BY MARCIA HODGSON
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

RETURNING TO NURSING TO ANSWER THE COVID CALL

Although her current day job as business manager of The BairFind Foundation has nothing to do with nursing, Ellen Sullivan of San Marco has always kept her hand in by keeping her RN (Registered Nurse) license active. Desiring to answer a call to former nurses to assist with COVID-19 testing, she became a hometown hero of sorts by finishing up a three-month, 176-hour clinical refresher course in December. The course was offered by Florida State College Jacksonville, the official provider for the Board of Nursing.

“There was a call for former nurses with the sheer volume of testing for COVID-19,” said Sullivan. “I’ve always maintained an active RN license, however, it was a long time since I’ve provided direct patient care,” she said, noting the course through FSCJ Workforce Planning was comprehensive and thorough.



Ellen Sullivan listens to a Kahn Academy lecture on the renal system while her dog Roxy looks on

To complete the refresher course Sullivan was required to devour 1,000 pages of text, answer 4,050 questions, take part in 25 clinical simulations and labs, successfully pass five timed-comprehensive exams, and study pharmacology. “I loved it. I highly recommend it,” she said. “Now, I am prepared to help in my community should the need arise.”

Before she began her work with The BairFind Foundation, a nonprofit that helps search for missing children, Sullivan was an entrepreneur, who had crossed over the sectors of nursing, healthcare, and nonprofits.

As an RN, she began her career as a critical care nurse. She then gained broad corporate experience in healthcare quality and compliance by working over 20 years at Florida Blue. Eventually, Sullivan left her executive role to invest in the first Doctors Express Urgent Care clinic in Florida. Later, after she successfully sold her business, she became CEO of BairFind in its national expansion as an official charity partner of Minor League Baseball. Although she stepped back as BairFind’s CEO when she took on a role to help Jacksonville Women’s Business Center as its former director, she continues to serve as BairFind’s business manager. She also currently serves as a consultant on innovation projects.

Sullivan has served on many boards of directors, including ATHENA International, JAX Chamber Board of Directors and Board of Governors, the Chamber Health Council, the Jacksonville Women’s Business Center, Women Business Owners of North Florida, and Theatre Jacksonville.

Her passion is the health and wellbeing of children and teens, and she is a longtime supporter of Safe Harbor Boys Home. A member of Leadership Jacksonville, she volunteers for its youth program.



“Now I am prepared to help in my community should the need arise.”

— Ellen Sullivan RN

Sullivan has received numerous awards and recognition including Family Foundations “Asset Award for Wise Money Week” and the Small Business Leader of the Year from the Chamber’s Health Council. She was named one of Advantage Magazine’s “Top 50 Business Influencers” and “Up and Coming Entrepreneur” Finalist at the Women in Business Awards. Also, she has been featured

in Entrepreneur Magazine and on CNBC. Ellen earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from the University of Iowa and a Master of Science degree in administration from Central Michigan University.

She is married to maritime attorney Rod Sullivan and has two children, Brendan, a category buyer for Southeastern Grocers, and Jacqueline, a professional performing artist.

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Placement of 5G poles in historic district

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

State mandate

A few years ago, the Federal Communications Commission approved 5G and left it to the states to regulate it through legislation, said DeFoor. In 2017, after dismissing the idea that 5G can adversely affect health, the Florida Legislature passed a law prohibiting local governments from banning or unreasonably restricting the ability of telecommunications companies to install transmission facilities and infrastructure. However, they allowed local governments the ability to require permits for use on public rights-of-way and to regulate “objective design standards, such as size, configuration, color, and shielding of equipment” in ways that still permitted the 5G service to be provided.

Local governments were tasked with granting permits to install the equipment on poles during a specific time period, said State Representative Wyman Duggan, who represents Riverside. “The local government is free to deny the permit application, but then it would go through a permit appeal process,” he said, referring to the Tower Review Committee, and not an appropriate committee of the City Council.

From April to September of 2018, the City Council’s Land Use and Zoning Committee and Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee held a series of eight joint meetings leading to the passage of Ordinance 2019-770 that regulated the specifics about the placement, location, and design of 5G infrastructure and apparatus. DeFoor had been part of the discussion, which was led by District 11 Councilman Danny Becton.

However, under a mandate from the state, a new Part 4 to Chapter 711 or the Ordinance Code to implement the permitting and objective design standards was adopted via Ordinance 2018-463-E. According to the bill summary, the amended ordinance was drafted by attorneys for Verizon Communications to change numerous provisions of the current code that were problematic for their technology model, which differs from one provider to another based on the manufacturer of their equipment.

According to the bill summary, the amended bill removed language spelling out the city’s right “to minimize the negative aesthetic impact and potential conflicts with other mobility and utility uses caused by a proliferation of new poles and to maximize location context, color, stealth, and concealment requirements in the placement of a Small Wireless Facility within the City’s Rights-of-Way by first requiring co-location on existing structures unless it can be proved to the Director’s satisfaction that co-location is not feasible.”

The original bill was also amended to remove the city’s ability to deny a permit because “a proposed installation fails to comply with ‘applicable objective design standards,’ or because the installation is not proposed to be co-located on an existing structure when the applicant has not demonstrated that such a structure is not available or is insufficient for the placement of the proposed installation.”

In addition, the amended bill deleted several objective design standards, increased the volume of equipment that may be pole mounted from 10 to 28 cubic feet, and deleted the requirement that applications for new poles must be reviewed for the potential to co-locate equipment on existing city, JEA, or privately owned poles or structures. It also removed the requirement that “permits for new poles can only be granted when the Director determines that no existing utility pole is reasonably feasible to collocate the small wireless facilities.”

“I worked hard with Danny Becton and Michael Boylan on the code to try to put as many restrictions as we possibly could into the 5G legislation and the location of their poles. Unfortunately, the state usurped the local control and agreed that 5G could be placed anywhere within the right-of-way easements,” DeFoor said. “Think about that. That means you could have a pole right in front of your house because we all have easements. It’s awful. It’s absolutely awful,” she said.

“I’m of the belief that we really need to go back to the state and tell them this can impact people’s property values, and that it impacts our tax base,” said DeFoor, noting she had been told that JEA was requiring “too much,”



The 5G pole is within the line of sight of Tanner Crews’ condo in the Cathedral District

for Verizon to rent space on its poles. “If all these poles go up, I would not be at all surprised if a lawsuit was filed by residents because it impacts their property values.”

In fact, a lawsuit was filed with a California appeals court. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit largely dismissed a challenge from dozens of state and local governments who tried to push back against the FCC and its orders to restrict their ability to regulate technology for 5G infrastructure. The decision was rendered in August 2020 and may be a precedent that pretty much prevents the City of Jacksonville from being able to enforce any regulations, said DeFoor.

JEA has a Master Wireless Agreement with Verizon, as with all the wireless carriers, allowing collocations on JEA communication towers, high voltage electric transmission structures, and JEA electric distribution poles and standalone streetlight poles. A rental does apply allowing JEA and the community an appropriate return on investment for the assets utilized,” said Simone Garvey-Ewan, media relations coordinator for JEA.

“JEA has been approached by Verizon for collocations on JEA electric distribution

poles and standalone streetlight poles for small cell collocation. JEA and Verizon have only looked at 12 sites downtown. Rent for a small cell on an electric distribution pole or standalone streetlight pole is presently \$1,432 per year, which is consistent with market analysis of similar utilities and cities. The small cell rent was set per an agreed to contract amendment in 2015 between JEA and Verizon,” she said.

In the Historic Commission meeting, Jones said Verizon’s representative told the group the company had not reached an agreement with JEA to share the utility poles, therefore Verizon must use its own towers. Cellular companies are also not required to share towers with each other, further increasing the number of possible towers in our community.

“We know these towers do not necessarily have to be placed on Verizon’s dedicated poles. They can be placed on existing poles owned by JEA,” Jones said, adding that during the meeting the representative from Verizon said there is a provision in state law that if JEA charges something other than a normal fee the phone company can use its own tower.

Residents in the Riverside Avondale historic district may be among the first to raise an aesthetics alarm on 5G poles, but they are not the only ones. At Large Group 4 Councilman Matt Carlucci said he received a call from Tanner Crews, a resident in Jacksonville’s Cathedral District, who in early December came home from work to discover a towering black pole blocking the line of sight from his window. Carlucci said he is trying to work with the city and Verizon to have the pole removed and placed in a more desirable location. “They aren’t supposed to go in front of windows,” Carlucci said. “I am sending another follow-up to what I sent in December to ask them to take out that pole and place it legally.”

Carlucci’s assistant, Alyson Lee, said she contacted Chief Ellyn Cavin about the pole in the Cathedral District. “Ellyn called me back and said the city had contracted with Verizon to install the poles. She said she did not think Verizon violated the letter of its contract but that she did think the company violated the spirit of the contract. She said she would contact Verizon and see what could be done,” Lee said.



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For the love of music, education

Local organization spearheads support of elementary school in new ‘Save Live, Local Music campaign’

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

When the onset of COVID-19 forced the international performers to cancel their visits to Jacksonville to perform at Riverside’s Friday Musicale, the nonprofit decided to it needed to pivot, to do something different.

“Our venue depends on a Cultural Council grant and venue rentals for weddings and social affairs to maintain the facility and programs, however, event cancellations in 2020 greatly reduced revenue,” said Janet Withers, stewardship coordinator of Friday Musicale. “We realized we needed to do something out of the box. Something bodacious.”

We recognized it is a new year, and we are coming out of this pandemic. We realized we should do something really out of the box, something really bodacious.”

— Janet Withers,
stewardship coordinator of Friday Musicale

In reviewing the history of Friday Musicale, the nonprofit’s board and staff recognized the organization had a long-standing tradition of being a community partner with local schools, but noticed that, for some reason, there was a gap of a few years in its seeking out local outreach opportunities. “We noticed in our history that we had done it before,

and it was very popular. We recognized it is a new year, and we are coming out of this pandemic,” Wither said.

That meant looking to what was going on in its own backyard, which ultimately resulted in a new campaign, “Save Live, Local Music.” The campaign includes partnering with local musical groups such as the Ritz Chamber Players, the University of North Florida Vocal Department, and local performing ensembles in jazz, Dixieland, and classical music.

It also means adopting a local school – Central Riverside Elementary – to continue its long tradition of providing music education and scholarships. Through the partnership with Central Riverside, Friday Musicale hopes to encourage children, parents, teachers, and staff to attend its concerts as it seeks to bolster the school’s musical studies program, provide onsite concerts at the school, and support school violin instructor Chris D’Avilo and his music students.

A kindergarten through fifth grade school, Central Riverside is a Title 1 school that serves 190 students. “We look forward to engaging with the students, parents, and staff in the music programs and the general curriculum,” said Dr. Susan Conroy, a Friday Musicale board member and retired music educator who often volunteers at the school. In the nonprofit’s newsletter she encouraged Musicale members to volunteer in the school library, classrooms, and during special events at the school. She also is encouraging them to donate school supplies, provide invitations to free concerts, and provide children’s programming in spring and summer 2021.



Riverside’s Friday Musicale has a rich history of providing children’s programming to the community

“Principal Dinah Stewart, Assistant Principal Monifa Campbell, Guidance Counselor Jeanette Hawthorne serve a diverse Title 1 school,” Conroy said. “There are specific needs, both for teachers and students. We will have a donation box at future March concerts.”

The Wish List for the school includes writing paper, notebooks, pencils, and individual hand sanitizers, spare coats in all sizes, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, spare clothing, pants, t-shirts, as well as boys’ and girls’ underwear for rainy day change outs. Meanwhile, Central Riverside’s library needs scholastic-leveled reading workbooks and group reading texts.

“Friday Musicale met with the leadership team at Central Riverside Elementary to discuss a community partnership to provide enrichment opportunities in music and theater for our families and to provide volunteering opportunities on campus,” said Central Riverside Elementary Principal Dinah Stewart. “As soon as the CDC lifts some of the restrictions, we will be reaching out to Friday Musicale for PTA activities, providing support in our art and music classes, just to name a few. Over the past holiday season, Friday Musicale provided refreshments to our faculty and staff.

Partnerships have always been an important resource for our school. We appreciate Friday Musicale for all its support.”

Friday Musicale has maintained scholarships and partnered with schools to host children’s programming for decades. Examples from years past include UNF’s Opera in a Box program, “Fairytale with a Twist”, Friday Musicale’s “Le Chevalier: the African-American Mozart”, Jazz Camp for ages 9 to 90, Master Classes with performers, and Outstanding Young Pianist Competitions.

“Reaching out to children and their families at Central Riverside encourages young people to appreciate classical, jazz and world music in a grand setting with top-level performers,” said Dr. Eric A. Becher, Friday Musicale’s executive director, music educator, and conductor.

Friday Musicale’s spring season schedule will be announced in February and will showcase such groups as Ancient City Brass Band, the UNF Vocal Department, and other prominent ensembles to bring live music to audiences. The auditorium has socially distanced seating, masks required, and sanitizer stations available. For more information, to donate, or to attend a concert, visit www.fridaymusicale.com or call the venue office at (904) 355-7584.

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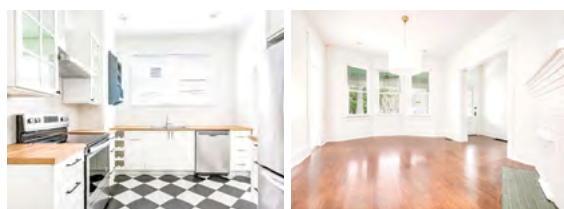


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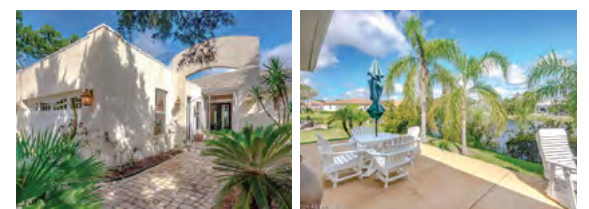
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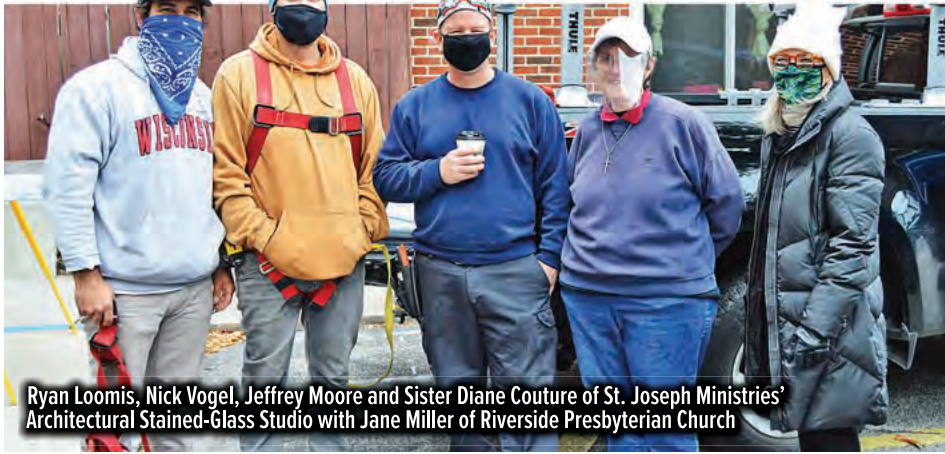
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Ryan Loomis, Nick Vogel, Jeffrey Moore and Sister Diane Couture of St. Joseph Ministries' Architectural Stained-Glass Studio with Jane Miller of Riverside Presbyterian Church



Sister Diane Couture works with Jeffrey Moore in cutting Lexan to fit over the stained-glass windows at Riverside Presbyterian Church



Clear Lexan protects the stained-glass window in front of Riverside Presbyterian Church



Jeffrey Moore, Nick Vogel, Ryan Loomis with Sister Diane Couture

'Flying nun' replaces protective covering over historic church windows

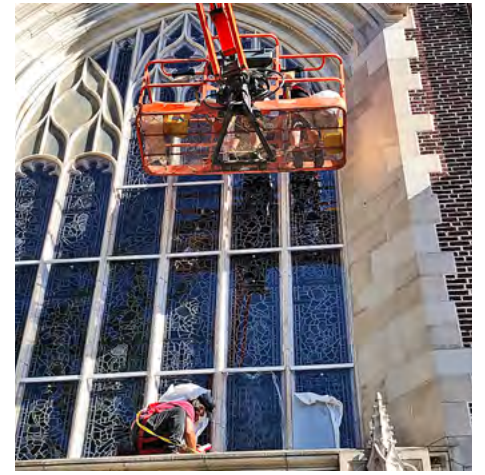
By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

The colors of the stained-glass windows at Riverside Presbyterian Church are shining more vibrantly these days thanks to the work of Sister Diane Couture and the St. Joseph Ministries' Architectural Stained-Glass Studio.

Sister Diane is lovingly referred to as "the flying nun," by Jane Miller, who oversees the project for Riverside Presbyterian's property and maintenance committee. She and her crew have been replacing the foggy, discolored Lexan, a bullet-proof outside protective layer, which covers the stained-glass windows that grace the historic church's sanctuary.

A nun with the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Augustine for 48 years, Couture, a talented artist, has headed the architectural stained-glass studio as a ministry for her sisterhood for the past 36 years. Her ministry seeks to bring "God's presence, love, and peace to sacred spaces through the gift of stained glass. Using this art form and with God's grace, we teach, touch, and bring His healing love into the lives of our clients, our students, and all who gaze upon our works of art," according to the studio's mission statement.

Couture's previous restoration work can be seen in the chapel at Ascension St. Vincent's Hospital, St. Paul's Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Ortega, and Second Missionary Baptist Church. Her shop in St. Augustine is the only one of its kind in Northeast Florida and just one of a handful in the state. She and her staff of five tackle eight to 10 projects a year, focusing on major orders from churches throughout



Sister Diane's crew replaces the Lexan that protects the stained-glass windows at Riverside Presbyterian Church

the United States. Perhaps one of her most notable projects has been the 9/11 memorial window at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City.

Couture said Riverside Presbyterian's figurative windows are unique. Constructed in 1927, the church's stained-glass windows were designed, fabricated, and installed by Henry Lee Willet of the Willet Studios of Philadelphia between 1943 and 1948. The windows are worked in the style of medieval glass, with representational figures and symbolism and imagery within each scene.

Church members have taken a leap of faith in deciding to embark on the window project, Miller said, adding that the cost replacing the Lexan on all the windows in the church will be approximately \$150,000. Currently the church has a third of the cost in its endowment, she said, but she has faith the rest of the money will eventually be raised. "Somehow it will get done," Miller said.

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Bolles receives historic gift, begins residence hall project

A historic gift from American businessman, philanthropist and professional sports owner Gordon Gund is fueling transformative changes for Bolles Hall and the Bolles Residential Life program in Jacksonville. While the amount is undisclosed, it marks the largest single donor gift in the School's 88-year history, according to Bolles Chief Advancement Officer Carol Nimitz.

"This gift fulfills our community's longtime vision of locating our Girls' Residential Life program on the Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus and allows the program to grow and expand in its experience," Nimitz said. Female boarders at Bolles have been living in a residence hall on the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus while their male peers call the third floor of Bolles Hall home. "Girls will soon be able to live on the campus where they learn and – along with boy-boarder and day-student peers – flourish in an environmentally friendly facility."

Called the Llura "Lulie" Liggett Gund '58 Bartram Residence Hall for Girls, the project encompasses the entire second floor of Bolles Hall and will double Bolles' female boarding capacity from 30 to 60 students – positioning the program to meet increasing admission demand. The work includes notable environmental enhancements to the entire building, originally developed in the mid-1920s as a posh hotel before its founding as a school in 1933. Bolles Hall will be 100% solar energy dependent once the new residence hall opens in July 2021.

Local architecture firm Luke Architecture P.A. has designed plans for the new spaces and Bent Construction is contractor for the six-month project. The full scope of work



Lulie Liggett Gund and her 1958 Bartram classmates. Gund is in the back row, far left



Zachary Gund, Lulie Liggett Gund with Gordon Gund and Grant Gund



Thanks to a generous gift from the Gund family, renovations are being made to transform the second floor of Bolles Hall into a girls' dormitory



Floor plan of the rooms comprising the new girls' dormitory in Bolles Hall

hinges on future completion of a STEM building planned for the Upper School San Jose Campus bluff. This building, expected to house the school's science, math, and technology offerings, adds classroom space displaced by the residence hall expansion.

The new female residence hall project will also provide new learning spaces for students on the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus. Former girls' dorm rooms

on this campus will be converted into new classrooms and areas for collaboration.

Lulie Gund attended Bartram School for girls in the 1950s before it merged with The Bolles School in 1991. An avid supporter of both schools and a philanthropist who made tangible changes in the realms of blinding retinal diseases, conservation, and renewable energy, Gund passed away in 2020. Her husband, Gordon Gund, and their

sons, Grant and Zack, made the gift in her honor and their generosity is unmatched.

"The indelible impact Lulie made on the world through her philanthropic endeavors is tangible and forever changes the future for Bolles," Nimitz said. "We are incredibly grateful to the Gund family for making this gift, it truly refines and advances the educational experiences of our children now and in the future."



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Animal House

By Julie Kerns Garmendia Resident Community News

Pet therapy teams provide comfort

VISITING WITH THERAPY ANIMALS LIFTS SPIRITS, BOOSTS MORALE AND RELIEVES STRESS

Children with prosthetic limbs, in wheelchairs or wearing baseball caps at Nemours, smile and laugh as they hug, pet, and talk to the dark bay American miniature horse with the seafoam-green orthotic leg device. Seven-year-old Buc stands calmly between Chris and Dale Dunn, surprisingly relaxed as the center of joyful, noisy attention. When the 36-inch horse looks these children in the eyes, hospital walls and medical scrubs fade away.

Buc almost did not survive to fulfill his unique destiny with Pet Partners of North Florida (PPNF), as part of the Dunn's pet therapy team that visits Nemours, Riverside senior centers, fire stations, schools and events. An accidental rope entanglement severely damaged the miniature horse's back leg and disconnected his hoof, and his owners could not afford vet bills. The Duns adopted Buc, then learned that the lost hoof compounded by a 10% chance of survival, indicated euthanasia.

"Dr. Herb Loeman at Atlantic Veterinary Hospital thought differently. He agreed to try to help Buc and with 24-hour care by our friend, equestrian Claire Piatt, they saved Buc's life. His foot healed, although it's



Chris and Dale Dunn with Buc and Buddie

misshapen. Sam Marvin, certified veterinarian prosthetist-orthotist in Bushnell, Florida, created a custom orthotic leg support, and Buc wears protective boots. Walking is a challenge, but he's a living miracle," Dunn said. "His disability helps hospitalized kids, who each have their own challenges or who may also look or move differently. Buc loves them. He senses who needs him most and puts his head against that child's chest."

The other four-legged member of the Dunn's animal-assisted therapy team is Buddie, an 11-year-old miniature Doberman pinscher. Buddie was adopted from St. Johns County Animal Control.

"When I put Buddie's vest on he knows it's time to go to work. If I place him carefully in the lap of a child in a wheelchair, he instantly knows to cuddle as gently as possible. If a child sits beside him, he crawls right into the child's lap. Everyone notices his soft coat, just perfect for tiny hands," Chris Dunn said. "With seniors, he understands their frailty and instinctively knows what to do to make them happy." Chris and Dale Dunn own Ravenwood Farm Foundation, a dog and horse rescue. They volunteer as a PPNF-registered pet therapy team and participate in hurricane/all-disaster emergency preparedness and large animal rescue/recovery for Florida and Louisiana. They are PetSmart Emergency Response Team volunteers.

Cindy Ballantyne and her rescue rabbit, Gimli, were the first registered rabbit pet therapy team in North Florida. When they visit mental or behavioral health support groups, everyone asks why Gimli has only three legs. Ballantyne is a military veteran who has struggled with PTSD, depression, and has worked with domestic abuse victims. She knows how to immediately connect

with her listeners, whatever their situations or personal challenges.

"I broke Gimli's leg," she tells them. "It's all my fault."

Uncomfortable silence and questioning stares normally follow as Ballantyne allows that statement to sink in. Then she explains that Gimli was relaxed on her lap when he suddenly became startled, and she could not react quickly enough to restrain him before he leapt to the ground. His severely broken leg could not be saved.

"What you say aloud to others or say to yourself inside your thoughts and how you say those words, really matters. Word choice and tone of voice can communicate entirely different meanings and emotions," Ballantyne said. "What happened to Gimli was an awful accident. However, I could torture myself with blame and guilt regarding my actions or inability to act quickly enough. Unfortunately, that is what people dealing with life adversities, behavioral or mental health issues, often do to themselves. We want to show that simple changes are possible, can be learned and can help."

Ballantyne said that her visits to share Gimli with first-grade children diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or various learning differences, are eye-opening.

"Rabbits are prey animals and startle easily. To approach or pet Gimli, you must be calm and gentle. These children, who struggle to be calm or quiet, discover that it is possible, because they want so badly to interact with Gimli," she said. "They learn to practice being able to quiet themselves or sit still. Still, slow, and quiet are skills quickly learned when petting Gimli is the reward. Every small success builds their self-esteem."



Cindy Ballantyne and her therapy rabbit Gimli visit with a senior

Ballantyne and Gimli visited a local hospital burn unit where a young patient wore a partial face covering and gloves. A visiting child entered with her family, saw the injured patient, and loudly remarked, "Ooooh, gross!" Ballantyne recalled what a hurtful moment that was for the burn patient and her parents.

"I showed the visitor child that Gimli only has three legs. He looks very different from other rabbits, but that's okay," she said. "Working as a team with these special animals gives us many small teaching moments." Ballantyne and Gimli visit Riverside/Avondale schools, nursing homes, hospitals, and patients at Brooks Rehabilitation.

PPNF's board chairman, certified instructor, and registered handler, is Lorri Reynolds. Reynolds and her rescue cat, Sooshi, were the first locally registered feline pet therapy team. They visit Community Hospice & Palliative Care and PedsCare patients, Brookdale Avondale, St. Catherine Laboure and Taylor Manor senior living facilities. Reynolds said that COVID restrictions forced pet therapy teams to find new venues when hospitals and nursing homes locked down. An unexpected result has been more access to many new venues and greatly expanded services.

Pet therapy teams visited Jacksonville's Amazon facilities after the 2020 shooting incidents to comfort workers traumatized by the violence, and nervous about their safety. They have visited the FBI, real estate and title companies, and other businesses to help share positive animal interaction, lift spirits, boost morale, and relieve stress, Reynolds said.



A senior draws comfort from Buc



Cindy Ballantyne with her rabbit, Gimli

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

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Each human handler said that most people need and want to feel connected to others during stressful times or situations, whatever their circumstances. To pet or hold an affectionate animal, could be the best part of the day. During animal-assisted therapy, the focus is on positive fun, relaxation, and enjoyment, to help better handle challenges that an individual or group might face.

PPNF is part of an all-volunteer, nonprofit national organization that promotes animal-assisted therapy through expert evaluation, training, testing, and registration of pet therapy team human handlers and their animal partners. Screening, adherence to the highest quality, research-based training, and continuing education ensure safe, effective visits.

The organization supports scientific research that documents the benefits of

animal-assisted therapy and the human-animal bond: affection, acceptance, comfort during crisis, relief of anxiety and stress, feelings of normalcy, and home-like experiences.

PPNF’s local chapter has volunteer men, women, and youth pet therapy team handlers from the age of 16 to 78 and approximately 100 teams. Volunteers may register from the age of 10, although they must be accompanied on visits by an adult until age 18. If interested in this rewarding volunteer opportunity to show compassion, help others, make a difference in lives and enjoy a rewarding activity while sharing your pet, contact PPNF.

All PPNF visits and services are completely free of charge. PPNF registers nine animal species: cats, dogs, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, pigs, miniature and full-size horses, donkeys, llamas, and alpacas.

To learn if a pet is suited for therapy work, take the online quiz at petpartners.org/quiz, or contact: Pet Partners of North Florida, P.O. Box 1485, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32004 or call 904/612-8952. For more information, their email is EachDayIsHis@gmail.com or visit their website, www.petpartnersnf.org.



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THE WAY WE WERE: BILL AND MARY DUDLEY SCHMIDT

BY MARY WANSER
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

It doesn't happen often. But sometimes, Cupid's arrow pierces the same heart twice. Such was the fate of Bill Schmidt.

He was only 15 years old when he met his first love, his first wife, the mother of his two children. But cancer came. On the day he turned 48, the widower's heart beat with love again when he met the lady who would become his second wife. Their nearly three-decade relationship is proof that true love can happen twice in a single lifetime.

Schmidt is a fourth generation Floridian. His maternal great-great-grandfather, William B. Henderson, born in Georgia, is considered one of the founders of Tampa and the namesake of Henderson Boulevard, Henderson Avenue, and W. B. Henderson Elementary School there. His mother, Christine Henderson, was one of five girls, all third generation Floridians.

Schmidt's father, Gert, was a German immigrant who grew up in Vermont, went to Cornell University in New York to learn the hospitality industry, and was hired by George Mason to manage his Tampa Terrace Hotel. Schmidt's parents met at that hotel while his dad was working, and his mom was there decorating a room for her Plant High School prom. Schmidt's dad, as hotel manager, had told his secretary that he was so taken by the high school senior, "Someday, I'm gonna marry that girl." A few years later, he did, before joining the Army Air Corps as a flight instructor. The couple moved to Ocala, where Bill Schmidt was born in 1944.

After the war, in 1946, the family moved to Jacksonville when Schmidt was 2 years old. His father had been hired by Robert Kloepfel to manage the Hotel George Washington downtown. Schmidt recalls living in a penthouse there and his swing set being perched atop the hotel roof. The bellman often took Schmidt for walks around the city for exercise. By the age of 5, after a brief move to Fairfax Manor in the Avondale area, the family settled in the neighborhood of Venetia near Ortega where Schmidt grew up as big brother to Kent, Jack, and Bobby.

Venetia was built according to the developer's dream—for it to be like Venice, Italy, with every other street to be little canals. But then the Great Depression came, and building stopped. So, when the family moved to the area, it was rather primitive and very woody. Schmidt's dad volunteered with the Wesconnett Fire Department. There was no garbage pick-up service and only two or three homes on each block. Theirs was at the corner of Roma Boulevard and Genoa Avenue.

Next door to their home was an empty lot where Schmidt and his brothers enjoyed playing kick the can, baseball, and other sports. Living close to the St. Johns River, the four often fished and water skied.

Schmidt attended Venetia Elementary School, Lakeshore Junior High, and Robert E. Lee High School where he was a member of the football team. He keeps up with many of his childhood friends all these decades later.

In January of his high school senior year, 1962, Schmidt's family moved to Florence Drive in Ortega, just prior to his graduating and leaving home for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to study business administration. During his senior year of college, he was president of his fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon, to which he had pledged along with two buddies from Lee: Hap Stewart and Mike Hoyt, who was Schmidt's freshman roommate. Schmidt had three more friends from Lee at UNC—Graham Allen, Bobby Martin, and Ray Rodgers—but they had pledged to a different fraternity. Upon returning home to Jacksonville after college graduation in 1966, Schmidt began working in the family business, Florida Tractor Corporation, a wholesale distribution company.

"I'd always loved advertising and public relations," Schmidt said. So, in 1982, he partnered with three friends—Fred Miller, Bill Robinson, and Larry Nussmeyer—to form Miller/Robinson/Nussmeyer/Schmidt, an advertising and public relations company. Once that company broke up, Schmidt went on to form William G. Schmidt Advertising and Public Relations, Inc.



Mary Dudley Childress and Bill Schmidt on their blind date on March 2, 1992

During his senior year of college, Schmidt married his high school sweetheart, Sandra Johnston. They'd been dating since they turned 15 but were apart for a time while he was at UNC and she at USC. They raised two boys on Algonquin Avenue in Ortega, Bill Junior and John, who were born 13 months apart. The boys attended St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, where their dad taught confirmation classes, and then Bolles starting in seventh grade. Growing up, when they weren't playing sports, they loved duck hunting and dove hunting with their dad. In 1991, Bill Junior was in North Carolina at Wake Forest School of Medicine. John had just graduated from UNC, his



Schmidt Family at John and Kathryn Schmidt's farm in The Plains, Virginia on Thanksgiving 2018. Back Row: John, Turner, Ragnar, Hildur, Mattie, Mary Dudley, Bill, Bill Jr., Grayson, and Kathryn. Front Row: Magnus, Coal the golden retriever, and Thor.

father's alma mater, and was working for the Republican National Committee in Washington. It was on October 13 of that year, after 27 years of marriage, that cancer took Sandra's life. It took Bill's heart with it. Or so he thought.

On March 2, 1992, his 48th birthday, Schmidt met Mary Dudley Childress on a blind date at a Mardi Gras celebration in Mobile, Alabama. He had been invited there by his friends, Geoff and Nancy (nee McLean) Parker. Schmidt and Parker had met during their freshman year at UNC when they were both members of the German Club. Childress had been invited to the annual event, which extends the debutante season for exclusive social circles, as godmother to one of the debutantes. When Schmidt and Childress met, "I was no spring chicken. I was 49," Mary Dudley admitted. "I fell for her the moment I saw her. It was love at first sight," Bill said.

They wed on February 24, 1995. "I was terrified, so it took him three years to convince me to get married," Mary Dudley said. She was a Mississippi gal, an only child whose parents died young. She felt, and still does, so fortunate because Gert and Christine, Bill's parents, welcomed her readily into their family. "Bill and Sandra raised two fine young men, and now there are six grandchildren," Mary Dudley pointed out. She relished having an instant family. "I married Bill because he's a good husband, a good father, and a good Christian," she said.

Mary Dudley comes from a tiny town, a farming community in Mississippi with a population of 735 people. She did live for a brief time in Alabama. And although she has seen the world as a 56-year, recently retired Delta airline flight attendant, "Jacksonville's the biggest place I've ever lived," she said. She relocated here after the wedding. "I moved into Bill's house and

made it my own. People have been lovely to me, and I'm so appreciative," she said.

Because of her airline career, the couple has been able to travel together extensively. "Mary Dudley has opened my horizons worldwide," Bill said. "I really wanted to share my career with him. I wanted to share the bounty," she said in reply. They have been to 16 countries on a regular basis. They were working trips for her while in the air, but they did get to tour together once they landed. One of numerous highlights was Bill having the opportunity to attend a Rotary Club meeting in Hamburg, Germany, on a layover where he met three men who seemed to know more about Florida than he did. Another was the uniqueness of eating delicious sushi from a convenience store in Narita, Japan. "My life hasn't been glamorous, but it's been filled with a lot of adventure," Mary Dudley said.

Mary Dudley does not miss flying for work. She's learning to navigate a whole new world being full-time on the ground. "I'm learning to cook a little bit," she said but admitted that Bill still prepares most of their meals. "I'm just beginning to have local adventures," she said, and notes she is happy about meeting new people in the area around their home.

While she was still employed by Delta, Mary Dudley started an additional part-time job at Underwood Jewelers in Avondale where she still works today, for over two decades now. "I've met so many wonderful people there from all walks of life. That was my introduction to Jacksonville. And I felt good about it," she said. She also commented about the numerous ZIP Codes she has learned since moving here.

Between them, the couple has had eight dogs since they've been together. Bill refers to the two of them as "animal persons." As

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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Schmidt Wedding - Chapel of St. Mark's Episcopal Church - February 24, 1995

Bill spends as much time as he can in the art studio he built in his home. His canvases reflect an Impressionist approach and style. He is an honorary board member of the Jacksonville Artists Guild (JAG), the organization he formed in 2009 in memory of his mother who was an accomplished and prolific artist, a painter of acrylics and oils. The Guild's co-founder is watercolorist Carole King Mehrrens, another Jacksonville resident, who was a dear friend, fellow painter, and traveling companion of Bill's mom. The organization today has over 140 members. JAG hosts a variety of events, exhibitions, and programs that benefit the public.

Bill suffers from spinal stenosis, and his doctor tells him, "Motion is lotion," so he tries to stay as active as possible. He chairs reunions for his alma mater, UNC. He has chaired many of his Lee High School reunions over the past five decades and remains friends with his female co-chairs, many of whom are members of the Lee Lunch Bunch Girls Club and have dubbed Schmidt their honorary mascot, still calling him by his childhood nickname, Billy. He threw himself a 75th birthday luncheon a couple of years ago and invited some of the ladies—Joanne Griffin-Caraway (former Miss Lee High), Catherine Sears-Sexton, and Margaret DeHoff-Stanly, to name a few.

Bill and Mary Dudley are still living in the Algonquin Avenue house in Ortega where he raised his boys. He's lived there for nearly 50 years. The couple has also acquired a condo on Jacksonville Beach where they enjoy watching the waves of the Atlantic Ocean.

a child, Mary Dudley enjoyed riding horses. Her dad was a horseman on their family's farm in Mississippi. At 72, when Bill bought her a horse for Christmas, she started taking lessons again at Geddaway Farm, which is owned by Sherri Geddes who lives in Ortega. Now 77, Mary Dudley recently began adult ballet classes at Baggs Studio on Plymouth Street.

"She's a young 77. She looks 55. When I first saw Mary Dudley, my heart went to 12 on the flutter meter, and it hasn't stopped since then," Bill said of his wife, and he mentioned a song entitled "Tell Your Heart to Beat Again," a single recorded in 2016 by Danny Gokey. The lyrics tell Bill's story best, his story of love and loss and love again: "Tell your heart to beat again. Close your eyes and breathe it in. Let the shadows fall away. Step into the light of grace."

Bill is retired from business now and has also stepped down from his volunteer work with the Episcopal Diocese of Florida. He's very proud to have been awarded the Bishop's Cross Award for his prior service by Bishop Samuel Johnson Howard in 2012.

Together for nearly 29 years, February 24 will mark their 26th wedding anniversary. For some, love like that doesn't even come once in a lifetime. For Bill Schmidt, it's come twice.



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Assumption cross country teams sweep diocese championship

The Assumption cross country teams whizzed past 14 competing schools to win the Diocese of St. Augustine Cross Country Championship held at Bishop Kenny High School on Nov. 14.

The girls' varsity led throughout to win the 3K-team competition. Lucrezia Gowdy finished first individually, while Stephanie Grden, Quinn Camerlengo, Jillian Jakab, Alexandra Lumpkin and Olivia Lumpkin all finished among the top 10.

The boys' varsity team also placed first in its 3K team competition. Patton Avera,

Joe Joseph, Lucas Andrade, and Gabriel Andrade all finished among the top 10 finishes individually.

Graziana Gowdy finished first among junior varsity girls as Assumption won in the girls' junior varsity 2K team competition. Gigi Werstine, Katelyn King, Taylor Lawhon, and Sarah Ruen powered Assumption by finishing among the top 10. Meanwhile, the boys' junior varsity team polished off the winning streak by placing first in its 2K team competition. Johnny Patelli, Seth Paulus, Henry Morreale, and Shane Taylor all finished in the top 10 individually.

The challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the practice start date until early November and reduced the number of meets from five to three. The meets took place at Bishop Snyder, the St John's Fair Grounds, and Bishop Kenny.

Cross-country is the single largest sports program within the Diocese of St. Augustine. Catholic schools from Duval, St. Johns, Clay County, and Flagler counties participated. In addition to the varsity and junior varsity teams, Assumption offers the sport to students in grade levels K-4 who wish to learn proper running form and strength training while having fun!



The Assumption Cross Country team



Lucrezia Gowdy



Assumption Girls' Varsity Team: Quinn Camerlengo, Olivia Jakab, Delana Joseph, Alexandra Lumpkin, Stephanie Grden; Lecrezia Gowdy



Graziana Gowdy with Eloise Libra and Evelyn Slattery



Students spell out Joy on the sidewalk.

Joy cometh to Episcopal School

The concept of joy was the focus of a campus-wide Health, Safety, and Well-Being (HSW) event at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville during the second week of January. The HSW theme for the year is: *Respect the Dignity of Every Human Being*. The first event, which was held in the fall, focused on gratitude. For the theme of joy, a campus-wide question and answer competition was held as well as an advisory discussion, and students viewed some created short films that explored how members of the advisory seek and find joy. A "Bag of Joy," filled with joke cards, sidewalk chalk, bubbles, and other treats, was given to each advisory for students to enjoy.

"Joy was an important theme for our event, especially since our last event focused on gratitude. Students explored what brings them joy, how they can cultivate joy for themselves, and how to share it with others," said Amy Burrows Perkins, director of Student Services. "At a time when so much feels out of control, it is important for us to pause and recognize the opportunity we have to impact how we feel. Welcoming joy felt celebratory, and we have pictures, videos, sidewalk chalk messages and bubbles all over campus as evidence of all the joy expressed today."

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Bishop Kenny senior wins national inaugural poetry contest

By **Marcia Hodgson**
Resident Community News

Twenty-two-year-old Amanda Gorman, the first person to be named National Youth Poet Laureate, may have wowed the crowd with the poem she recited during the Inauguration for Joe Biden Jan. 20, but she is not the only young poet to receive national acclamation. Bishop Kenny Senior Hallie Knight, 17, of San Marco also received national recognition when she won a contest organized by the Academy of American Poets for an inauguration poem that she wrote for a class at Bishop Kenny High School.

Knight's poem, "To Rebuild," included some well-formed ideas about the present state of the country and what she would like to see changed. As the winner, she received a \$1,000 cash prize and a chance to have her poem featured on Poets.org and in American Poets Magazine.

Knight said she was inspired by W.H. Auden's poem, "As I Walked Out One Evening," and Adrienne Rich's literary work, "Storm Warnings." In crafting her award-winning piece, she likened the United States to a house that has been severely but not hopelessly damaged.

"I wanted to acknowledge the greatness of the potential for our country at this present moment, and the opportunity we have as citizens to choose what it becomes out of all this chaos," she said.

Guidelines for the contest required that the student be under age 17 and submit work that reflects "on the country's challenges, strengths, and hope for its future." A former inaugural poet, Richard Blanco, who read a poem at the 2013 inauguration of President Barack Obama, served as the judge of the contest. In an article written



Hallie Knight

by the Associated Press, Blanco said Knight's imagery impressed him, and he likened it to Abraham Lincoln's famous warning that a "house divided against itself cannot stand."

Knight was one of three poets recognized in the contest. Runner up was 17-year-old Mina King of Shreveport, Louisiana, for her poem, "In Pursuit of Dawn." Third place went to Gabrielle Marshall of Richmond, Virginia for her poem, "The Power of Hope."

A superior student, Knight was also recognized as the Bishop Kenny High School Student of the Month for January. She was selected for academics highlighting initiative and commitment. She has a rigorous schedule with six AP-level classes and is involved in several extra-curricular activities as well as Campus Ministry. She is a board member for the Interact Club, and a member of the History Club at school. She is also an Extraordinary Minister of the Holy Eucharist and a member

To Rebuild

The house was built,
Brick by brick, pane by pane,
Initially withstanding winds,
The force of a hurricane.

But over time, the faults are found
As storm after storm
Assails, the craftsmanship outdated,
In need of reform.

The windows break, one by one,
Under the weight of wrongs, the structure strains,
Until one day fire catches,
And only the foundation of good intentions remains.

While easiest would be to walk,
To abandon, moving on to rebuild,
The value is seen by those who have called it
Home, desires to be fulfilled.

Remembering the mistakes,
Maintaining the hope of freedom,
Hand in hand, we work,
Entering a new season.

The work is not complete until
The walls protect all who live there,
No exceptions. Abandonment of all
Unnecessary despair.

A job led by all, not by one,
We work long days turn long nights.
The creation of our hands
Proving more than surface level acknowledgment of rights.

The past is not buried
But underlies
What we have transformed
Before our eyes.

"I wanted to acknowledge the greatness of the potential for our country at this present moment, and the opportunity we have as citizens to choose what it becomes out of all this chaos."

— Hallie Knight

of the National Honor Society, the Science Honor Society, and the Math Honor Society. Last fall, she was named a National Merit Semifinalist having scored in the top 1% in the country on the PSAT. Of the 70,000 high school juniors who took the test from throughout the state of Florida, only 879 in the state were designated as semifinalists due to their high score on the test. The finalists will be confirmed in February 2021.

She has also been a part of Bishop Kenny's cross-country team since her freshman year.

Although she has not settled on what college she will attend next year, Knight hopes to major in chemical engineering and has expressed an interest in attending Georgia Tech.

"Bishop Kenny is a place where I have made friends that will last a lifetime," Knight said. "It allowed me to combine academic courses and AP art along with encouraging my love for community outreach. They all bring me a sense of joy that I want to continue with throughout my life."



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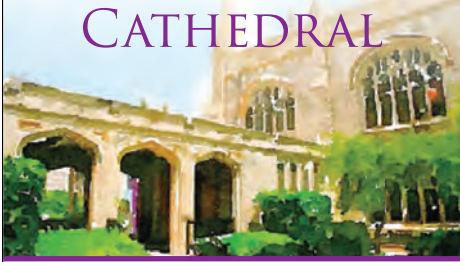
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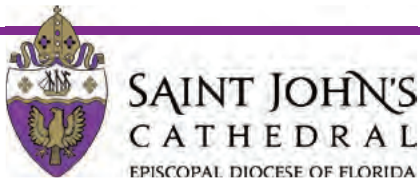
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Episcopal art students take home scholastic art awards

Fine Art students from the Episcopal School of Jacksonville earned more than 75 awards including 17 gold keys during the 2021 Northeast Florida Scholastic Art Awards Jan. 9. During the adjudication, judges from around Northeast Florida reviewed more than 2,900 entries ranging from 16 visual art categories. Included among the honors awarded to Episcopal students were 17 Gold Keys, 20 Silver Keys, and 39 Honor recognitions.

"These awards are a remarkable achievement for our Episcopal artists. They have been recognized as most outstanding regionally," said Becca Hoadley, an art instructor at the school. "Gold Level student art will be on display in the Jacksonville Main Library and moving on digitally to a national level jurisdiction in New York. National winners will be announced March 17."

The regional Gold Key artwork will be on display at the Jacksonville Main Library Saturday, Feb. 13 through Saturday, March 13. The library is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Gold Key winners:

Alaina Case – Photography; William Chase – Photography; Miranda Doro – Painting; Emily Drake – Oil Pastel; Chloe Simpson – Graphite Drawing; Kaitlyn Sweder (2) – Ink and Graphite; Lucy Williams – Charcoal; Alston Rachels – Oil Painting; Ellie Reed – Charcoal; Audrey Gunnlaugsson – Charcoal; Chester Holland – Block Printing; Katherine Kavanaugh (4) Oil Painting; Madison Linn (4) – Acrylic Painting; Julia D'Arienzo – Photography; Paul Lampley-Sims – Photography; Isabella Romanello – Photography; Elizabeth Roy – Ceramics and Glass.

Silver Key winners:

William Chase – Photography; Sophia Chokshi – Photography; Joseph Cuchiara – Graphite; Elizabeth Curran – Photography; Cecilia Fannin – Charcoal; Mackenzie Flakus – Ceramics; Declan Hammerling – Graphite; Izzy Joy – Photography; Kate Kavanaugh – Charcoal; Mimmi Kurlas – Ceramics; Emily Leeper – Oil Pastel; Annie Miller – Photography; Jake Murphy – Ceramics; Tommaso Pozzoni – Acrylic Painting; Alston Rachels – Acrylic Painting; Ellie Reed – Charcoal; Kaitlyn Sweder – Drawing; Mary Woodward – Oil Pastel; Lyla Wright -Graphite; Emily Ziomek – Photography.



Audrey Gunnlaugsson, Chloe Simpson, Ellie Reed and Chester Holland

Honorable mention:

Kate Adams – Drawing; Annie Afflic – Photography; Lauren Avery – Photography; Jace Bankston – Drawing; Sally Barksdale (2) Drawing; Abby Beaver (2) Photography; Audrey Franken – Printmaking; William Chase (2) – Photography; Gabriela Diaz-Vendrell – Ceramics; Miranda Doro (2) – Oil Painting; Julia Fannin – Charcoal; Makenzie Flakus (2) Ceramics; Sydney Freed – Photography; Parklyn Gardner – Photography; Declan Hammerling (2) Graphite; Nadya Hicks – Oil Pastel; Abi House – Graphite; Harrison Hutto (3) Ceramics; Mimi Kurlas – Ceramics; Madison Linn – Acrylic and Colored Pencil; Myles Long – Ceramics; Jon Maggiore – Graphite; Alston Rachels – Acrylic Painting; Lucy Rachels – Acrylic Painting; Harper Mcevoy – Photography; James Mickler – Block Print; Maddie Morris – Photography; Annie Miller – Photography; Jake Murphy (7) Ceramics; Ellie Reed – Charcoal; Kate Reinhardt – Photography; Elizabeth Roy – Ceramics and Glass; Emily Spinning – Photography; Daniela Suarez – Ceramics; Paul Vitulli – Ceramics; Joelle Wadei – Acrylic Painting; Kathy Waryold (2) Photography; Taylor Wells – Ceramics; Emily Ziomek (2) Photography.

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DA graduate featured in prestigious 2020 College Board art exhibit

Larry Fullwood, Jr., a 2020 graduate of Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA), was one of 51 students selected to have artwork featured in the 2020 College Board AP Art and Design Digital Exhibit, which can be viewed online. It is the first time a student or graduate from Douglas Anderson has been included in the exhibit, said DA Principal Melanie Hammer.

Fullwood was a visual arts major at DA with an emphasis in drawing/painting and photography. He earned a full-ride scholarship to Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he is majoring in painting and drawing with a minor in entrepreneurial studies.

“DA pushed me to take my art to the next level, lighting a fire under me to continue on that path into college,” Fullwood said.

The College Board exhibit features 51 international high school artists who submitted their artwork to the 2020 AP Art and Design exam. During the AP Art and Design Exam adjudication, over 400 readers graded student portfolios submitted for review in 3-D design, 2-D design, and drawing. Pulling from the top scores, the 51 students selected for the AP Art and Design Digital Exhibit represent high-quality



Larry Fullwood Jr.

examples of the Sustained Investigation and Selected Works sections of the portfolio. The digital exhibit is designed not only to showcase the rigor and excellence of the AP Art and Design portfolio but also as an exemplar teaching tool shared with AP Art and Design students around the world. In this capacity, high-achieving students' artwork and statements and their teacher statements help teach best practices in visual art production.

“Larry was a good student,” recalled Hillary Hogue, his drawing/painting teacher at DA. “What really sets him apart is his dedication to his practice as an artist. H knows that having talent is only part of his success. Working hard and investigating his ideas is how he creates a new level of mastery.”

Hammer agreed. “Larry is a dedicated artist and student. He puts forth tremendous effort and time into his work. He is truly deserving of this honor, and we are all very proud of him.”

The AP Art and Design program was founded in 1972, and as of 1978, 4,500 students had completed portfolios for submission to the program. Today, over 60,000 students participate annually. Students that receive a score of three or higher (on a scale of one to five) are eligible to receive college credit.

RPDS students bring holiday cheer to 20 families

Riverside Presbyterian Day School held its annual Caring Tree Chapel in early December and honored many gifts collected for Lutheran Social Services. More than 300 presents were donated and organized by the school's sixth-grade students. The school's generosity provided gifts to more than 20 Jacksonville families in need.



Blaire Massey addresses the audience during the Caring Tree Chapel at Riverside Presbyterian Day School in December

Five from Troop 2 earn Eagle Scout rank

Five high school seniors achieved the rank of Eagle Scout during a special ceremony held at St. Johns Presbyterian Church Jan. 17.

Ford Milne, Chapman Davis, Andrew Gardner, Hayes Duggan, and Joseph Lundahl, all members of Boy Scout Troop 2 in Ortega, achieved the coveted distinction. Milne is a student at The Bolles School, while Davis, Gardner, Duggan and Lundahl are all classmates at Stanton College Preparatory School. Reflecting back on their scouting experience, the newly minted Eagles said they enjoyed white-water rafting in North Carolina, mountainous treks while staying at Philmot Scout Ranch in New Mexico, as well as weekend campouts, and for Lundahl, a trip to Glacier National Park in Montana.

Milne joined Troop 2 in fifth grade because of his love of nature and all things outdoors. After hearing that the residents of St. Catherine's Laboure Manor craved more access to outdoor activities, as his Eagle Scout project, Milne constructed moveable flower planters at wheelchair height so the residents could enjoy gardening.

Gardner joined Boy Scouts at age 11. For his Eagle project, he combined two of his favorite activities, outdoor games and church by constructing an Octoball court at Southside United Methodist Church. He worked to get the wood material donated for the project so that he and his fellow scouts could construct the eight-sided structure onsite.

When he was 8 years old Davis entered Pack 2 as a Cub Scout eventually crossing over into Troop 2. His Eagle project



Andrew Gardner, Chapman Davis, Ford Milne, Joseph Lundahl, Hayes Duggan

involved reconstructing a flagstone pathway around a pollinator garden on the S-Line Urban Trail for Groundwork Jacksonville. Davis organized, scheduled, and led a group of his peers to complete the project.

With help from his fellow scouts, Duggan's Eagle project consisted of designing and building a trailhead amenity for the mountain bike trail at Tillie Fowler Regional Park. The amenity consists of a wood frame gravel base supporting picnic tables, a suspension bike rack, and an information kiosk. Duggan said he has enjoyed biking there for many years and was happy to have the chance to improve the park for the enjoyment of all.

Like his friends, Lundahl said he also enjoyed the outdoor experiences and friendships he has developed during his time at Troop 2. For his Eagle Project, he designed, funded, and led a team of his peers to landscape gardens at the City Rescue Mission Chapel.

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Episcopal science projects continue despite COVID-19

Students working on research projects in the Episcopal Honors Science Seminar are continuing their work on research projects this semester, despite the COVID pandemic that is causing complications with university research opportunities.

“Students in Honors Science Seminar have embraced many interesting, complex, and timely projects this year,” said Marion Zeiner, director of Scientific Research. “Most students are conducting their investigations at home, in the field and at Episcopal School of Jacksonville.”

The Coronavirus did not stop some Episcopal students from working in and with laboratories, including the University of North Florida Physics Department, the University of North Florida Chemistry Department, Central Michigan University, and Seal Shield in Orlando.

This year the honor science students’ project topics were very diverse. They



Episcopal sophomore Tom Commander works with Jordan Harrow, a senior

included studying melanoma treatments, UV radiation on eye development, nanoparticle treatment on cell stem growth, robotic manipulation of objects, engineering neuromuscular electrical stimulation, pesticide resistance, a novel approach to water analysis, links between online learning and student progress combinatorial effects of lead nitrate and dibutyl phthalate, concrete for colonization of Mars, the eradication of mites on beehives, and ElectroClave UV-C disinfection.

Central Riverside’s gifted globetrotters travel virtually

Students in the Gifted Program at Central Riverside Elementary School have been celebrating global diversity by traveling virtually around the world. Each stop included a study of the geography, art, architecture, and people of each country. Some of the countries that the students visited were Italy, India, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and Thailand. Students also had the opportunity to share and sample cuisine from these countries. Panettone, Naan, shortbread, empanadas, and Pocky were among the most popular items.



William Dobbins, Cort Csar, Joey Turner, Julian Bowie, Ryan Carpenter, Myles Long, Monica Hamilton, and Arianna Vestel

DA alumni mentor students in new college and career class

COVID-19 has brought about many challenges in education, and as many students plan to opt for virtual learning this year, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts is offering a new course for Duval Homeroom students.

The course, College and Career, is designed to help students explore and plan for post-secondary educational career opportunities by assisting them in creating a personal portfolio.

To assist with the new initiative, DA has partnered with Alumni for Leadership and Mentoring, Inc. (PALM). Working with PALM, Douglas Anderson has been able to connect the school’s alumni with current DA students in a mentoring partnership in the arts. Several of the alumni who have participated in the course’s Career Talk Guest series are working artists across the country.

“I love that we are able to use a class to precisely focus on what we would want to pursue when leaving senior year,” said Nedra-Ann Murray, a junior. “I call this class, ‘The game-plan class.’”

Included among the alumni panelists are Nick Sacks and Alexis Atwill.



Nick Sacks performs on Broadway in Dear Evan Hanson

A 2007 graduate of DA, Sacks earned a BFA in music theater/acting from Carnegie Mellon. He has had several roles in film/television and theater, most recently on Broadway as Connor/Jansen in Dear Evan Hanson.

Atwill, a 2001 DA performance theater graduate, works as a puppeteer for Manual Cinema and as a sales and communication associate for a local business in Chicago. She has worked on multiple projects with Manual Cinema, but most often travels with Ada/Ava and Hansel & Gretel.

“I learned that opportunities are endless, and they can often come right at your feet,” said Lio Vinson, a sophomore. “Something as simple as seeing your friend do a puppet show can influence your career and allow you to follow a dream of something you never expected. There are many ways to go about life and careers but being open to your opportunities allows you to discover more than you originally imagined.”



Alexis Atwill in DA's new virtual College and Career class

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Caden Cohen

Central Riverside student wins MLK essay contest

For the fourth consecutive year, the winner of the Martin Luther King Tomorrow's Leader Essay contest has hailed from Central Riverside Elementary and the language arts classroom of Bernadette Harris.

Caden Cohen, a fifth grader, was selected from among hundreds of Duval County public and private school students, as the winner of the literary contest. Cohen received a visit from Mayor Lenny Curry in his classroom Jan. 5 and recited his essay during the 34th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Empowerment Virtual Breakfast Jan. 15. The celebration was live streamed over Facebook and YouTube.

The essays were scored blindly with a different panel of judges selecting the winners, said Paola Lorenzo, a secretary in Curry's office.

"Caden blew the panel away with his passionate message about the importance of choosing love over hate," said Harris, his teacher.

Four Crusaders receive college athletic scholarships

Four Bishop Kenny student athletes – Emma Fraidenburg, Sophia Hayag, Jasmyne Roberts, and Clay Tucker – signed college athletic commitments Nov. 11.

Fraidenburg signed to play volleyball for the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. She will play middle hitter, the same position she played on the 2020 State 4A Championship team at Bishop Kenny. "Being a middle blocker has always been my first choice for a position because I am tall and I have a strong willingness to learn and adapt my level of play to become an asset to the team," she said. She is a member of the German Club, and the German and Mu Alpha Theta honor societies. Her goal is to become a pediatric nurse because she is strong in math and science and loves children.

Hayag will play soccer for Wofford College. "I absolutely love soccer because there aren't set plays," said Hayag, who plays midfield and is team captain. "The game is constantly changing, and you literally have to think on your feet." Hayag is a member of the Interact, Medical, and Spanish Clubs. She is also a member of the Spanish and Tri M honor societies.

Roberts, a junior, signed to play basketball for the University of Miami. Roberts transferred to BK as a sophomore and has been the starting guard since she started playing for the Crusaders. "I love playing guard because I can shoot or make a move and attack the basket to score," she said. Roberts, started the year with 1,642 career points and would like to reach 2,000 before the end of the season. She has 761 rebounds and has a goal of reaching 1,000 this season. She is a Kairos retreat leader, a



Emma Fraidenburg, Sophia Hayag, Jasmyne Roberts, and Clay Tucker

member of the Diversity Task Force, and co-founder of the Student Diversity Union. Her plans to major in communications and become a network sports broadcaster.

Tucker signed to play golf at Florida Southern University. He led the Bishop Kenny golf team to a fourth-place state finish, and he placed third individually out of 96 competitors. Tucker is a member of the National Honor Society, and the German and Mu Alpha Theta honor societies. "Golf and life are very similar," he said. "The goal is to minimize your mistakes and turn them into opportunities."

Episcopal seniors head to college

Despite challenges created by COVID-19, seniors at the Episcopal School of Jacksonville have received early action or early decision acceptance from more than 50 colleges and universities. The schools include Yale, Duke, Dartmouth, Vanderbilt, Wake Forest, Boston College, the University of Richmond, Barnard, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"Even though seniors have not always been able to visit the campuses of the schools they are applying to this year, we are making sure they participate in virtual tours, that the school provides expertise in their subject matter of interest, and that we are in touch virtually with admissions offices on their behalf," said Ryan

Riggs, director of College Counseling at Episcopal. "Most important for college success is finding the right fit for students, and we know our program helps accomplish that due to the number of students who are still attending their school of choice three or four years later."

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Episcopal enhances athletics program for lower school students



Coach Kasee Eppley works with lower school students on the St. Mark's campus.

The athletics department at The Episcopal School of Jacksonville is creating additional programming on its Beaches and St. Mark's Campuses this semester with the help of coaches from the school's Munnerlyn Campus. The athletics faculty provided skills and drills sessions for its lower schools over eight weeks and included basketball, flag football, volleyball, tennis, and soccer.

Coach Carlos Campos, the Munnerlyn Campus's middle school girls' soccer coach, held soccer clinics at both campuses. Flag football, volleyball, softball, and lacrosse were also offered by multiple Munnerlyn Campus coaches at the lower schools.

In addition, Coach Kayla Durden, the varsity girls' program director, ran basketball at Beaches, and Coach Sean Braswell ran

basketball at St. Marks. Before Christmas break, Glenn Carter, boys' lacrosse program director, held lacrosse lessons at Beaches, and Kasse Eppley, assistant director of athletics – middle school, ran softball instruction at St. Marks. This programming ensures Episcopal's youngest Eagles will learn teamwork and sport-specific skills.

Record number of three-pointers powers Episcopal victory



Episcopal's Beza Miller takes aim the basket

It was a basketball game no Eagle will ever forget.

The Episcopal School of Jacksonville's boys' basketball team carved its name in the record books when it set a Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) record by sinking 24 three-point baskets on its way to an 81-55 victory over New Smyrna Beach High School. The game took place over the school's winter break.

Episcopal's Kent Jackson, a freshman, sank 12 of the 24 buckets, converting on 12 of 16 attempts from three-point territory. He finished with a total of 38 points.

Tallying up 24 three-point shots in a single game hands the Eagles a Top 15 national record, according to the National Federation of High Schools.

After the New Smyrna Beach victory, Episcopal earned its 10th win of the season on Jan. 5 with a victory over Englewood.

Bishop Snyder freshman finishes in top 25 in girls' state X-C race



Lauren Newkirk, Kailynn Posey, Lexis Lopez, Ellie Cardozo, Lia Lynott, Kaitlyn Frost, Emily Wheldon, Rebecca Randall.

Emily Wheldon of Ortega Forest helped power the Bishop Snyder girls' cross-country team to a 12th place finish in regional competition this year.

In the regional cross-country meet, Wheldon placed 12th to win an individual spot in the state 1A championship meet in Tallahassee in November. Ranked 51st in Division 1A going into the state competition, Wheldon ran her best race ever to finish 24th in the crowded field with a personal best time of 20:34 over the 5-kilometer course.

Due to a late start to the season thanks to COVID-19, the Lady Cardinals participated in six races and finished third in the district competition. Advancing to the regional meet, Bishop Snyder placed eighth. In a year not hampered by the pandemic, their performance would have sealed them a spot as a team in the state competition, but due to a limited number of runners, only the top four-seeded teams were able to make the trip to Tallahassee. Also running on the Lady Cardinals team was Ellie Cardozo, who lives in Ortega Forest.

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Art can save us

By Marcia Hodgson
Resident Community News

Fashionistas often draw inspiration from world events, and this year has been no different. With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, 2020's newest fashion statement, the face mask, was born.

As COVID-19 spread across the nation, medical experts strongly espoused the wearing of facial coverings as the best way to protect oneself against infection while limiting the transmission of the virus within the community. A perfect union of function and fashion, donning a face mask is now as much a part of daily life as wearing a coat or sporting a pair of sunglasses. And although utilitarian KN-95 and blue paper surgical masks may dominate many faces within Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods, there is nothing that says masks need to be boring. Masks can be artistic statements. In fact, faces swathed in colorful, unique materials can showcase identity.

To celebrate the "new normal" fashion accessory, the *Resident Community News* held a "Masks for Aid" contest at the end of last year. The results are showcased in

the sixth annual edition of *Circles - Social Datebook & Charity Register* now available on newsstands. Readers from the community had been requested to create their own artistic facial coverings, and the response was overwhelming. Several intriguing face wrappings were made by the students of art instructor Jessica Grotberg of Orange Park, including "Fish" by winner Stephanie Keith, and "Raven" by runner-up Riley Cox. Receiving third place was a handsomely hand-embroidered mask by Kelly Sullivan, a student of Patricia Beach, an art teacher at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies. The contest offered cash prizes to the top three winners.

"My inspiration to do this project was my love for fish and all the colors of their scales," said Keith, 18. "I always try to challenge myself in each piece I do. I appreciate the help and support of my art teacher, Ms. Jessica, and my mom," she said.

Cox also found inspiration from her mother as she worked to bring "Raven" to fruition. "What inspired me to do this mask is my mom as well as my friends at the art studio," she said. "As far as I know, black birds mean a new beginning and so the mask represents a new beginning for everyone."

Meanwhile, Sullivan's great grandmother was her muse. "Growing up, I have always



"Fish" by winner Stephanie Keith of Orange Park Art Classes



"Raven" by runner-up Riley Cox of Orange Park Art Classes



Third-place finisher Kelly Sullivan of Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies submitted an embroidered creation inspired by her great grandmother

seen my great grandmother's embroidered pieces around her house," she said. "She always made the most beautiful designs, and I decided that I wanted to try embroidery for myself. In the last few years, she has not been able to embroider so I wanted to honor her passion for the art. I decided to embroider flowers on the mask because I wanted to create an elegant design that could be functional for someone to wear in the future."

Other Wolfson High School students that sent in hand-created masks were Morgan Renfro, Megan Woolbright, Robert Grant, and Chelsea Dejesus.

Also competing in the contest were Tyler Brown of Orange Park High School, Olivia Raker of Assumption Catholic School, Livia

Pinto of West Riverside Elementary School, Sophia Williams of Ortega, Tiana Fordham of Orange Park Art Classes, Sara Smith of Fleming Island High School, and Ronald Episcopal of Riverside.

One prediction is that artistic masks will be more sought after in the community as residents continue to adapt to the new reality. Already many fashion designers are transforming leftover fabric into face coverings that coordinate with apparel. Designers such as Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Fendi, and Gucci have taken to decorating face masks with their logos or designing them to go with their runway ensembles.

One thing is for certain, masks save lives and will be around for a while. We might as well have a little fun as we wear them.



Megan Woolbright, Robert Grant, Morgan Renfro and Chelsea Dejesus



Kelly Sullivan



Olivia Raker



Livia Pinto



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FOR SALE



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2126 HERSCHEL STREET - \$1,400 (Residential)
2 BR / 2 BA / 1,285 sqft. / \$1,400 security deposit

RIVERSIDE 2nd FLOOR APARTMENT FOR RENT. From 5 Points, Park St West, south on Goodwin, left on Herschel to sign - 2 BR, 2 BA, living room, dining room, large kitchen (R/R/DW), hardwood floors, original wood work, washer dryer, and offstreet parking, no smoking, no pets, \$1400 security deposit, 1 year lease [ATK js]. Available 2/1.



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