Resident

COMMUNITY NEWS

RIVERSIDE | AVONDALE | ORTEGA | MURRAY HILL

Happy Mother's Day

FIERCELY LOCAL NEWS ... FIERCELY LOYAL READERS | RESIDENTNEWS.NET | MAY 2021, VOL. 14, ISSUE 05

CHUCK & MICHELLE DIVITA

COUNTRY MUSIC GROUP HELPS RAISE FUNDS

Headlined by Lady A, the multi-Platinum, Grammy Award-winning country music group, the First Coast American Heart Association's 2021 Heart Ball raised over $1.6 million.

READ MORE ON PAGE 31

STRIDES FOR PRIDE IS ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

The 10th Annual Strides for Pride 5K took place on April 24, 2021 in support of LGBTQ youth at JASMYN.

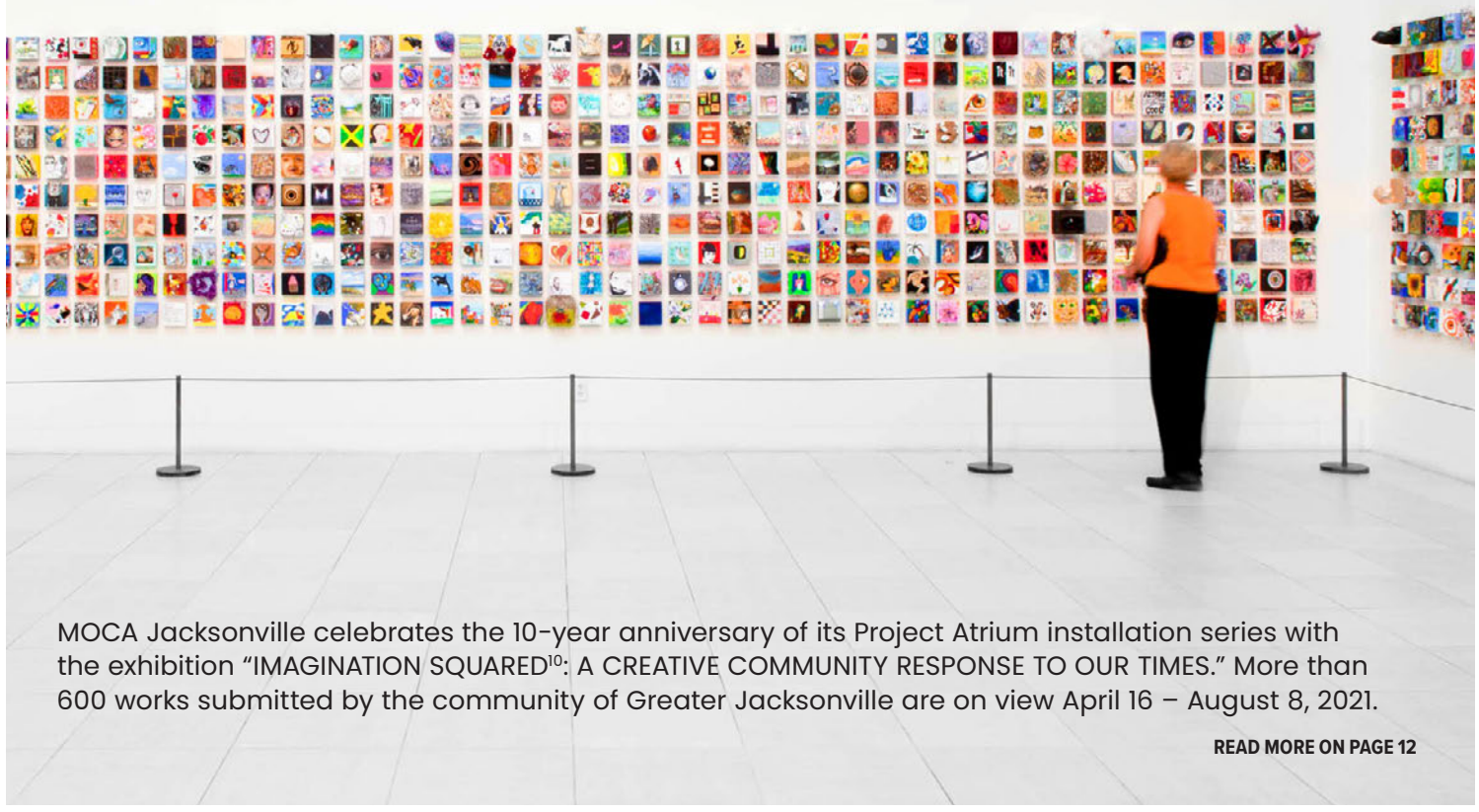
READ MORE ON PAGE 13

REACHING FOR THE STARS

At only 17 years old, Taylor Richardson has already impacted the local community, the country, the world. She aspires to someday impact space.

READ MORE ON PAGE 36

IMAGINATION SQUARED[10]



MOCA Jacksonville celebrates the 10-year anniversary of its Project Atrium installation series with the exhibition "IMAGINATION SQUARED[10]: A CREATIVE COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO OUR TIMES." More than 600 works submitted by the community of Greater Jacksonville are on view April 16 – August 8, 2021.

READ MORE ON PAGE 12

PROPOSAL FOR SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES DRAWS INTEREST, IRE OF NEIGHBORS

SIZE, SCALE AND CONCEPT ALL IN QUESTION FOR NEW PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)

BY JENNIFER EDWARDS

Is a high-end, luxury senior community needed in the Ortega area? The answer is yes or no, depending on who you ask.

READ MORE ON PAGE 10

IFF DISPUTES FINDINGS, ACCUSATIONS OF AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION VIOLATIONS — PAGE 8

POST STREET RENOVATION MEETS THE CHALLENGE — PAGE 20

JACKSONVILLE HAS A NEW LOCAL LEAGUE OF STONEWALL SPORTS — PAGE 29

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IN HOMES BY MAY 5TH, 2021

MOTHER'S DAY

She may have dreamed about this special day,
Or life may have surprised her with it anyway.
Sometimes the days are one big blur,
Sometimes the days are long, for sure.
She is making lists so stuff gets done,
She is also the planner of the stuff that's fun.
There are cheeks to kiss and there are tears to dry,
There are books to read and there's advice to try.
Many meals to make and many things to clean,
Many things to safeguard from things seen and unseen.
At the end of each day, she might be worn out,
But she knows deep inside what motherhood is about.
It's giving love with no strings,
It's giving all without thanks,
It's having barely enough
for ourselves in the tanks.
It can push us to limits
It's an endless work shift.
But at the end of each day,
It's still the best gift.
Happy Mother's Day!

By: c.c. Snowden

Jacksonville's inaugural emancipation celebration coming

STATE RECOGNIZES MAY 20 AS OFFICIAL DATE IN FLORIDA

Councilwoman Ju'Coby Pittman, James Weldon Johnson Park and the City of Jacksonville are excited to announce the first annual Jacksonville Emancipation Celebration. The festival will take place on Thursday, May 20, 2021 in an effort to educate the community about the historical significance of Florida's observed Emancipation Day.

"Emancipation was proclaimed in Florida on May 20, 1865 and the City of Jacksonville recognizes the significance that has made for our community," said Mayor Lenny Curry. "We're excited and humbled to support James Weldon Johnson Park as we celebrate this day together with a fun festival for the community."

Jacksonville's Emancipation Celebration will feature local African American food trucks and vendors, live performances from Jacksonville's best musicians, dancers and poets, fun activities for the kids, a Community Art Project and a historical display. Local historical organizations will also lend their expertise to weave educational stories throughout the performances and activities. The festival will begin at 11 a.m. and close out at 8 p.m. at James Weldon Johnson Park.

"As a community, we are recognizing the past wrongs and injustices with a celebration of unity with a profound purpose. As we continue to celebrate as a community, we still have work to do together," said Councilwoman Ju'Coby Pittman.

Emancipation was proclaimed in Tallahassee, Fla. on May 20, 1865, 11 days after the end of the Civil War, and two years after the Proclamation was first issued by President Abraham Lincoln to free those enslaved in Southern states. On May 10, Union General Edward M. McCook arrived in Tallahassee to receive the surrender of Florida's Confederate troops. On May 20, McCook formally announced President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, effectively ending slavery in the state. While many people celebrate Juneteenth, Florida celebrates May 20 as its Emancipation Day.

Lee High School renaming up for a final vote

BALLOTS TO BE CAST AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

As current students, local alumni and taxpayers wrangle with the latest updates to official High School names in Duval County, voting is now open for Robert E. Lee High School in the local area. Voters will now determine school names for figures that were prominent in Southern history, most at issue are the names affiliated with the Confederacy.

According to media sources with the Duval County Public Schools, community balloting for the final schools in renaming process began April 26. Eligible stakeholders of Andrew Jackson, Jean Ribault, and Robert E. Lee High Schools, as well as Jean Ribault Middle School, had begun casting their ballots as of press time. The voting period runs through Friday, May 7; hours are 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. Lee High School voting hours are 10:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Voting takes place at the respective schools and there are signs and/or tables set up designating where voters should report. The Supervisor of Election's Office was engaged to assist with the facilitation of the voting process among the alumni, community, faculty, PTA/PTSA members, and students, to ensure accurate and fair voting processes are implemented.

The Duval County Public School Board has created a name change tracker, located on its website. There is also information provided about voting procedures if one visits https://dcps.duvalschools.org/Page/29982.

The Resident will report on the outcome of the voting once the results are announced by the proper authorities.

JACKSONVILLE RANKED AMONG THE TOP US CITIES FOR WALKABILITY AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

A recent study conducted by CommercialCafe ranked Jacksonville, Florida #12 of the top 15 of 53 cities across the nation for its walkability and outdoor activity potential.

According to the study, Jacksonville ranked #1 in the top 5, earning 20 of 20 points, for offering 73 park acres per 1,000 residents, making the state's most populous city the one to have the country's largest park system.

Jacksonville stood out, too, for its park-to-city area ratio, dedicating 14.5% of its city area to park land.

"Parks and walkability have always been extremely important for the physical and mental wellbeing of our cities' residents, but especially in the past year, when we didn't get many other forms of recreation," said Alexandra Ursu, Marketing Communications Specialist for CommercialCafe.

That's why, amidst the nationwide programs and events that celebrated National Park Week 2021 in late April, CommercialCafe conducted a study of US cities with a population of 300,000 or greater, those that had data available for all analyzed metrics used in the study.

CommercialCafe is a nationwide commercial real estate internet listing service that provides research and analysis of the market. The organization is part of Yardi, a California-based software vendor for real estate professionals and property managers.

Data for the study came from the U.S. Census Bureau and The Trust for Public Land. Full study results and methodology can be found at https://www.commercialcafe.com

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AVONDALE

1471 Belvedere Avenue
4 bedrooms, 3 baths • 2,491 sf • **$649,000**

SOLD

3952 Baltic Street
2 bedrooms, 1 bath • 1,260 sf

JOHN GORRIE

2525 College Street #1104
2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths • 1,332 sf • **$332,000**

LESLIE RIOS WILKINS
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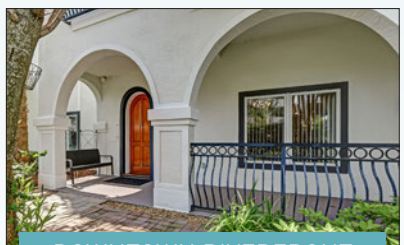
TED MILLER
(904) 463-1731

VILANO BEACH

110 Ocean Hollow Lane #308
2 bedrooms, 2 baths • 964 sf • **$350,000**



DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT

406 E Bay Street
2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths • 2,032 sf • **$550,000**

UNDER CONTRACT

3043 St Johns Avenue
4 bedrooms, 3 baths • 4,359 sf • **$1,075,000**

ORTEGA TERRACE

5122 Arapahoe Avenue
4 bedrooms, 3 baths • 2,999 sf • **$550,000**

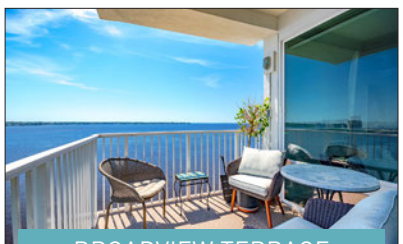
NATHAN MILLER
(904) 465-3001

SOUTHPOINTE CONDO

5303 Ortega Boulevard #202
3 bedrooms, 2 baths • 1,960 sf • **$319,000**

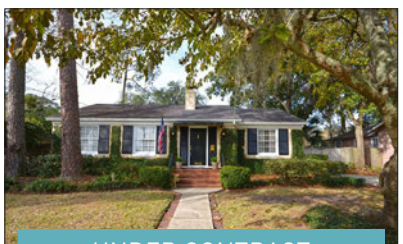
ORTEGA RIVER

5012 Eagle Nature Trail
.25 acre waterfront lot • **$269,000**



BROADVIEW TERRACE

1650 Lancaster Terrace #902
3 bedrooms, 2 baths • 1,782 sf • **$535,000**



UNDER CONTRACT

5012 Ortega Boulevard
3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths • 2,186 sf • **$299,000**

WALTER WARE
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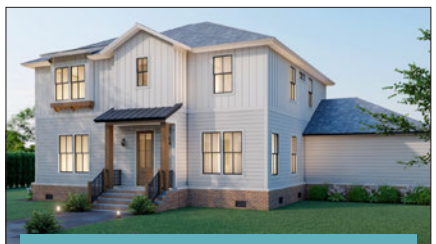
UNDER CONTRACT

1386 Talbot Avenue
2 bed/2 bath + guest house • 1,066 sf • **$330,000**

SOLD

4646 Martingale Road
4 bedrooms, 1 bath • 1,674 sf



NEW CONSTRUCTION

4371 Demedici Avenue
4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths • 2,990 sf • **$699,000**

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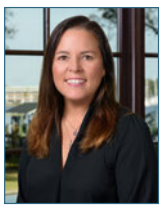

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Downtown's Laura Street Trio closer to being revived

BY JENNIFER EDWARDS
Resident Community News

Modern view of the Laura Street Trio, from the Wayne W Wood Collection, 2006.

Rendering of proposed renovation to the Laura Street Trio, presented to the Downtown Investment Board.

A cluster of Downtown's most historic and visible buildings is a couple steps closer to a new life, one burgeoning with activity.

Preservationists have described the Laura Street Trio as, collectively, the most endangered historical buildings in Jacksonville. The trio includes the Florida National Bank Building, the Bisbee Building and the Florida Life Building, built at the turn of the last century. The buildings sit at the corner of Laura and Forsyth streets and each was built just a handful of years after the Great Fire of 1901 razed many of Jacksonville's buildings to the ground.

City leadership has been eager to see the buildings revitalized and put to good use attracting residents and a workforce downtown, with all the necessary entertainment and commercial services such a workforce needs.

City Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) CEO Lori Boyer said in mid-April that legislation was being drafted for approval by City Council that would grant Southeast Group, a local developer, a multi-million-dollar incentive package for adaptive restoration of the historic and highly visible landmark. In March, the DIA Board unanimously approved offering Southeast a $24.7 million package for what is estimated to be a $70.4 million restoration project. The package includes an interest-only $5.3 million loan that would become due in a decade, and $19.4 million in forgivable loans.

Boyer said she hoped to see the legislation drafted in May and ready to take to the council; the Trio is one of the projects that City leaders have most wanted to see completed.

"They're centrally located," Boyer said of the buildings. "I'm sitting here in my office in City Hall and I can see from my open windows straight through to (the trio) from where I sit. That's an example of the impact it has on offices throughout downtown. Not only are they significant landmarks that will restore character, but in the meantime, the fact that they are deteriorating and vacant is a blight on downtown. It's a big deal."

According to local preservationist Wayne Wood's book, "Jacksonville's Architectural Heritage: Landmarks for the Future," the three buildings are exquisitely configured, with the two-story Neo-Classical bank framed by the two "ultra-modern" (for the time) skyscrapers, which ascend from the street corner. Their prominent place at the intersection of downtown Jacksonville's two busiest streets makes them one of the most unique architectural groupings in the South. The three are also emblematic of Jacksonville's renaissance following the fire, the third largest metropolitan fire in U.S. history.

Southeast's plans for the trio include the construction of a new, eight-floor building that would create a Marriott Autograph Collection hotel with restaurant and commercial space, according to the City. The new building would bring the hotel to 146 rooms, which would be needed to make the project financially viable, project architect Tom Hurst of Dasher Hurst Architects told City officials in February. Hurst said the design team and Southeast Managing Director Steve Atkins want the layout to emphasize the three historic structures.

"We want to make sure that we're deferential to the existing historic buildings and we don't try to overwhelm them," Hurst said. "We could have probably designed a 20-story high-rise here and we could have made the numbers work better. But we want to pay homage to them."

This wouldn't be Southeast Group's first rehabilitation of an historic structure; the developer successfully renovated and restored the Barnett Building across the street from the trio, converting it into a combination of living and commercial space.

The Southeast Group acquired the trio along with the Barnett building in 2013. The 18-story Barnett building was built in 1926 and had been vacant since the early 2000s though the inside was demolished in the mid-2000s, Atkins said. The group began rehab in 2017 and completed it a couple of years later.

The building is now home to several businesses and high-rise apartments with striking views of downtown and the river. Commercial banking takes up the first floor and the Jacksonville Business Journal resides on the second-floor mezzanine. Above that, the University of North Florida maintains a downtown college campus and entrepreneurial center.

Residential apartments occupy the eighth through the 18th floors.

"I recognize this is a great deal of money in terms of incentives, and we will be cognizant of that as we restore these buildings to the highest standard," Southeast Principal and Managing Director Steve Atkins told the board after its March vote on the Laura Street Trio incentive package, according to Florida Times-Union reports at the time. Southeast is seeking National Park Service approval for historic designation of the building.

For Boyer of the DIA, the Trio project is one of many she hopes to keep the gas pedal pressed down on.

"We are pleased with the continued level of interest in downtown redevelopment projects that we have seen throughout the pandemic and that we are continuing to see," Boyer said. "We are not seeing a slowdown; we are seeing continued increased level of interest. I think part of that is recognition of Florida's growth and recovery and how we fared as compared with other locations. There is certainly no lack of interest."

The South facing facade of the conceptual design for Marriott's Autograph Collection as viewed from Adams St. across N. Laura St.

HISTORICAL MARKET KNOWLEDGE = PROVEN RESULTS

1117 CEDAR ST - $310,000
2 BR · 2 BA · 1,057 sqft

1636 KING ST 1 - $395,000
2 BR · 2 BA · 2,454 sqft

1157 NORWICH RD - $1,195,000
Waterfront · .71 acres

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- Fever
- Constipation
- Feeling full and bloated
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JEA closer to revitalizing central business district

STEADY PROGRESS CONTINUES ON 135,000-SQUARE-FOOT HEADQUARTERS ON PEARL STREET

BY JENNIFER EDWARDS
Resident Community News

This spring saw Downtown's central business district come a step closer toward a chance for revitalization, with full-steam-ahead progress on JEA's sleek new, pedestrian-friendly headquarters.

Ryan Companies U.S. Inc., a Minneapolis-headquartered developer, is constructing the seven-story building at 225 Pearl Street, with an adjacent parking garage that will be used by both employees and the public. The property is to include a nine-level parking garage with 657 spaces and a pedestrian-friendly complex with a unique design feature – a chamfered, or cutaway, corner on the parking garage, at the corner of Adams and Julia Street. The ground floor of the garage is planned to include 10,690 square feet of retail space.

On March 25, Ryan staff celebrated raising the final steel beam, painted white, on-site with the project team, subcontractors, and on-site trade labor. In addition, JEA employees, retirees and stakeholders also signed a commemorative beam that was installed on the new headquarters' lower level in mid-April, according to a news release. The beam was laid adopt the 125-foot-tall tower, which will feature large windows and open floor plans geared toward collaborative meeting space for one of the nation's largest community-owned electric utility companies. The site had been vacant until construction, although the City of Jacksonville used it as temporary parking. It takes up an entire City block, bordered to the north by Monroe Street, to the east by Julia Street, to the south by Adams Street, and to the west by Pearl Street.

The seven-story, 153,000-square-foot build-to-suit project is projected to revitalize the central business district, with a completion date of 2022. The building's design team weaved in aspects of the surrounding area's bridges and rich industrial history, while providing access to Jacksonville's major roadways and public transportation. It will stand east of the Duval County Courthouse lawn and other government buildings, and the current headquarters building on Church Street will then be put up for sale, according to the JEA construction website.

Ariel Woodson, Ryan spokeswoman, said the project was on track for a summer opening next year.

"Despite the challenging year (2020), Ryan Companies and JEA have displayed exceptional planning, teamwork, and creativity to reach the height of development on this Downtown Jacksonville office project," Scott Stenman, Vice President of Construction at Ryan Companies, said in a prepared statement. "Our team has faced different obstacles throughout 2020 as the pandemic has changed the way we safely construct buildings as well as how society views traditional office space. I am proud of our progress and our ability to reach this milestone on time. The JEA Headquarters is a sign of revitalization, and economic growth in Downtown Jacksonville and Ryan is thrilled to be part of the team bringing the project to fruition."

When the project is complete JEA will move from its 1960s-era offices at 21 W. Church St., where it has been headquartered since 1989. The new building is being planned for a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification, which will be determined after completion. LEED is a green building certification program used worldwide.

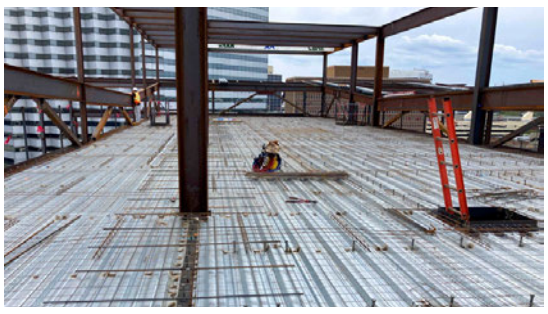
JEA spokeswoman Simone Garvey-Ewan said that JEA would not be doing a mass hiring before or after the move but would continue its continual recruitment efforts from its new location.

"Our downtown staff is going to move with us," Garvey-Ewan explained. "We are constantly recruiting. When we go to the headquarters, it will be the same thing. We are transferring our staff from where we are located right now (21 West Church St.) to 225 Pearl Street North."

The new headquarters will be easier for some customers to access; it will be a short distance from JTA's Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center which connects visitors with various mass transit options. It will also include what JEA terms a "customer experience center" where customers can pay bills, discuss accounts and learn about products and services.

Ryan Companies was selected, after a lengthy ITN process, in April 2019 to develop, design and build the new headquarters. The 1.5-acre parcel is on the 300 block of West Adams Street in downtown Jacksonville. The Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) gave its final approval to the project June 12 last year, although the final version was not as tall as developers had originally envisioned, or with quite as many parking spaces. Then, on June 30, Ryan Companies U.S. Inc. announced it had closed on the parcel at a cost of $2.6 million.

FOR WEEKLY UPDATES AND PHOTOS, FOLLOW THE PROJECT AT HTTPS://NEWJEAHQ.COM/.



Construction is moving along at a clip at the site of the new JEA Headquarters. The new, 135,000-square-foot-building will have a Pearl Street address.

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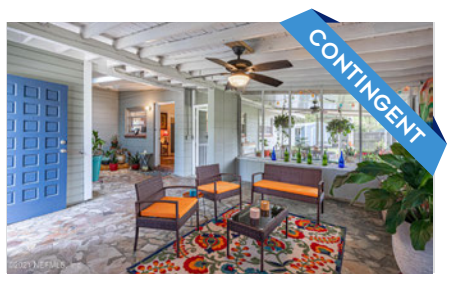
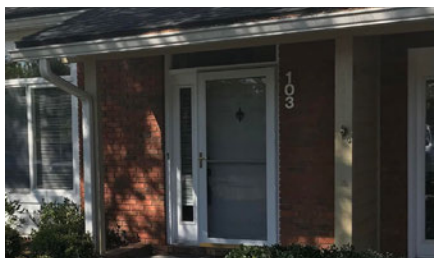
8848 INLET BLUFF DR – $192,500
3 BR | 2 BA | 1 HB | 1,563 SQFT.
Listed By Wade L Griffin

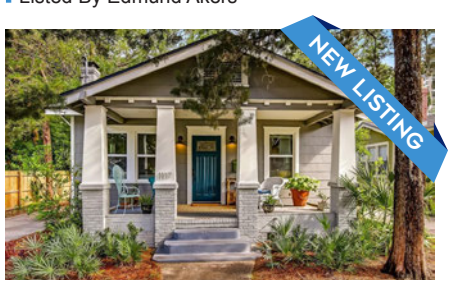


2127 LEON RD – $208,900
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,240 SQFT.
Listed By Edmund Akers

1268 WOLFE ST – $227,400
2 BR | 1 BA | 928 SQFT.
Listed By Erin E King



5400 WATER OAK LN #103 – $265,000
2 BR | 2 BA | 1 HB | 1,560 SQFT.
Listed By Sherry Faircloth

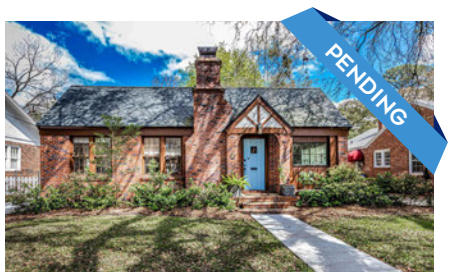


1117 CEDAR ST – $310,000
2 BR | 2 BA | 1,057 SQFT.
Listed By Wade L Griffin

1636 KING ST 1 – $395,000
3 BR | 2 BA | 1 HB | 2,454 SQFT.
Listed By Wade L Griffin

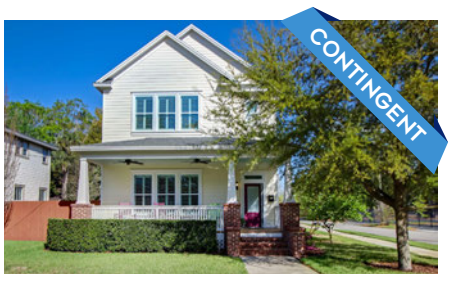
4530 IROQUOIS AVE – $400,000
4 BR | 2 BA | 1,785 SQFT.
Listed By Nancy Cusimano

12199 RIDGE CROSSING WAY – $410,000
4 BR | 4 BA | 2,601 SQFT.
Listed By Edmund Akers



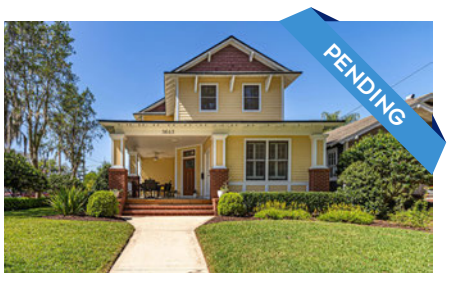
1263 BELVEDERE AVE – $449,000
3 BR | 2 BA | 1,642 SQFT.
Listed By Wade L Griffin

1395 AVONDALE AVE – $459,000
3 BR | 1 BA | 1 HB | 1,544 SQFT.
Listed By Tripp Newsom

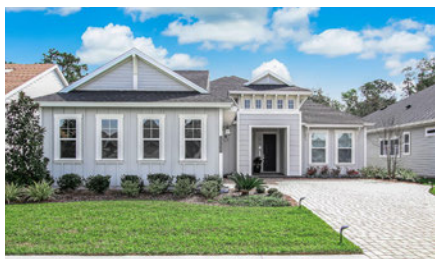


2735 LYDIA ST – $584,400
3 BR | 2 BA | 1 HB | 2,400 SQFT.
Listed By Erin E King

348 CHARLOTTE ST – $609,900
3 BR | 3 BA | 2,364 SQFT.
Listed By Erin E King

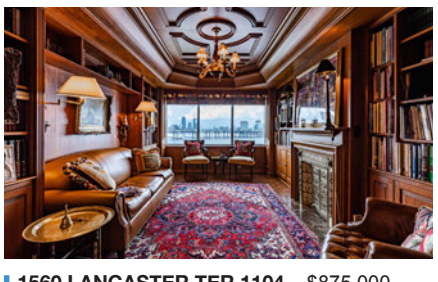


3643 PINE ST – $685,000
3 BR | 2 BA | 1 HB | 2,228 SQFT.
Listed By Wade L Griffin

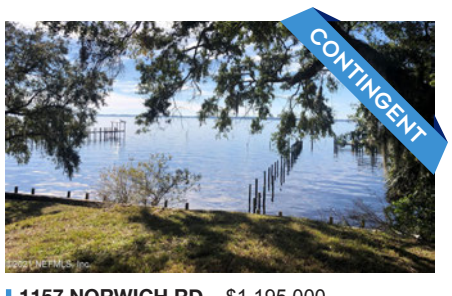


10605 AVENTURA DR – $724,400
4 BR | 3 BA | 2,890 SQFT.
Listed By Erin E King

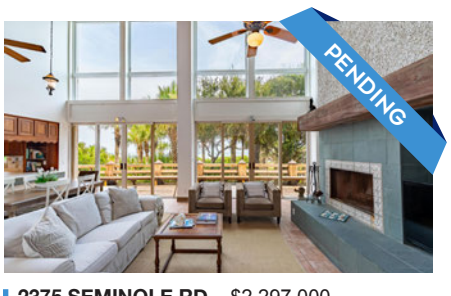
1828 POWELL PL – $825,000
5 BR | 4 BA | 3,816 SQFT.
Listed By Wade L Griffin



1560 LANCASTER TER 1104 – $875,000
3 BR | 4 BA | 3,317 SQFT.
Listed By Nancy Cusimano



1157 NORWICH RD – $1,195,000
WATERFRONT LOT 102' x 313' (.71 acres)
Listed By Wade L Griffin



2375 SEMINOLE RD – $2,297,000
3 BR | 4 BA | 3,791 SQFT.
Listed By Robert B Van Cleve

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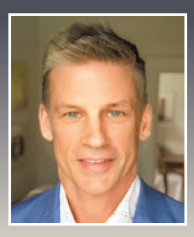

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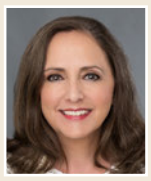

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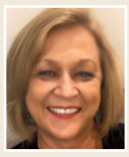

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IFF denies responsibility for odor, air quality issue remains unsettled for locals

"As a result of the chemical odor, our neighbors have experienced a number of negative health impacts including skin burning sensations, coughing, shortness of breath, dizziness, headaches, nausea, asthma attacks, and insomnia. Adults, children and pets alike have all been affected."

- Josh Gellers, Murray Hill Preservation Society board member and faculty member of UNF's Political Science & Public Administration

BY KAREN J. RIELEY
Resident Community News

Eight months after complaints began increasing markedly, the odor described by many as "sickly sweet" persists in Murray Hill. Residents think the odor is coming from an International Flavors and Fragrances factory located at 2051 North Lane Avenue, three to five miles away from Murray Hill.

According to its website, IFF is a global fragrance company that uses "by-products from the paper-making process to make ingredients for fine fragrances and products for personal care, fabric care, and home care." It uses sulfur and turpentine in its processes that are discharged in wastewater. The company denies that its factory is the source of the odor described by residents.

The City of Jacksonville's Environmental Quality Division served IFF with a cease-and-desist citation on Dec. 11, 2020, and is working with IFF to resolve the matter. Three residents of Jacksonville's historic neighborhoods filed a civil lawsuit on Jan. 12, 2021.

City Council member Randy DeFoor, who represents District 14 which includes Murray Hill, hosted a town meeting on March 25, the first one in which IFF participated. The company presented wind and weather maps and data from air sample studies that it believes prove it is not the likely source of the problem.

Josh Gellers, Murray Hill Preservation Society board member and faculty member of UNF's Political Science & Public Administration Department, said that the "noxious, turpentine-like perfume smell" is particularly evident in the late evenings and early morning hours.

"As a result of the chemical odor, our neighbors have experienced a number of negative health impacts including skin burning sensations, coughing, shortness of breath, dizziness, headaches, nausea, asthma attacks, and insomnia. Adults, children and pets alike have all been affected," said Gellers. He reported receiving dozens of emails from concerned citizens, not only in Murray Hill, but also in Riverside, Avondale, Ortega, Lake Shore and Fairfax.

"My own wife battled a burning sensation on her face and instantaneous nausea one night, causing her to run to the bathroom while changing our infant daughter, who sleeps in a room where the chemical odor's presence was most pronounced. The chemical smell is a violation of our right to a healthy environment and healthy life. The community will not stand for anything other than complete cessation of this smell."

Gellers urged community members to contact their City Council representatives to encourage them to secure the services of Envirosuite, a company that provides 24-7 monitoring of air pollutants and their origins, which the City's Environmental Quality Division is not able to do.

The City is considering hiring Envirosuite to conduct a 12-month study that would help pinpoint the source of the odors. The process uses strategically positioned ambient sensors without needing to send people out for on-site inspections or hire expensive consultants.

At issue is the fact that many complaints cannot be validated because they are made at after normal work hours when the Environmental Quality Division cannot investigate. According to Kealey West, an attorney with the EQD, "We must verify a complaint from at least five persons within a 90-day period, and then we can move forward to enforcement, while working with the source or sources of the odors, to implement necessary corrective actions or to stop or minimize objectionable odors."

West noted that the Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board has approved funding the study beginning perhaps as early as this summer, assuming that it makes it through City Council's final appropriations, to provide a better understanding of how odors move through Jacksonville. While the study will allow for monitoring during times the EQD staff currently cannot respond to complaints, it will not monitor any particular facility or obtain evidence to document a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9...

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violation of any law, rule or regulation during the study period.

IFF company spokesperson Michael Munz, from the Dalton Agency, said that IFF representatives are out in the neighborhood, seeking out industry experts and eliciting help from the City of Jacksonville Environmental Quality Division and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

"We want to not only comply but be best in practice," Munz said. "Prior to the City citation in December 2020, IFF has never received a citation in its history. All of the complaints cited are three to five miles away from IFF. We know there are other industrial facilities in the area. We are investigating every complaint."

IFF Production Planning Manager John Otterson talked about the plant's continuous operation as proof that any smells presumably associated with the IFF factory would not be stronger before or after regular work hours. He noted their use of advanced computer control and state-of-the-art processes, such as a vapor reduction system and a chemical scrubber for odor control.

"Recently we've put in floating hexagonal disks that are covering the surface of the pond to eliminate reduce the amount of vapor coming off of the surface of the waste treatment facility," he said.

IFF hired Golder Associates in October to help the company identify the odor and determine whether the odor is from their plant.

"Golder has concluded that IFF is in compliance," said Stacy Watson May, attorney for Holland & Knight, that represents IFF. "There were no findings that there is any type of health risk related to the odor, and Golder's report concluded that IFF is not likely the source of the odor in the Murray Hill area."

"We provided sampling and modeling to identify the odor sources described in complaints," said Gage Miller, senior environmental scientist for Golder Associates. He explained that IFF has two sources for odor issues – windblown and regulated, like the factory's smokestacks.

"We focused mainly on windblown by sampling downwind of known odor sources such as IFF and collected data at the time of the complaints."

Miller produced slides showing wind direction on the days when complaints were lodged that showed that the offensive odor could not be coming from IFF.

"Sampling did confirm that there was odor downwind of Beaver Street and south of I-10," Miller said. "There are two sites south of Beaver Street that have styrene emission; however, IFF does not. The sweet smell that complaints have identified is indicative of styrene, not sulfur and turpentine."

IFF states that it does not change its operation during the day by emitting more wastewater in the early mornings and late night, while another factory that emits styrene might be doing so. In addition to IFF's claim that another factory is more likely the culprit of the odor, it notes that the JEA wastewater lift station in the area doesn't have any type of lift cover and that the sulfur smell is very strong in that area.

IFF has produced a website to explain its position – www.iffjaxcommunity.com.

"Air odor issues are incredibly complex" said Jim Maher, assistant director for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. "We have responded about 16 times to specific air complaints, and none were able to be validated, but by the time we get there, [the odor] might be gone. That' why is it so important to call as soon as you smell something."

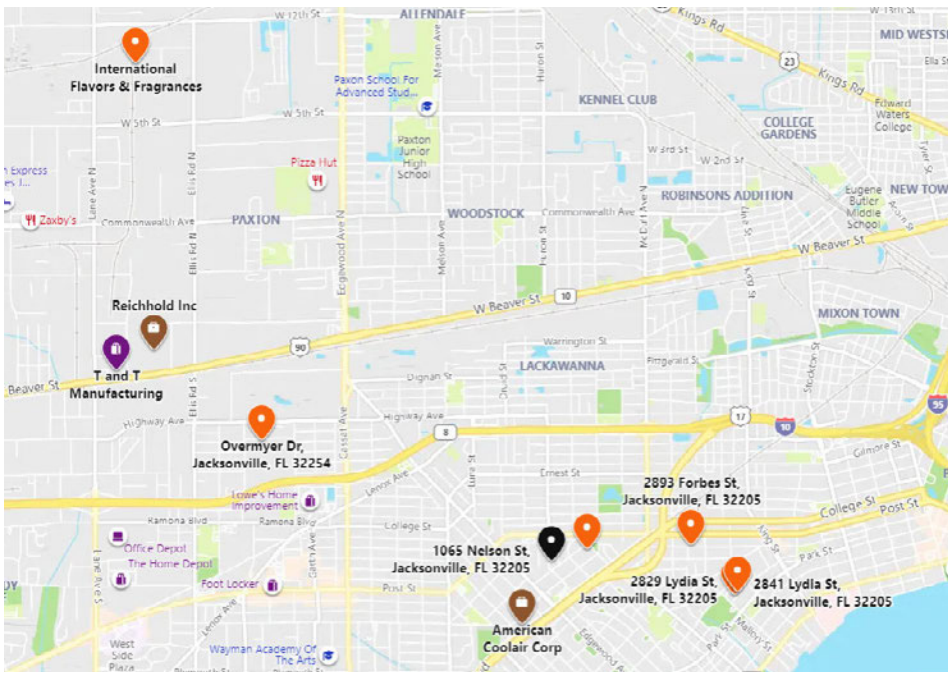
Maher noted that IFF has a Title V Clean Air Act permit with FL DEP which, according to the US EPA website, "requires major sources of air pollutants to obtain an operating permit, operate in compliance with that permit, and certify at least annually their compliance with permit requirements."

"We have not found any noncompliance in any of that," said Maher.

Several residents expressed their concern about health issues related to the odor, noting that the smell is at times so noxious that they can't go outside their homes to run or walk or hold outdoor family events. Residents living in Springfield and on the east side of the river in San Marco also expressed their concern about the smell.

"I've been held hostage because of the smell," said Murray Hill resident Angela Mann, who is an associate professor in UNF's Department of Psychology. "I feel like we're being gaslighted, and I am offended by tonight's presentation," said Mann, who is eight months' pregnant.

Residents also expressed concern that Golder Associates was compensated by IFF for the study that was conducted and that IFF was made aware of when Golder would be conducting sampling. According



to Watson May, however, the facility wouldn't be able to control when it's emitting odors.

"We couldn't change that if we were trying to hide something," she said.

"I'm seriously considering selling my house that I've only been in a little over two years, because I cannot tolerate the odor," Murray Hill resident Lisa Crawford said. She asked whether a device that could catch a sample could be obtained to enable individual citizens to sample odors as they occur.

Shane Brisentine, who has lived in Murray Hill for 15 years, said, "I don't want to give up my home. I'm not going to settle for letting somebody else win."

"I'm a realtor and photographer, and I've worked all around where the IFF factory is located. I have smelled the odor right by the plant in every direction," he said.

"As several people have said, this is a very complicated issue," City Councilperson DeFoor said. "There are some very strongly held views, but it sounds to me as though the [study] that has been proposed by Envirosuite is going to be a systematic approach to the problem or to the questions."

"You really don't want to solve the wrong problem here. That will serve no one's interest. If the wrong cause is identified, that won't correct it for anyone," she said.

To report an objectionable odor, call 630-CITY as quickly as possible when you smell the odor or go to the Environmental Quality – Odor page of the MyJax website. You can also email the Murray Hill Preservation Association at MurrayHillChemicalSmell@murrayhilljax.com. Michelle Worley, district executive secretary for Angela Nixon, Florida House of Representatives, District 14, encourages residents to call her at (904) 924-1500 if they have questions.

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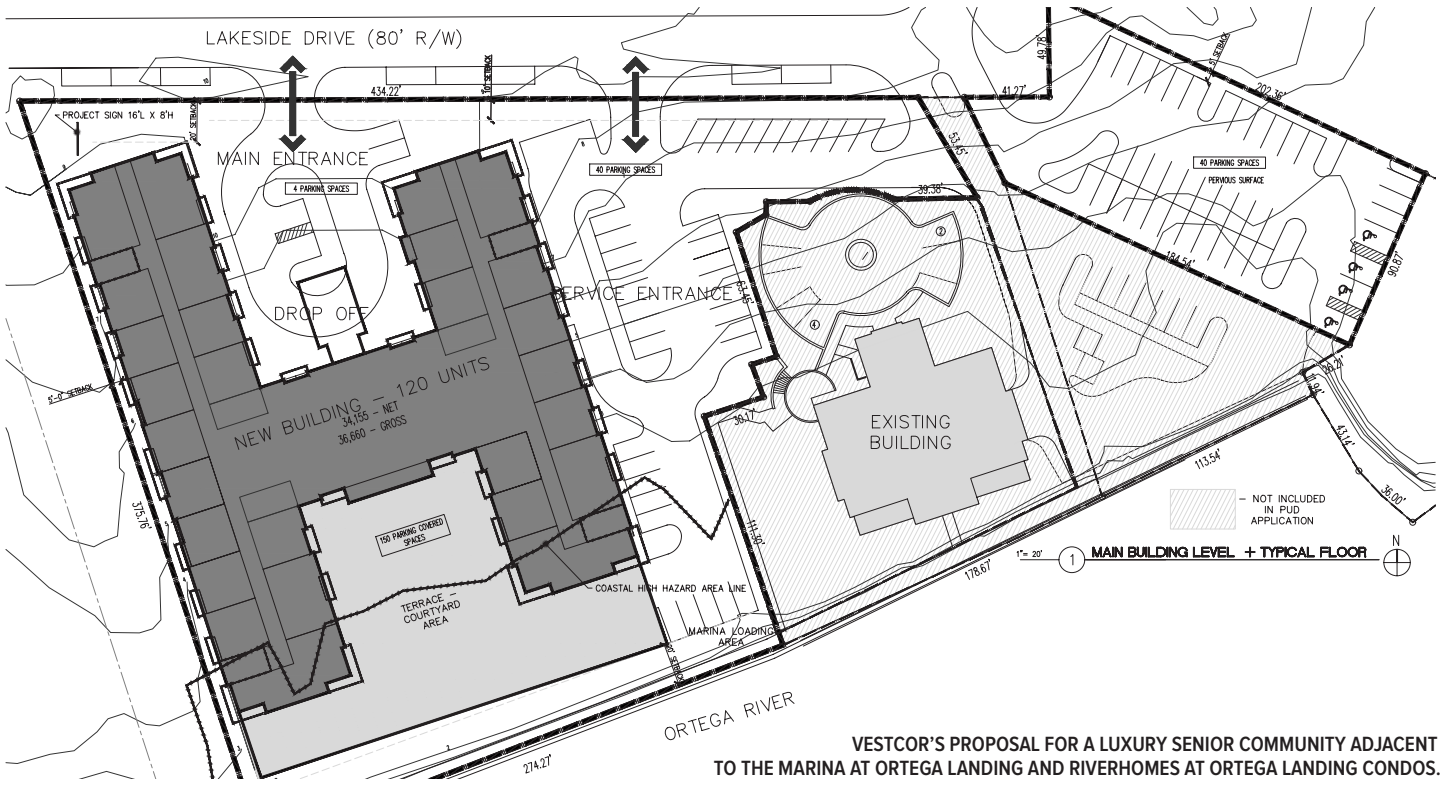
Ortega Landing

"The parking is huge, with the number of marina slips and the number of cars with the slip owners. That's one of my concerns, the size of the building, the commercial concern and the parking that this is going to create."

- Keith Waldrip, local resident



VESTCOR'S PROPOSAL FOR A LUXURY SENIOR COMMUNITY ADJACENT TO THE MARINA AT ORTEGA LANDING AND RIVERHOMES AT ORTEGA LANDING CONDOS.

In May, representatives from local developer Vestcor plan to make a pitch to the City for the community, which would require zoning changes to a proposed site situated next to the popular Marina at Ortega Landing – and a vocal condo community that has already made its mind up about the project. While Vestcor representatives say its studies indicate the community is needed for an aging population in the area, the condo owners and neighbors along Lakeside Drive across from the riverfront site say the building would change the sleepy character of their neighborhood and is not welcome.

Vestcor has headed up projects all over the state, and currently has already completed three senior living communities in Jacksonville and beyond: HarborChase of Mandarin on San Jose Boulevard, Tallahassee's The Grove at Canopy and The Grove at Trelago in Maitland. Those properties provide three levels of care to seniors: independent living, assisted living and memory care, and Vestcor provides asset management services after they're complete to maximize the property's operating income and to maintain the communities.

Now, Vestcor executives would like to add another community at Ortega Landing, adjacent to existing condos and edging along the high-end, 192-boat-slip marina. Ortega Landing is North of the Aging True headquarters and East of Ortega Park, the former Roosevelt Square Mall, which houses Publix alongside other retail, dining, and other businesses. The proposed senior living community at Ortega Landing would be a five-story-tall building consisting of 66 independent living units and 54 assisted living units, Will Morgan, president of Vestcor Communities Inc., wrote in an email to *The Resident.*

"This concept offers seniors the ability to maintain an independent lifestyle with the comfort of knowing additional care is available when needed. Residential units are well appointed, with finish levels similar to condominiums, just on a smaller scale," he explained. He said that amenity spaces comprise almost half of the building and

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include multiple dining venues, a movie theater, hair and nail salon, activity rooms and "peaceful well-landscaped courtyard areas." Services include dining, housekeeping, transportation and organized activities.

"Our communities have a hospitality focus for residents and their families while offering a service level and resident care at a ratio that allows for personalized attention," Morgan wrote. "This type of all-inclusive community offers a maintenance-free lifestyle to seniors. For many, it also provides a sense of community and socialization that they might not have living at home."

Some in the neighborhood agree that such a place is needed for aging residents in the area, but not all do. Some neighbors living along Lakeside Drive, which would front the new complex, are concerned about traffic along a corridor that has already seen an increase in the number of cars using the previously quiet residential street since a new street connecting it to Roosevelt Boulevard, by Publix, reopened a few months ago a few months ago. And the entire membership of the Riverhomes at Ortega Landing Condominium Association Inc. – which represents the condo owners in the four-story building that would be next-door to the new community – has come out against the project. The condo building is at 4238 Lakeside Drive and houses eight large units.

Keith Waldrip and Mark Ross live in a house in the 4000 block of Lakeside directly across from the marina, condos and proposed site for the assisted living facility. Keith Waldrip's chief concern is parking and increased traffic.

"The parking is huge, with the number of marina slips and the number of cars with the slip owners," Keith Waldrip said. "If you had a pretty day like today on a Saturday or Sunday, there is nowhere for people to park if this happens. My big concern is that they are all going to park on the street. The City has cut out some spaces already and I'm betting you any amount of money that Vestcor is pushing for on-street parking. That's one of my concerns, the size of the building, the commercial concern and the parking that this is going to create."

Condo owner Mitzi Kuntz said she has observed a big increase in traffic since the cut-through to Roosevelt Boulevard opened up.

"When I walk out the front door of my condo and I walk along the sidewalk to where Publix is, I start counting cars as they whip around the curve, at least 30, 40 and sometimes 45 cars use it as a cut through," she said of the less-than-half-a-mile stretch.

Ross said he wonders why Vestcor didn't instead choose a parcel further west on Lakeside Drive, closer to Roosevelt Square, that is already zoned for Vestcor's intended use and is situated next to the Ortega Yacht Club condos, housed in a high-rise many stories taller than the proposed facility. "But Vestcor representatives said that site was half the size of the current parcel it has under contract, and would require a smaller footprint than is feasible for their senior living model.

Charles Johnston, one of many condo owners who spoke at a meeting in April held in opposition to the project, echoed other owners' sentiments when he said that the proposed facility was not what he was told would be on the property when he bought his condo in 2012. Charles and his wife Barbara were one of the first owners in the building and were told that similar condos would be built on the site, not an assisted living facility.

"When Barbara and I visited these condos, the real estate agent selling these condos had renderings of what is the Ortega Landing community, established by the City of Jacksonville by passing the Planned Unit Development (PUD) in 2004," he said. "Barbara and I understood that just because the picture of those drawings were how they were being represented, that some changes (to the community) could be made. We understood that. But we did understand that they would be residential units and there would be no more than 67 and the architecture would be all be the same and that the buildings would be integrated into a community that is Ortega Landing. That's how (Northbrook, Ill.-based owner) Bixby Bridge Capital LLC marketed those condos. I think Bixby Bridge was committed to the Ortega Landing development at this time and was promoting this 'one community concept' when we bought our condo."

Most of the condo owners said they too invested in living in the condos with an understanding of what the property would eventually look like and are worried the property instead would be dominated by a large commercial building with round-the-clock employees and laundry and food service deliveries.

But Morgan of Vestcor said the senior living project is an improvement over what could be built there instead with the use already approved for the site.

"When this site was marketed for sale, we understand most interested buyers were evaluating it for multifamily, either condominiums or apartments, some larger in density than the PUD currently allows," he said. "The site is a perfect fit for senior living given the concerns of the surrounding community. Senior living is a very passive use with regards to traffic, parking, noise, and activity around the community. Frankly, most of our residents do not drive much, if at all, since most of what they need is available within the community and transportation is available for the occasional appointment or errand."

Much of the parking would be underground, he added, and said a Vestcor traffic study indicated that the proposed use would result in 60 percent less traffic than the multifamily and retail currently approved for the site. Additional surface parking is also being planned on the property to accommodate the marina, he said.

He also said the proposed facility would be smaller than what would be required for condos comparable to those already built. "We are proposing to eliminate the additional retail use that was sensitive to neighbors when the PUD was originally approved," he wrote. "Our research indicates a community of this caliber would be well-received in the market. We have had several meetings over the last 18 months with the condominium owners next door and other members of the community to understand the concerns over our proposed development. We have made great strides in refining our design in response to these discussions and will continue to do so."

A firm date for Vestcor's presentation to the City had not been set as of press time. In the meantime, condo association member said they had retained attorney Paul M. Harden and T.R. Hainline Jr. of Rogers Towers, P.A.

City Rescue Mission starts new 24-hour shelter program

On April 8, City Rescue Mission (CRM) began a new 24-hour shelter program for those experiencing homelessness. The program is called Overcomers and is part of the Emergency Shelter service provided at CRM.

"This is a program that is planned and purposeful. We want to empower and enable those who come to us for help to transition into a successful, sustainable, victorious life," said Paul Stasi, Executive Director of CRM.

Program guests will meet and work with a case manager to develop a plan to exit homelessness. After immediate needs are met, the goal of the Overcomers program will be to help folks transition from homelessness to safe, affordable, accessible, and acceptable housing. Life skills education, workforce development, and job placement assistance will also be provided for participants of the Overcomers program.

Since 1946, the faith-based, non-profit CRM has been providing help to the homeless and needy in Jacksonville and Northeast Florida. In 2019, they served 242,643 and provided over 80,000 nights of shelter. The Overcomers program is a new addition to services already provided, which include drug and alcohol recovery programs.

Note that CRM follows CDC safety recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, visit www.CRMjax.org.

IMAGINATION SQUARED[10] art exhibition celebrates Project Atrium's 10-year anniversary

> "The works beautifully capture the diversity of human experience navigating these difficult challenging times, and we are grateful to everyone who participated."
>
> - Ylva Rouse, Senior Curator for the museum

More than 5,000 people viewed the first exhibition, "Imagination Squared," on its opening night alone in September 2010. MOCA Jacksonville is celebrating the exhibition's 10-year anniversary with "IMAGINATION SQUARED[10]: A CREATIVE COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO OUR TIMES" that includes more than 600 works submitted by the community of Greater Jacksonville which are on view April 16 – August 8, 2021.

In December 2020, the museum placed a public call for art asking the Jacksonville community to participate as artists by submitting an artwork on a 10' x 10' square provided by the museum. MOCA Jacksonville partnered with a number of organizations to distribute squares including UNF Department of Art, Art History and Design, FSCJ, Douglas Anderson and LaVilla Schools of the Arts, Jacksonville University, Art with a Heart in Healthcare, Jacksonville Art and Music School, Ortega Elementary School, St. John's Youth Academy, Gateway Rehabilitation and Pine Castle. A total of 663 artworks were submitted by the community for exhibition.

"The public response to this exhibition has been extraordinary," said Ylva Rouse, senior curator for the museum. "The works beautifully capture the diversity of human experience navigating these difficult challenging times, and we are grateful to everyone who participated."

The exhibition is a reiteration of "Imagination Squared," a unique public collaborative installation that took place in September 2010. The original exhibition was created by artists Christina Foard and Dolf James to bring attention to the creative power of the artistic community in Jacksonville to provide a transformative cultural experience that was celebrated by more than 5,000 people on its opening night.

The original "Imagination Squared" installation also paved the way for the creation of MOCA's Project Atrium Series that for the past decade has featured site-specific installations by emerging and mid-career artists. Haskell Atrium Gallery's location in the museum, its dimensions and its scale challenge invited artists to reinvent and collaborate. The public can watch the artist create work in an open space that is free for visitors to enjoy the creative process.

"Revisiting the impetus of Project Atrium is the perfect way to both celebrate the accomplishments of this incredible installation series, but also to honor our commitment to our mission to making the discovery, knowledge and advancement of the art, artists and ideas of our time accessible to all," said MOCA Director Caitlín Doherty. "This year, perhaps more than ever before, it is important to bring our community together through art making and sharing, reflecting on recent challenges, while at the same time dreaming of what the future may bring."

Brooke and Hap Stein is title sponsor and Driver, McAfee, Hawthorne & Diebenow, PLCC is supporting sponsor for "IMAGINATION SQUARED[10]: A CREATIVE COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO OUR TIMES".

STRIDES FOR PRIDE IS ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

Despite the virtual nature of this year's JASMYN 5K *Strides for Pride* run/walk, the LGBT community and allied supporters came out to support kids, teens, adults, families, gay and straight of all races and cultural backgrounds.

Runners and walkers of all fitness levels were challenged to raise funds on their own funds, by earning sponsorships from their peers and businesses. Race packages and pickups were made available at the event in Riverside Park April 24, where race entrants were welcome by the JU Cheer Squad as sponsors and volunteers handed out bags, swag, t-shirts, and medals along with a brief photo op.

Individuals was asked to create a fundraising page to support JASMYN through the event and teams were also able to raise funds, as the best team and best individuals collected prizes, any individual that raised over 250-dollars won a special, limited edition JASMYN mask.

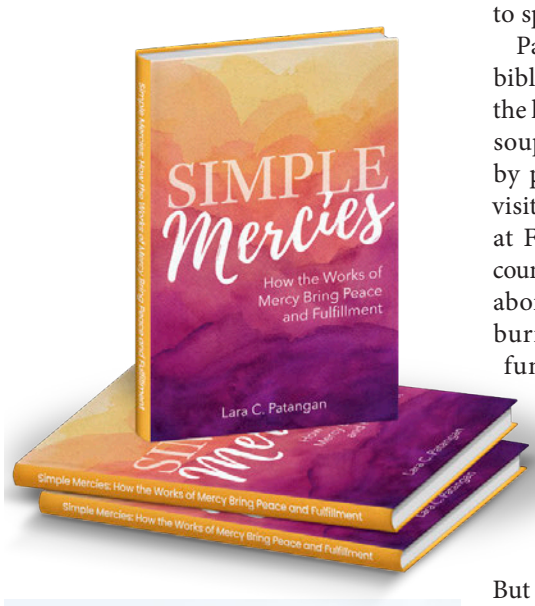
This year, the organization kicked off a pet photo opportunity to showcase the area's top dog in the Pets for Pride Photo Contest. The winning pet who gets the most votes online will be crowned as JASMYN's animal mascot for the calendar year.

Information was unavailable by press time to announce winners, stay tuned for results in an upcoming issue of Resident News. Photos by danharrisphotoart.com.

Local author to host launch party for first book's release

The public is invited to a launch party for the release of Lara Patangan's first book, *Simple Mercies: How the Works of Mercy Bring Peace and Fulfillment*. The celebration will take place on May 22nd at 7 p.m. at Assumption Catholic Church, the author's home parish.

The evening will begin with a presentation by Patangan in the church. Book signing and reception will follow in Jordon Hall. Refreshments will be available.



Written with humor and insight, Simple Mercies, published by Our Sunday Visitor, is for those who have ever questioned their contribution to the world or struggled with finding God's purpose for their lives.

In September 2013, Patangan turned 40. To mark this milestone birthday, she chose to celebrate not by having a big party, buying a shiny gift, or going on a fun trip. None of that appealed to her. She chose, instead, to spend a full year in service to others.

Patangan, a devout Catholic, performed biblically based works of mercy. She fed the hungry by volunteering at a Downtown soup kitchen, and she clothed the naked by putting in hours at Rethreaded. She visited the imprisoned, death row inmates at Florida State Prison in Raiford. She counseled the doubtful, a woman considering abortion at a local Women's Center. She buried the dead by helping to plan the funerals of a Burmese refugee family killed in a car crash in Macclenny.

"Being open to serve made me aware of so many opportunities," Patangan said.

In her new book, Patangan shares some of those experiences. But the book has a bigger mission. It is to encourage others to realize how much their service helps others, whether it's at home, at school, in the workplace, or with elderly parents. "I feel like many of us think that our service is too mundane too matter," she said. The book is to broaden people's idea of what service is and to show that what we do for others makes a difference.

Today, in addition to being a freelance writer, Patangan continues to volunteer, like at Meals on Wheels, at Animal Care & Protective Services, and at Assumption Church. She, her husband, and their two sons have picked up trash along the bank of the St. Johns River. "Asking 'What can I do?' is a very humbling question. By being open and willing, there are so many things that we can do for one another," she said.

Patangan, a St. Nicholas resident, grew up in Jacksonville and graduated from Bishop Kenny High School before earning a Bachelor of Science in Public Relations degree from the University of Florida. She spent the early part of her career working for various non-profits doing fundraising and development locally for Hubbard House and in New Orleans for an AIDS service organization and a children's hospital before moving back to Jacksonville and becoming a mom.

Though there is no cost to attend her book launch event on May 22, an RSVP would be appreciated. Call San Marco Book Store at (904) 396-7597 or register at bit.ly/larabooks. Book pre-orders are encouraged. To sign up for the author's blog, visit www.LaraPatangan.com.

JAX FEDERAL CREDIT UNION NAMES NEW CEO/PRESIDENT

JOHN SERVOS

The board of directors of Jax Federal Credit Union has appointed John Servos as its new CEO and president. Servos comes to the credit union after a successful 22-year career at Neighbors Credit Union in St. Louis Mo., where he served as CEO for more than 12 years. The credit union's assets grew from $192 million to $467 million under his leadership.

Prior to serving as CEO of Neighbors, he also served as chief financial officer for nine years and vice president of compliance and audit services for one year. He obtained his CPA certificate and worked in public accounting before moving to the credit union industry.

"John is a proven and well-respected executive whose success is a testament to his deep commitment to member service," said Charles T. McLeod Jr., chairman of the Jax Federal Credit Union board of directors. "We look forward to his leadership and vast CFO and CEO experience in helping guide our 86-year-old credit union through its next phase of growth."

Mary Svoboda, who served as interim president and CEO, has returned to her previous dual roles of chief operating officer and chief lending officer. Jax Federal Credit Union serves over 39,000 members across Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Baker and Nassau counties.

Search for RAP Executive Director settled, announced

SHANNON BLANKINSHIP

A new leader will take the helm in mid-May at RAP [Riverside Avondale Preservation], as the transition from one executive director to another is underway. The Board of Riverside Avondale Preservation announced the arrival of their newest addition, after selecting Shannon Blankinship as the next Executive Director of the organization beginning May 17, 2021, according to Brooks Andrews, Chair of the Board of Directors.

"We are thrilled to welcome Shannon to RAP," Brooks said. "Shannon brings a wealth of experience that will assist our organization's focus on community engagement and outreach while protecting our historic assets. Shannon is known for getting things done, all the while, with a smile on her face, engaged volunteers and an enthusiastic following of active supporters for the causes she champions."

Shannon is a community advocate and has focused her work on environmental protection and advocacy. She began her career with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and was an intern with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

She moved to Jacksonville to attend Florida Coastal School of Law and received her J.D. in 2012 before becoming the Outreach Director for St. Johns Riverkeeper. Currently, she serves as their Advocacy Director and has been with the organization for nearly ten years. Last year Shannon became Chair of Resilient Jax, a coalition of non-profit organizations, businesses, and individuals collaborating on resiliency solutions. Riverside Avondale Preservation is one of Resilient Jax's founding members.

"When I moved to Jacksonville I wanted to live where I could walk to the market, restaurants, and parks so I made Riverside my home. Riverside Avondale Preservation has done the hard work to protect the architecture and history that makes our neighborhood unique while nurturing this dynamic art scene and numerous independent businesses. I am thrilled to continue this legacy and look forward to advocating for all the things that make Riverside and Avondale extraordinary," said Shannon.

"We were also impressed with Shannon's community stewardship as evidenced by an impressive list of board and committee activities," said Brooks.

Among those activities are service on two Task Forces, a COJ Consolidation Task Force that reviewed the current charter and the McCoys Creek Restoration Task Force with Groundwork Jacksonville.

RAP's current Executive Director, Warren Jones, announced his retirement in January. He will continue in that position until May 17, then will work with Shannon and the RAP team until the first week in June to create a smooth transition.

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Keep an eye out for Tony in the neighborhood. You may catch a glimpse of him passing by with Hans, his trusty VW Bug!

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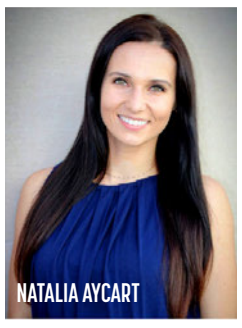
Bolles announces Director for Global Learning and Engagement


NATALIA AYCART

Bolles Associate Head of School, Mike Drew, has announced that Natalia Aycart will be the Director for Global Learning and Engagement (GLE). This position is a new addition to all four campuses of Bolles.

"At the core, Global Learning is about promoting within our students the skills and knowledge they need to be prepared for our increasingly interconnected world. This is especially relevant for Bolles—an independent day and boarding school educating students from all over the world," Drew said.

Aycart will begin her new role as founding director in August, teaching classes as well as implementing, supervising, and directing GLE programs and operations for grades Pre-K through 12.

"I am honored to be part of this successful and experienced team. I look forward to opening student perspective and experience to all the world has to offer," Aycart said.

Aycart is fluent in English and Spanish. She has worked at Saint Paul's Episcopal Day School in Kansas City, Missouri as the Global Learning and Multicultural Affairs Coordinator and Foreign Language Educator as well as for the Foreign Language Academy as a Foreign Visiting Teacher, a program endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education and sponsored by the Ministry of Education of Spain, the country where she completed her own formal education. She holds a bachelor's degree in education with a concentration in foreign language education. She holds a master's degree and a second bachelor's degree in organizational psychology. In addition to the United States and Spain, she has lived in Sweden, England, and Italy. Aycart has received numerous awards and recognitions in her field.

Baptist Medical Center celebrates opening of Chartrand Frisch Family Birth & Newborn Center

RIBBON CUTTING, APRIL 12

On April 12, leaders of Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital, along with donors Mark and Meredith (Chartrand) Frisch and their families, celebrated the dedication of the Chartrand Frisch Family Birth & Newborn Center. This project marks the completion of a $16 million renovation to the Baptist Jacksonville Maternal Evaluation, Delivery, Maternal Newborn, and High-Risk Units.

Mark and Meredith Frisch were so inspired by the care they received from Baptist and Wolfson with the births and complications that arose for all four of their children, they decided to make a generous gift to help fund renovations of the birthing and postpartum suites at Baptist. Meredith's parents, Nancy and Gary Chartrand; her brother, Jeff Chartrand; and Mark's parents, Ben and Pat Frisch, also contributed. Both families helped inspire others to make financial gifts that made the project possible.

"Our goal in redesigning this space was to make this monumental life experience even more special for moms and families. These new suites are as impressive as our state-of-the-art maternal newborn care," said Michael Mayo, FACHE, President of Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville.

A Family Advisory Group of current and expecting mothers offered input on the Center's design to ensure that every aspect of the units will improve the patient and family experience. Features such as private bathrooms with ample storage for personal belongings, new high-risk monitoring technology in birthing suites, and a nursery with a "knee wall" to make it easier for young siblings to view babies who need extended stays were included in the plans. Every aspect of the Center was designed with mothers, babies, and families in mind.

The new Center is located adjacent to Wolfson Children's Hospital's high-level Neonatal Intensive Care Unit where expert teams of pediatric specialists provide immediate life-saving care to newborns who need it. The Center will also have direct access to the 92-bed Neonatal Intensive Care Center in the new Wolfson Children's Critical Care Tower that is scheduled to open in early 2022.

"We want parents to take comfort knowing that, should something happen, we have the very best experts and state-of-the-art technology available to immediately provide world-class care to their precious new baby," said Michael D. Aubin, FACHE, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital.

"We hope families who enter the Chartrand Frisch Family Birth & Newborn Center are comforted knowing they are in expert hands and are able to relax and focus on what matters most: the new life they are bringing into the world," said CC Brooks, Vice President of Patient Care Services at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital.

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Cynthia Riegler

Foley named Bolles director of residential life

The Foley family, Mike, Kylie, Luke and Stephanie, will join the Jacksonville community this summer when Mike will take over his new responsibilities as director of Bolles' residential life program.

The Bolles School has recently selected Mike Foley as the new director of its residential life program. The school's boarding program attracts students from around the world.

Foley has been the head of student life and international programming, as well as director of campus life, at Hilton Head Preparatory School in South Carolina for the past six years. He has also been director of residential life at Ross School in East Hampton, New York; director of advancement at Real Life Christian Academy in Clermont, Florida, dean of international and domestic student services at Montverde Academy in Montverde, Florida; and director of athletics and summer day camp at Windermere Preparatory School in Windermere, Florida. Additional roles and experiences at these institutions include athletic director, dean of English as a Second Language and Pre-K-12 art teacher.

Foley has a bachelor's degree in Studio Art from Denison University in Granville, Ohio, and a master's degree in education in curriculum and instruction from University of Phoenix.

Foley has been a guest speaker and presenter at numerous events. Ivy International Group invited him to present on "The Art of Cultural Transition in China" and GE International asked him to present on "The Top 5 Reasons to Attend a U.S. Boarding School" during a European visit to Germany, Ukraine, Hungry, Turkey, Portugal and Spain in 2019.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to join the team," Foley said. "I look forward to continuing the tradition of excellence at The Bolles School."

Mike and wife Stephanie and children Luke, a current senior who is committed to play baseball at Erskine College in South Carolina, and Kylie, a freshman who plays volleyball, basketball and soccer, will move to Jacksonville from Hilton Head, South Carolina, this summer.

SUBARU OF JACKSONVILLE "SHARES THE LOVE" WITH A $125,000 DONATION TO WOLFSON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Subaru of Jacksonville gifted Wolfson Children's Hospital $125,000, making the 13th annual Share the Love campaign a success!

This was the dealership's largest gift so far to the region's only full-service children's hospital. It will be used toward advanced technology to treat critically ill and injured patients and toward continuing education in child passenger safety.

During this year's campaign, which ran from November 19, 2020 to January 4, 2021, Subaru of Jacksonville donated $250 for every new vehicle purchased or leased. Customers could choose any one of five charities, including the dealership's hometown charity, Wolfson Children's Hospital. Additionally, Subaru of America and Subaru of Jacksonville donated money to the hospital for every oil change the local dealership performed during the campaign.

Since pledging a five-year commitment to Wolfson Children's in 2016, Subaru of Jacksonville has donated $601,488 to the hospital. This year, the dealership's owner, Phil Porter, extended the commitment by three years, pledging a total impact of $1.25 million. Further, Subaru of Jacksonville will sponsor other fundraising events to benefit the hospital. "Wolfson Children's Hospital touches many in our community and we're proud to support such a worthy cause," Porter said.

As a non-profit organization, Wolfson Children's Hospital relies on charitable donations to provide care for all children in the region, regardless creed, religion, race, or ability to pay. As an expression of gratitude for the generosity of Subaru's owner, the Wolfson Children's Pediatric Trauma Center is now named the Porter Family Children's Trauma Center.

"The services we are able to provide thanks to the continued support of Phil Porter, Subaru of Jacksonville, and Subaru of America are truly life-saving," said Michael D. Aubin, FACHE, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital and interim chief philanthropy officer for the Baptist Health Foundation.

YMCA's STRONGER TOGETHER bash recognizes volunteers and donors, sets fundraising goal

Shelly Boynton celebrates her recognition as Volunteer of the Year by the YMCA with her family during this year's Y-Bash.

The YMCA of Florida's First Coast recently celebrated organizations and individuals who are helping it meet its mission to transform lives during its eleventh annual Y-Bash "STRONGER TOGETHER" event. The organization also announced it fundraising goal to raise $2.147 million to support programs such as safety around water, youth development and supporting seniors.

"When the pandemic landed on our doorstep and we had to close our First Coast Y branches, we were determined to find ways to stay connected to our members and support our community," said Eric K. Mann, YMCA of Florida's First Coast president and CEO. "The work we do has never been more important, and we're grateful for the many staff members, generous donors, volunteers, members and partners who have invested their time and talent to help maintain the Y's commitment to build a brighter future."

VyStar Credit Union was presented with the 2020 Corporate Partner of the Year award during the event for its more than two decades of work with the Y. VyStar employees are involved as advisory board volunteers across First Coast YMCA branches. VyStar has also been a critical community partner during Y events such as Operation Salute Back to School Bash and Thingamajig, as well as corporate wellness initiatives.

"We were glad to work with the Y to help serve our community amidst the pandemic, and we're appreciative of this recognition of our alignment with the Y to support community building, our youth and our military," said Brian Wolfburg, president and CEO of VyStar Credit Union.

The Y also recognized its Employees of the Year, Allison Krabill and Nicole Payne. As executive director of the First Coast Y's Camp Immokalee, Krabill provided critical support to Keystone Heights families in need of emergency childcare and led virtual fitness classes for kids to ensure they had opportunities to stay active and healthy.

As the group exercise leader at the Brooks Family YMCA, Payne worked with the Y's largest LIVESTRONG program which supports cancer survivors. She also helped Christmas wishes come true for more than 100 deserving children.

Shelly Boynton was honored as Volunteer of the Year for her 10 years of service on the First Coast YMCA's Metropolitan Board where she supported the development of the Stronger Together campaign, leading more than 40 volunteers across the First Coast to represent all 15 Y branch locations.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty named 'Elite'

From left, President and CEO Christy Budnick and Founder and Chairwoman Linda H. Sherrer, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty was recently recognized with the Berkshire Elite Award, honoring the top companies in the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices network.

The Northeast Florida real estate firm ranks No. 22 among all Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices brokerages in its global network based on total GCI (Gross Commission Income.)

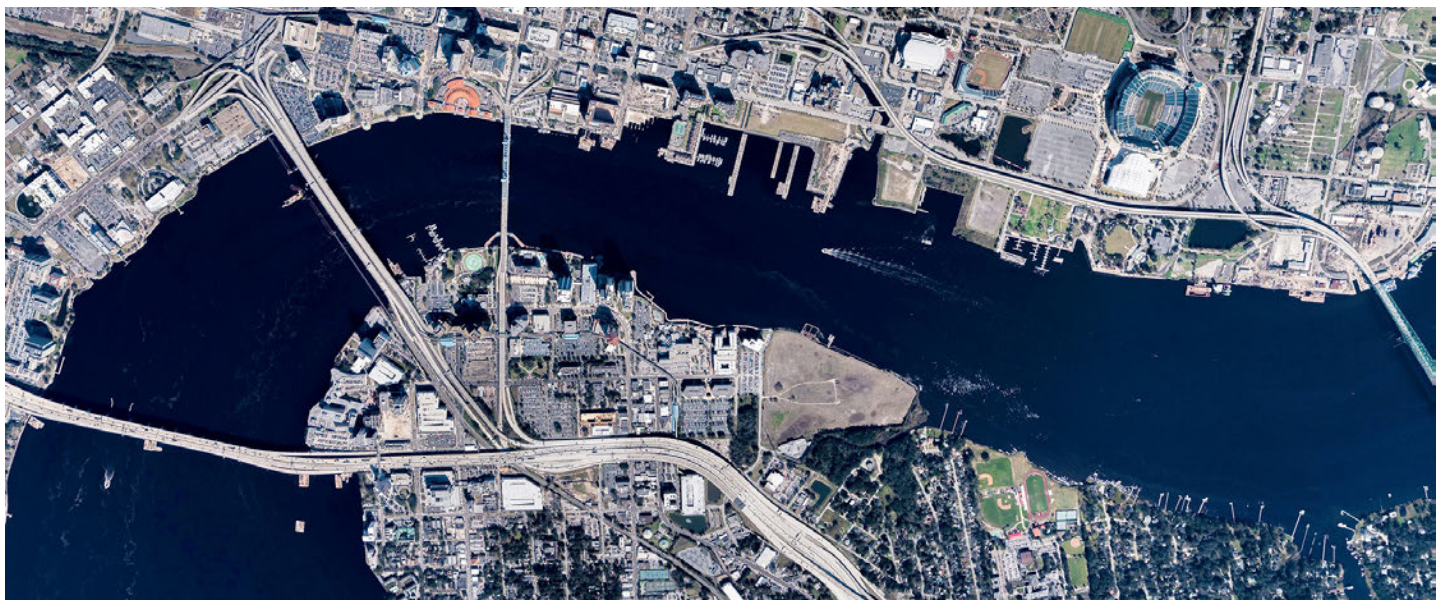
The company was recognized during an awards ceremony at Sales Convention 2021, an annual gathering of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices real estate professionals. Held virtually this year, the business and educational event offered opportunities to gain insight from leading speakers, discuss market trends, network and celebrate successes.

"We are gratified to receive this honor and be recognized alongside some of North America's most successful and prestigious real estate brokerages," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty President and CEO Christy Budnick. "We appreciate our dedicated team of Realtors, Brokers, employees and our wonderful clients who helped us achieve this recognition."

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty become a member of the network in 2014. The company was founded in 1988.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO RIVER CHALLENGES BEST AND HIGHEST USE IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

BY JENNIFER EDWARDS
Resident Community News



A view of Downtown and the riverfront. The City is planning to renovate the Landing property into a public park, and community organizers hope it will be the first of many along the riverfront.

Plans to transform the former Landing site on the St. Johns River and install public artwork are underway and soon to be revealed. And a new coalition of nonprofits and public interest agencies hope those plans are but the first step toward a string of parks along the North and Southbank of the river.

In March, City officials selected three firms out of 14 vying to design park on the former Landing property, which also contains two pads that are likely to be used for private development after the park is built. As part of the project, each firm is to include a significant work of public art, and will be paid $125,000 for its design, although only one plan will eventually be chosen and funded for the property, located at 2 Independent Drive W. The park must be at least four-and-a-half acres of the site's more than seven-and-a-half, which includes a parking lot.

Currently Olin Partnership Ltd, based in Philadelphia; Agency Landscape + Planning LLC out of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Perkins & Will Inc. of Chicago are working on their designs, which will be crafted using a lot of public input, said Lori Boyer, City Downtown Investment Authority CEO.

"They are design firms who design park space," she explained, noting that the three are not developers. "They are designing what goes in that park space, what it looks like. We have three different versions of that that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21...

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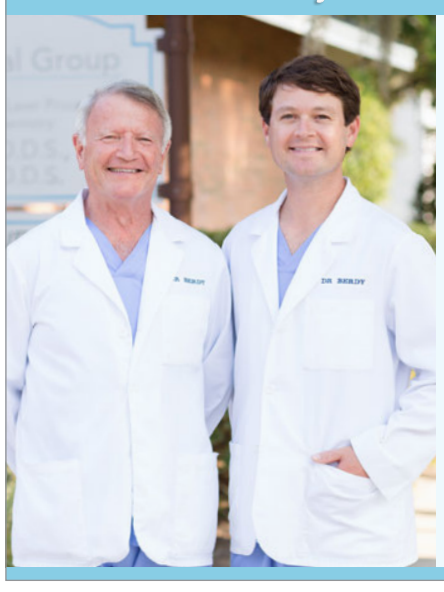

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A view looking west from the Shipyards, a publicly owned property that Riverfront Parks Now wants developed into a public park.

we will be able to get to see at the end of June. We will then be selecting (the project)."

Olin Partnership Ltd is known for several high-profile projects including the Washington Monument Grounds in Washington, D.C.; New York City's Bryant Park; the J. Paul Getty Center in Lost Angeles and Columbus Circle in Manhattan. Its architects also created a waterfront project in Alexandria, Va.

According to its website, "Olin creates distinguished landscapes and urban designs worldwide. Our work is predicated upon social engagement, craft, detail, materiality and timelessness. Our appreciation of the urban environment is paramount."

Agency Landscape + Planning LLC is known for a long list of projects, including the Charleston Navy Yard Visitor Experience Plan; Chicago River's Edge Ideas Lab; Chicago River Walk and the Sarasota Bayfront Master Plan. Part of its mission statement includes what its members term agency, which is described as "a mission-driven practice dedicated to addressing social equity, cultural vitality and environmental resilience through design excellence, strategic planning and community engagement."

The third firm, Perkins & Will Inc. has studios all over the United States and throughout the world. Its projects include the National Museum of African American History in Washington, D.C., Waterfront Botanical Gardens in Louisville, Ky. and the Historic Emancipation Park in Houston.

"Our goal is to design places that make a positive difference in the world. That's why people are at the heart of everything we do," according to the Perkins & Will website.

The commitment to replace what once was an eyesore with a beautiful outdoor park for the public to enjoy is music to the ears of a new coalition of private individuals, nonprofits and public organizations that have teamed up to advocate for a park system along the river. But the members of Riverfront Parks Now want to see more than just the Landing site turned into public space for all to enjoy.

Riverfront Parks Now consists of representatives of multiple community organizations including the St. Johns Riverkeeper; the Sierra Club; Duval Audubon Society; Scenic Jacksonville; Jacksonville Urban League and many others. Its members "envision a connected network of extensive public green space and active parks along Jacksonville's riverfront that maximizes public access, reconnects the community to our river and creates a sense of place," according to its mission statement. The group began forming last year, after multiple factors converged: flooding from Irma; the expiration of the development rights to the Shipyards and the demolition of the Landing and the old Courthouse. A survey conducted by the Riverfront Parks Now showed that 50 percent of the riverfront is now City-owned.

Nancy Powell, project manager for the Riverfront Parks Now steering committee and executive director of Scenic Jacksonville, said Riverfront Parks Now represents 13 organizations and more than 5,000 people who want to see what's left of the riverfront preserved.

"It is our mission to advocate for a major destination riverfront park and network of parks in downtown Jacksonville that we feel will help spur downtown revitalization, provide flood control and resiliency and attract economic investment, but most of all to be a showcase for the citizens of Jacksonville, a place to be outdoors and healthy, a place to be proud of, that so many others have figured out," Powell said. "We only have 10 percent of our Riverfront that is left because the rest is already privatized, across the whole riverfront, across our county. Those places where it is publicly owned happen to be downtown Jacksonville - Metropolitan Park, the Shipyards, the Landing and some other properties that may be developed. The Shipyards and parts of Metropolitan park have been targeted for development, and once (the public land is) gone, it's gone. We really need to be thoughtful about giving public access to our people to the waterfront. There are people on the Northside and other places who don't get access to the river. A free public park system that is really well done can bring all of our community together. We feel it is a win, win, win."

Powell said Riverfront Parks now is helping to give input for the design of the Landing space.

For Boyer, of DIA, the idea of more public greenspace and parks along the river is welcome. Where City official and Riverfront Parks Now members differ is in terms of scope.

"A park system along the river is something that we've always had planned," Boyer said.

"That's not new. We have always viewed both sides of the river and the Riverwalk as an interconnected park system. We value their emphasis on it. The fact that (Riverfront Parks Now is) bringing it to the fore and advocating for those really extraordinary park spaces downtown as a destination, we completely agree with. It's great to have them focused and bringing that level of attention to the issue. The places where we depart are whether every piece of publicly owned property along the property needs to be a park or whether some of it as private development could support or enhance the park space. They are taking it a step further and are asking that all City property along the property be considered for park property. That's a step further than we have been."

THE RENOVATORS

Post Street renovation meets the challenge

Lunn removed an unfinished utility porch from the back of the house. Then, he bricked up the opening and installed French doors in place of a dining room window.

Lake Shore resident Ray Lunn was looking for a challenge. Having restored cars for years, he decided that renovating a house might be a good next step. The house at 4517 Post Street in Murray Hill seemed ripe for pursuing.

"I worked two jobs to pay off my own house and truck so that I could get a home equity loan and make a cash offer," Lunn said. Lunn bought the Post Street house in January 2013 with the intention of simply renovating the kitchen and then renting it out.

"The deeper I looked, the more I found things that needed fixing," Lunn said. Built in 1928, the 900 square foot house needed a lot of help. The kitchen had four layers of floor over the original tongue-and-groove hardwood floors that Lunn wanted to refinish. A drainpipe leak had damaged the floor.

"I love attention to detail and fixing structural issues, so this house was a good project for me," said Lunn. He decided to renovate the house completely and sell it instead of renting it.

"It's a brand-new old house now with original elements but new amenities."

In the kitchen, Lunn has added granite countertops, custom maple cabinets, a deep undermount sink, garbage disposal, pass-through window over the range to allow the cook to talk with people in the living room, and under-cabinet LED lighting. He removed a window to add French doors that open to a patio.

"I installed picture molding and trim throughout the house to match the original look," he said.

In the bathroom, he installed reproductions of the original hexagon porcelain floor tile, Carrara marble wall tiles and a shower fixture for the original bathtub. He enjoyed building custom cabinets, a toilet seat and lid from maple wood that he had left over from the kitchen cabinets.

Lunn acknowledges that the house's front door was his biggest renovation challenge. He wanted to install a period-style door, but first he had to deal with the fact that the existing door was 80 inches, four inches shorter than the original opening. He turned to Eco Relics in the Mixontown neighborhood to build a new door out of maple and find the period door hardware.

"I went to YouTube to learn how to build a new casement for the door, install the door and add the lock and hinges," Lunn said. He also added exterior lighting and rain chains.

Lunn says he definitely wants to take on another project like this in the future.

"You have to have patience. I have thousands of man-hours involved in this project. It also takes upfront money," said Lunn. "You can't count on an older home being level and squared." He had to correct all the doors because the house had settled.

The house has sold.

"I wanted the house to be move-in ready and project-free, so that all the new owner will have to do is put furniture and personal touches in it," he said. "Everything that was an issue has been repaired and resolved."

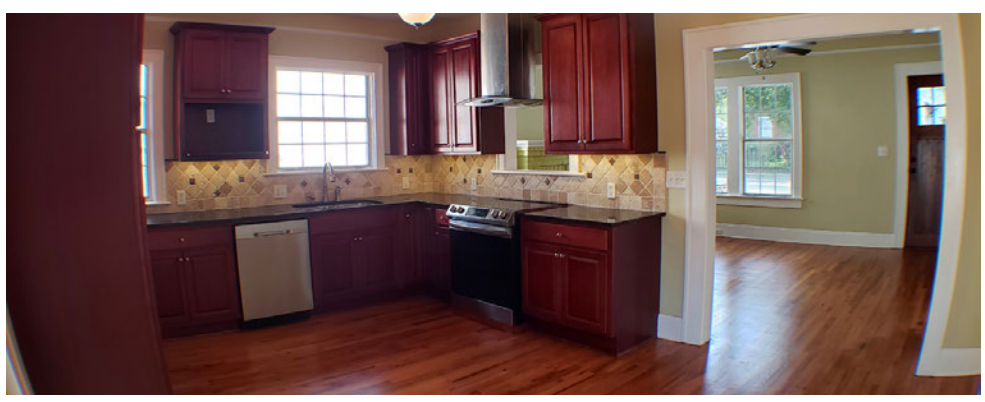
Lunn chose to buy in Murray Hill because he was looking for a stable neighborhood with a moderate price range.

"The neighborhood has really come back with a lot of young people buying and renovating homes."

Lunn is originally from Kansas City, Kansas. He came to Jacksonville to join his brother, who used to work for CSX. Lunn was in code enforcement for 12 years and then environmental for 14 years for the City of Jacksonville. He bought his home in Lake Shore in 1994 and retired from the City in 2021, which gave him more time to finish the Post Street house.

He gives this advice about buying old homes: "Buy a house you can afford and have income in reserve to have the work done. There's always more work than you can see."

LEFT (bathrooms): Lunn discovered the original hexagon porcelain tile floor under square ceramic tiles in the bathroom, which he demoed. He repaired the floor joists, installed a new floor that recreated the original look, and built a floating vanity and wall-to-wall, built-in cabinets.



Lunn made significant upgrades to the kitchen, including granite countertops, custom maple cabinets, a deep undermount sink, garbage disposal, pass-through window over the range and under-cabinet LED lighting.

Lunn built wood caps and installed carriage lights for the brick columns, replaced deteriorated facia and soffit boards before the metal roof was installed, and added a stained beadboard ceiling and rain chains.

Greenscape board members plant trees in Cuba Hunter Park

> "Planting trees is fun, it's therapeutic, it's an investment in the environment and it's one of the most unselfish acts a human can do."
>
> - Anne Dooley, Greenscape's executive director

DIANE & DAVE DAVID

PEGGY BRYAN & JENNIFER KING

About 20 members of Greenscape of Jacksonville's board of directors and some of their family members planted 15 trees on April 10 in Cuba Hunter Park. While most plantings are accomplished by volunteers, this special planting was done solely by board members to give them a chance to get their hands dirty and reconnect after a more than a year of meeting virtually due to COVID, while setting an example for other potential tree planting volunteers.

After a safety talk by Joe Anderson, forester and utility specialist with JEA, and Mike Robinson, a former JEA forester and current Greenscape associate, members planted 15-gallon size trees including eight Live Oak, four Red Maple and three Fringe Tree.

"We had brand new folks and some who went back to the beginning of our organization in the 1970s, said Anna Dooley, Greenscape's executive director. "For some it was their first tree, for others it was one of many they had added to our canopy. Planting trees is fun, it's therapeutic, it's an investment in the environment and it's one of the most unselfish acts a human can do."

For longtime board member, Carol Worsham, who lives in Venetia, the Cuba Hunter Park planting was particularly special. As a landscape architect, she originally designed the park 20 years ago and had the opportunity to plant more trees during the April event. Worsham is managing principal for HDR, an engineering, architecture, environmental and construction services company.

The park, located off Emerson Road between I-95 and Beach Boulevard, features a 10,000 square foot Skate Park with a seven-foot quarter pipe and a six-foot half pipe that have helped it to earn the title of one of the best skate parks in the United States. The park also offers basketball, soccer, a playground and plenty of room for picnics.

Greenscape is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enriching North Florida through planting, protecting and promoting trees.

Easter in Avondale

Easter on the Avenue was held on Sat April 3 in the BHHS Parking lot. The event was sponsored by the Avondale Merchants' Association Board. There were photos with Peter the Easter Rabbit, sidewalk chalk and candy. Peter paraded down the Avenue and visited every merchant and passed out candy. There were lots of smiles and fun was had by all. On May 22, the Historic Avondale Merchants Association along with sponsors Cady Realty and Love 904 are hosting a Summer Movie, *Moana* in Boone Park at 6p.m.

Avondale Merchants' Association Board (Left to Right): Tasha Brooks, Bronwyn Benoit, Peter, Missy Cady Kampmeyer, Liz Bobeck.

Heather Cosgrove at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty.

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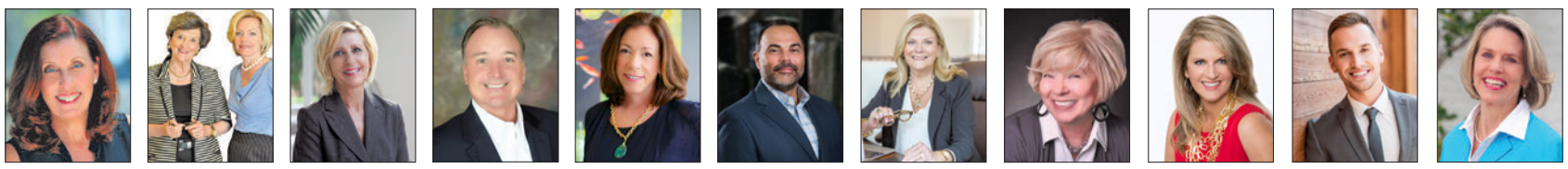

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Gene Baker with Valorie Baker, head of St. Johns Country Day School

DAY SCHOOL GALA CREATES OLD HAVANA EXPERIENCE, RAISES RENOVATION FUNDS

Guests attending St. Johns Country Day School's Gala and Auction experienced "A Night in Old Havana" on April 10 at Timuquana Country Club. The evening's events included cocktails, tapas, live music by Arriba El So, and a silent and live auction.

The event raised more than $100,000 in support of the School's quad and deck renovations. The space serves as the epicenter of the campus and an extension of classrooms, where students practice teamwork, creativity, communication skills and more. Along with a newly renovated deck and quad area, a new brick walkway will connect the Lower School with the Middle and Upper Schools.

The project is slated to start this summer.

A Berry Good time

North Florida School of Special Education's Reimagined Berry Good Farms Weekend Festival, April 8 – 11, dished up a culinary weekend filled with live music, delicious food, entertainment, and a celebration of community. This four-day fundraising event allowed guests to safely enjoy the NFSSE campus highlighting the exciting, new Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center. Event chairs, Maren and Paul Bertozzi, led the event which raised more than $150,000 for the school's academics and programs for students with mild to moderate intellectual and developmental differences.

The school's signature fundraising event, Dinner on the Farm, was a beautiful soiree. With the horses grazing nearby and surrounded by the beautiful trees, guests dined on delicious fare under the canopy of the riding arena. Local restaurateur, Jon Insetta of Restaurant Orsay, partnered with NFSSE's new executive chef, Carrie Eagle, and the culinary team to create a memorable dining experience.

Along with the Equestrian Center which opened in January 2020, the Berry Good Farms Weekend Festival spotlighted the school's microenterprises which provide vocational training to students ages 18 and up.

Marsha Oliver with 2022 BGFWF Chairs Gary and Nancy Chartrand.

Nicole Brose, Cathie Godward and Bo Bonenberger enjoy Farmaritas at Concert on the Farm.

Event Chairs Maren and Paul Bertozzi being presented with custom stained glass by Art With Soul Artist, Braxton Beattie.

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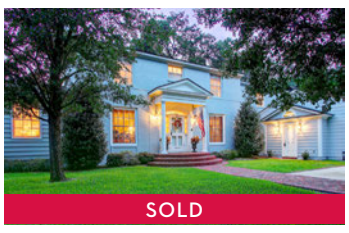

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The Veres family enjoying MOO-vie on the Farm Family Night.

STANDING UP AND INVESTING IN GIRLS

Dr. Robin Rose and GIJ Staff Members Kaitlyn Lee, Julia Ramer and Brenda Phillips.

Girls Inc. of Jacksonville recently honored three local supporters during a hybrid virtual event held March 25, streamed live from WJCT Studios. Keynote Speaker Melanie Lawson, a mentor to young girls and NEWS4JAX Morning Show Anchor played a vital role as the themed- Girls Rise Up – Standing with and Investing in Them! ceremonies played out for loyal fans, donors, volunteers, as well as friends and families of girls served by the programs.

High School senior and Luncheon Emcee Amber Ferrell welcomed three honorees to the podium, starting with Nicole Thomas, Thomas was awarded the Women of Vision honor, John. J. "Jack" Allen and Mary F. Pietan were both awarded honors as Champions for Girls during the ceremonies.

Ferrell has been in the Girls Inc. program since 6th grade and she credits Girls Inc. for helping her be prepared to graduate from high school in June. In addition, she will attend Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee to accomplish her goal of majoring in biomedical science to become a dermatologist.

Girls Inc. programs help ensure girls graduate from high school and make successful post-secondary transitions to college or the workplace and break female generational poverty cycles.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RENEE PARENTEAU

Celebration Luncheon Honoree Nicole Thomas, Hospital President at Baptist Medical Center South and her husband, Michael Thomas.

Celebration Luncheon Honoree Mary Pietan, former President of the Women's Giving Alliance, GIJ Board Member Paula Liang and Dr. Robin Rose, President & CEO of GIJ.

Dr. Robin Rose and Melanie Lawson-Minor, Luncheon Keynote Speaker and Morning News Anchor at News4JAX.

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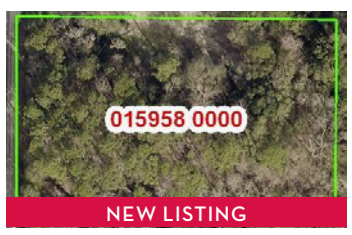

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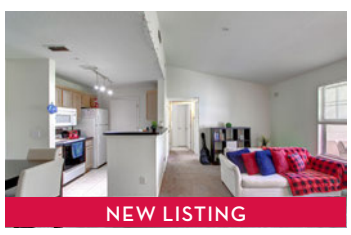

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Jacksonville has a new local league of Stonewall Sports

Stonewall Sports Jax Spring Season 2021: Left to Right - Ashton Mareth, Blake Burdett, Edwin Carvalho, Steven Kyle, Dustin Schulze, Kyle Nix, Adam Beaugh, Cameron Nord, Joe Wolf, Ricky Ostrofsky, Jeremy Dziubek, Ray Berndt, Ryan McBride, John Schmidt.

The Team: Left to Right, Back to Front - Keith Robey, Tony Keenan, Mitchell Bramlett, Travis Froehlich, Angel Centeno, Angel Santiago, Thomas Edward, Chris Oberley, Chris Medlin, Noah DuCasse.

Board of Directors of Jacksonville Chapter: Left to Right -
Dr. Zachary Neumann (Sports Director), Travis Guthrie (Treasurer), Tonee Cudi (Marketing Director),
Angel Santiago (Technical Director), Mateo Rogers (City Commissioner), Corey Brown (Events Director)

BY MARY WANSER
Resident Community News

There's a new league in the Greater Jacksonville area, Stonewall Sports Jax. This inaugural season's registration brought in 290 players, divided into 15 teams. The season opener took place on Sunday, April 11 at Willowbranch Park.

Stonewall Sports is an LGBTQ and Ally community-based, non-profit sports organization founded in 2010 that strives to raise funds for charitable organizations. (Ally refers to allies who are in support of the LGBTQ community but do not identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual themselves.) The league is open to all, ages 21+. "We are thrilled with the opportunity to launch our very own Jacksonville chapter," said Corey J. Brown, the local representative and sports director.

Their Vision: We believe every person should have the ability to feel comfortable being oneself in organized sports. Our league will value each player for who they are and what one brings to the league's community. We also believe organized communities have the ability and responsibility to support others in need.

Their Mission: To provide an inclusive, low-cost, high FUN sports league that is managed as a non-profit with a philanthropic heart.

Just as Stonewall Sports national is a non-profit organization, so is the local Jacksonville chapter. All income to the league, even from registration, goes to a charitable foundation. Each season, Stonewall Sports Jax will choose a different local charity to support. For spring, it's JASMYN, which supports and empowers displaced LGBTQ youth, promoting equality and human rights.

Monetary donations are accepted and so is game equipment. Sponsorship levels are available for businesses wishing to print their logo on jerseys, ballcaps, water bottles, and the like. Sponsorship applications and donation packets are available on Stonewall Sports Jax's Facebook page and website.

This inaugural season, spring 2021, is devoted to kickball. There will be an upcoming summer and a fall season that will focus on different sports of the 16 approved by the national organization. Possibilities include beach volleyball, tennis, bocce ball, and others. Registration for these will open in late May; go to https://StonewallJax.LeagueApps.com/ or StonewallSportsJax on either Facebook or Instagram.

All spectators are welcome. Kickball games are played on the baseball grounds at Willowbranch Park in Riverside every Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The spring season runs April 11 to May 23.

Bloom and grow where you are planted

Thoai Nguyen, Mai Tran with baby Harrison with Susan Snider

Thoai Nguyen, Mai Tran & active volunteers

Jeff an Linsay Knox

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS
Resident Community News

The concept of "bloom and grow where you are planted" certainly applies to Mai Tran, an attorney with the state department and her husband Thoai Nguyen a mechanical engineer. These intrepid, grateful refugees traveled a circuitous route from Viet Nam to Jacksonville to plant a garden and live the American Dream. Mai Tran said, "I have always yearned to pay it forward. This country, and its people, have already given us so much."

Mai Tran's father came to the U.S. as a boat refugee selling all his possessions, including his wedding ring. to escape the communist regime of Vietnam. It took five years before he could bring his wife and Mai to America. Thoai's father fought alongside the Americans during his time in the South Vietnamese military. He was a prisoner of war and was separated from his family for almost seven years. Thoai was fourteen years old when the family sought political asylum in the U.S. Mai said she thinks her husband enjoys working in the community garden they started on the corner of Retaw and San Juan because it reminds him of home. "Back in the village, growing vegetables and catching fish was a normal way of life. Sharing crops with neighbors was a common practice." Since buying the vacant lot in 2020 their community has grown along with their vegetables. There are over 140 people in this hardworking group! They have a Facebook, Neighborhood App and You Tube presence to encourage people to visit and enjoy their bounty.

The couple met while in graduate school at University of North Florida where they bonded over their charity and community efforts of renovation projects and work in soup kitchens. After they wed and purchased a house in Lakeshore, they would drive by the vacant lot and wonder if anyone was ever going to do anything with it. So, they "saved their pennies" and bought it! Mai said, "When Covid-19 quarantine started in 2020, we decided that it would be the perfect opportunity to use the space as a safe place for neighbors to come together over a common interest." They hoped to lift morale while producing crops to donate to charitable groups and to share their bounty – no strings attached. She confessed, "It became a social experiment to give people a chance to come together and just give and do good for others without asking for anything in return. It is a labor of love."

Donations of plants and mulch came from the members and the wood donated by Mandi Stuart Wolters from her late mother's wheelchair ramp went into the construction of the benches and table built by Thoai and Lee Hoyt, the "president" of the casually organized group who calls his wife Tonda the "science officer." Besides sharing with neighbors and friends, the industrious group donates fresh vegetables to the Rosa Lee Brannon Food Pantry of St. Catherine's Episcopal Church. Susan Snider of St. Catherine's was at the garden on a recent Saturday to receive vegetables and expressed her appreciation for the group's efforts and the bounty of fresh food supplied by the community garden for St. Catherine's outreach program.

With about a dozen regular and active members who work on Saturday mornings, the group has certainly responded to the definition of community in terms of a feeling of fellowship and sharing common interests and goals. They have sponsored Bar-B-Ques to raise interest on well digging days. Yes, they dug a well! Thoai and neighbor Jeff Knox dug three times until they hit the right spot. They now have a wonderful red pump to get water, however, they need electricity and an irrigation system before the summer heat dries out the tomatoes, kale, cabbage, squash, and other fruits and vegetables in the young garden. Moses Weary of Permaculture Jax visited recently to offer support and advice on techniques for the self- sustaining gardening.

Mark your calendar for Saturday May 22nd from 10 am – 12 noon for fun and fellowship, a visit with artists from Jacksonville Artists Guild and other plein air painters, SPRUCE Mobile Flower Shop, (a portion of sales will go to Lakeshore Community Garden) and a tour of the garden whose decorative sign was created by Linsay Craig-Knox and Jeff Knox.

Visit Lakeshore Community Garden on Facebook. Visits and donations to the garden are always welcome. Contact Lee Hoyt at 904-476-6921.

A jewelry experience unlike any other in the area

RELATIONSHIPS AND GOLDEN RULE AT THE CORE OF SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

There is no window shopping nor any fancy window dressings at Nicolaas Alexander Jewelers and Appraisers at 3975 St. Johns Avenue. But, like an unadorned jewelry box with several sparkling gems inside, there is a wealth of beauty and extensive services concealed in the unassuming building.

From custom and estate jewelry appraisal, repair, restoration or complete reimaginations of rings, stones and jewels from all rare corners of the world, gemologists Douglas Struble and Karel Moerings, alongside office manager Candace Helms, offer personal service whether you are purchasing, consigning or selling.

"We don't follow the general jewelry store model. We do not stand behind counters in our showroom. We don't sell designer jewelry brands or lines. It's usually custom or estate. There is no pressure, no full court press," said owner, Karel Moerings. "You can't just walk by and window shop, so you have to come in and visit. When someone comes in, we want them to feel like they are coming into someone's home."

The jewelry store, like its owner, has quite a history and history has been one of Moerings' loves. He has a degree in psychology from UNF, worked as a child abuse-delinquency counselor, and was the Executive Director of Methodist Hospital Foundation for all the gift shops before starting his own jewelry shop.

Moerings graduated from Gemological Institute of America based in Santa Monica, California and subsequently opened his jewelry business in Avondale in 1989. The name Nicolaas Alexander pays respect to, and honors his father, who spoke eight languages and worked with the Dutch Resistance during WWII.

Born and raised in Jacksonville, the younger Moerings is married to Dawn, has a son Nicolaas and daughter Annalise who is also a gemologist. She will be returning to Jacksonville to join the Nicolaas Alexander team and work with her father soon. Moerings' mother, Betty, was also a guidance counselor and teacher, she also worked as a secretary to a Dutch general during the war. For his parents, it was always about building personal character, that model has carried over into Karel's business dealings and life experiences.

DOUGLAS STRUBLE AND KAREL MOERINGS

"Most of our business is from client referrals. It's more than just putting a price on something," shared Moerings. Not only does Karel serve his customers in the local area, he provides appraisals for multiple government agencies, illustrating the level of trust placed in his hands.

"Sometimes items are seized and need to be evaluated or as in the case of IRS, qualify a value for estate and donation purposes. Having a formal education helps with the ability to research and study. I love the history and the science."

For Douglas Struble, who has been working alongside Moerings for 25 years, being flexible and wearing many different hats is a must. As goldsmith, he carries a design from start to finish and emphasized that everything is done on site.

"I wake up happy because I enjoy what I do," Struble said. "It's great to make something unique. We are pretty laid back and it is all about making the client happy. We treat everybody the same whether they spend $150.00 or drop $100,000."

Of the numerous plaques and awards and certifications displayed on the walls one of the most poignant is dedicated to Doug with a photo of a couple in a hospital room. Doug's contribution of handcrafted wedding rings enabled the couple to exchange wedding vows before the gentleman passed away. Moerings and Struble could not agree on the number of sterling silver honor guard badges they have created for JSO members over the years but acknowledge that they number in the hundreds. They emphasized that it was not for special recognition for themselves but for the community. Struble's son-in-law and grandson are in the Police Department.

Outside of the numerous memberships, affiliations, and certifications from the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers to the International Gem Society, the business is run by an easy-going, kind group of folks.

Cheerful, friendly Candace Helms has been greeting people at Nicolaas Alexander for 18 years. The group shares a common history in their love of their work and there is evidence of Moerings' interesting family history in the crest on the wall and his father's bookcase with bullet holes from the Nazis which houses Karel's many research books.

Their motto is "Life is not measured in the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away." Custom jewelry from Nicolaas Alexander could create one of those moments. Contact them at (904) 388-4212.

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Responding to need motivates donors

> "I tend to give where I volunteer. I like seeing the faces of clients and hearing their stories."
> - Carolyn Phanstiel

BY KAREN J. RIELEY
Resident Community News

Carolyn Phanstiel doesn't consider herself a philanthropist; instead, she describes her desire to help others as being like a child's pinwheel with three spokes — a whoops-moments spoke, spreading-the-love spoke and a when-enough-is-enough spoke.

Mariette Broduer, principal consultant for MTB Consulting, asked Phanstiel to share her thoughts about philanthropic giving, along with John Zell's description of a donor with whom he is working in his role as vice president of development for The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, with members and guests of the Planned Giving Council of Northeast Florida during its virtual April meeting.

Three "whoops moments" in particular have inspired Phanstiel to make annual gifts to organizations, as well to create a family legacy of giving that she hopes her children and grandchildren will continue. While in Taiwan as a teacher, she recalled seeing street signs in Chinese and wondering why they weren't in English.

"That's when I realized that not everything is about me," she said.

While she was in the American Samoa, she observed her children experiencing a culture that was focused on caring and sharing. "No one goes hungry there," she said. "The schoolchildren all share money at lunchtime to make sure everyone eats."

Phanstiel's third "whoops" happens once a year when she volunteers to help with the homeless count in Nassau County.

"I remember driving in certain areas and seeing one 20-year-old girl living in a tent behind Walmart and another couple living under a bridge."

Her faith compels her to "spread the love," the second spoke on her pinwheel of giving.

"One day I was in a church and as I exited after the service I noticed a sign over the portal that said 'Now the service begins.' That really hit me."

Another time her son and grandchildren were on the beach in Fernandina hunting for sharks' teeth.

"My grandson came running back to the house to tell her that his father gave their best sharks' teeth to a woman and her son they met on the beach who had been having trouble finding sharks' teeth on their own," Phanstiel said.

She has been reflecting on the third spoke on her pinwheel, "when enough is enough," since her retirement.

"I'm thinking about when I have enough stuff and enough money to be satisfied and when it is time to give money away," she said.

Zell shared that his donor is motivated by "removing the thorn in his shoe" by donating to fix things that he believes he can improve. This particular donor is an only child who grew up poor. He views his work as a public school teacher and church organist/choir director as part of his way of giving back.

"His church musician work has always been his passion, even though it is a side job," said Zell. "He wanted to fix things to make the church better, like poor air conditioning where the choir and organist sat and equipment to make the organ play lower notes and louder, so his wife and he gave the money needed for both of those projects."

Both donors express the amount of difference they are able to make versus the quantities of people they are able to help as the way they measure impact.

"I tend to give where I volunteer," Phanstiel said. "I like seeing the faces of clients and hearing their stories. Also, I check Charity Navigator because I want to make sure the organization is a good steward in making sure that my dollars count."

In terms of estate planning, Phanstiel has picked four organizations and her estate gifts to them will be done through The Community Foundation as a family advised fund.

"My family decided one Christmas that instead of buying gifts for each other we would put the amount of money we would have spent in a family advised fund and then hold a family council to decide which charity would receive the funds that year, which has become a family legacy that I hope will continue," she said.

Zell's donor is focusing on distribution of Apple stock that he bought for $15 a share when Apple first started putting computers in schools, which improved his experience as a teacher. Annual contributions from these stocks as they have appreciated have enabled him to avoid capital gains tax and make meaningful gifts beyond what he would be able to do from his personal checkbook.

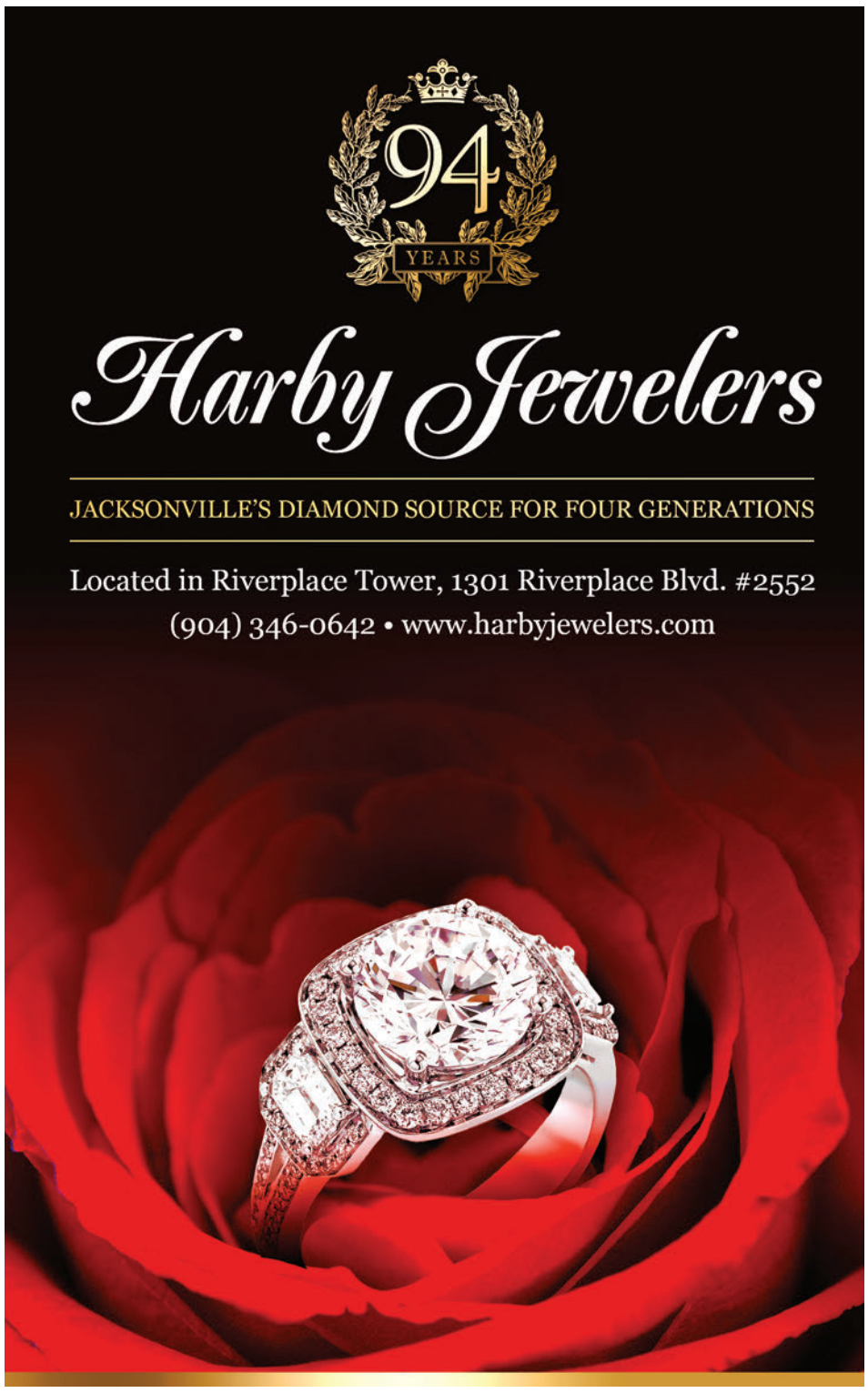
The donor is working on a charitable reminder trust that will mostly benefit the church that he has attended since his retirement. He wants to fund an annual organ recital with a nationally recognized organist that will raise fund to bolster the church's operating budget.

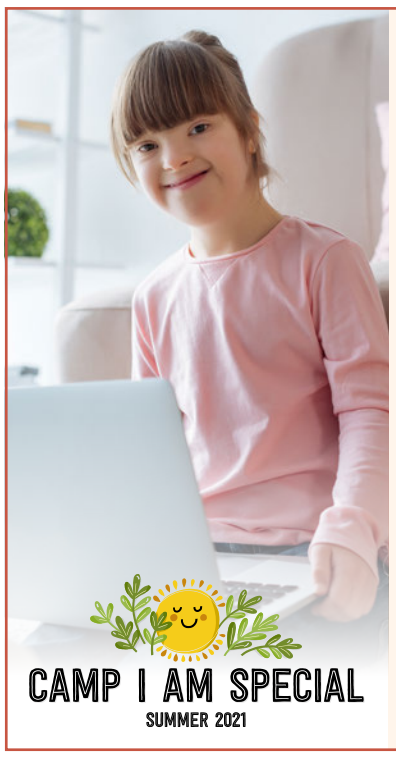
The meeting produced three takeaways for attendees. Phanstiel shared that she thinks organizations should focus on their volunteers who are already invested in their organization. "That seems to be low-hanging fruit," she said.

Zell notes that primary prospects are those who give every year and volunteer. "There is an exponential increase that they will want to give an estate gift." The importance of listening to the donor is the third takeaway.

"I'd probably be turned off if a fundraiser or professional advisor approached me about giving," Phanstiel said. "Strong values and a realization of what is needed has to be in place already."

"It has to be their idea, not your direct ask," Zell said. "My job is to help them build out their goals so that they feel joy about what is going to be accomplished."





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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 ...

COUNTRY MUSIC GROUP HELPS RAISE FUNDS

More than 400 people attended this year's digital experience on April 14th, which was emceed by J.P. Shadrick, radio and TV host for the Jaguars, and chaired by Michele and Chuck Divita, Executive Vice President Commercial Markets at GuideWell and Florida Blue.

The evening also featured the compelling story of a local Jacksonville man who suffered sudden cardiac arrest in his home and survived due to his wife's immediate CPR response prior to the arrival of paramedics. Funds from the event support life-saving research, education and raising awareness for cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

"Our team was so thrilled by the remarkable attendance for this year's digital experience," said Amber Wilson, executive director of the First Coast American Heart Association. "Every year we are honored and amazed by the tremendous support we receive within our community at Heart Ball. This year was no different and we look forward to returning to the ballroom in 2022."

Nicole Thomas, hospital president of Baptist Medical Center South.

Mayo Clinic CEO_Dr. Kent Thielen and wife Dr. Jackie Thielen.

Privacy for the playground

West Riverside Elementary School (WRES) volunteers successfully installed a hedgerow along the Park Street fence of the school. Over a dozen volunteers from WRES, including parents and students, spent the day getting their hands dirty. Approximately 50 Variegated Ligustrum were planted and will grow into a privacy hedge creating a buffer between the school's playground and Park Street. Asiatic Jasmine was also planted to create groundcover and the entire area was mulched with 50 bags of natural pine bark. The landscaping is especially noticeable by drivers who pass the backside of the school on Park Street. The plantings help to beautify the historic neighborhood school.

The project was funded by the West Riverside Elementary Parent Teacher Association (PTA) through funds raised in their fall fundraising campaign. The PTA Landscaping Committee is led by PTA parents, Dr. Sarah Campbell Austin of Women's Physicians of Jacksonville and Mrs. Heather Staples of Riverside. According to Dr. Austin, "It's been exciting to be a part of this project. I joined the West Riverside Elementary PTA in 2018, when my daughter started kindergarten. It has been a real source of joy and I've gotten to know so many other parents and neighbors. It feels great to be a part of such a dedicated group and affect change in one small piece of the world."

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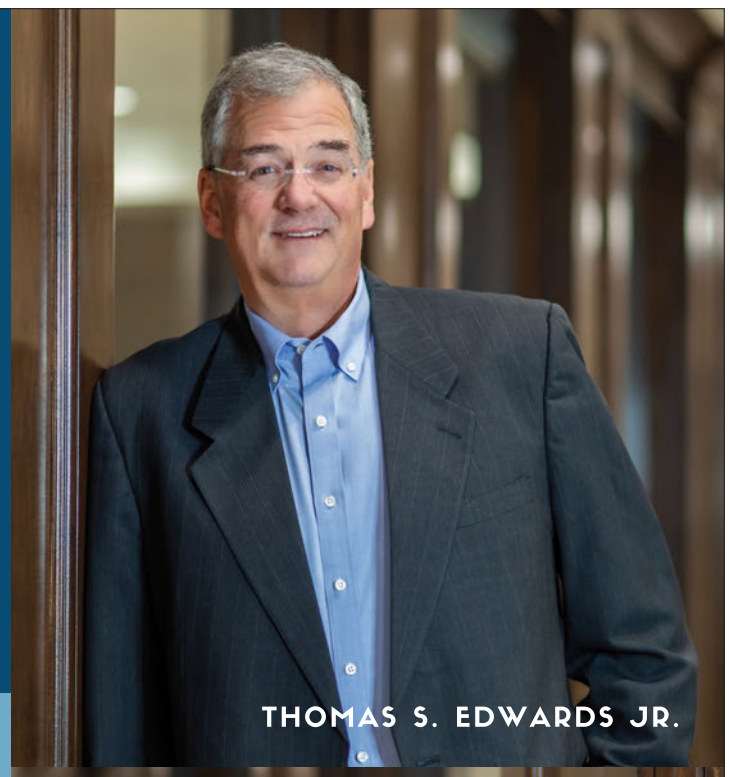

ANIMAL HOUSE

Ceremonial White Dove Releases

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA
Resident Community News

When ceremonial white doves lift up and soar off into the sky, it is a mesmerizing, achingly beautiful sight that momentarily stops time. Throughout history, pristine white doves have symbolically and visually embodied the deepest human emotions, whether of sorrow and loss, joyful celebration or religious significance.

However, those lifetime memories inspired by white doves released heavenward, harshly contrast with what can happen next, if the released birds are not professionally trained to fly home. What happens to white doves after release? Sadly, few people ask questions, or verify professional credentials of anyone offering the service.

Healthy birds professionally bred and trained for their superior homing instincts and flight skills, and banded for owner identification, are the only birds that should be used for humane ceremonial release, according to the National White Dove Release Society (NWDRS), American Dove Association (ADA), National Pigeon Association (NPA) and the National Audubon Society (NAS). Professional bird trainer/handlers belong to one or more of these organizations and abide by established, ethical standards of bird care and ownership.

Trained homing birds rise directly up into the sky after release, circle above to gain their bearings and fly away. Capable of flight speeds from 70 mph to 80 mph or more, with quick maneuverability and keen vision, they swiftly reach their highest flight elevation. This ascent helps thwart hawks who hunt by high-speed downward dives. The birds return directly to their home lofts, usually with a 90% or higher safe return rate, according to experts.

Untrained, non-homing birds released for ceremonies, usually land immediately and may never leave the release area. Those blindingly white birds, fed, watered and protected from their hatch date, have no knowledge of how to find safe food, water and shelter. Confused and waiting to be cared for, they perch in trees, stand or aimlessly walk around, approach or follow people: easy prey for air and land predators. Others die of dehydration or starvation.

One local expert, bird trainer/handler of fifty years, Mike Pirrone and his wife, Carolyn, formed their business, Pirrone White Dove Release, in 1996. Their business was a complete surprise. Mike Pirrone unintentionally bred two white birds from his flock of racing pigeons; a forty-year hobby that won him countless awards. Pirrone took his white birds to St. Paul's Catholic Church, for release during services. That sparked continuous requests for white dove release ceremonies.

"We see the birds – living symbols of purity and hope - bring comfort, peace and closure for grieving families or add so much joy to celebrations. We meet wonderful people who invite us into their lives to share and commemorate their sacred milestone events and we realized, this is what we are meant to do," the couple said. "Money is not the priority. What these white birds mean to people, the emotions of the release ceremony and how it affects families, that's what matters."

There is some confusion about the seemingly interchangeable use of the terms dove and pigeon to describe these white birds. According to the National Audubon Society, there are approximately 300 different species of doves and pigeons in the family Columbidae. Renowned ornithologist Kenn Kaufman, Audubon field editor and author of multiple bird field guides, explained that, "…pigeon and dove are two different words for birds in that family…like egret and heron."

Although related, birds capable of learning to home long distances after release, are not domestic doves, Ringneck Doves or other varieties often sold at pet stores, pet bird shows or online. The birds with powerful homing instincts and fast distance flight ability are homing pigeons specifically bred for their white color.

Mike & Carolyn Pirrone holding their ceremonial white birds in front of one of their lofts.n front of their home loft.

Homing pigeons possess an internal compass in their brains. Once successfully trained, that compass guides them with unerring accuracy back to their home loft. This ability made them valuable throughout history as messenger-carriers, and later for the worldwide sport of pigeon racing. Homing carrier pigeons were used extensively for military communications by the 19th century. They were the only reliable means of communication during both world wars.

The Pirrones band and train their birds to home as soon as the chicks are weaned, at

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Mike holding one of his birds at a white dove release ceremony.

about a month of age. From initial short backyard flights to and from their lofts, by the age of five months they easily fly fifty miles back to their home loft. Because these birds can live up to twenty years, this commitment is longterm. The Pirrones keep every bird for the duration of its lifetime, which currently has Mike busy constructing another new loft for additional space.

The white color that distinguishes these birds as an historical symbol of love, hope, peace and purity, also makes them more vulnerable to predators after release; a fact upheld by critics of release ceremonies as inhumane.

The Pirrones, parents of two and doting grandparents of five, care for their birds as lovingly as their children. They painstakingly take every possible precaution, and say the birds are born to fly and love the freedom of release and flight back home. Every Pirrone bird is blessed by a Catholic priest from their church.

The Pirrones' white homing pigeons with leg bands clearly visible.

With safety a constant priority, the Pirrones have a proven system for successful flights. Only fully trained birds are released, in pairs or more; they fly best in a flock. The Pirrones are practically meteorologists, who follow NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association) reports and monitor weather conditions 24/7. Their birds only fly in daylight and good weather; rain or wind postpones or cancels events. They inspect release sites prior to every ceremony to assess danger and are experts at spotting, distracting or warding off hawks pre-release. They only accept events within fifty miles of the birds' home loft, although the birds are capable of longer distance flights.

Mr. Pirrone, one of eight sons born to a large Italian family in Philadelphia, grew up raising racing pigeons and shared a lifelong love of the birds and the sport, with his father. After he and Carolyn married, they relocated to Jacksonville in 1980. The Pirrones had careers: he in the Mayport shrimp industry and Carolyn at Mayo, Landstar and Ford.

Their "retirement" business training birds for release ceremonies comes complete with special decorations, creative baskets for the birds and a framed dove keepsake for participants. They keep in touch with families and both agree that it has brought a higher, completely unexpected purpose to their lives.

The Pirrones describe a dark side to this beautiful ceremonial tradition, and it centers around unscrupulous individuals who purchase any white squabs (fledgling birds) to use for release ceremonies. Purchased for a few dollars from poultry farms, backyard breeders or elsewhere, these birds are bought solely for their white color, not any homing or distance flight ability, with no intention of any training.

These birds are often kept in squalid conditions, with little or no recommended care or necessary vaccines to prevent disease and infection. They are not treated with any compassion, but are deliberately raised as cheaply as possible: products to be sold, released and abandoned for maximum, quick profit.

This article was inspired by the day my daughter called home from college to tell me two pure white doves – with no leg bands - were on her dorm balcony, obviously tame and begging for food. What followed was a lot of research that resulted in a happy ending for those birds and a need to publicize the facts and issues regarding white doves released for ceremonies.

If an obviously tame, lost, ill or injured bird is found, first secure the space where they are located to prevent flight, or provide safe confinement in a pet crate or cardboard box with holes for light and air. Next, provide bird seed and water. Note any injures or if the bird's leg is banded. Whether it is white or has colors, write down the number and letters on the leg band and contact: www.nwdrs.org, National White Dove Release Society or www.npausa.com, National Pigeon Association. The band number and letters identify that bird, its owner and registration for safe return. If there is no identification band, contact any local animal welfare organization, bird rescue group or lost pet organization for help.

Those interested in a professional white dove release ceremony, can visit the following websites for extensive information and how to contact a reputable, professional homing bird trainer/handler.

John Glisson overcame autism to earn the rank of Eagle Scout and is pictured with his father, George Glisson at a white dove release ceremony held in his honor by his family.

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National White Dove Release Society & Directory
www.nwdrs.org

The White Dove Directory
www.whitedovedirectory.com

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www.npausa.com

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LOCAL FOLKS

Clark LaBlond

BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS
Resident Community News

"We all love him. He's so funny and witty. He was a really, really popular teacher."

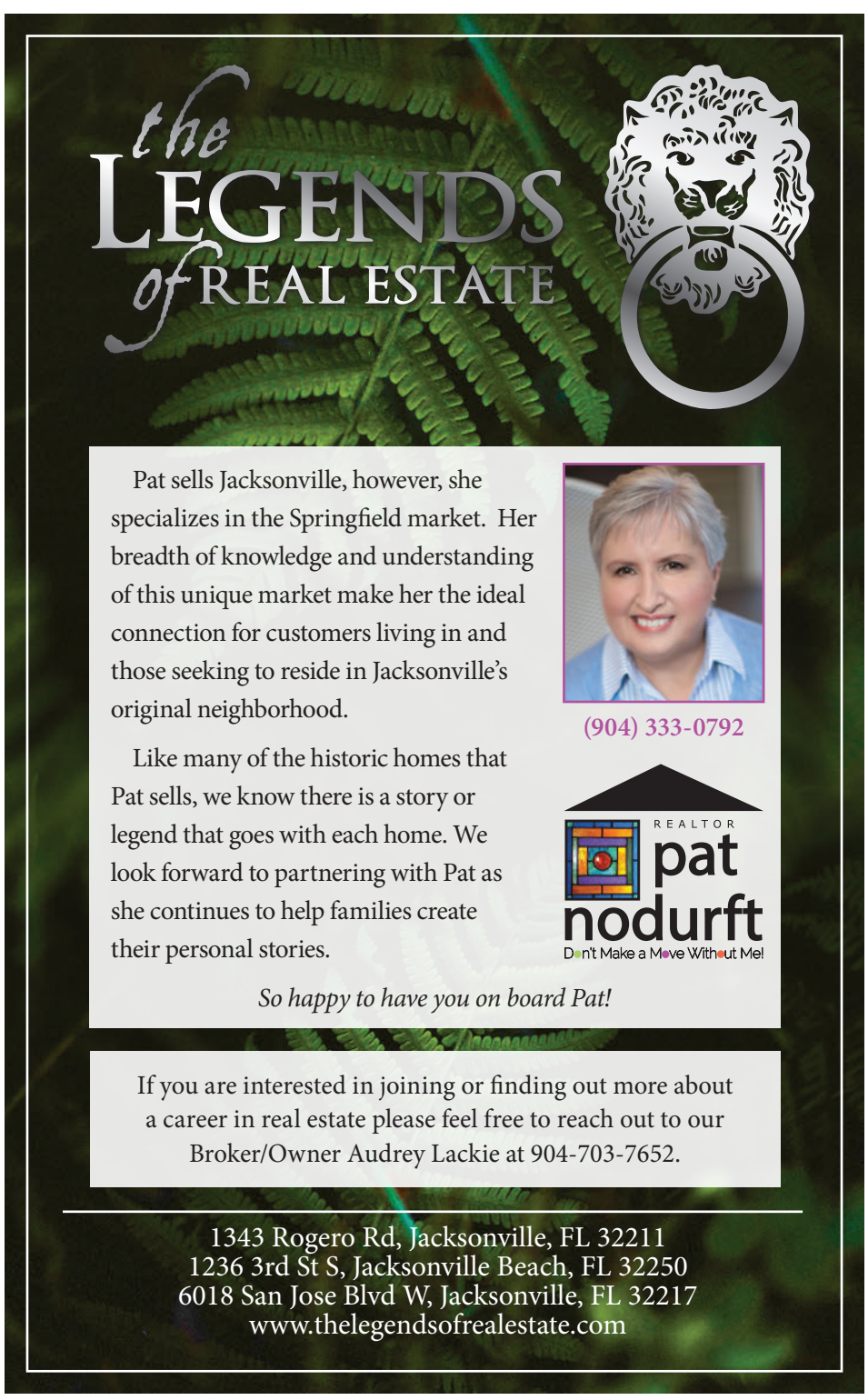
- Sue Barry, LaBlond's Jazzercize student

Clark LaBlond did not grow up in Jacksonville. It took him until 1995 to return to the Bold City after hip hopping from California to Minnesota to Jacksonville then Chicago and, finally back to where he now calls home. This traveling man attended school in California where he swam competitively, played football, was in Indian Guides and dreamed of becoming a veterinarian. While in high school he applied for an elite program which accepted only 40 people from all over the country for vet training. The acceptance letter arrived. His parents were thrilled. He was not. By then he had changed his mind. After some intense bargaining with his parents, he attended and absolutely loved it.

He continued his training in college with large animals – horses and cattle – but then switched from UC Davis to California Polytechnic and majored in Broadcast Journalism. His indulgent parents set more rigid boundaries and he gained a summer internship with Coldwell-Banker Realty where he was mentored by the agency owner who was a great influence on him. LaBlond explained that his parents and his maternal grandmother also helped mold the person he is today. He said, "My parents were absolutely amazing people – my mother was so talented. I developed my appreciation of the arts from her. She had breast cancer then developed ALS, but she got involved in a test study. She never complained and she taught me about being true to your core. She had great strength and fortitude. And my father worked tirelessly. I learned about having a strong work ethic. He was so patient and loving; I learned the gentle side of being a male from him even though he was 6'1" weighed 250 pounds and had played football for USC. He was a teddy bear."

After traveling around the country, LaBlond returned to Jacksonville where he had previously worked in advertising and stayed in the guest house of friends Ric Goodman and John Hurtubise in Avondale. He had many opportunities to check out the historic district and purchased a home on Powell Place in 1997. As fate would have it, Rick and John invited "this poor California boy over for a party" and introduced him to their friend Ben Montgomery a Jacksonville resident since 1974. LaBlond described Ben as a "tall, good looking guy with the kindest soul. He is so genuine and has

CLARK LABLOND



CLARK LABLOND & BEN MONTGOMERY

CLARK LABLOND & BEN MONTGOMERY

a huge heart." It took a while, but the duo got engaged in 2018 and were married in October of 2020 at a friend's house on the river. There were fireworks and custom masks for the 300 plus attendees! The couple loves to travel and despite concerned objections from friends concerning Covid, off they went to Egypt for their honeymoon. LaBlond explained that it was the trip of a lifetime and the timing was perfect because of Covid keeping the crowds away. They went on a hot air balloon ride at 4 A.M., rode camels, took a boat ride down the Nile with only 10 people on board and were the only visitors to one of the pyramids. The guard had to unlock the gate; Clark climbed into the burial vault and was the only person inside soaking up the mysterious allure of the ancient tomb.

The couple looks forward to visiting friends in Greece and going to New York when Broadway reopens. They support the arts locally, are members of The Cummer Gallery, Friends of Jax and LaBlond serves on several real estate related organizations as General Manager of The Legends Real Estate. The couple attend St. Paul's Catholic Church, binge watch random tv shows but like feel good movies, musicals, and animation films. The duo loves to get dressed up to entertain and cook for their friends. Clark's California style of cooking is just "throwing something together- pasta, chicken." He says Ben has one signature dish – chicken curry. "Whether it's dressed up or casual, we want our guests to say, 'We feel so comfortable here.' If its cheese and crackers or something fancier, we want a place where people can just BE. And have fun."

Sue Barry, one of LaBlond's Jazzercise students (add that to his resume') said that Clark often invited students over to the house for parties and they were definitely lots of fun. She said, "We all love him. He's so funny and witty. He was a really, really popular teacher." LaBlond gave up on his Jazzercise teaching in 2020 after 17 years although he has maintained many friendships with his Jazzercise pals.

For Valentine's Day the creative and fun minded LaBlond amused his partner Ben by staging a personalized scavenger hunt which involved a trip to the florist for flowers and to pick up a clue, then to Avondale Gift Boutique for another clue and on and on until finally out to dinner.

This "poor California boy" and Ben now have an entourage of adoring friends to entertain. Clark's sister, her family and 2 cousins now live in Jacksonville as well so there will be many opportunities for the two some to welcome folks to their home- throw something together and have fun. Although he and Ben have sold their Avondale homes they are not straying from the fold. They are seeking a house in the historic district where they can entertain, share their generous spirits with friends and family and enjoy their lives together.

TAYLOR RICHARDSON IS REACHING FOR THE STARS

Mural of Taylor Richardson on the Upper Eastside of Jacksonville.

PHOTO CREDIT: RENEE PARENTEAU

TAYLOR RICHARDSON

At only 17 years old, Taylor Richardson has already impacted the local community, the country, the world. She aspires to someday impact space.

Taylor is determined to visit Mars. "A little Black girl walking around in an astronaut's suit saying she wants to go to Mars was a very lofty dream. But she is doing the work to try to ensure that," said her mother, Latonja Richardson.

Taylor's service and advocacy work began when she was 9 years old when she built a Mars colony, a project that earned her a stay at Alabama's Space Camp where she was the only Black girl of 500 attending. There, she was given the nickname Astronaut StarBright.

"Most people know her for her philanthropy skills. In the last three years, Taylor has raised almost $250,000 for girls' empowerment and STEM resources for girls, particularly girls of color, not just nationally, but internationally as well," said Latonja.

"Through my work, the legacy I want to leave behind is to bring a sisterhood of warriors with me all the way to the stars by disrupting the status quo where Black girls like me have equal representation at the table," Taylor said. And her intention is not only to benefit Black girls, but all girls.

Taylor launched The Black Friend Challenge, hoping to distribute 100 copies of the book The Black Friend by Frederick Joseph as a way to prompt dialogue to combat racism. So far, she's raised over $22,000, and all 21 Jacksonville public libraries now have the book available, as do over 30 states and 40 US Embassies.

In June 2019, Taylor was the first Black girl and the youngest ever to receive an "Aspiring EVE" award by The Florida Times-Union. Though she is still too young to vote, in summer 2019, Taylor helped 150 Jacksonville youth register to vote. She has been interviewed on national news shows along with celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and Mae Jemison, the first African American woman to travel through space.

Taylor has spoken at conferences around the world to push #RepresentationMatters. She has graced the covers of two scholastic science magazines. She was voted 2017 Girl of the Year for Women in Aviation, being the first African American girl to do so. She is featured in two documentary films that are doing well in festivals across the country. She has her own Wikipedia page, and a list of other accomplishments too lengthy to print.

As a young child, Taylor was bullied due to the color of her skin and to her diagnosis of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). She changed the acronym to Abundantly Different Happily Divine, trademarked that name, and now sells ADHD apparel. The proceeds she donates to a local ADHD foundation and to space initiatives.

Taylor has proven that labels of any sort need not hold anyone back from following their dreams and achieving their goals. "What I'm most proud about with Taylor is not her successes but how she has handled her failures, how she has handled being bullied," said Latonja.

Despite her early setbacks, Taylor is currently a junior at The Bolles School, maintaining a 3.8 GPA while attending virtual classes. Her next step is college; she wants to be a physician, a scientist, and an astronaut. Then, it's to Mars.

"Kids are not 'the future;' we are here now. We are not going to change the world 'someday;' we are already doing it," Taylor said.

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THE WOLFPACK FINISHES BEST SEASON YET, MAKE QUARTER FINALS IN LACROSSE

Varsity Girls Lacrosse team at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies.

On April 12, the Varsity Girls Lacrosse team of Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies finished their best season in the school's history by defeating Paxon in the district quarter-finals hosted at Wolfson.

The game made for a total of seven wins and five losses for the team in the 2021 season. This was a huge accomplishment considering that many team members are first-time lacrosse players competing against veteran players. A further challenge to the team's development was posed by the pandemic, which suspended all spring sports last year.

This is a young team, the newest in the North Florida area. It was started by Jessica Fessenden, Head Coach, only three years ago and is led by sophomores Kaylee Carolan, Kaili Wery, and Campbell Scharer.

"Finishing the 2021 season with seven wins is a huge accomplishment that the Wolfpack is very proud of," said Fessenden. The team is looking forward to growing and competing in the future against some of the larger programs in the region.

Erik Williams wins 3rd consecutive First Coast Spelling Bee

The Williams family: L-R Annica, Erik, David, and Alan.

St. Johns Country Day School is proud to announce that Erik Williams, 8th grade student, has won his 3rd consecutive First Coast Spelling Bee.

On Monday, March 2, Williams became the 2021 champion after correctly spelling the word abience. Other notable words he mastered included vervet, orogeny, and quiddity.

The Bee lasted over three hours and Williams emerged victorious through 39 rounds, defeating 13 other contestants from across the First Coast. "Congratulations, Erik!" said Regan Minners from the school's communications department.

The coronavirus pandemic caused this year's local competition to be held virtually, but Williams is now preparing for the Scripps National Spelling Bee that is scheduled to be held in person on Thursday, July 8 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort in Bay Lake, near Orlando. The St. Johns Spartan family will be cheering Williams on.

Florida Dairy Farmers name Bishop Kenny Player and Coach of the Year in Volleyball

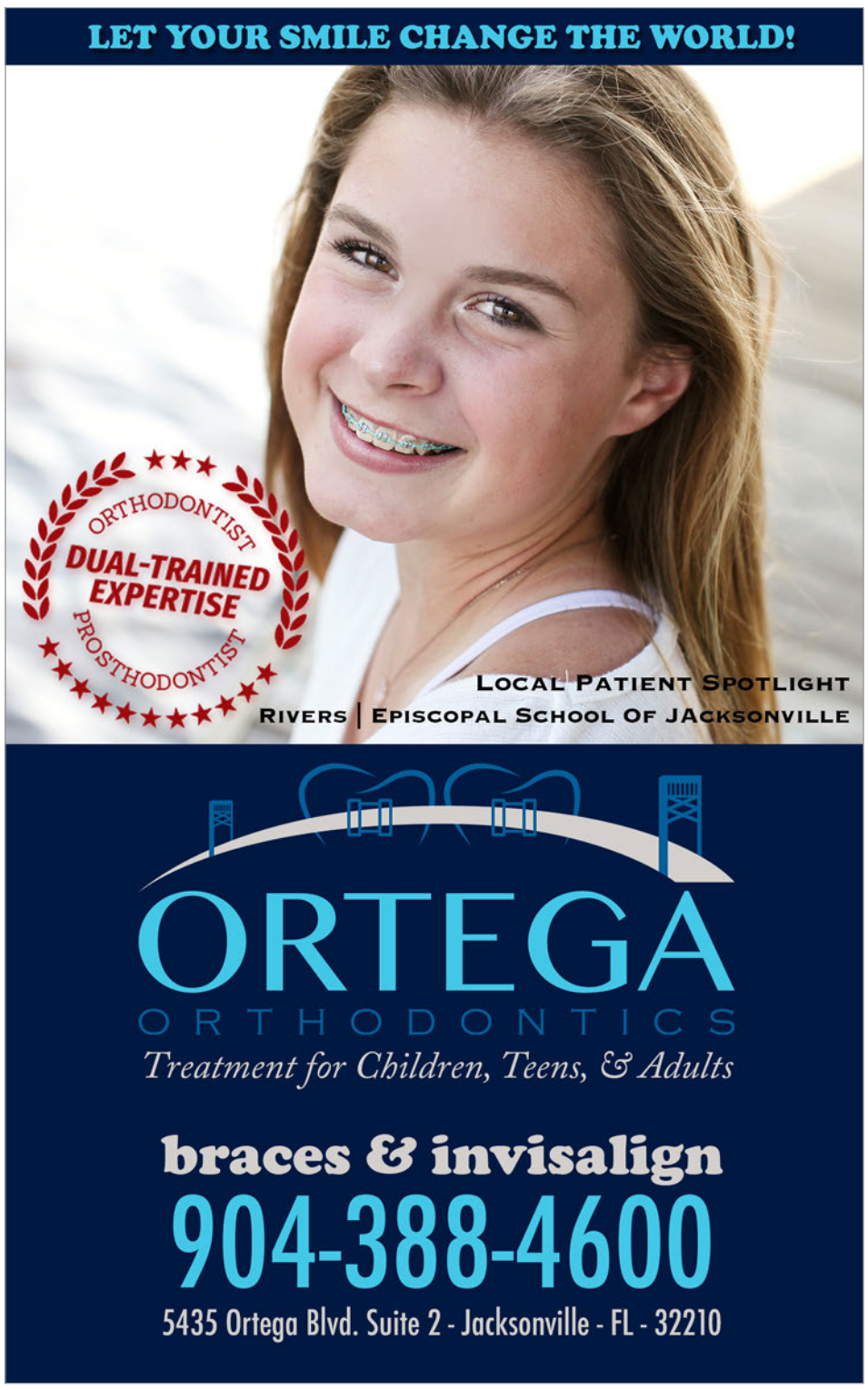
Suzanne Winkler (Coach of the Year) and Ally Cavanaugh (Player of the Year).

Ally Cavanaugh in action at state championship game.

Indoor volleyball coach Suzanne Winkler and star player Ally Cavanaugh of Bishop Kenny High School have been named Coach of the Year and Player of the Year by Florida Dairy Farmers in Class 4A. These awards cap off an outstanding season for the team.

The BK Crusaders won the state championship game against Cardinal Gibbons in four sets, finishing the season with a 21-8 record. Their leader, Coach Winkler, has been head coach for 18 years. She has led teams through a long list of championship titles and holds multiple awards for her coaching finesse. Winkler is known for valuing her players as individuals yet mandating that they play as team members who work for the greater good of the program.

Cavanaugh '23 is the starting outside hitter for the team who had a season high of 295 kills with a .336 hitting percentage and 57 blocks. She is passionate about volleyball, plays all year round, and dreams of playing for a large division 1 program in college. She is thankful to have Winkler as a guide. "When I moved from the middle position mid-season to outside hitter, I was anxious, and Coach Winkler pushed me and made me believe that I could dominate in my new position. It was important for me to know that she believed in me and together we finished the season as state champions!" Cavanaugh said.



Wolfson students exceed fundraising goal

Rynna Burgbacher, Sam Davis, Will Brandler, and Leah Troup compete at Trivia Night fundraiser.

The students of Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies have exceeded their fundraising goal to benefit Children's Miracle Network. The Wolfson Student Government set their sights on $3,000, but the Wolfpack actually raised $4,129.92, making the high school the first in North Florida to meet, and then surpass, its fundraising goal last month.

The students participated in a variety of fundraising events to make the accomplishment possible, including candy grams at Valentine's Day and a Friday Trivia Night held in the school's courtyard.

In late March, the Wolfson Student Government Association under the leadership of club sponsor and English teacher Caitlyn Glynn hosted the first Dance Marathon for Duval County Public Schools. This event is a popular tradition on college campuses across the country and has been adapted by many private schools across North Florida. It's a fundraiser designed to bring school students and community members together in support of a greater cause while having plenty of fun. Although this year's Dance Marathon had to be held virtually due to the pandemic, it was a huge success for Wolfson.

Episcopal students win big at Virtual State Science Fair of Florida

Episcopal students were recipients of place and special awards, cash prizes and gifts at the Virtual State Science Fair of Florida the week of MAY 5.

Senior Sally Barksdale was the recipient of the First Place Award in Biochemistry for her computer-based investigation to predict responses to melanoma treatment based on their genetic biomarkers.

Earning second place awards were junior Daniel Delong for his robotic hand, senior Julia Kagiliery for her novel method of water analysis and sophomore Sean Ramsey for his Martian concrete.

Senior Miranda Doro was the recipient of the prestigious Governor's Award to attend the one-month National Youth Science Camp, and she was nominated for a four-year $10,000 scholarship at the University of Florida.

Other Episcopal winners of place awards and special awards include the following: sophomore Tom Commander, nanoparticle treatments; sophomore Isabella Buschini, UV light on eye development; senior Jordan Harrow, pesticide resistance; junior Matthew Schinsing, pesticides in bee colonies; sophomore Natalie Rabil, water pollution on amphipods; junior Jackson Whitchurch, UV-C treatments; senior Ariel Largen, effectiveness of online learning; and junior Jake Barker '22, successful grant applications.

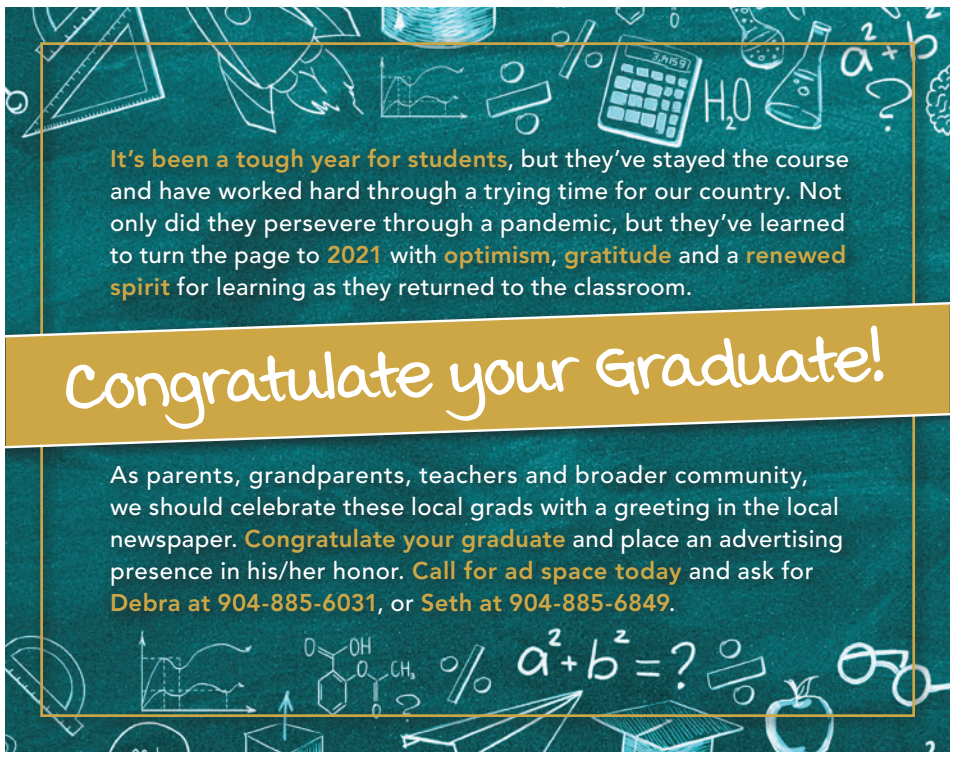
More than 600 students from public and private schools from around the state presented to judges via video recordings, posters and virtual interviews. Judges evaluated the students' projects based on their clarity, thoroughness, creativity and communication skills.

During the first week in May Barksdale, Delong, Kagiliery and Harrow will present their projects at the Virtual International Science and Engineering Fair, where they will be competing with approximately 1,700 students from 75 other countries.

EPISCOPAL SCHOOL STUDENTS VOLUNTEER IN THEIR COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY

Episcopal School students made cards for people needing hope in Jacksonville during their Community Service Day.

Students from all three campuses of Episcopal School of Jacksonville volunteered more than 2,400 hours during the school's March 23 Community Service Day. Fine Arts students performed pop-up shows across the city, including at the Beaches and St. Mark's Campuses; and advisories tackled individual group service projects and made more than 200 Easter baskets for Community Hospice PedsCare. Other students volunteered in a variety of ways, such as cleaning up campus and the beach, making cards for those incarcerated, sick, in nursing homes or hospice; building toys for homeless pets; and packing food, learning about hunger and assisting Farm Share, Hunger Fight and UCOM.



Middle School names new Bartram Campus head

Bolles President and Head of School Tyler Hodges recently announced that Joshua Bauman has been hired to lead the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus as its head.

"We are exceedingly pleased to welcome Josh to Bolles and have every confidence he is the right person for this very special role in our community," Hodges said.

Bauman is coming with his family to the Jacksonville community at the end of the 2020-21 school year from Virginia. For the past 16 years, he has worked in various leadership roles at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School, an age 3 - grade 12 Episcopal day school in Alexandria, Virginia. He most recently served as associate director of the school's middle school for which he redesigned the school's schedule, formalized a professional growth plan, hired faculty specifically focusing on diverse experiences and added Chinese to the school's language offerings.

To build a commitment to service in middle school students, he coordinated a Special Olympics Young Athletes program as well as a service-learning trip in which students assisted families in rebuilding their homes from hurricane devastation in Puerto Rico. He has also served as Eighth Grade dean, Spanish teacher, middle school and varsity boys' soccer coach and, while at Cardigan Mountain School in Canaan, New Hampshire, as a dorm parent.

He earned a master's degree in educational studies from Johns Hopkins University and a bachelor's degree in international studies and Spanish at Kenyon College in Ohio.

"My family and I are thrilled and honored to join the Bolles community, and I cannot wait to spend my days with the students on the beautiful Bartram Campus," Bauman said. "I am inspired by the breadth of opportunities offered at Bolles as well as the commitment to character development and inclusivity."

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA RAISES FUNDS TO REPAIR PICNIC TABLES

Kate, Sadie and Audrey Hernandez, PTA fundraising chairperson; George Nelson, PTA president; Robin Nelson, first grade teacher; Steve Hernandez; Lou Seger; Michelle Tibbits, parent liaison; and Scott Hernandez, PTA treasurer, show off the renovated outdoor picnic tables for Ortega Elementary School students.

School year-long efforts by the Ortega Elementary School PTA are garnering funds to replace all of the on the school's outdoor picnic tables. Students enjoy breakfast, small break-out groups and lunch at the tables, which has become even more important as COVID-19 friendly outdoor learning.

Fundraising activities have included Spirit Nights and a Read-A-Thon. The PTA asked students to have family members and friends sponsor them in their reading during a two-week period. Classes competed against each other for the most minutes read, and the winning class was awarded a prize by the school.

Douglas Anderson students net national awards

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts staff recently celebrated the school's 2021 National Scholastic Arts Award Winners. Starting 98 years ago, the Scholastic Arts & Writing award program is the oldest awards program in the nation. Nationally, Scholastic Program judges have evaluated more than 400,000 works of art and selected 2,000 winners. This year, ten Douglas Anderson students earned 12 national awards.

The students who took home the hardware included: Catherine Evoniuk, gold medal, photography; Britney Garibay, American Visions Medal, painting; silver medal, painting; silver medal with distinction, art portfolio; Matthew Green, gold medal, drawing and illustration; Natalie Holden, silver medal, ceramics & glass; Zane Leyva , gold medal, sculpture; Zhanna Marzan, silver medal, art portfolio; Nayra McMahan, silver medal, poetry; Bruno Misawa Marcondes, silver medal, film & animation; Blake Molenaar, silver medal, poetry; Julianna Press, silver medal, painting.

TOP LEFT: Britney Garibay – Forgotten Farmers (American Visions Medal)
BOTTOM LEFT: Natalie Holden – Mutated Lobster (Silver Medal)

St. Paul's-Riverside students join 18th annual choir festival

St. Paul's-Riverside students (front) Phoenix Ruffin, TJ Vallecer, Marco Chua, Euan Pascual, (back) Jayden Register and Gabriel Rodman participate in the recently held 18th Annual First Coast Honors Choir Festival.

Six students from St. Paul's Catholic School-Riverside joined select fourth to eighth graders from across the Jacksonville in the 18th Annual First Coast Honors Choir Festival. Hosted by the Jacksonville Children's Chorus (JCC), the choral event was held at the Riverside Park United Methodist Church on April 10.

Barbara Sletto, nationally acclaimed conductor and founder of Iowa-based Heartland Youth Choir, led the treble choir during rehearsals throughout the one-day event, which culminated in a recorded performance that aired virtually on April 21. The event also featured a short concert by the Jacksonville University Choir.

Only local students endorsed by their respective music educators were allowed to participate. St. Paul's music teacher, Lisa Weindorf, said students were selected based on overall musicianship, including the ability to follow a conductor's cues, excellent singing voice and rhythmic skills, keen sense of responsibility, performance skills and passion for music. St. Paul's was represented by Jayden Register, Gabriel Rodman, Marco Chua, Euan Pascual, TJ Vallecer and Phoenix Ruffin.

"There are songs of hope and peace as well as songs that exemplify not only great choral writing, but respectful portrayal of diversity in quality music," said Weindorf.

"Our children need to be exposed to music and languages of different cultures. This will foster a deeper appreciation for cultural traditions they have not yet experienced," she said. "Music is so powerful. It can lift our souls; it can give us a sense of peace and hope. It can teach us about other cultures and history, and connect us to each other. It's the universal language."

St. Mark's first graders study sea animals

St. Mark's first graders enjoy a special study trip to Marineland as part of their studies of sea animals.

First graders attending Episcopal School of Jacksonville, St. Mark's Campus have begun their in-depth studies of sea animals, which will conclude this month with a sea animal presentation of projects and essays. As a special experience to help reinforce learning for this subject, students took a special study trip to Marineland on April 7.

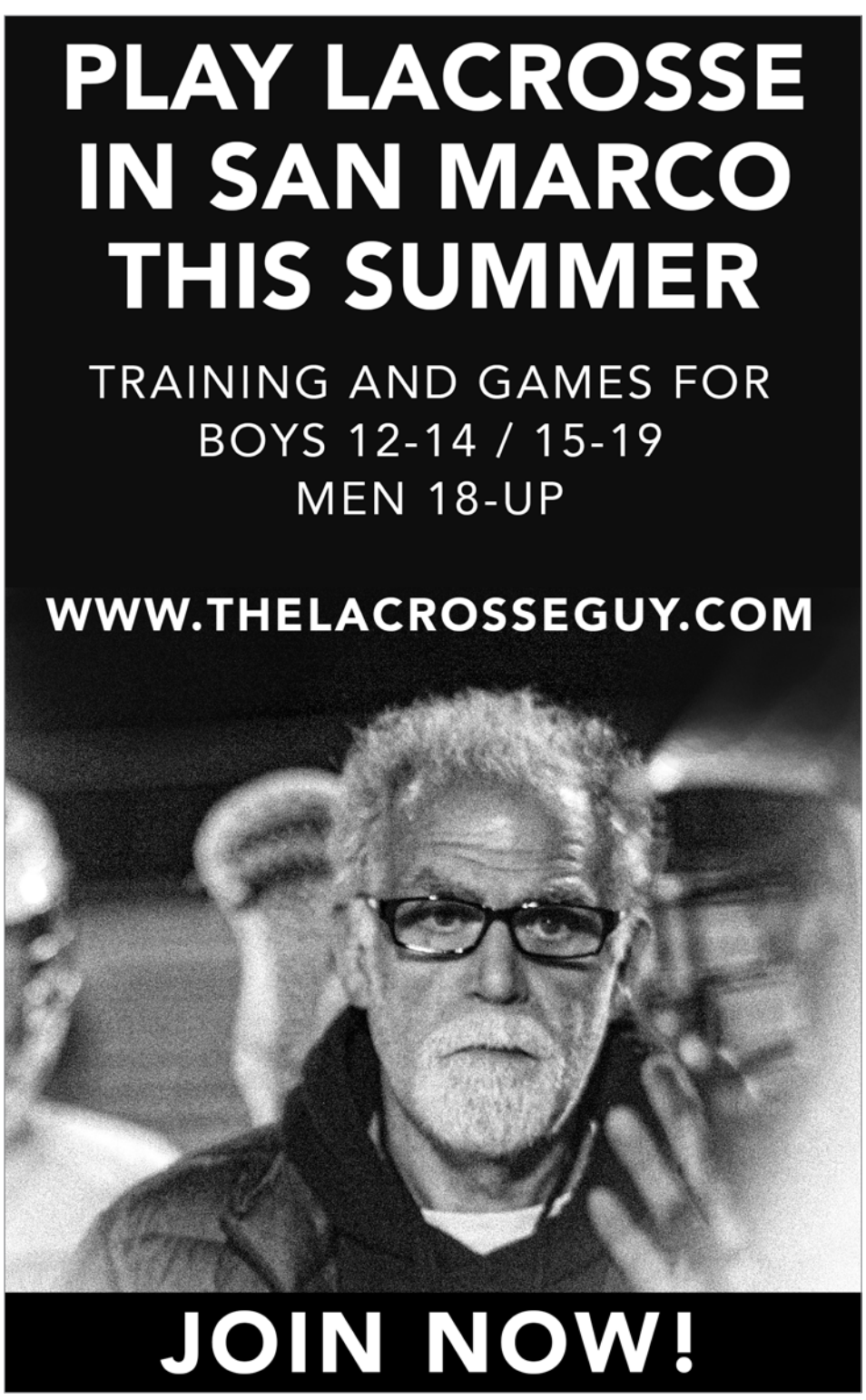
The visit included a behind-the-scenes tour of the aquarium's exhibits as well as lessons on dolphin anatomy and conservation efforts. Students especially enjoyed an up-close encounter with the dolphins, learning their names, ages and how the trainers and biologists are able to identify each one. Following a picnic lunch, students also enjoyed a visit to the beach.

Bolles student-athletes commit to colleges, universities

San Marco residents Bobby Crouch and Mack Marrone, San Jose resident Richie Rosenblum and Ortega resident Meagan Donovan were among seven Bolles student-athletes honored on April 14 for committing to a particular college or university to continue their athletic and academic careers. Family, friends, classmates, coaches and faculty gathered in Davis Gymnasium on the San Jose Campus to celebrate their commitments.

The following Bolles student-athletes were honored: basketball – Bobby Crouch, Babson College, and Richie Rosenblum, Wartburg College; crew – Bear Fender, Stetson University; football – Michael Bumpus, Brown University, and Mack Marrone, Colgate University; swimming – Krissi Greene, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; and tennis – Meagan Donovan, Washington and Lee University.

This was the third of three college commitment ceremonies held at The Bolles School this school year to recognize student-athletes as they committed to colleges. Thirteen Bolles student-athletes were honored on February 3, and eight were honored on November 11.



FOUNDATION INCREASES ACCESS, INVITES STUDENTS TO EXPLORE GREAT OUTDOORS

Timucuan Parks Foundation (TPF) and its park partner, the City of Jacksonville, welcomed teens and aides from the North Florida School of Special Education (NFSSE) for an afternoon of education and exploration at Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park recently.

The Healthy Living: Fresh Air, Fitness, Friendship and Fun program included an introduction to the types of animals the teens could encounter in environments like Hanna Park and a 1.5-mile walk along the wooded trails and the beach. The day was made possible, in part, by a grant from the National Park Service and Outdoor Foundation.

Since 1999, TPF, a nonprofit organization, has been working with partners to preserve, promote, and enhance Jacksonville's natural areas through community engagement, education, and enjoyment. Their Healthy Living program is designed to reach non-traditional and diverse audiences to show them the mental and physical benefits of outdoor recreation in preservation parks. Throughout the year, TPF hosts Healthy Living walks in Jacksonville's "wilderness" parks and preserves for different age groups and organizations.

Special guests hike a wooded trail in Hanna Park.

The "skulls and skins" education program led by JaxParks Ranger Stephen Klem.

NFSSE students learn at Hanna Park.

THE WAY WE WERE: DR. CHRISTIAN BERDY

BY MARY WANSER
RESIDENT COMMUNITY NEWS

Since 1975, Dr. Christian Berdy has been a well-known Jacksonville periodontist, a specialist in the treatment of gums. His life can be characterized as one of perseverance and selflessness.

Berdy's parents were born in Austria and met in a Jewish refugee center in France in the late 1930s. Berdy was born in occupied France in the city of Lyon in 1942 and had an older sister. "We were very lucky to survive the war as a family intact," he said.

Both of his parents being non-French citizens in post WWII made it very difficult for them to earn a living. "We never talked about that phase of their life because it was such a miserable time," Berdy said. He and his siblings were able to put together bits and pieces of the story over the years.

Their family immigrated to the United States in 1949 when Berdy was nearly 7 years old, and his younger brother was born a few years later. Upon their arrival to the US, the Berdy family lived in Bayone, New Jersey and then on Staten Island, New York. Both residences were in the homes of relatives until there was enough income to secure their own place. Berdy acquired his third language, English, in the States after growing up with his parents' native tongue, German, and his own, French.

His mom was a schoolteacher, but her Austrian credentials were not accepted by the New York City school system, so she taught at a private, Catholic school. His dad built furniture and restored antiques. He liked to sing, too, so he did so in a local cathedral on Sundays.

Berdy lived on Staten Island until he was in the seventh grade. In 1955, the family moved to Denver, Colorado because his parents liked to ski. So, that's where Berdy completed junior high and high school. He went on to the University of Colorado in Boulder. That was before the school had spread to multiple campuses and before Berdy knew that a student could attend an out-of-state school.

One of Berdy's jobs as a teenager was working in his dad's furniture workshop. One of their customers was a dentist who gave Berdy a summer job in his office. That's when Berdy decided that dentistry would be a better profession for him than carpentry. At that time, the Denver area had no dental schools, so he applied to several out of state.

His first acceptance was from the University of Illinois. "I didn't know I was going to be accepted to other schools, so I accepted them," he said. He requested dormitory housing on the Chicago campus, but a technical error prevented that. As still happens sometimes to this day, Berdy's first name, Christian, was mistaken for Christine, and he was assigned to a girls' room. At that time, student housing was strictly segregated, males from females, so he pointed out the error to the administration department and was told, "You're 21, so find your own place."

Berdy packed all his worldly possessions into his Volkswagen and drove the 24 hours it took to drive from Denver to Chicago on the old US highway system. He found an available bed in the worst part of town at the men's YMCA. Upon waking his first morning there, he noticed in the shared restroom a man two sinks down from him

Dr. Berdy, wife Debbie, Debbie's granddaughters Emily & Olivia, Debbie's daughter Sonia, Sonia's husband David.

shaving with a straight-edge razor held in his fingers devoid a holder. "I thought to myself, 'This doesn't work very well for me. The environment is not going to be very healthy,'" Berdy said.

He found, instead, a dental fraternity that offered him a rented room for $25 per month in a leased house owned by the University of Illinois, a house that had been condemned ten years prior. "It had running water sometimes, and sometimes it didn't," he said. Roaches were his roommates. But he was a dental student pursuing a dream, and so, he stayed.

Books, tuition, and supplies cost approximately $1,000 per year back then. Berdy was able to secure a small scholarship to help. He worked for the rest.

One of his jobs was as a bus driver for the Chicago Transit Authority. Summer pay was a whopping $2,000. It was the 1960s during the King riots. Streets were on fire. "Driving a bus in Chicago, picking up 30 passengers at a time, and staying on schedule is a challenge. I had five accidents that summer," Berdy admitted, so he wasn't hired back. The following summer, he worked as a steel mill mechanic's helper.

After undergrad and dental schooling in Illinois, Berdy enlisted in the Navy as a Reserve officer during the Vietnam era. He was assigned to a base in Long Beach, California. From there, he was sent to the Philippines for two years as a Navy dentist. He traveled to India, Thailand, and Japan on R&R, military free time. "It opened up my eyes to world travel," he said.

Navy Lieutenant Commander Christian Berdy.

From the Philippines, Berdy was not ready to return to civilian life quite yet; so, he re-enlisted and was sent to Naval Air Station Jacksonville for the next two years. A local dentist, Dr. Charles Hester, was on sick leave and needed a substitute in his office. Berdy and his friend, Dr. Charles Prizzia, filled in. (Years later, Prizzia would be named godfather to one of Berdy's sons.) When they, as general dentists, encountered patients with gum problems, they made referrals to the practice of Scott, Watson, and Miller. Berdy was impressed with how good his patients' gums looked after only a few months of treatment and decided he wanted to learn that field. "That's how I got into being a gum specialist," he said.

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Drs. Berdy, Miller, Watson, and Scott.

He resigned his commission from the Navy and went to periodontist school, a two-year residency program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. During his residency, he maintained a part-time practice in nearby Southern Pines. His teachers didn't like that they had a student already in practice.

Halfway through his program, Berdy attended a national convention of periodontists in Atlanta, Georgia. There, he re-connected with Drs. Scott, Watson, and Miller and expressed interest in joining their practice. It happened on a handshake. He joined them in Riverside immediately after graduation in 1975.

They practiced in a building on the corner of Stockton and Park Streets. In 1976, they opened satellite offices in Orange Park and Bay Meadows. Dr. Frank Scott retired in 1985, well-known throughout the Southeast. "He was the grandfather of periodontists for our particular area," Berdy said.

As it says on his website, "Dr. Berdy is the only remaining doctor of this historic practice that was renamed Berdy Dental Group in 2016." His younger son, Cary, a general dentist, began working with his dad four years ago.

Berdy's older son, Christopher, is an attorney in Alabama. Berdy's current wife, Debbie, has a daughter, Sonia, in Gainesville. In the blended family are five amazing grandchildren.

He's been a Rotarian with the Riverside Rotary Club since the 1980s. During that time, he has made multiple mission trips to remote areas of Bolivia, Peru, and Guatemala to perform dental work on the local people, mainly extractions. Those activities have been curtailed for a while due to COVID.

Berdy is an unselfish man. He knows that his staff hears when he tells patients of his world travels, and he wants his receptionists, hygienists, and assistants to have opportunities he's been given. "I've taken staff overseas to see the world as well. We've gone to dental meetings in different parts of the world, so they've had the opportunity to travel," he said. They've attended meetings as close as Orlando and as far as London, Paris, and Monte Carlo. On the way to a California convention to give a lecture, Berdy and the staff stopped at the Grand Canyon for a tour. He's taken as many as 12 or 14 people with him on trips.

The theme of Berdy's life has been service to his patients. "In dentistry, the work that you do is very satisfying when the patient's mouth gets healthy, or when you've reconstructed a smile, when you give them new hope on smiling and looking at themselves in the mirror. That is very gratifying," he said.

Dr. Berdy serves not only his staff and patients but also organized dentistry. He is past president of the Clay County Dental Society, Florida Academy of Dental Practice Administration, and Florida Society of Periodontists. He has been a member of the American Dental Association since 1968. He continues to be a member of the Florida Society of Periodontists and the Duval County Dental Society as well.

Berdy reminisced about what Jacksonville was like without Internet or cell phones and with fewer people. "The roads are more clogged than ever," he said. That might be one of the biggest changes he's noticed in Jacksonville since he arrived nearly five decades ago. And Jacksonville is all the better for him having come.

"I feel like I'm the American dream. I'm a refugee immigrant. And yet, I've been able to get good schooling and have been able to serve back to the community. To me, the United States is the best place in the whole wide world," Berdy said.

Dr. Berdy in Staten Island, NY at 8 years old.

Drs. Christian and Cary Berdy in office.

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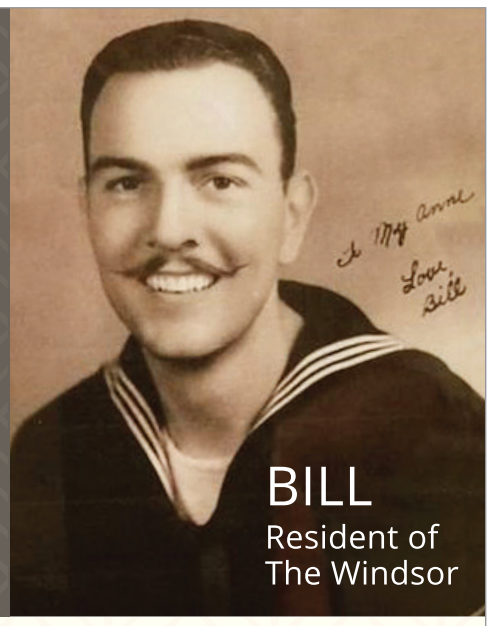

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IN MEMORIUM

ESTHER (BETTY) ELIZABETH MCCORMICK ACOSTA-CARTER

December 6, 1924 - April 3, 2021
Jacksonville

Betty Acosta-Carter, 96, died peacefully on April 3. She was married to the love of her life, Edward I. Acosta, from Jacksonville, for 40 years, from 1945 until his death in 1986. A few years later Betty was reacquainted with Carroll Carter, and they married at All Saints Church in 1988. They were married 10 years until Carroll's death in 1998.

She was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on Sept. 23, 1945 as Sharon Lee Fink to parents named Melvin and Ruth. She was a graduate of Woodward High School before attending the University of Cincinnati.

Betty was born on Dec. 6, 1924, in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where her father was stationed in the Army. She was the eldest of four daughters.

The family relocated to Washington, D.C., and then to Puerto Rico. After her father's death, they moved to Columbus, Ga. Betty was a graduate of Columbus High School and attended Stratford College.

Betty was a member of All Saints Episcopal Church on Hendricks Avenue for more than 60 years. She was also a founding member of the St. Mary's Circle at All Saints.

Betty was also a member of San Jose Country Club for 70 years where she was an avid golfer and a member of the San Jose Ladies Golf Association. She also participated in the St. Johns Dinner Club.

Over the years she volunteered her time for several charitable organizations, such as the American Cancer Society and The Tournament Players Club at Sawgrass. She was a longtime member of the (NSCDA) National Society of the Colonial Dames of America and the (DAR) National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Betty loved to play bridge, enjoyed flowers and gardening, and was a lifetime student of history. She enjoyed entertaining her many friends, walking daily on the beach and spending time in St. Augustine with her beloved family.

She leaves behind her beloved pet, Zoey. Others left to cherish her memory include her sister, Patricia McCormick McNeel (Marietta Ga.), and her children, Edward George Acosta, Andrea Acosta Newman (Buddy), and daughter in-law Mini Acosta. She was also "Grammy" to Karsen Newman, Kaden Newman, Emily Myers (Mark), Matthew Firkel, Suzann Hobson, and several nieces and nephews. She was great- grandmother to Pressley Myers. She also leaves behind her very caring friend, Lisa Armstrong.

Her family is grateful to her caregivers for the past five years, Abu Abdela, Jasmine Taylor, Rosario Householder, and Bernadette Hills.

Betty is preceded in death by her parents, Major and Mrs. Edward George McCormick, sisters Lenora McCormick Guy and Helena McCormick Pease and son Mark St. Elmo Acosta, as well as her husbands, Edward I. Acosta and Carroll E. Carter.

"Betty loved to play bridge, enjoyed flowers and gardening, and was a lifetime student of history. She enjoyed Entertaining her many friends, walking daily on the beach and spending time in St. Augustine with her beloved family."

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YMCA's celebration of W.W. Gay's life establishes new scholarship fund and community award

Paul Jones shares stories during the Celebration of Life event in honor of his grandfather, W.W. 'Bill' Gay.

Paul Jones, Joy Jones and Dr. Vernon Jones.

The Jones family.

The Winston Family YMCA hosted a virtual Celebration of Life event on March 23 that raised more than $110,000 for the 2021 Winston Y Annual Campaign and announced the new W.W. 'Bill' Gay Community Impact Award.

Family members, employees, community leaders and elected officials, including Rick Catlett, former president and CEO of the Taxslayer Gator Bowl; Scott Stricklin, athletic director for the University of Florida; and Sen. Rick Scott, shared stories about Gay's impact on the community with guests to the event.

A new W.W. 'Bill' Gay Community Impact Award was introduced at the event. The annual award will recognize an outstanding individual/organization making a major impact in the Northeast Florida Community. The inaugural award was presented at the event to Gay's family.

The W.W. 'Bill' Gay Scholarship Fund was also unveiled during the event to honor Gay's legacy and support of YMCA programs that provide opportunity for those in need in our community. Donations support the YMCA's goal to ensure that no one is ever turned away for the inability to pay.

THE NOMINATION FORM FOR NEXT YEAR IS NOW OPEN AND CAN BE FILLED OUT AND SUBMITTED HERE HTTPS://BIT.LY/2RCSGYT.

TO DONATE IN GAY'S HONOR AND SUPPORT THE WINSTON YMCA PROGRAMS, TEXT WWGAYLEGACY TO 41444.

PARTING SHOT

The 'Why' for her vaccine...to be able to hug her Mom

Skyeler Ferris, a local resident and Bold Bean Coffee Roasters staffer was thankful to get her first shot, she'll get the second round of Moderna's shots set on May 3. "I'm excited to hug my mom," shared Ferris, who had been unable to do so, as her mother has a compromised immune system. Robin Duncan of AGAPE Health administered the shot during a pop-up vaccination event at Restaurant Orsay.

JACKSONVILLE JUMBO SHRIMP BASEBALL

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30 DUR 3:05	31					

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GWI - GWINNETT STRIPERS (ATL)
JAX - JACKSONVILLE JUMBO SHRIMP (MIA)
MEM - MEMPHIS REDBIRDS (STL)
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FOR SALE

8681 MABEL DRIVE - $540,000

4 BR / 3 BA / 2,504 sqft.

****OPEN HOUSE WEDNESDAY (4/21) 11-1PM****

Shows like a model!! Like new home, built on a serene conservation in highly sought-after Old Still gated community. This home has 4 bedrooms and 3 full baths, which includes an upstairs bonus suite for guests or multi-generational living. Stunning gourmet kitchen with quartz countertops, double oven, 42" white cabinets and soft close drawers. Upgrades to this home include shiplap, crown molding, plantation shutters, custom drapes and gorgeous light fixtures. Even more, there is a spacious screened lanai for all of your relaxing needs! Monthly HOA includes lawn maintenance. **Won't last long!**

3530 PARK STREET - $495,000

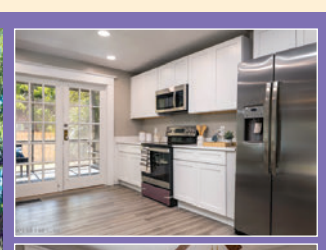
4 BR / 2 BA / 2,328 sqft.

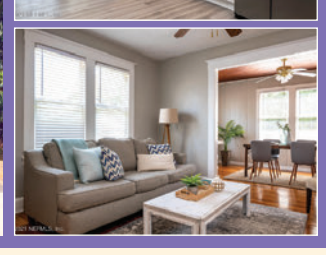
Nestled in the heart of Avondale, this charming home is updated and move-in ready. Energy efficient low-E dual pane windows throughout and newer central heat/air make this home comfortable year-round. Original hardwood floors welcome you to the great room, which features a gas fireplace. The kitchen has stainless steel appliances, including a high-output gas stove and beautiful hood. Bathrooms are well-appointed, and there is amazing storage throughout the home. The main bedroom is accented by a dressing room and stunning bathtub in the ensuite bathroom. On-demand gas water heater and automatic emergency natural gas generator offer comfort and reassurance during storms and power outages. Walking distance to some of Jacksonville's finest eateries and shops.

5565 WINDERMERE DRIVE - $199,000

4 BR / 1 BA / 1,520 sqft.

Beautifully renovated and move-in-ready 4 bedroom concrete block home! BRAND NEW ROOF! Freshly painted inside & out; Tile & new gorgeous vinyl plank flooring throughout! Inviting kitchen opens into large breakfast room. Newly remodeled bath. Split BR floorplan, Living Rm, Huge Family Rm with travertine tile & expansive views of private backyard plus inside laundry area. Back deck overlooking nice-sized fully fenced backyard w/ large workshop/storage bldg. Great value!





FEATURED LISTING

1418 DONALD ST - $335,000 ◆ 2 BR / 2 BA / 1,476 sqft.

Located in Avondale's Historic District! Early 20th century character with the conveniences of today! Featuring ample natural light & living space, refinished hardwood floors, new stainless-steel appliances, quartz countertops, bonus rooms upstairs AND downstairs perfect for an office or guest room, separate dining with original French doors. Screened-in back porch with newly built privacy fence, perfect for summer Florida living! Easy walk or bike ride to the Shoppes of Avondale, 5 Points or the Riverside Arts Market in addition to countless parks. Centrally located near downtown & NAS for an easy commute & only 15 minutes to the airport.

5249 PLYMOUTH STREET - $189,000

4 BR / 2 BA / 1,525 sqft.

LAKESHORE DUPLEX. Excellent investment opportunity. (2) 2 BD, 1 BA units. Property being sold "AS IS". 5249 is occupied and under lease through 7/8/2021 at $825 per month. 5247 is vacant and available to show.

5375 ORTEGA FARMS BLVD 802 - $139,000

2 BR / 2 BA / 1,016 sqft.

First floor condo in beautiful gated community located on the Ortega River. Amenities include pool, dock, fitness center with sauna and water front clubhouse with open grilling deck. Two Bedroom, two Bath, Living Room with wood laminate flooring open to the Kitchen and Dining area. The kitchen has a breakfast bar, nice cabinetry, granite counter tops and stainless steel appliances. One bedroom upstairs and the owner's suite downstairs with bath, tile floors and private balcony access overlooking the pool. Upstairs bedroom has a hookup for a ventless combo washer/dryer. River leads to the ocean and has abundant wild life.

311 ASHLEY STREET 1707 - $99,999

1 BR / 1 BA / 625 sqft.

DOWNTOWN CONDO 17TH FL PENTHOUSE UNIT CITY PLACE CONDO FOR SALE. Penthouse CORNER UNIT. Panoramic views of Jacksonville and beautiful sunsets. 1 large bedroom w/ remote LED ceiling fan & LPV flooring, large living area all tiled, full kitchen w/solid wood custom cabinets, full size stove & side by side frig, breakfast bar, (R/R/MW), CHA. Updated bath w/shower all tile, exhaust fan & new LED light. Hall closet extended w/sliding mirror doors. Secured building with security. Clubroom, Fitness Room, Laundry room. Evening & weekend security on-site. Walking distance to Court house & Library. Minutes to hospital & stadium.

FEATURED RENTALS

1478 RIVERPLACE BLVD #402 - $1,750 (Residential)

2 BR / 2 BA / 1,563 sqft. / $1,995 security deposit

SAN MARCO PLACE 4th FLOOR CONDOMINIUM FOR RENT. From 5 Points, I-95 S, exit San Marco, left on San Marco Blvd, right at roundabout to River Place Blvd. Living/dining room, kitchen with granite and cherry cabinets (R/R/MW/DW), CHA, W/D, carpeted, 2 car garage parking, storage, condo pool, fitness center, concierge & other amenities. 1 year lease, may consider pet/w/NRPF, non-smoking, [ATK pm dn] available April 1st.

1431 RIVERPLACE BLVD #1804 - $2,500 (Residential)

2 BR / 2 BA / 1,382 sqft. / $2,500 security deposit

SOUTHBANK 18TH FLOOR WATERFRONT CONDO FOR RENT. From downtown, Main St. bridge south, left on Riverplace to The Peninsula Building. Open floor plan,Living/Dining Combo; Eating Space-Kitchen(R/R/MW/DW), washer/dryer, approx. 1382 sf, Tile, Marble & wood flooring, condo pool, Jacuzzi, spa, fitness center, game room, concierge & valet services, conference room, business center, 2 car garage parking, storage, hot water included in rent, 1 year lease, no smoking, [ATK-SH&FM] available now Private Remarks: Vacant. Please use showing time. Key at the front desk.

712 EDGEWOOD AVENUE S - $2,495 (COMMERCIAL)

OFFICE FOR LEASE / 2,125 sqft.

COMMERCIAL MURRY HILL OFFICE FOR LEASE - From 5 Points, take Park St west, right on Edgewood Ave S, continue north to property on the left after College St. - This charming house is a great fit for a professional office or retail space in the popular Murray Hill area. With 2,125 sf of space, the building contains a front room that could be used as waiting area, kitchen, half bath, storage, one office, and a reception area downstairs. There are three office spaces and a full bath upstairs.

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