



KICKIN' IT AT OLE' COWFORD

The Cowford Ball welcomed Hayley and Ryan Horn to the party at the Glass Factory, Sept. 17. The traditional Western-themed gala drew a sold out crowd and continues to engage hundreds of donors for the fundraising goals of the American Cancer Society.

SEE PAGE 20

Pedestrian safety for students a topic of concern

Growth brings more traffic and distracted drivers



BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

When the new school year began, San Marco resident Dale Farrow walked with his sixth grader to make sure he and his friend knew how to approach crossing the busy streets, particular Atlantic Boulevard, to get to Landon Middle School.

He did that for three weeks and spoke with the boys about always being cautious and alert when-ever they are about to step off the sidewalk and into a crosswalk.

"I've made sure to talk to them about when they approach the crosswalk to make sure their heads are up, they make eye contact with the cars before they step onto the street and make sure the cars were completely stopped before they step out," he explained. "It's really the first lane stepping out and then the last lane as you approach the other side of the street because that fourth lane — their vision is blocked by the third lane and so they really — if there's a kid crossing in front of the car in the third lane, the fourth lane really can't see the kids so that's really the terrifying spot and the most concerning spot for me."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33



Hannah Ripkey, Lori Boyer, Bobby West, Chris Winnen, Katherine Mosley, Cesar Ortiz, Steve Sealy, Kevin Powell and Paul Bertozzi participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for One Riverside on Thursday, Sept. 22. Photos by Michele Leivas.

Breaking Ground and Turning Dirt

Digging in, delivering a brighter future for downtown

The former site of the Florida Times Union is only a memory, as heli-pads, flagpoles and several buildings were recently razed. The daily newspaper once occupied the multi-acre site of a former newspaper empire. The shell of a building that housed the newspaper operations and other buildings housing print presses bit the dust over the last year and a half, paving way for a new development along the St. Johns River and its Northbank Riverwalk.

SEE PAGE 8



"A Dream Come True"

The opening and operations of USS Orleck DD-886 are official for the Jacksonville Naval Museum.

SEE PAGE 8



Committee gathers, toasts to Florida Forum's 30th Season

Committee Members Ann Miller, Caroline Nimmicht, Mary Schaffer Sealey, Curry Cozzi and Mary Jane Allegro were on hand to toast to the Florida Forum kickoff.

SEE PAGE 35

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your **OPINION**

Thanks for your article in the September issue. I've smelled this regularly for a long time. Noticed it this morning when I left for work. I typically smell it between 5 and 7:30 am outside my house at Myra and Stockton. It's concerning to me for the health of all area residents. I appreciate the information about sending complaints and will continue to do so. The COJ site is a bit of a maze so it might be helpful to give residents more details in future publications. Thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,
Matt Monroe

Thank you for including my household on your mailing list for the San Jose/San Marco/St. Nicholas edition of Resident Community News.

Since your newspaper first began arriving our mailbox some months ago, we have been consistently excited and impressed to be reading a real local newspaper full of interesting announcements, stories, profiles, letters, opinions, and yes, even advertisements.

Based on your track record I want you to know that we would even be willing to pay for a subscription to continue having Resident Community News delivered to our home (where we've resided for thirty-two years). Alternatively, since we've nothing to advertise, we would be glad to make a gift if you have (or later create) a donation/contribution/support portal for your grateful readers.

PS — In the September issue, pages 1, 2, 14, 19, and 25 are among those with one or more "real local newspaper" features that prompted me to send you this note.

Very Best Wishes,
Thomas J. Wiswell

As a Miramar resident, I am excited to see businesses investing in San Marco. However, with increased urbanization comes an increased responsibility to protect pedestrians. Most Resident readers drive through this area regularly. On behalf of our students and other pedestrians, I am writing to ask all drivers to exercise more care and caution, especially when children are walking or biking to and from school.

I have been working with Jacksonville City Council Members LeAnna Cumber and Matt Carlucci to create a safer pedestrian experience for students who walk or bike to Julia Landon College Preparatory and Leadership Development School. Landon is bordered by two busy state roads and has three local roads running through the campus. The commute for students who walk or bike to school has become more complicated and more dangerous.

The City of Jacksonville installed flashing light crosswalks on Atlantic Boulevard at Mango and Arcadia this summer. However, I suspect motorists are not yet in the habit of stopping to let pedestrians cross safely. I witnessed several "near misses" the first two weeks of school as students started to cross in the protected crosswalk but had to stop abruptly because an oncoming vehicle did not yield.

Crossing the city streets that divide the campus has become more dangerous for students. Motorists are using these streets to escape traffic on Atlantic Blvd. Landon students must cross Minerva and Arcadia to get to the basketball court and football field for physical education classes and team practices. Last spring, Duval County Public Schools staff worked with the City of Jacksonville to reduce the speed limit on Thacker, Minerva, and Arcadia to 20 miles per hour; install signage; and repaint crosswalks. Still, Landon staff have observed motorists speeding on all three roads and driving the wrong way on Minerva, a one-way road.

Safe pedestrian crossing is not just a student problem but a necessity for all San Marco residents and visitors who enjoy the restaurants, shops and residences around the Square. When you see flashing lights, stop and wait for pedestrians to cross. Observe the speed limits and one-way limitations. Let's make our community safe for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages.

Sincerely,
Cindy Pearson, Duval County School Board, District 3

Moderation in the housing market shows a shift toward affordability

SUBMITTED BY **MARCIA HODGSON**
Communications Director, NEFAR

In most areas of Northeast Florida the August housing market reflected a slight drop in median prices while the number of days homes sat on the market has gradually continued to climb. Buyers can relish the good news that, for single-family homes, the percent closed-over list price went down 27.7% as did the average list price, 1%, indicating a small tick up in affordability throughout the region. As far as affordability goes, the market still has a way to go to get back to the point where homes are affordable for people making the median family income. However, there are many indications that it is finally moving in the right direction. For instance, the region's Home Affordability Index inched up 2.9% to 70 for single-family homes. The index measures housing affordability by measuring whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income, and median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability.

"Moving into fall 2022 we continue to see the residential real estate market, which includes single-family homes, condos, and townhomes, continue to moderate and normalize," said NEFAR 2022 President Mark Rosener. "While still an 18% increase year over year, the median price in our six-county market has shown mild fluctuations month to month of between \$350,000 and \$365,000 since March. This indicates that the dramatic increases that were seen during the pandemic are coming to an end. Closed and pending sales have leveled off in the 2,300 to 2,500 range over the past several months and are now well below the 3,000 to 3,500 peak a little more than a year ago. Median days on the market have continued to increase to 31 days with only 19.1% of

homes selling over list price and the sale-to-list price ratio settling into a more normal 98.6%," he continued. "New listings are hitting the market and active inventory has stabilized, with 3,200 new listings and 6,348 active listings. The combination of fewer unit sales and our current active inventory has increased the region's months of supply to 2.7 months, which has been stable over the past couple of months."

As far as single-family homes go, \$393,900 was the median price for the region in August, a scant 1.5% decline. As seen in the combined market of single-family, condos, and townhomes, the median days on the market for single-family residences hiked up 34.8%. Still, inventory remains historically low, with a 2.7-month supply and an active inventory of 5,323 single-family homes.

As the market levels off into its new normal, sellers and buyers may need to adjust their mindsets, said Rosener. "Sellers will need to price their homes in line with current comparable sold and active listings," he said. "The tried-and-true factors of location and condition for a home have become as important as ever and are specific to each neighborhood. The advice and counsel of a trusted REALTOR® are very important for homeowners looking to sell their homes in today's market," he said, noting that NEFAR members have access to specific market conditions and are trained to help homeowners price their homes to meet their specific needs.

Meanwhile, for buyers, the additional inventory now on the market is good news, Rosener said. "It allows for more selection and perhaps a less competitive frenzy of activity for each listing. Multiple offers on properties are still a reality in many areas of the market but not as much of a factor as it was at the peak. REALTOR'S® guidance can give each customer the information they need to make a sound buying decision," Rosener said.



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Find the fresh “Rainbow raw pad thai” recipe at [baptistjax.com/juice](https://www.baptistjax.com/juice) and top it with the savory homemade dressing below for a healthy meal.




FOR THE DRESSING

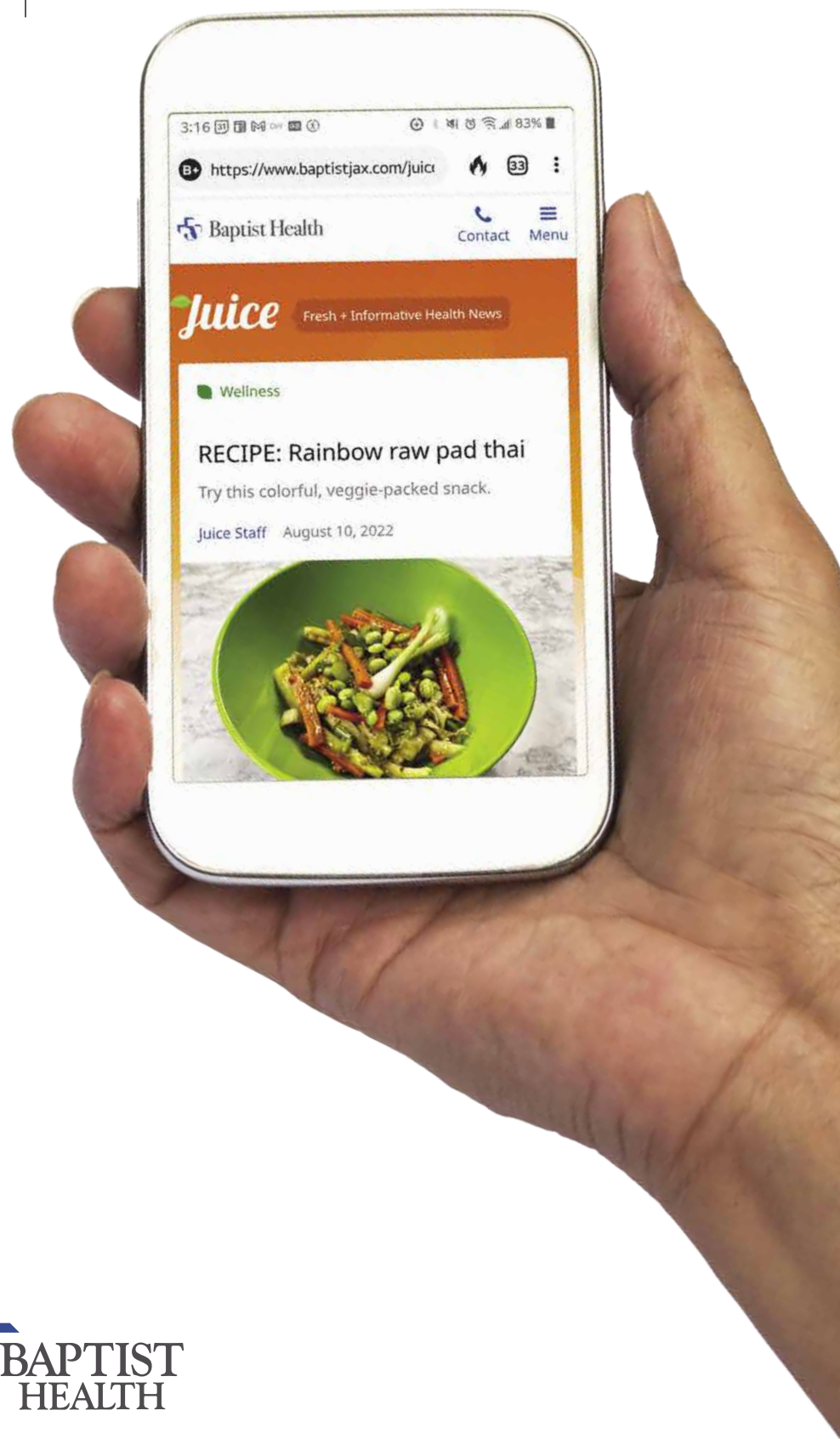
- 1 garlic clove
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- 2 tablespoons water
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Prepare the dressing by processing all dressing ingredients in a mini processor (or simply whisk by hand). The dressing may seem a bit thin at first, but it thickens as it sits. Pour it on the pad thai and enjoy!



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Candidate Q and A – City Council District 5 Race

1) What is the number one issue you feel should be addressed by City leaders that you don't currently see introduced by the current City Council?

Carlucci: Job opportunities. As the former President for San Marco Merchants Association, I helped bring City and business leaders together to support new economic opportunities including Publix at East San Marco – and our local businesses are benefiting. We need to continue leveraging District 5's unique assets so that we can promote smart economic growth and development for our families and businesses.

Roberts: Over 35,000 people move to Jacksonville every year. That's a huge opportunity and a huge challenge. How do we manage growth while keeping families safe and preserving the character of our city? A comprehensive, strategic plan for Jacksonville's growth is essential. Downtown revitalization, leveraging density and infill, will create an economic engine that funds community needs throughout every part of our city. By creating new streams of revenue, development can put more officers on the streets, pay to improve & maintain parks and create meaningful programs to address homelessness. This is the solution to the issues that have held our city back. Moreover, by focusing growth into the urban core, it allows us to protect and preserve the neighborhoods we all know and love.

2) What is the biggest problem we face in our city, and how do you personally plan to address it?

Carlucci: Jacksonville has a crime problem. It's time that we provide our law enforcement with the tools and resources they need to fight dangerous crime and ensure our communities are safe places to live, work and raise a family.

Roberts: Jacksonville's government has a reputation problem. Allegations of corruption, back-room deals and favoritism have plagued this city for too long. We need fresh perspectives, a strong dose of professionalism, and transparency. I have spent my career helping large organizations make rational, data driven decisions in the boardroom, interfaced with government regulators but also understand the pressure of running my own business while raising my 3 boys. To restore trust, leadership in Jacksonville has to be less about who you know, or what your last name is, and more about what you bring to the table.

3) Do you think taxpayers would be better off with a privatized JEA? Or do you think [The JEA] it should remain a publicly owned utility?

Carlucci: JEA is Jacksonville's utility, and it should stay that way.

Roberts: JEA provides a vital service to our citizens and this City has a vested interest in ensuring long-term stability for taxpayers. JEA is a publicly owned utility. Privatization is not on the table; taxpayers deserve representatives with the ability to evaluate complex financial transactions independently. More than any other candidate, I have the skills and experience to ensure that moving forward, any major financial decisions in our city are in the best interest of our residents and evaluated in a thoughtful, thorough, and transparent way.

4) Should City Council repeal the gas tax, or stay on course to use those funds for the previously stated purposes and proposed projects by the Curry Administration?

Carlucci: City Council had the opportunity to repeal the gas tax last year, but rejected it. As I knock doors, District 5 families repeatedly say they are struggling to pay for the higher costs of groceries and housing. Higher taxes won't help them.

Roberts: People hate politics because nothing ever gets done. After intense debate, and full legislative process, last year's gas tax passed with substantial bi-partisan support. Last December, an attempt to repeal that legislation was defeated 13-5. Dissent is valuable, but government should not become bogged down in second guessing. Raising taxes should always be a last resort, however we also have a duty to fund urgent infrastructure needs. As stewards of taxpayer dollars, it is our responsibility to continually evaluate budget priorities and ensure future spending is aligned to community needs.

5) Do you believe we should remove monuments and historical markers from the public square, or should we let them stand. In that same vein, are you for a referendum to allow taxpayers to decide, versus a body of 19 representative speaking for citizens of Duval County?


Carlucci: There needs to be a way to preserve our history while we also define our future. History is meant to be understood from all points of view so Jacksonville can grow, evolve, and become stronger.

Roberts: City Council is not a prize, it's a job. This is exactly the type of decisions that city council gets paid to make. If you're not willing to make these decisions, don't ask for this job. Should a monument be taken down simply because its "controversial"? Absolutely not. Having said that, this city needs to create a clearly defined policy of what is acceptable, and what is not. This policy should be applied fairly and evenly across the spectrum of public monuments and markers throughout Jacksonville.



Joe Carlucci and Morgan Roberts

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History, heart and soul

San Marco Merchants Association unveils new neighborhood banners

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

On Wednesday, Sept. 7, the San Marco Merchants Association (SMMA) unveiled a series of new banners that will welcome residents and visitors alike to the community.

Three collections, each consisting of four banners in rich, vibrant colors, will rotate on lampposts along Hendricks Avenue, San Marco Boulevard and Atlantic Boulevard down to San Marco Square. The banners will be at the outskirts of the neighborhood at the intersections of Hendricks Avenue and Prudential Drive and San Marco Boulevard and Gary Street to the north; and Atlantic Boulevard and the train tracks to the east.

“We worked really hard as a group to come up with something that would make our neighborhood stand out and be different than every other neighborhood in the community,” said SMMA President Scott Wohlers during the unveiling ceremony. “...That’s what we did and that’s what I hope we’ve captured with these banners is that we truly captured the history, the heart and the soul of San Marco.”

Board member Anita Vining said the idea for new banners has been in the works for quite a while.

“We had the banners but they’d grown faded and tired so this was a mission for our board for quite a while — we just needed money to do it,” she explained.

Proceeds from the inaugural San Marco Beer Fest earlier this year finally allowed SMMA to allocate funds for new banners and, Vining said, fellow board member Marla Quattrone saw it as an opportunity to create something “really good.”



Scott Wohlers, SMMA President, speaks to the crowd during the ceremonial unveiling of the new banners that will adorn the streetscapes of San Marco.

The banners’ rich colors are reminiscent of San Marco’s foliage through the seasons, explained Quattrone, who is also a member of SMMA’s beautification committee member, while the Art Deco font and gold arches speak to the 1920s — the era during which San Marco “really started to flourish as a neighborhood community.”

SMMA worked with Raintree Graphics, a Jacksonville-based printing company, to create the banners once the final design was determined.

Quattrone said the “self-guided” nature of the project made it a “rewarding” and “positive” process, allowing for a wide range of input and ideas to create something that “reflected the very best” of the community.

Quattrone added that her hope is these banners “reinforce what people already believe about San Marco or that people start to see San Marco in a new light. That’s the purpose, to me, of the banners and what drove the design.”

The banners are expected to be installed as soon as possible.

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Mayoral race heats up as Davis enters the fray

BY SAMANTHA FLOM
Resident Community News

With Jacksonville's first mayoral election just five months out, some candidates have begun ramping up their campaigns while others are just getting started.

On Sept. 8, Republican Daniel Davis formally kicked off his campaign with a Sept. 8 rally at Tom Nehl Trucking Company that was attended by both current Mayor Lenny Curry and former Mayor John Peyton.

The announcement followed months of speculation that the Jax Chamber president and CEO would run, during which his associated political action committee, Building a Better Economy, raked in more than \$4 million — the most of any candidate to date.

But with three other Republicans to split the GOP vote and Democrats surging in the polls, the question remains as to whether those funds will be enough to boost the former state representative to victory.

A CROWDED REPUBLICAN FIELD

Prior to Davis entering the race, an Aug. 17 survey conducted by the University of North Florida Public Opinion Research Lab showed the former City Council president holding a narrow lead among the Republican candidates with 11 percent of the vote, followed by City Council members Al Ferraro and LeAnna Cumber at 8 and 7 percent, respectively, and Frank Keasler Jr. at less than 1 percent.

While Davis' campaign did not respond to multiple requests for comment, Ferraro, for his part, was not overly concerned by the poll's results, noting the 5.9 percent margin of error.

"That poll is the definition of a statistical tie," he noted. "With that in mind, our city deserves a mayor who operates with integrity. Unlike Daniel Davis, who actively promoted the sale of JEA — which was a blatantly obvious rip-off of the taxpayers that has resulted in federal indictments — I opposed this raw deal. Jacksonville deserves a mayor who will act on behalf of the hardworking families across Jacksonville and not just the select few lobbyists and members of the 'good old boy' system that have profited off of government dollars for too long."

Unapologetic in his criticism of Davis, the two-term District 2 councilman touted his reputation as a "straight shooter," adding that he intends to "restore honesty and accountability" to the mayor's office.



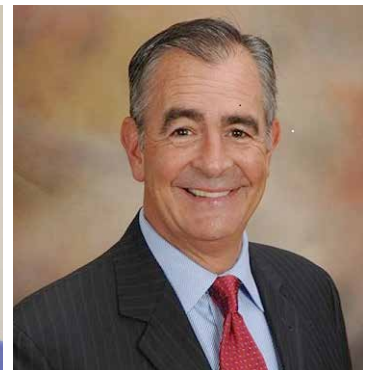
LeAnna Cumber



Al Ferraro



Audrey Gibson



Frank Keasler Jr.

"I invite voters to examine my voting record on the City Council," he said. "I stood strong on the principles I espoused during my prior campaigns. As mayor, I will do the same and not surprise my voters by failing to do as I promised. I will focus on our core functions like ensuring public safety, restoring our infrastructure and keeping government hands out of taxpayer pockets. We have a great city and it's time that we put Jacksonville families first."

Cumber, like Ferraro, said that she felt the city required a change in leadership that the other candidates could not provide.

"I'm the only candidate out there that is the 'change candidate,'" the District 5 councilwoman contended. "All the other candidates, it's more of the same, and if you continue to do more of the same, you get the same results."

Noting her work on the City Council to create the city's Public Nuisance Abatement Board and crack down on drug and sex trafficking, Cumber described herself as a champion of Jacksonville families.

"This city really needs a fighter, and someone who's going to fight for the future of the city and for its kids and grandkids," she said. "We have a 9- and 11-year-old, so I look at things through their eyes, and I want them to want to come back and for them to grow up in the safest, best city in the country. And we can absolutely be that."

Even though Cumber placed fifth overall in the UNF survey, she is second in fundraising, having raised more than \$3 million with the help of her JAX First political action committee. She has also secured endorsements from District 14 Councilwoman Randy DeFoor and local faith leaders like Rev. Fred Newbill; Bishop Terry L. Hill Jr.; Pastors Robert LeCount, Terrance Pickett and Terrance Brisbane; and Elder Terrance Ray.

Keasler, meanwhile, is a former attorney who had his license permanently revoked in 2014 over allegations of a conflict of interest.

Stating that he was just glad to be "in by the skin of [his] chin," Keasler attributed the

launch of his mayoral campaign to the breakdown of race relations following the controversial death of George Floyd.

"I saw the beginning of the 2020 'summer of love' and politicians on both sides of the aisle once again rushing to get TV time," he recalled, holding that during that period, the Black community was being "placated, patronized and pandered" to by those in power as a means of control.

"When Mayor Curry took down [Andrew] Jackson's statue in Hemming Park under the [cover] of darkness, I said, 'Dear God what have we become?'" Keasler continued. "And from such compulsion I have heeded the call to stand for our city and 'We the People.'"

DEMOCRATS IN CONTENTION

Like most Republicans in the race, the leading Democrat hopefuls have positioned themselves as "change candidates." But while the Republicans largely identified crime as the No. 1 issue currently plaguing the city, Democrat frontrunner Donna Deegan — who received the most support in the UNF survey with 31 percent of the vote — does not include crime as a key issue on her campaign website. Instead, her "#ChangeForGood" platform homes in on infrastructure, health and the economy.

Though Deegan's campaign did not respond to requests for comment, her primary competition for the Democrat vote, State Sen. Audrey Gibson, agreed with Republicans that curtailing crime should be the top priority for Jacksonville's next mayor.

Stating that her plan to address crime would combine "old-fashioned policing" methods with technological advancements, Gibson said she would work with the sheriff's office to boost public safety.

"We must have a strong multidisciplinary crime and safety commission that is data-driven beyond program review and sprinkle funding," she said. "More partnerships among and between community organizations focused on prevention, intervention and mental health is how we get to our community

feeling safer. My experience in criminology and serving for years on criminal and juvenile justice committees makes me the best candidate to communicate with the sheriff on the issues of crime prevention and public safety."

After Gibson entered the race in June, rumors floated among Democrats that she might have done so to siphon votes from Deegan. And whether true or false, the state senator's candidacy may have done just that, as Deegan's poll numbers have dropped 10 points since February, when a previous UNF survey indicated she had the support of 41 percent of likely voters.

Meanwhile, in the August poll, Gibson drew 10 percent of the vote.

Gibson, addressing the speculation, stated: "I am running for mayor because I believe it is time that we had a mayor who puts the needs of the residents first and actually brings the community together. A mayor who gets it that we all want a good quality of life including housing affordability, safe neighborhoods, healthier families, a good business environment and a future that embraces 'Promises made, promises kept.' And a budget that works for all. I have years of experience in budgeting."

The final three candidates, Democrat Theresa Ann Richardson, independent Darcy G. Richardson and non-party affiliated candidate Omega Allen, were unreachable for comment.

Altogether, they accounted for less than 4 percent of the vote, yet it is also worth noting that 20 percent of the survey's respondents either had yet to decide on a candidate or chose not to answer the question. And with several months left to campaign, there is still time to make an impact.

Jacksonville's first mayoral election will take place Tuesday, March 21, 2023. If no candidate receives an outright majority, the top two finishers will go head-to-head in a runoff. In the meantime, Resident Community News will continue to follow the race and provide updates as the election draws near.

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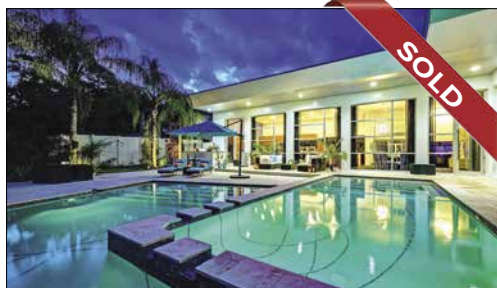
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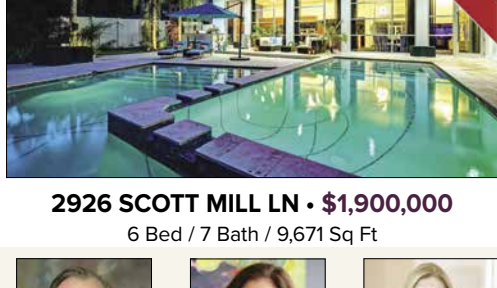
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Groundbreaking ceremony held for One Riverside

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

One Riverside, a much-anticipated mixed-use development at the Northbank's 1 Riverside Avenue, celebrated its groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday, Sept. 22.

Demolition of the Florida Times-Union building that once claimed that address began in May of this year and focus has shifted from what was to what will be.

Katherine Mosley, a partner with Atlanta-based developer TriBridge Residential LLC spoke at the ceremony, explaining construction for this development will take place in phases. Phase one of construction will include 270 residential units and one restaurant while also enhancing connectivity and access to the Riverwalk.

"...I certainly look forward to the day that we're out here eating at the restaurant, shopping at the grocer, walking on the Riverwalk," she said. "I think it's going to be a very exciting project for Jacksonville and really enforce the sense of community that the city's done such a great job cultivating. There's been tons of development in recent years and I know that's planned to continue and we're excited to be a part of that."

The estimated \$250 million mixed-used project will cover 18.8 acres and will also include a new Whole Foods Market and retail space to be developed by Atlanta-based Fuqua Development. A city park is also planned for the project, also accessible off the Riverwalk.

Mosley spoke of TriBridge's "collaborative relationships" with Jacksonville's Downtown

Investment Authority (DIA) and the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB).

"I think they did a great job of not only looking out for the interest of our specific development, but really enhanced a lot of the benefits to the community," Mosley added. "They pushed us to do things like activate the Riverwalk with restaurant uses and retail. Obviously they're contributing the city park that will be accessed off of the Riverwalk and really enhance the connectivity amongst the Brooklyn community that's so well-established and vibrant, really bringing that across Riverside Avenue and connecting it to the Riverwalk."

Jacksonville-based Live Oak Contracting is the contractor for the project. President and CEO Paul Bertozzi, a Jacksonville native himself, spoke excitedly about what it means to have reached this milestone on the project and what the project itself will mean for Jacksonville.

"It's a great achievement to get it to this stage and now, as some of them say, the easy work is ahead of us," Bertozzi said after the ceremony. "The hard work of getting the development done and built and really bringing all the other teams that are gonna help support the development of the project, from trade partners to the architects and engineers that will continually be working with us through the project as well as TriBridge. It's a great feat to get here but we've got a lot of work still to get done.....It's gonna be a great project here, but it's really a catalyst for everything else and all the other opportunities for Jacksonville."

Also involved in the project are Prosser Inc., Dwell Design Studio, Banko Design and LandDesign.

It's official... USS Orleck opens to the public

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The USS Orleck DD-86 is now officially open to the public.

"...We have been working 12 years for this day, for this moment," said Jacksonville Naval Museum President Daniel Bean at the opening ceremony on Friday, Sept. 23. "I would like to just say that dreams do come true."

Bob Orleck, nephew to the ship's namesake — Lieutenant Joseph Orleck — and executive director of the USS Orleck DD-86 Association, attended the event and spoke both of his uncle and the ship itself.

"This is where she was meant to be," Orleck said of the retired destroyer's new homeport.

"This is only possible because of the hard work of a great number of volunteers," said Vystar Credit Union President and CEO Brian Wolfburg during the ceremony. "Those are volunteers who are committed to our community, to our downtown and to our military and that brings together everything Vystar stands for."

City of Jacksonville Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Charles E. Moreland spoke at the ceremony as well, stating, "This is history."

"...We're grateful for our partnerships all over the City to make this a reality here today," he added. "One of the things the mayor mentioned, he was going to transform

the skyline of Jacksonville. Well, Mayor? I believe you've done that."

The USS Orleck is the most decorated U.S. Navy warship post-World War II. Commissioned on Sept. 15, 1945, the ship served in the Cold War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. During the Korean War, she began what became known as the "Train Buster Club" after successfully eliminating two military transport trains, first destroying the tracks ahead of and behind the trains and then the trains themselves.


After 37 years of service, the USS Orleck was decommissioned on Oct. 1, 1982 and was transferred to the Turkish Navy.

The Orleck first arrived in Jacksonville in March of this year and is temporarily moored at the Jacksonville Riverwalk, but will ultimately be moved to her final location at the anticipated Shipyards West Park on Bay Street. According to Downtown Jacksonville, the park "will be a world-class riverfront park inclusive of complimentary amenities that will provide the missing link between Riverfront Plaza and Metropolitan Park." Design of the park is expected to be complete by early 2023. The USS Orleck "will be part of the activation of that park," explained Jacksonville Naval Museum Executive Director Jim Webb.

Vystar employees and members received early access to the USS Orleck on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 24 and 25, while the ship officially opened to the public on Wednesday, Sept. 28. Its hours are Wednesdays thru Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

It is currently located at 114 E. Coastline Drive.

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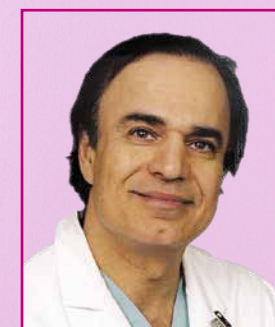


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Jordan joins Baptist Health's Familial Brain Aneurysm Study to help others, ends up saving her own life

Threat discovered during state-funded research screening to assess the hereditary probability of brain aneurysms in families.

Pamela Jordan, 61, wasn't having any symptoms, exercised three days a week and lived a healthy lifestyle; but, because of her family history of aneurysm and stroke, she agreed to participate in Baptist Health's Familial Brain Aneurysm Study. Backed by \$750,000 in grants from the State of Florida, the study allowed Jordan to receive a magnetic resonance angiographic (MRA) scan that provided images of her arteries. Ricardo Hanel, MD, PhD, neurosurgeon and co-medical director of Baptist Stroke & Cerebrovascular Center, evaluated the scan for abnormalities and found a 6mm unruptured aneurysm behind Jordan's right eye.



Pamela Jordan, left, with Dr. Ricardo Hanel

"I wasn't thinking I'd have a problem, but if I can do something to help others, I'm all for it," Jordan said. "I was surprised when they actually found something!"

Dr. Hanel inserted a cylindrical pipeline device to slow the flow of blood into the aneurysm and allow the vessel to heal, making Jordan the first family member to be treated for an aneurysm found during the study.

"Today, we know that if you have two first-degree relatives (mother, father, siblings) with a brain aneurysm, your risk of having an aneurysm increases from 4% to 8%," said Dr. Hanel, the principal investigator of the study. "Discovering Mrs. Jordan's aneurysm in the course of the study is gratifying because we helped prevent a possible emergency situation, and it's further evidence that heredity may play a role in predicting the likelihood of aneurysm in a family line."

All 'fore' fun: San Marco's Fore Score Golf Tavern



There's a new game in town in San Marco.

Fore Score Golf Tavern opened this summer at 1407 Atlantic Avenue in San Marco Square, adjacent to the fire station.

Owner Daniel Hileman said the building's location, view and large bay windows allowed them to "elevate" the experience of Fore Score.

"It gives people a place to come and entertain their friends and family, have great food, a cocktail or a glass of wine right here in your local community," he said. "...It's been fantastic and I think the community has really enjoyed having something new and different in the area."

A San Marco resident himself, Hileman said Fore Score Golf Tavern offers a unique experience for guests: The restaurant offers food and cocktails and the simulators, of course, provide the fun.

Reservations for the simulator bays must be completed online prior to guests' arrivals. In addition to golf, the simulators offer other sports, including football, soccer, carnival games and — a favorite for kids of all ages, Hileman said — zombie dodgeball.

"We'll have a bay of 12-year-olds having fun and high-fiving and cheering and then right next to them will be a bay of 27-year-old buddies doing the exact same thing," Hileman said.

The bays range in price from \$35/hour during the week to \$65/hour on the weekends.

Partners in this venture include Hileman and his wife Kerrie, Kasey and TJ McInnis, Andy Allen of Corner Lot and Jordan and Anne England of Industry West.

Fore Score Golf Tavern is open Sunday through Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Thursday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

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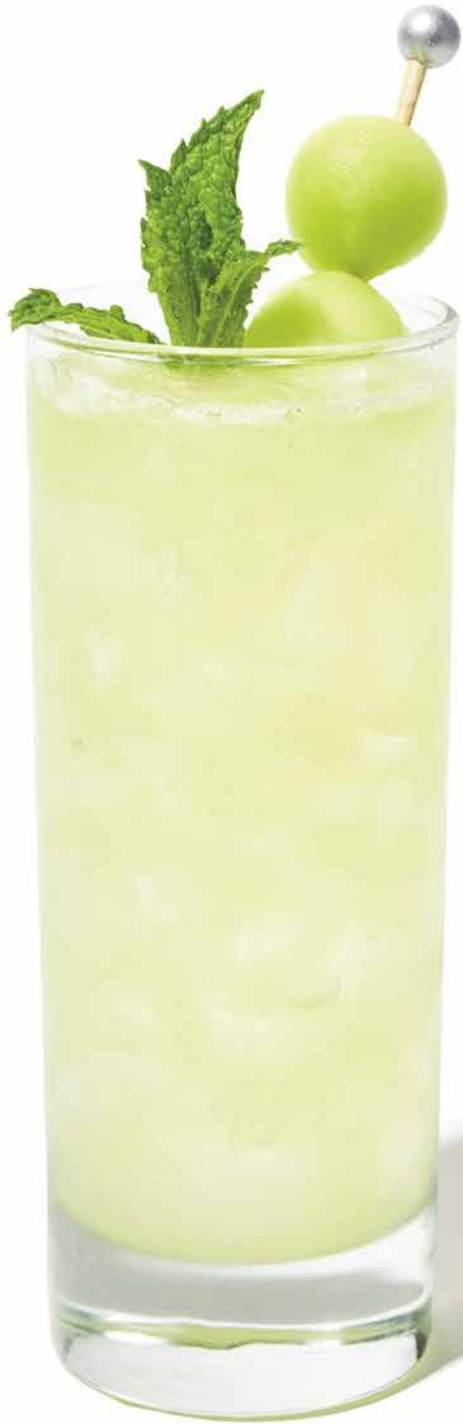


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Junior Achievement of North Florida adds seven new board members



Nadar Farhat Patty Keenan Jennifer Kirouac Mike Knox Shenani Ranadewa Trish Skoglund Shatara Troy

Junior Achievement (JA) of North Florida has named seven new members to its board of directors:

Nader Farhat is the managing partner of the Jacksonville office for PwC.

Patty Keenan is the chief learning officer for Miller Electric Company and founder of an executive coaching firm.

Jennifer Kirouac has more than 25 years' banking experience and is currently the vice president, senior business banking relationship manager for First Horizon.

Mike Knox is the senior vice president, relationship manager for PNC Financial Services.

Shehani Ranadewa is an AVP with Deutsche Bank who has helped coordinate several JA fundraisers.

Trish Skoglund is the director of mergers and acquisitions with Crowley and is looking forward to being part of an organization that provides resources for young people regardless of their socio-economic background.

Shatara Troy is a JA alumna who serves as COO of Harbor View Advisors and managing director of the firm's consulting practice area.

These new members are now part of a board made up of 36 community leaders

who volunteer their time and are dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy—three sets of critical life skills that are not always taught in schools.

"[They] reflect the communities we serve and can help to drive our strategic initiatives related to growth and impact," said Meg Rose, Board Chair.

"We welcome everyone to the board and look forward to working together to achieve our mission of inspiring and preparing young people to succeed," said Shannon Italia, President of the organization.

Junior Achievement receives \$800,000 from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott

Junior Achievement of North Florida announced that it has received a gift of \$800,000 from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. It is part of a total of \$38.8 million donated to Junior Achievement USA and JA operations in 26 communities across the country. This is the largest gift from a single donor in the organization's 103-year history.

"We greatly appreciate the incredible generosity of MacKenzie Scott for this amazing gift to our organization," said Shannon Italia, president of Junior Achievement of North Florida. "We see this investment as a recognition of all the great work taking place in our community because of the passion and commitment of the business leaders, educators, volunteers, and other partners who support Junior Achievement locally. This donation will allow us to make even better use of other community investments to positively impact the lives of the young people we serve."

Junior Achievement of North Florida will be using its portion of the gift to scale its impact in the region and accelerate the timeline for launching an integrated program model that provides young people with a pathway to work readiness and financial literacy.

Resident Proclamation Thanks Police Officers



Jacksonville residents publicly expressed their gratitude to past and present police officers by endorsing a banner of appreciation. The large proclamation banner, circulated by the We Can Be Heroes Foundation, was presented at the Jacksonville Police Memorial Building on Sept. 15. The proclamation salutes past and present law enforcement officers for selflessly risking their lives to protect individuals, families, neighborhoods and property against crime.

"Sometimes, in the wake of recent tragedies, police officers have not received the gratitude and thanks they deserve," said Beth Heath, president of the We Can Be Heroes Foundation. "This banner reminds law enforcement their service is respected by countless thousands of grateful people in, or passing through, this city."



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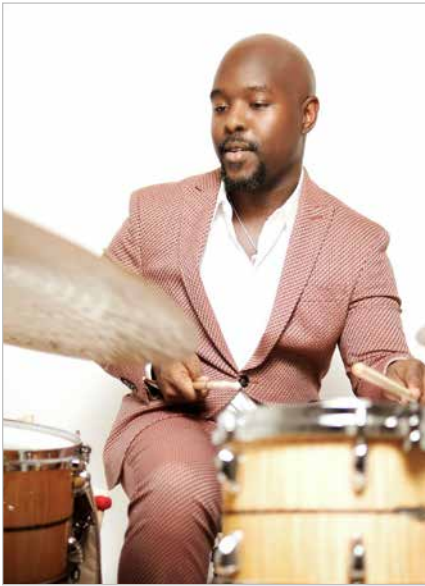
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Ulysses Owens, Jr. Selected for the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award

Grammy award-winning performer, producer and educator uses music to empower Jacksonville youth



Ulysses Owens, Jr. Photo Courtesy of Felicia Bass

Grammy Award-winning jazz percussionist, producer and educator Ulysses Owens Jr. was recently named the 2022 Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award recipient by The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. The award, bestowed annually, recognizes a gifted local artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida. The award is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker and includes a \$10,000 unrestricted grant for the recipient.

A graduate of Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and the Juilliard School of Music, and a Jacksonville native, Owens was called “a drummer who takes a back seat to no one,” by the New York Times. Owens’ artistic command of percussion has earned him positions in some of the most successful jazz ensembles in the world. His accolades are numerous, including being named a Rising Star by DownBeat Magazine five times in a row; the Gold Medal winner in the 2014 Global Music Awards; and a 2015 Jazz at Lincoln Center Awards Honoree. His most notable accomplishments are performances on the 2021 Grammy Award-winning album Dedicated to You, and the 2021 Grammy Award-winning Big Band album, The Good Feeling.

Alongside his international touring schedule, Owens is deeply invested in Jacksonville. In 2008, he was inspired to create a nonprofit organization, Don’t Miss A Beat, with his family as an antidote to the level of high school dropouts and murder rates among young Black people in the community. The program began with the singular objective of helping suspended youth stay in school so they wouldn’t “miss a beat.” Today, Don’t Miss A Beat blends music, art, academic achievement and civic engagement to

enhance the lives of children, teens and their parents in the Riverside, Brooklyn and Woodstock communities of Jacksonville. The organization uses the performing arts to facilitate youth development, cultivate talent, provide academic support, and enhance educational achievement and graduation rates.

“Ulysses’ superior artistry has brought a singular distinction to Northeast Florida. It is this type of dedication to craft Ann McDonald Baker sought to recognize in her lifetime through Art Ventures,” according to Amy Crane, senior program director at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and coordinator of the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award selection process.

“Just as remarkable, through Don’t Miss A Beat, Ulysses has impacted the lives of thousands of young people and their families in Jacksonville. Students have stayed in school, graduated, and received scholarships to colleges. His passion for cultivating young artists by investing in their education has profoundly benefitted our entire community.”

Owens was introduced as the 2022 Ann McDonald Baker Award winner at the Don’t Miss A Beat Summer Camp finale and the Broadway Production of Dreamgirls held last month in Jacksonville.

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Barnard To Head Educational Division at Hope Haven



Nancy Barnard

Nancy Barnard, formerly noted for her tutoring business Educational Development Services, is parlaying her 20 years of tutoring and educational experience into a role as head of a new

educational division at Hope Haven. As the Educational Program Director in the Center for Cognitive and Educational Intervention, Barnard will have the opportunity to reach more children and families community.

"I have only addressed the tip of an iceberg that continues to be a barrier to so many children and their educational success," said Barnard. "I am excited about the opportunity to serve more dyslexic students in Jacksonville. Hope Haven has a history of serving children in Jacksonville that need special services."

Barnard indicated that an estimated 20% of the population, 25,000 students in Duval County Public Schools, and up to 80% of incarcerated persons are living with dyslexia, and that the pipeline to prison for many of these children begins in the third grade.

She will work closely with neuropsychologist Dr. Allison Cato-Jackson to provide the intervention education that students with dyslexia and other learning challenges need to be successful, as well as offer SAT and ACT support. New goals for the program are to raise awareness of dyslexia in our community, educate teachers on recognizing dyslexia, and train teachers in methods of instruction that best address this pervasive learning disability.

Jessica Finch Joins St. Johns Riverkeeper



Jessica Fince, Photo Courtesy of St. Johns Riverkeeper

Jessica Finch has joined St. Johns Riverkeeper as the Community Engagement Coordinator for Putnam County. She is responsible for raising awareness, engaging residents and leaders, and building support in Putnam County for St. Johns Riverkeeper's advocacy priorities.

"Rivers have always been a huge part of my life, having spent most of my life living on one. Growing up on the Suwannee gave me an appreciation of the natural beauty and recreational opportunities that are unique to river communities," she said.

Finch has a keen understanding of the importance of clean and healthy rivers to the economy and quality of life of the local community. One primary focus of her new role will be the restoration of the natural flow of the Ocklawaha River to reunite Silver Springs, the Ocklawaha and the St. Johns.

"The health and vitality of the St. Johns is of utmost importance to the residents of Putnam County. I know that we share the same vision for the river, and I am proud to be a part of the team."

Bachara Construction Law Group celebrates 15th anniversary

Bachara Construction Law Group (BCLG), recently celebrated 15 years of providing legal representation to owners, developers, contractors, construction trades and suppliers throughout the Southeast. It marked the occasion with a re-brand, new website and new visual identity.

"I founded the firm with three main objectives: to concentrate exclusively on construction law, offer clients exceptional attention and individualized service, and utilize technology to expand our capabilities while remaining a boutique practice," said Chip Bachara, managing partner, on the firm's success.

"As someone who literally grew up in and around the construction industry, I understand the dynamics our clients are facing. That makes it exceptionally satisfying to help them address their legal challenges and get back to growing their businesses, providing employment, and building the landscape and economy of Northeast Florida."

BCLG has been recognized multiple times by U.S. News - Best Lawyers "Best Law Firms" as a Tier One practice for construction law and construction litigation, most recently in 2022. Its attorneys have been selected for Best Lawyers, Florida Super Lawyers, Florida's Legal Elite and other peer-reviewed honors.

Rotary Club of Mandarin appoints new leadership



2022-2023 President Marc Hassan, Rotary Club of Mandarin

The Rotary Club of Mandarin recently installed new leadership for 2022-2023. Appointed as President — Elect was Marc Hassan. Wes Caldwell was appointed Fundraiser Chair and Brian Hall as Secretary and Treasurer.

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Olivia Frick Named Chair-elect of ULI North Florida



Olivia Frick

Olivia Frick, business development professional with LS3P Associates, has been named chair-elect of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) North Florida District Council. Frick has been a dedicated member of ULI and currently serves as the sponsorship chair for the District Council. She is also a graduate of ULI's Center for Leadership and Women's Leadership Development Initiative.

"I am humbled to have been selected as the chair-elect of ULI North Florida," said Frick. "ULI has a diverse, dedicated and inspiring membership, and I am fortunate to be a part of this organization."

Frick will succeed Patrick Krechowski, partner, Balch & Bingham, as District Council chair effective July 1, 2023, and serve a two-year term.

"Working closely with Olivia over the last four years, I have experienced her dedication to ULI, and I am confident her passion and leadership will guide our region and continue to advance the mission of ULI," said Krechowski.

The ULI is the global leader in research and education focused on land use and real estate issues. As chair, Frick will provide leadership in the responsible use of land for nearly 550 ULI North Florida members that span from Flagler to Escambia counties.

Family Promise celebrates milestone anniversary and new Family Resource Center



(Front) From Ortega United Methodist Church: Tony Nasrallah, Sally Tate, Karen Snoak, Vicky Yong; (middle) from St. Johns Presbyterian Church: Allison Stanly and Christine Hughes; from Ortega United Methodist Church: Bob and Melodie Brunson, Frank Yong, Sage Peterson, Kathy Story, Kathy Nipper; and (back) from Ortega United Methodist Church: Drew Story, Bill Nipper

More than 200 volunteers, supporters and donors toured the new Family Resource Center for Family Promise of Jacksonville during two open houses on Sept. 18 and 21, 2022. The center is located at 431 University Boulevard North, 32211, in Arlington Congregation Church.

Due to COVID, Family Promise did not have a 15th anniversary celebration in 2020. It combined an 15+1 (16) year celebration with the Open House. Activities included a self-guided tour of the Family Resource Center and a program including a family served by Family Promise as well as speakers on the community need and Family Promise's vision for the future.

"To better respond to our community's needs, we needed to increase our capacity. This move allowed Family Promise to expand services and be in the position to serve more families," said Mark Landschoot, executive director and Lakeshore resident.

Among Family Promise host congregations for its Temporary Shelter program are Lakewood United Methodist Church, Ortega United Methodist, Church, Riverside Park United Methodist, St. John Presbyterian Church and St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Family Promise of Jacksonville is a nonprofit organization with the goal of helping families experiencing or at-risk homelessness to return to stability. It offers three programs focusing on diversion, prevention and temporary shelter. Family Promise collaborates with 15 local congregations, multiple social service organizations and 800 volunteers. The families served have an 80 percent success rate.

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Florida Public Relations Association
Jacksonville Chapter Announces 2022-2023
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Amanda Young, EmmaJean Livingston, Madelene Skinner, Jay Morgan-Schleuning, APR, CPRC, Andrea Siracusa, APR, CPRC, Kimberly Norman, Courtney Barclay, Ph.D., JD, APR, Nancy Rubin, APR, Chelsea Kavanagh, APR

The Jacksonville Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA), which supports public relations and communications professionals across Northeast Florida, recently installed its 2022-2023 Board of Directors. The following individuals will hold office for a one-year term:

- President — Andrea Siracusa, APR, CPRC, Dreams Come True
- Treasurer — Chelsea Kavanagh, APR, Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT)
- Vice President of Membership — Kimberly Norman, JAXPORT
- Vice President of Credentialing — Nancy Rubin, APR, ThinkSpark Inc.
- Vice President of Media and Communications — EmmaJean Livingston, Firehouse Subs Headquarters
- Vice President of Young Professionals — Amanda Young, Brunet-García Advertising
- Immediate Past President — Courtney Barclay, Ph.D., JD, APR, Jacksonville University
- Senior Advisor — Madelene Skinner, RS&H

A dream fulfilled

Lilly Grace celebrates one year, opens second location

Amy Walwyn always wanted to create a place where women of all ages could find something that made them feel beautiful.

Lilly Grace Boutique is the realization of that dream.

Opened in May 2021, the San Marco boutique quickly established itself as a local favorite.

“I love fashion, I love the latest trends and I wanted to be able to bring good, nice quality clothes to women that they’ll put it on and they’ll feel good about themselves,” said Walwyn from behind the counter of her San Marco store.

Recently, Walwyn has been able to expand Lilly Grace and open a second location at the Pavilion at Durbin Park in St. Johns. Walwyn said while she had no initial plans to expand, she seized the opportunity when it arose, and though it may be the same boutique, the inventory is unique to each location.

“We want there to be similarities, but we want each store to have its own personality so you’ll see we have some of the same pieces, but not duplicates of everything because San Marco is very different from Durbin,” she said.

Walwyn and her staff do extensive research on the demographics and community for each location to help determine its inventory, she explained. After seeing students from the Bolles School and the Episcopal School of Jacksonville coming into her flagship store, for example, Walwyn researched the schools’ dress codes to ensure her boutique offered girls clothes they would wear both on weekends and at school.

Ultimately, she said, she wants her stores to offer something for everyone.

“My goal has always been and will always be I want three generations to be able to come into the locations and each one of them walk out with something, from grandmother to daughter to granddaughter,” she said. “Maybe a clutch or a blazer for the older generation, but I want them to be able to come in and find something.”

The San Marco flagship store is located at 2026 Hendricks Avenue and is open Sundays, noon to 5 p.m., Mondays - Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Durbin store is at 120 Durbin Pavilion Dr. Unit 102, St. Johns with the same operating hours.

Hooshang Oriental Rugs reaches another milestone



The oldest continuously running business in Avondale celebrated its 45th year in business, as it steadily moves into its 46th year of operation. The shop, owned and curated by Mr. Hooshang Harvesf Ph.D. has been in Historic Avondale through thick and thin in the economy and has always maintained its presence.

“I am truly blessed,” said Harvesf, of his longevity as a shop owner and rug importer. “The neighborhood is the best, the people are friendly, and I’ve always had a special fondness for Avondale.” Some have dubbed him the “Mayor of Avondale” for his tenure in business and presence on the Board for the local merchant association, on which he has played every role – from treasurer to president – and is a member emeritus of the group.

By importing, selling and cleaning rugs from all over the world, the shop has always been known as a top resource for discovering the finest hand-knit rugs from the major weaving centers of the world. Homes throughout Northeast Florida and other parts of the country, and the world, are adorned with rugs curated and collected by Harvesf.

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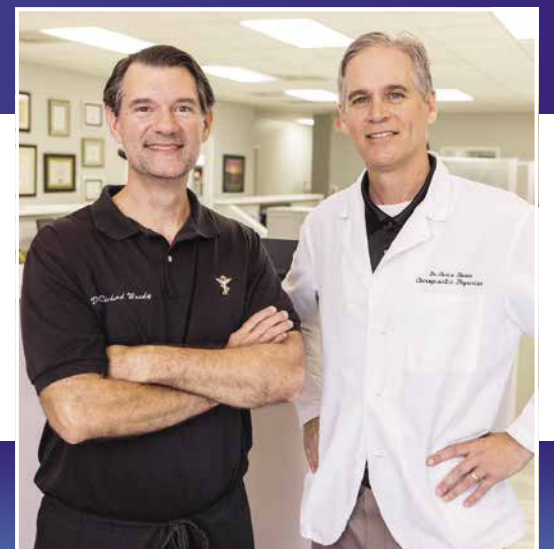
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Lucky 3's: Toscana Little Italy celebrates 13th anniversary in San Marco, third anniversary with new owners



Rebecca and Sam Winchester behind the bar toasting their third anniversary owning Toscana Little Italy. Photo by Lindsey Lewis.

Cooking is a passion for Rebecca Winchester.

As owner and executive chef of Toscana Little Italy, she can live that passion every day. While her husband and co-owner Sam runs the front of the house during the evenings, Winchester is in the kitchen doing what she loves.

While Winchester and her husband celebrated their third anniversary this Oct. 1 at Toscana Little Italy, the restaurant itself has been a San Marco staple for 13 years.

The Winchesters purchased the restaurant from the original owners in 2019 and, for their first year, really focused on paying homage to what the prior owners had created. Now, with three years under their belt, Winchester said its time for some change.

In addition to making aesthetic changes to the restaurant itself, Winchester has introduced a new menu with several featured entrees she has created herself.

"With this new menu that I've written that I'm going to be introducing, we have

things that aren't found here in Jacksonville," Winchester said, "Items and sauces and the creativity of innovative Italian. We still have the comfort food. We still have the chicken parms and the pic-catas and the marsalas. But I wanted to try to introduce Jacksonville to a little bit of some-thing different, northern Italian, northeast United States Italian."

So far, Winchester said, the menu has been well received and she has nothing but the utmost respect and appreciation for this community and clientele that have fully embraced her and her husband.

"Our community has been really supportive of us," she added. "We would be nothing if we weren't in this community. There's just been this outpouring of encouragement and continued loyalty by coming time after time and day after day... That kind of support just doesn't happen in any community and we just feel really blessed being relative outsiders to Jacksonville, we were just really embraced and I can't ask for anything more than that."

Friends of Hendricks to install shade structure over basketball court

The Friends of Hendricks will soon be installing phase one of a shade structure for half of Hendricks Avenue Elementary School's basketball court, providing relief during the hotter school months for children playing outside.

Installation is expected to take place during the first week of October with a dedication ceremony planned for the end of the month.

The parent- and volunteer-led non-profit organization spent the 2021-22 school year raising funds for this project, which cost approximately \$40,000, according to Friends of Hendricks President Cory Lek. The organization will use this year to raise the funds to install another structure for the remaining half of the basketball court.

"It's been a long time coming," Lek said. "This has been discussed and wanted by the school for many years."

The Friends of Hendricks hosts several fundraising opportunities throughout the school year. "Hugs from Henry" is a birthday celebration parents can register their children for with school mascot Henry, the Eagle; Spirit Nights are events held in partnership with local businesses during which the organization receives a percentage of that day's sales. The largest fundraising event, Lek said, is the annual Walkathon held in February.

"Community businesses sponsor us and in turn we advertise for their business," Lek explained. "It's a partnership that's mutually beneficial. We raise half the money through that and half the money through families: The children ask for pledges for each lap they walk. It's just like an old-fashioned walkathon."

At last year's 10th annual Walkathon, Lek said they were able to raise \$45,000.

"After nearly a decade of planning and organizing, I'm so pleased that our school community has come together to provide this much-needed relief to our students," said Hendricks Avenue Elementary Principal Darrell Edmunds in an e-mail. "The summer months present real heat safety risks during P.E. class and other outdoor activities. This shade structure will not only provide a cool space for students, but also serves as a testament to the commitment of our Hendricks Avenue Elementary school community."

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Florida Forum celebrates 30th Season for Women's Board

Speaker's relevance to Ukraine War, Russian corruption on display

Conspiracy. Crime. Corruption. The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital kicked off the Florida Forum's season with Bill Browder, Sept. 20, with stories that seem stranger than fiction. Mr. Browder entertained the crowd at the Jacksonville Performing Arts Center, his timely talks of corruption painted an interesting picture of Vladimir Putin, his cohorts, and the oligarchs running the county.

As the largest foreign investor in Russia in the early 2000s, he was deemed a 'threat to national security' by Russian officials after unearthing corruption. Alongside his trusted attorney, Sergei Magnitsky, the pair discovered financial crimes against Hermitage Capital Group, Browder's fund, by officials and oligarchs within the Russian state. He lost his friend and attorney Magnitsky, who testified about a massive U.S. \$230 million dollar fraud and was subsequently murdered while imprisoned for his role in unearthing the actors involved. Since 2005, Browder has been on Vladimir Putin's hit list.

Browder has gone on to publish two books about the experiences he has lived. In addition to Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice, in Feb. 2015, and his second book, Freezing Order: A True Story of Money Laundering, Murder, and Surviving Vladimir Putin's Wrath, was recently released in April 2022; Browder continues to fight for policy he's helped to craft regarding visa bans and freezing of assets for human rights abusers around the world. Passage of the Sergei Magnitsky Accountability Act in 2012, as well as the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act of 2016 have been pursued passionately by Browder, who's deep fondness for his friend fuels the fire for further legislative action across the globe.



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Natalie Rosenberg with Karla Newton and Leigh Smith



David Loop, Amy and Rick Morales with Dee Loop

Cowford Ball a smash, tickets sold out

This year's Cowford Ball was special, it was sold out early and the crowd was enthused to grow the notoriety amongst a new, energized group of volunteers. The event committee was largely made up of folks that had never attended a Cowford Ball in the past.

The show of support from both businesses, volunteers and participation from donors helped to make this year's event one to remember. With the theme of Life is a Highway, the crowd enjoyed the mechanical bull, some amazing auction items and a mystery box giveaway by Diamonds Direct.

The Chair of the event, Sarah Allen Foster, had a personal connection to the mission of the American Cancer Society after having fought her own battle with childhood cancer. Twenty years later, she welcomed her longtime physician and his spouse, Honorary Chairs Dr. Eric and Marcy Sandler, to join in celebrating fundraising for a Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative. Dr. Sandler was her physician and met her at the tender age of 7, he helped her remain confident in remission and monitored side effects after her battle with High-Risk Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

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Alana Hassan with Lauren and Jaren Nelson

Cowford Ball Chair Sarah Foster with Keely Kennedy of ACS

20 Years Celebrated at Delicious Destinations

After a two-year hiatus, Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation once again hosted Delicious Destinations in-person – just in time for the event's 20th anniversary. This year's premier food and wine event, presented by Miller Electric, raised \$298,000 in critical funds for the organization's community outreach programs, which connect those in need with quality, compassionate healthcare. The event was held Sept. 9 and 10 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, where some of the city's most celebrated chefs guided attendees on a culinary voyage across the historic Spice Route via dishes inspired by regions that stretch from Japan and Indonesia to India and the Mediterranean.



Dick Morales & Marcia Morales pose with daughter Marcia Morales Howard and son-in-law Laurence Howard at Delicious Destinations 2022



Aaron Bean, Mark Scruby, Virginia Hall, Abby Bean, and Randy Goodwin enjoy Delicious Destinations 2022



Chefs from Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation's 20th Annual Delicious Destinations receive kudos from the crowd



Delicious Destinations Committee Members pause for a quick picture to celebrate the success of the 20th annual event



Jill Bechtold with Morgan Roberts, Lindsay Tygert and Quanneise Findlay



Tiffany Snyder with Emcee Vic Micolucci and Holly Izard



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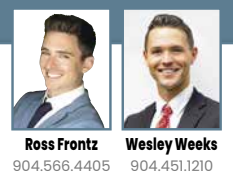
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Community Foundation launches A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity & Impact Fund

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News



Some members of the A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity & Impact Fund Founder's Circle. Photo courtesy of The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida (Photographer: laird).

On Aug. 19, the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida launched the A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity and Impact Fund, a new collective giving fund “to attract and deploy assets in the community to ignite transformational change in Jacksonville’s Black communities.”

Conversations surrounding the fund first began in 2020 with community leaders to explore what could be done to resolve “the issues that plague the Black community,” explained Wanda Willis, Community Foundation vice president of civic leadership.

Those discussions and subsequent research helped identify the fund’s three focus areas: economic development, education and healthcare.

The online brochure about the A.L. Lewis Black Opportunity and Impact Fund explained while these three factors are “key determinants of human wellbeing...Black communities in Jacksonville experience significant disadvantages and challenges in each area. Investing in solutions that drive the elimination of these inequities will support the strengthening of Black communities and the organizations that serve them.”

The fund is named for Jacksonville’s renowned Black philanthropist. In 1901, he helped found the Afro-American Life Insurance Co. Later, in 1935, Lewis co-founded American Beach. According to the A.L. Lewis Museum, American Beach was “an oceanfront resort where African Americans could

enjoy ‘recreation and relaxation without humiliation’ during the Jim Crow era.”

The fund was officially launched at the Community Foundation’s Aug. 19 donors’ forum to focus on “the impact and legacy of Black philanthropy,” Willis explained.

Dr. Johnetta Betsch Cole, the great-granddaughter of A.L. Lewis — who allowed the fund to use her great-grandfather’s name and likeness — is a founding member of the fund and an honorary member of the its Founders’ Circle.

“It was quite special to have her as part of this initiative,” Willis said. “She was certainly part of some of the earlier conversations in pulling together this fund and it was just so befitting with her great-grandfather having been one of the first Black philanthropists in the state of Florida to lend his name in support of this fund.”

Cole said when the Community Foundation first approached her about this, her reaction was one of “gratitude and pride.”

“Gratitude that my great-grandfather’s name will be associated with a philanthropic effort that just seems to be so connected to who he was, what he did and what he hoped would be,” Cole recalled. “...[and] pride that the town that I grew up in — and those were not good days from my perspective, those were days of just unceasing racial discrimination and legal

segregation — and so how proud I am that the city that I grew up in is now at a point where it acknowledges not only the great work of a man named A.L. Lewis but the need for those of us who have been blessed to remember our responsibility to give back.”

A grant-making process is expected to launch in early 2023, Willis explained. Once the grant applications are available, a committee will help determine how and where the funds will be distributed.

As a collective giving fund, this initiative is comprised of funds given by many donors rather than a single person.

Those interested in helping can visit www.jaxcf.org/black-philanthropy for more information or to make a gift. The Community Foundation also accepts “legacy gifts” where donors designate a portion of their estate to the fund.

Cole said witnessing this fund come to be has filled her with “amazement and joy” and stands in testament to the lesson her great-grandfather passed on to his family and “anyone who would listen.”

“His lesson was there must be a ratio between what you have and what you give,” she said. “...Everybody can give something. Those of us who have been fortunate must give the most.”

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LOCAL FOLKS

Jon Singleton

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News



Jon Singleton in an Afghan refugee village

Jon Singleton is a San Marco resident. He's known by many as a successful Watson realtor. But Singleton has a much higher calling than this.

He spent eleven years in the Navy Reserves, following ten years of active duty. He retired a decade ago and is a civilian now. In 2006, while a Reserves member, Singleton was called to Afghanistan during the 20-year war, when America retained a military presence in the country. "I was embedded with the Afghans. I spent every day with them. I lived on a coalition base. Every day, I would walk out the gate to the Afghan side and mentor a couple of the colonels there," he said. Singleton forged personal relationships. And though he's been back in America since 2007, he still maintains connections there.

In August 2021, the US withdrew the last of its troops from Afghanistan, leaving behind American citizens and Afghan allies. Armed Taliban fighters swiftly took over key parts of the country and are hunting down these people, raiding their homes, torturing and killing them and their families as retribution for assisting Americans in their two-decade attempt to prevent the country from becoming a safe haven for international terrorists.

Since last August, many of the Afghans who had helped Singleton and other Americans and their allies on their mission there have been contacting him, wondering if he can help. They need assistance navigating the paperwork process to obtain visas so that they can legally get out of the country. These people include interpreters and translators, among others, who worked closely with US forces. Many are Afghans who risked their lives to help the Americans' mission. Many of them are sponsored by the soldiers they had worked with.

According to Singleton, the requests actually began even before the big pull-out. So, he reached out to folks he had initially served with to see what, together, they might be able to do. Singleton has gotten involved with a network of volunteer veterans like himself who are determined to make a difference, to mitigate human suffering, to keep the promise made to bring out those who helped Americans in their war efforts. The volunteer group call themselves Task Force Pineapple, the fruit having been the original password used to identify safe people at gates and checkpoints in an operation similar to that of the Underground Railroad used by abolitionists in the 1800s. The evacuation efforts have been dubbed "digital Dunkirk," harkening back to a similar WWII mission to evacuate parts of Europe.

"Everything we're doing is through secure communications. I'm trying to help keep them motivated and alive."

- Jon Singleton

Singleton's efforts have involved posting pleas on social media, asking his fellow veterans, friends, and family members for funding to help people escape Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Last year, Singleton raised \$25,000, which he sent to Kabul, the capital city, through a covert financial network so that some people could get out. So far, Singleton himself has been responsible for the escape of 41 people. Of them, 26 are stranded in a third country now, still not having made it to American safety, still not having made it through the visa process. "I am grateful though that of the 26 still stuck, at least they're no longer being hunted," Singleton said. Their applications are in, but the paperwork is stuck in processing.

Of the 100,000 or so people who have attempted to apply for the special visa set up for those fleeing persecution, only 2% have been approved thus far. Singleton is part of another group that communicates with members of Congress, the



Jon Singleton with Afghan refugee children

State Department, and Immigration Services to help expedite the visa process. Those who have already made it to the US can wait for the long process. Singleton and his group lobby on behalf of the people still trapped in Afghanistan and surrounding locales. These are people who qualify for existing visa programs, but the American government is having a hard time processing the backlog. These are people who did not want to leave their country until the legal process was complete. But it's unsafe now to wait.

According to Singleton, Iran and Pakistan are the only two countries that accept Afghan refugees; however, they are countries that often turn the refugees back over to the Taliban. So, not all Afghans are safe in those countries either. "If we can get the Afghans to the US, there is another set of support services to help them. Jacksonville has an amazing community that has taken in refugees for the last hundred years," Singleton said.

Since the US decided to officially withdraw from Afghanistan, it has been mainly volunteer groups of American veterans who are actively trying to save their friends, as they promised they would. This has led to another issue that's been re-surfacing of late—veterans with mental health issues. "I've been on a 911 call for a year," Singleton said. He and others in his various associations receive desperate messages daily, asking for help to escape the unthinkable—rape, murder, and more.

"Everything we're doing is through secure communications," Singleton said. Traditional social media is unsafe to use. "I'm trying to help keep them motivated and alive." That humanitarian work is in addition to his lobbying on their behalf, hoping to make a difference in the facilitation of the backlog of paperwork.

Singleton wants the public to know how veterans are struggling with two broken promises—the promise of the American government to its allies and the promise of military personnel to the people who helped keep them alive while overseas through attacks and explosions. Vets consider it a violation of a moral code to leave behind their war partners, and they're going through some trauma right now.

"I greatly appreciate all the support from the community. Some has been financial. Some has been moral support and encouragement," Singleton said. He's grateful, too, to his realty team for allowing him to spend the time and energy that he has on these matters for the past year.

"Our focus is trying to help people because everyone deserves a safe home," Singleton said.



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Mission Power is Eric Livingston's new company with old roots. With two decades of generator industry experience, Livingston and his trusted team of experts make your power their priority. From residential to commercial, whether tending to a temporary outage or recovering after a disaster, Mission Power strives every day to bring you peace of mind inside no matter what's happening outside.

Headquartered here in Jacksonville, Mission Power is capable of getting you help across the nation in one hour or less during an electrical disruption. Mission Power sells generators of all sizes. They install those units and offer standard and emergency servicing of them. Multiple maintenance packages are available to help ensure your generator lasts a lifetime.

Old Roots

Livingston was born and raised in Ortega and has grown up in and around the power industry. His maternal grandfather, Henry "Buck" Autrey, led one of the largest electrical contracting companies in the nation, headquartered in Jacksonville—Miller Electric in Riverside—for nearly six decades and, at 90, still sits on their board of directors.

Eric is a fourth-generation electrician, starting with his great-grandfather, Roy White; his grandfather, Buck Autrey; and his father, Buz Livingston. All of them had an impact on where Eric Livingston is today.

Livingston worked in various positions alongside his grandad at Miller for 15 years. It's where he landed his first full-time job out of college, following a 5-year electrical apprenticeship at the Jacksonville Academy of Electrical Technology, the same program his father and grandfather had gone through generations before him. In 2012, after having graduated from the University of Florida, Livingston earned the title of Top Apprentice, the same award that Autrey had received.

After working for Miller Electric for 15 years, in August 2021, Livingston decided to venture out on his own and started Mission Power. "This is something I've always wanted to do. I wanted to follow in my grandfather's footsteps,

taking nothing and turning it into something," Livingston said. And that's what he has done.

New Company

Though separate entities, Mission Power maintains a labor agreement with Miller Electric. The businesses complement each other. While Miller is a large company that focuses on heavy commercial projects, Mission Power caters to the residential and light commercial sectors.

As a Jacksonville-based business with Normandy Boulevard as its base, Mission Power is a truly turn-key provider. Unlike other contractors in town who do residential and commercial generator work, Mission Power leaves no phase of the process on the hands of its customers. Livingston and his Mission Power crew handle all aspects of power restoration for you. They will even facilitate the necessary communication with the utility providers on your behalf. "The customer never has to lift a finger once my company is contracted to do the job," Livingston said.

Mission Power strives to provide a level of responsiveness that's unparalleled in the industry. Whether you're a homeowner or a business manager, your outage is just as serious to Mission Power as if it were for a critical data center facility. "You are just as important. We take it personally," Livingston said. He understands and cares that unexpected power outages mean no air conditioning at home in the middle of a Florida summer and jeopardy to a modern business's operations.

Depend on Mission Power for your backup power needs, a free quote, and a timely response. Livingston guarantees that his crew will not leave until your power is restored and the situation is resolved. It's their mission. "My customer's experience is very important to me. It's what defines my business. The reliability that's put on us is highly regarded at Mission Power," he said.

This is only one of many testimonials from customers of Mission Power: "Eric Livingston is professional, dedicated, and knowledgeable. He has saved us many times through hurricanes, exploding transformers, and other unfortunate losses of power during peak seasons over the years. Eric and his crew have worked



countless hours without sleep for multiple days just to get us up and running. I recommend any service his new company offers," said Billy Mayo, Manager of Florida Yacht Club.



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Transportation Security Administration Canines & Officers

Detecting Explosives to Protect People & Transport

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA
Resident Community News

The canine and officer explosives detection teams that graduate from the Transportation Security Administration's \$12 million Canine Training Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas protect people and transportation hubs by detecting and locating explosives. Among those graduates are Jacksonville's TSA-trained bomb-sniffing canines and the officers who handle them. These local, expert TSA canine explosives detection teams protect and patrol Jacksonville International Airport, Jaxport, Duval County

Courthouse, attend major local events and respond to threats.

With the mission to protect citizens and the nation's transportation system from explosives, TSA canine teams work to ensure safe travel to and from destinations whenever passengers in Jacksonville or elsewhere in the U.S. board an airplane, bus, train, ship, ferry, or subway. Approximately 100 TSA teams are assigned to U.S. airports, mass transit, and maritime sites. At any given time, more than 1,000 TSA canine teams are on active duty throughout the country.

Wherever crowds gather to see a president, cheer teams at college championship games, NFL playoffs, or a Super Bowl, celebrate the nationally televised July Fourth celebration from the U.S. Capitol, crowd sidewalks at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or New Year's



Training Officer & Canine at TSA Canine Training Center

Eve Countdowns, TSA canine explosives detection teams are present to patrol and protect. The teams also serve as a visible deterrent to terrorism, acts of violence, criminal activity and support other security missions when needed.

About forty percent of those officers who graduate from the TSA Canine Training Center are TSA inspectors. Approximately sixty percent of the graduates are local or state law enforcement officers from police departments across the country who travel to the center to be trained and paired with a TSA explosives detection canine. After the first week in the program, officers are assessed by trainers who pair them with compatible canines.

Most canine handlers accepted into the TSA Canine Training Program are already TSA officers with some canine or military experience. Other applicants must have law enforcement, military or canine experience to be considered for acceptance by the program.

Once the TSA national canine training center partners with a police department, that relationship continues past a team's graduation, according to Patricia Mancha, TSA Spokesperson-San Antonio. She described it as a partnership to maximize and further extend the capabilities of trained teams and TSA's commitment to

protecting the nation. She said that locations with no TSA canine explosives detection teams at smaller airports would be an example. The local police department would deploy their TSA canine team to that airport in response to any threat and vice versa.

TSA's canine training center is the second largest such program in the U.S., second only to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-Department of Defense canine unit, according to Mancha. The center hires professional actors of all ages, appearances, and ethnicities, complete with actual luggage, to serve as passengers. Every effort is made to duplicate a typical airport's activity, sights, sounds, and smells.

The training center has seventeen indoor venues that look like full-scale transportation sites. There is an airport terminal, gate area, cargo loading, checkpoint areas, baggage claim, full-size airplanes, interiors, and cargo belly. There is a vehicle parking lot, a light rail station and railcars, an air cargo facility, two mock terminals, and open area search venues for air scent detection training.

The scope of the TSA program increases the graduates' capacity for rapid response, deployment, and successful explosives detection anywhere there is a threat to citizens or the U.S. transportation system. The teams also



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TSA explosives detection canine & officer patrol terminal

continuous training and require annual re-certification.

The annual on-site TSA Canine Team Re-certifications that are required continually assess and ensure that both canines and handlers demonstrate proficiency in their home environment. Four key elements are evaluated: the canine's ability to recognize explosives odors, the handler's ability to interpret the canine's change of behavior, the handler's ability to conduct logical and systematic searches and the team's ability to locate the explosives odor source.

Only seven dog breeds qualify for the TSA Canine Training Program. They are purchased from specialized U.S. and European breeders who adhere to strict TSA requirements. Both male and female dogs are eligible: German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, German Short-haired Pointers, Wirehaired Pointers, Vizslas, Belgian Malinois, and Golden Retrievers.

TSA trainers choose canines specifically bred for their size, intelligence, scent detection ability, athleticism, endurance, energy level, work ethic, focus, and trainability. The trainers travel to evaluate potential dogs in a lengthy process of screening and tests before final selection.

Because of the stringent selection criteria and testing, only a low percentage of selected dogs fail to graduate from the program. After dogs and officers are evaluated and matched as a team based on trainer assessment, they begin the training program. The program consists of work with various explosives based on intelligence data and emerging threats in cooperation with the FBI.

Conventional explosives detection canines and handlers undergo an eleven-week training program costing approximately \$33,000. Passenger screening canines and handlers

complete a sixteen-week training program costing roughly \$46,000.

The teams graduate from the TSA Canine Training Program after demonstrating proficiency in multiple transportation environments: airport, terminal, freight, cargo, baggage, vehicle, bus, ferry, and rail. After teams graduate, they return to their assigned duty station at a TSA site or a police department to acclimate and familiarize the canine with their operational environment and duties.

TSA explosives detection canines are much like elite athletes. Their daily schedule is closely monitored to enable them to perform their duties at peak ability for maximum longevity. They are fed specific diets for optimal health and performance. They are weighed daily, with monthly veterinarian check-ups, and maintain structured work and rest schedules.

Before its administration by the TSA - which was created in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks — the first federal explosives detection canines program was part of the Federal Aviation Authority by order of President Richard Nixon. In 1972 he called for a national project to protect civil aviation — an FAA Explosives Detection Canine Team Program - after a bomb-sniffing dog prevented a near-catastrophic event on board a U.S. commercial airplane during flight.

On March 9, 1972, that flight on Trans World Airlines took off from JFK International Airport in New York. Moments into the flight, the airline received an anonymous phone call warning that a bomb was set to explode onboard. The aircraft returned to JFK, passengers evacuated, and a bomb-sniffing dog named Brandy rushed to search the plane. Brandy found the explosive device just twelve minutes before it was set to detonate.



Jacksonville TSA canine team

utilize a variety of training venues in and around the San Antonio metropolitan area, including the San Antonio International Airport, local shopping malls, the ATT Center, and the VIA Bus Terminal. Through such extensive and comprehensive training, the TSA canine teams offer one of the most effective means of detecting explosives threats, according to Sari Koshetz, TSA Spokesperson-Florida.

Koshetz emphasized that TSA canines can efficiently screen large numbers of passengers in numerous transportation facility types and locations, under all conditions, including terminals, vessels, vehicles, buildings, baggage, and cargo. Each TSA canine's extraordinary sense of smell is fine-tuned through intense, specific training they receive at the center. The canines and officers also complete

TSA would like the public to know that while TSA canines live and work with their officer handlers and enjoy a healthy life/work balance, treats are never handed to them. The dogs work to earn rewards or a chew toy after the successful completion of their jobs. Because of their strict diet and training, TSA representatives respectfully request that the public restrain children and never approach, touch, pet, feed, or distract working TSA explosives detection canines. A request for a photo is acceptable, but please honor the officer's response as these teams focus on their critical jobs protecting the public.



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JUNIOR RESIDENTS

St. Johns Celebrates 69 Years



Thank you to the many supporters who helped make the Ron Angie Bare Playground a reality!

Students, parents, alumni, faculty and friends of the St. Johns Country Day School gathered on Sept. 14 in celebration of Founders Day, which was highlighted by a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the highly anticipated new play space.

"Today we recognize traditions, and enjoy a new beginning while celebrating 69 years of St. Johns Country Day School," said Head of School Valorie Baker.

"The new Ron & Angie Bare Playground is a beautiful, functional space that provides areas for free play, individual exercise, and team sports," said Baker, as Board President Gene Nichols joined her to thank the many supporters who made the new space possible.

In its 69 years, St. Johns has come a long way from its original home on the second floor of a public building at the corner of Park Avenue and Kingsley. Founded by Dr. Edwin P. Heinrich and Mrs. Dorothea Heinrich on Sept. 14, 1953, St. Johns started with 26 students. It now serves students as young as three through grade 12, and is ranked the #1 College Prep Private High School in Jacksonville.



Lane Courtney and William Courtney wait anxiously for the playground to open



George Friedline (far right) with first grader and fellow Seniors Emerson Cooper and Andrew Hightower



Owene Weber hugs Head of School Valorie Baker



Kirkwood Weber takes a turn down the slide

Chace Caven named 2023 National Merit Semifinalist



Chace Caven

High school senior Chace Caven has been named a 2023 National Merit Semifinalist. He is one of over 16,000 semifinalists in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, and will vie for 7,250 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million that will be offered next spring. Semifinalist

honorees represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, including the highest-scoring entrants in each state.

Caven started high school at Stanton College Preparatory School before switching to home school his junior year. His score on his junior-year Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test enabled his entry to the 68th annual program.

The program was established in 1955 to honor the nation's scholastic champions, and encourage the pursuit of academic excellence. To become a finalist, consideration will be given to Caven's academic record, school and community involvement, leadership abilities, employment and awards received. He must also have high SAT or ACT scores, write an essay and be recommended by a high school official. National Merit Scholarship winners will be announced April-July 2023.

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Bishop Kenney Students Honored by National Merit Scholarship Program



Front row: Cooper Howe, Alyssa Malacaman, Doria Wright, Mikaela Georgi, Anabel Macchi, Joslyn Rill, Aidan Phillips; Back row: Alex Yalch, Alexander Bernich, Ian Kirsch, William Wallace, Emily Wilson; (Not pictured – Emily Malzahn)



Alex Yalch

Alex Yalch, Bishop Kenny High School Class of 2023, has been named a National Merit Semifinalist in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Program finalists will be confirmed in March 2023.

Yalch has a 4.5 GPA, and is a member of the English, Mu Alpha Theta, Rho Kappa, Science, Thespian and National Honor Societies. He is an active member of the BK Student Ambassadors, History, Science and Theatre Clubs, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Yalch has

over 310 service hours, is a member of Thespian Troupe 2411, and will play the Tin Man in the school's fall production of the Wizard of Oz.

"I like that BK has given me an opportunity to be involved in so many extracurricular activities. I truly felt welcome to try new things and was given the chance to embrace academics and the arts," said Yalch, who would like to attend the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and major in environmental science.

Fellow seniors Alexander Bernich, Mikaela Georgi, Cooper Howe, Ian Kirsch, Anabel Macchi, Alyssa Malacaman, Emily Malzahn, Aidan Phillips, Joslyn Rill, William Wallace, Emily Wilson and Doria Wright, were also recognized as Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Program, based upon their outstanding PSAT scores.

Tradition continues for Senior Buddies



Cookie Myers, left, with her first grader and fellow seniors Antonio Holmberg and Ally Desguin



George Friedline (far right) with first grader and fellow Seniors Emerson Cooper and Andrew Hightower



Meg Fackler and Annie Boatright with first grader and fellow senior Nessa Ali



William Courtney, center, with his seniors

St. Johns Country Day School students gathered around the Quad on Sept. 14 for the annual tradition of matching senior-year students with their first-grade buddies. As each first grader's name was called, they walked with their Senior Buddies to toss a coin into the Wishing Fountain together.

A longtime favorite tradition for both students and alumni, the Senior-Grade 1 Buddy Program matches each first grader with one or more senior buddies for a year of fun and friendship. Students enjoy lunches together, have special holiday parties,

and take a trip to the Jacksonville Zoo in the spring. They stand together at flag raising each morning, and the first graders often join their seniors in celebrating college acceptances, or cheering them on at sporting events. Even long after graduation, some former seniors stop by St. Johns Country Day School for lunch with their younger buddy.

"The relationships built through this program provide continued support and friendship beyond the years at St. Johns," said Head of School Valorie Baker.

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Isabella Farhat Receives UF Scholarship



Isabella Farhat

Bishop Kenny High School (BKHS) senior Isabella Farhat was offered a scholarship to the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences for 2023-2024, where she plans to major in agriculture with hopes of pursuing an environmental law degree. She recently participated in the Florida Youth Institute's residential summer program which introduces students to college majors and career opportunities pertaining to agriculture, natural resources and the environment, while exploring global food security.

"I went into this program thinking that everybody was going to impress me," Farhat said. "We met tons of experts and tons of farmers, but when actually meeting these people, they more than exceeded my expectations. [That] week has probably been the best week of my life, by far. I've learned so much and met some amazing people."

Farhat takes advanced placement courses at BKHS, is a member of the English, Latin, Mu Alpha Theta, Rho Kappa, and National Honor Societies. She is also involved with St. Vincent de Paul Society, BK Ambassadors, is an Extraordinary Ministry of Holy Communion, and a member of the cross country and track teams.

RPDS Sixth-graders Reflect on Service During Southwind Trip



Sixth-graders at Riverside Presbyterian Day School (RPDS) kicked off their capstone year with the school's annual overnight trip, Southwind, which prepares them for a year of service both on- and off-campus. The school's eldest students will serve throughout the year by leading full school assemblies and flag raising ceremonies, acting as morning

safety patrol, gathering recycling around campus, and serving the surrounding community.

"The entire sixth-grade year at RPDS is built around leadership and the understanding that, in order to be a good leader, one must take individual responsibility," said RPDS sixth-grade teacher Suzanne Byerly Taylor. "They work on developing their own sense of self as they set goals and reflect on their strengths. Empathy and compassion are reinforced as students learn to help others, even when the help that is needed is not always the kind of help we want to give."

In preparation for their Southwind trip, students were asked to reflect on what being a leader within the school means to them.

"I've been waiting to be a sixth-grader for nine years, and I remember in Kindergarten, when I thought the sixth-graders were so big and cool. Now I go to a Kindergarten class every morning, and it makes me feel like a leader," said Charlotte Herford.

"It means having integrity," said Lila Jimerson. "It means setting an example for the younger students. But, most of all, it means being responsible even when it is hard. It matters what we do, because all the lower grades look up to us. We should do our part so future students can do theirs."

San Jose Episcopal Day School students meet Fire and Rescue Department



San Jose Episcopal Day School students in PK3 and PK4 were treated to a special morning courtesy of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department (JFRD). The brave men and women from JFRD gave excited students a lesson on safety, and first-hand experience operating the famed water hose. The children learned about community helpers, and all the great work that JFRD does to keep Jacksonville safe.



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Brianna Kilcullen A Champion For Sustainability

Bishop Kenny Alumna Develops Environmentally-friendly Hemp Towel



Brianna Kilcullen

Brianna Kilcullen, 2007 graduate of Bishop Kenny High School, is driving textile sustainability through her actions, and her hemp towel company, Anact. After graduating George Washington University with an International Business degree, Kilcullen worked to increase sustainability in production and supply chains for large clothing manufacturers like

Under Armour and prAna. While on a work trip to China, she was introduced to the bacteria-resistant properties of hemp and began researching the viability of a hemp towel. Having grown up in Florida's hot and muggy environment, the fiber appeared to be a better alternative to help towels dry properly.

Thus, Anact was established in 2019, and is currently the only company to offer exclusively hemp towels. It was featured on Good Morning America in 2021 and now offers towels and totes developed from sustainable, quick-dry hemp fibers, which Kilcullen helped get legalized in Florida in 2019.

When asked how the name came about, she said that Anact is short for "an act," like an act of kindness, an act of goodwill, or simply creating an impact. Her goal of Anact is to create a socially responsible product that spurs a movement to solve problems and make things better. Kilcullen credits her faith in God for guiding her through this journey. Her love of the environment and creating a more sustainable world has shaped her drive to focus on the responsibilities of the textile industry and its impact on the world today.

Wolfpack remains scholarly & spirited



Abby Germaine, Levi Helton, Peyton Franks, and Kiersten Dearing



Cameron Day, Charlotte Caccam, and Campbell Schrarer

The Wolfpack at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies remains scholarly and spirited.

Three of their outstanding seniors have been named as semifinalists for the 2023 National Merit Scholarship: Cameron Day, Charlotte Caccam, and Campbell Scharer. These exceptional students had qualified by taking the Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). Of the 1.5 million entrants nationwide, only 16,000 or so students actually qualify as semifinalists. Further, these three Wolfson students were of the highest scoring entrants in the entire state of Florida.

Not only do Wolfson students excel at academics but also at exhibiting school spirit. Friday nights find their Pep Club occupying the loudest and proudest section of the bleachers. Donning blue and white stripes, the club leaders for 2022-23 are seniors Kiersten Dearing, Peyton Franks, Abby Germaine, and Levi Helton, chosen for their leadership skills and for their love of the Wolfpack. Join them in rallying the student section, the band, and the cheerleaders. Tickets to attend Wolfson sporting events can be purchased at www.GoFan.co (no m).

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BY SUSANNA P. BARTON
Resident Community News

This month, I'm going to talk trash with you about a special kind of gratitude — the big, stinky, overflowing bins of gratitude for miracle-workers who make our waste and clutter (poof!) disappear from the neighborhoods week in and week out. These angels are garbage collectors and the charitable folks who accept our purged items for the greater good — the people who stop us from becoming some gross version of poet Shel Silverstein's poor Sarah Cynthia Silvia Stout. Without them, "Hoarders: Buried Alive" producers and city code enforcement officers would be our only friends.

Garbage and stuff collectors have a special place in heaven — with "seats near the dessert table," as writer Anne Lamott describes. And I am certain they get to scoot a little closer each time they roar up to the Bartons' weekly curbside offerings.

Our waste collection used to be Thursday. That was always easy to remember because Thursday is the only weekday whose letters spell TRASH. You can't spell TRASH with letters from any other day of the week, this was an unfailing reminder. Then COVID came, then the schedule changed and now I can barely remember that trash day is now Wednesday, I think.

Barton bins have historically been full of the most loathsome loot. Yes, we're the jerks who don't always flatten our Amazon boxes — we are "those people" who stuff eroding plastic chairs and planters, broken grills and various household items the geri-dogs have destroyed into (OK, often next to) the can. Just last month, I tire-rolled a giant, once-expensive rug out the backdoor and to the side of the street with the intention of a donation pick-up, yet those garbage angels hauled it away like a hawk might a rat. Our bins are full of single sock collections, bacon grease, shopping bags from secret retail sessions, rotting Halloween pumpkins, Christmas trees, deer and fish carcasses from driveway taxidermy

renderings, children's artwork and yes, on occasion there may or may not have been a dead hamster corpse tossed in for good measure. And, shamefully, I haven't even begun to describe the beverage vessels that usually clink and clank around in there. Before our recycling program started back up this spring, during the COVID, we would wake sleeping babies with our weekly wine bottle and beer can deposit. We are trashy people, loud and proud!

Speaking of recycling — I can hardly go there. True facts: My husband is an ardent recycler, but I don't enjoy the process one bit. I am keen on getting stinky recycle garbage out of the house as quickly as possible, including the driving crushed beer can collection, the stank milk jugs no one rinsed and the empty cans of green beans that our geri-dogs enjoy for some suppers. And now with all the confusion about what to recycle and how to do it, I just leave that up to David and try to remember that recycling day is now THURSDAY, actually every OTHER Thursday, which I will never remember because you can't spell RECYCLING out of the letters in Thursday. It's all just too much.

Many years ago, I started putting cold soft drinks on top of our garbage can as a "thank you for putting up with our disgusting BS" to our collectors. It was a love habit I picked up from everyone's favorite neighborhood queen, Suzanne Honeycutt, who is a font of all good and loving ideas. I have enjoyed a beautiful return on this small investment — nine times out of 10, our wonderful crud collectors roll our can right back up to its dirty crevice by the garage. Imagine that.

I am equally grateful for all the neighborhood organizations that whisk away the superfluous possessions in my home that attract dust and goad me toward severe mental distress. I love that - in a moment of complete closet disgust — I can pluck unworn clothing off the hangers, stuff them in bags and deliver them to neighborhood groups up that will make good use of my fashion mistakes. Goodwill is fabulous, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Same with Salvation Army, the Hubbard House Thrift Store, City Rescue Mission, St. Vincent

dePaul Thrift Store and yes, even THE Thrift Store on Emerson Street. And if you've ever wondered who goes to these stores and benefits from the purging of your stuff collection, it's worth a visit to see most of the shoppers are people just like you. I for one, have been obsessed with thrifting at these stores thanks to my adulating daughter — though, shopping there only triples my de-stuffing efforts on the homefront. It matters not. I am now so taken with the notion that I can barely stand to buy clothes that DON'T come from the thrift store! Once you've paid \$3 for a shirt someone else paid \$300 for, it's hard to go back. I am grateful we live so close to all these stores and collection points — proximity makes the process of purging and thrifting an easy task.

Another gratitude shout-out goes to that awesome Buy Nothing 32207 Facebook group — maybe there are ones for 32205, or 32210, too, who knows. It's the best idea ever. Basically, it gives people a platform for giving their stuff away to people nearby who can use it, or for getting something needed for free. Here's how the concept is described on their website: The Buy Nothing Project's mission is "to build community by connecting people through hyperlocal gifting and reducing our impact on the environment." People are really giving away their excess stuff here with great vigor! I've seen everything from offers of unwanted bras, to popular spices that didn't hit someone's spot, plants, bumper crops of limes, diapers, sectional sofas and footrests for a wheelchair. It really is randomly beautiful.

Speaking of random and all things purging, I have surely done my share of that in this month's column. But gosh it feels restoring to demonstrate gratitude for these wonderful people who make us tidier, less junky neighbors! Thanks to them, we will never live in a world like Sarah Cynthia Silvia Stout, who never took the garbage out and paid dearly for it. In case you aren't familiar with the classic children's poem, I'll conclude with Sarah Cynthia Silvia Stout's tragic fate, the one that will never be ours thanks to our steadfast, angel-winged garbage and stuff collectors:

Susanna Barton is usually not this messy. She has lived in a house on Granada Park with her husband David, their children Ben (The Bolles School '18, Washington & Lee University '22) and Marley (The Bolles School '20, Sewanee The University of the South '24), and their super annoying geri-dogs for 25-plus years. She has written for The Jacksonville Business Journal, The Resident, Jacksonville University and The Bolles School during her professional life in Jacksonville and is now exploring the realms of early retirement. She really enjoys embarrassing-mom-walk exercising later in the morning, napping, reading and catching some rays when she's not watching terrible reality television, particularly Dr. Pimple Popper. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.

COURTESY OF WHERE THE SIDEWALK ENDS: POEMS AND DRAWINGS, BY SHEL SILVERSTEIN



"At last the garbage reached so high
That finally it touched the sky,
And none of her friends would come to play,
And all of her neighbors moved away;
And finally, Sarah Cynthia Stout,
Said, "Okay, I'll take the garbage out!"
But then, of course it was too late,
The garbage reached across the state
From New York to the Golden Gate;
And there in the garbage she did hate
Poor Sarah met an awful fate
That I cannot right now relate
Because the hour is much too late
But children, remember Sarah Stout,
And always take the garbage out."



— Shel Silverstein



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PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

CONTINUED FROM COVER

Still, Farrow is one of several parties concerned about pedestrian — specifically children — safety on the increasingly busier streets of San Marco when it comes to middle schoolers walking to and from school.

San Marco has experienced tremendous growth recently and will continue to do so as new residential and business construction wraps up. While it is an exciting time for the San Marco community, the increased traffic and new traffic patterns have already raised concerns about this issue.

Earlier this year, a child was struck by a vehicle returning to the school building from PE class. Fortunately, only mild injuries were sustained, but it served to underscore the very real issue surrounding pedestrian safety.

In previous years, the School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to Landon had been able to act as a crossing guard during pick-up and drop-off hours, helping to direct traffic and monitor children as they crossed Atlantic Boulevard, explained Duval County Public School Board Member Cindy Pearson. Following the passage of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act last year, however, the SRO is required by law to be at the school “bell to bell,” she said.

“Officer Jackson was phenomenal in handling car traffic and student traffic so there was a police officer there crossing students and feeding cars into line managing the car line,” Pearson said. “That’s gone away. He has to be in front of the school now. We have tried to contract with JSO [Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office] to get an off-duty officer and no one, to my knowledge, picked up the off-duty overtime and even if they did, we couldn’t afford it longterm.”

Pearson and Landon Middle School Principal Ryan Casey were able to arrange for a second officer to come monitor the traffic and aid with children crossing Atlantic during the first two weeks of school while the SRO remained on campus as required.

Parents like Farrow would like to see a crossing guard back at Atlantic, although that is part of a larger conversation

between DCPS and JSO. Crossing guards are only provided for elementary schools. Pearson said she has inquired about an exception for Landon but is “still waiting to hear back on that.”

To help remedy the situation, Pearson has been working with the City of Jacksonville to improve pedestrian visibility for cars and raise motorist awareness of the heavy foot traffic, particularly in the morning and afternoon.

To that end, City Council Member At-Large Matt Carlucci joined with District 5 Council Member LeAnna Cumber and arranged three public meetings to discuss the Landon Middle School Traffic Study. Pearson was part of these meetings, as were Landon Middle School Principal Ryan Casey, other city representatives and Landon parents.

Through the conversations at those meetings, several safety features have been added along the streets surrounding Landon: Eight new crosswalks have been installed, including the two on Atlantic Boulevard with Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFB): These are the signs that allow pedestrians to push a button and trigger flashing lights to alert and stop motorists before crossing. Crosswalks were also added to Minerva Avenue and Arcadia Place with static crossing signs (without flashers). Additionally, Carlucci said, the speed limit on the streets going in and out of Landon’s campus have been lowered from 30 miles per hour to 20.

Alterations have also been made to the traffic lights themselves at the intersection of Hendricks and Atlantic, Carlucci added.

“They [traffic engineers] changed the timing on some of the lights there at Atlantic and Hendricks to help the flow of traffic as well to make for a safer environment,” he said, “cause that left-hand lane on Atlantic going straight, you have to make a left there so they let that light be green a little longer so that traffic can move itself out of there.”

After the RRFBs were installed, Pearson said, the City also extended the amount of time they flash to allow children more time to safely cross and while they are effective, Pearson said a large part of the problem is motorists may not always think to look specifically for children when they see the flashers activated.

“I’d really like the community to retrain themselves to look for those flashing lights and stop and understand that in order for that light to be flashing, someone had to push that button



With increased traffic in the San Marco community, City and Duval County Public School District members, as well as parents, urge motorists to heed street signage and always be aware of pedestrians, particularly children on their way to and from school. Photo by Michele Leivas.

not as tall as an adult,” she said.

Farrow added another issue is motorists “just blowing through those crossings.”

The discussion surrounding pedestrian safety will continue to evolve as the community does, but Pearson, Carlucci and Farrow all urge motorists to remain alert behind the wheel and always watch for pedestrians.

“We’re all guilty of being distracted drivers,” Carlucci said, “but when you get into an area like that, put the phone down and drive. Pay attention, read the signs [and] look for the flashers. Look for the crosswalks. They’re there for a reason.”



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Plans underway for Cynthia Saben's 5th annual Breakfast In The Park

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Cynthia Saben's plans are underway for her 5th annual Breakfast In The Park. She needs volunteers and donors as she prepares for Christmas morning 2022 at New Dawn Outreach Center on Duval Street.

In November 2018, Cynthia had an idea. She was going to wake up on Christmas morning, cook up some biscuits and gravy in her kitchen, pack a few containers of orange juice in her trunk, and head to Main Street Park to distribute the goods to folks she had noticed lingering there. Cynthia mentioned her idea to a friend at work who agreed to help. Their discussions led to an expanded menu to include eggs and coffee. "You tell God your plan, and He'll get a good laugh," Cynthia said. They estimated they'd need enough to feed 50 people, so they requested volunteers and donations via Facebook. Cynthia swears she heard angels whispering to her, "Get more eggs. Get more eggs." She's grateful she did, as the final headcount reached 325 people who ate that morning. Cynthia knew she'd do it again the following year.

By Christmas 2019, the Main Street Park had become a dog park, no longer an ideal location for serving breakfast. Cynthia moved the operation to Spring Park. It proved too far a walk for many of the folks in need, and the headcount dropped to under 200. So, after the lines dwindled, Cynthia and some volunteers hand-delivered boxed breakfasts to people

on the streets. This practice would continue through the next several Christmases and include serving residents at Cathedral Towers, an affordable housing apartment complex.

The next year, 2020, Cynthia contacted New Dawn Outreach Center for permission to serve Christmas breakfast in their parking lot near the corner of Liberty and Ashley Streets, though the operation would retain its original name, Breakfast In The Park. "That began a new partnership," Cynthia said. Christmas breakfast was served there the following year as well, in 2021, and they plan to continue this year at New Dawn's new location at 225 East Duval Street. "We're so excited because that gets us closer to where we were the first year," Cynthia said. It's nearer to what she calls "the hub" of where there is a high concentration of homeless people in need of a hot meal.

Cynthia's goal this year is to feed 350-400 Christmas breakfasts. Her dream is to find a company that will lend her chairs and tables to seat her "guests" so that they needn't sit on curbs to eat. She's fine with serving breakfast outside because many of those who come are wheelchair users who would have staircase and doorway issues for an indoor location and because many have emotional dispositions that might make them feel unsafe in a confined space. "Every safety precaution we can think of, we're on top of," Cynthia said.

Breakfast In The Park has not come without its challenges. In 2020 and 2021, Cynthia had to cap the number of volunteers who could help and the number of meals served due to pandemic fears and restrictions. She has had to secure permits when gathering in the parks. Every year, she purchases a daily insurance

policy. This year, the cost of food due to economic inflation is a concern. Equipment has to be planned for, too, not only food. Some of the equipment that Cynthia and her team use every year is borrowed. Some pieces she was able to buy with donations. Others she has purchased herself just because there was a desperate need—like the griddle, for example, which she purchased new because their previous one had rusted.

Cynthia is insistent that the Christmas breakfasts be hearty. "We scramble real eggs on site, not powdered. The food is not plated up beforehand. I want it to be fresh," she said. They serve sausage, gravy over biscuits, and fruit cups. Danish and bread donations come from a local supermarket.

Cynthia's Christmas breakfast is not only about food and beverages. The parking lot is set up with various stations that guests visit. In addition to the food and drink areas, there's a prayer tent and an animal rescue stop. And it wouldn't be Christmas without presents, so there are nylon drawstring care bags that are packed in advance in volunteers' garages or on Cynthia's patio so that guests have gifts to take with them as they leave the breakfast line. The bags include essential toiletries, feminine products, underclothes, water bottles, snacks, and such—all depending upon what's donated ahead of time.

What Cynthia had planned to do by herself, set up one little canopy tent alone, expanded to include one friend assisting her. Over the past five years, the operation has grown to having an entire team of 50 or more volunteers and a multitude of generous donors, all of them reaching out to make Christmas morning a whole lot warmer for hundreds of Jacksonville



Brian Regnier, Cynthia Saben, Lora Weeks, and Winston Regnier



Breakfast In The Park 2020



Cynthia Saben with Breakfast In The Park guests

residents. Cynthia knows she cannot do this alone. She needs the community's help. "I do not want anyone turned away hungry or without something to take with them," she said.

To get involved, visit the Breakfast In The Park Facebook page. Listed there are particular items needed in addition to funds and gift cards. Cynthia uses that page as well as word of mouth to plan ahead of December 25. She asks that you please get in touch.

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Chairs rally support for opening of Florida Forum

Committees, leadership gathered to raise a toast

The home of Beth and Billy Morris welcomed leadership and committee members of the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital's Florida Forum to a kickoff party, Sept. 7. The lineup for the season's festivities was toasted by Chairs Beverley Brooke and Sharon Pentaleri, alongside President Robin Albanese, as the ladies discussed the fundraising goals that ultimately aid children of the community in need of world-class healthcare.

The first installment was the timely visit from Bill Browder, Sept. 20, and the next installments of visiting speakers for the Forum's 30th Season are Jenna Bush, best-selling author and daughter of former President, George H.W. Bush, slated for Nov. 8; and Allyson Felix, an Olympic track and field gold medalist (seven), who is set to appear Jan. 8, 2023.

The special reception reflected upon the hostess' Chairing of the first Florida Forum, as Beth Morris presided over the initial kickoff that welcomed an all-star lineup of Charles Kuralt, Lou Holtz and Margaret Thatcher to Jacksonville thirty years ago.



Katherine Forrester with Kelly Kunz



Florida Forum Chairs Sharon Pentaleri and Beverley Brooke with Women's Board President, Robin Albanese were on hand to raise a toast and raise funds for children in the region that come to Wolfson Children's Hospital for care.



Beverley Brooke with Robin Albanese and Sharon Pentaleri



Ashley Howard with Kendra McCrary, Heather Moseley and Miles Scheuthv



Beth Morris with her daughter Mary Jane Allegra

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The latest sports craze has a name just as crazy

What's the dill with pickleball?



BY KERRY SPECKMAN
Resident Community News

What do Bill Gates, a seventh grader from Murray Hill, the Kardashians and a San Marco business owner with bad knees have in common?

Pickleball.

At this point you're probably thinking one of two things: Who cares about the Kardashians or what in the heck is pickleball? Assuming the first question is rhetorical, the answer is: a sport. But pickleball's not just any sport: It's the fastest growing sport in the country with an estimated 4.8 million players in 2021.

To those unfamiliar with pickleball, it's a mashup of badminton, ping-pong and tennis. It's played on a flat, hard surface the size of a badminton court, and players use solid paddles, similar to those in ping-pong to hit a ball over a net like tennis. Pickleball can be played by two or four people, and a typical game lasts 15 minutes. The game itself is fairly simple and can be picked up quickly, which is part of its appeal. The fact that it requires no athletic experience and is suitable for all ages and fitness levels makes it more accessible than the vast majority of sports, hence its popularity.

Andy Zarka was thrilled to discover pickleball in 2019, having given up running and cycling because of his bad knees. "Pickleball is perfect because it keeps me active and feeds my competitive spirit," said the former Wolfson High School basketball standout and lifelong sports fan. It also fulfills the sense of camaraderie he felt being on a team and playing pick up basketball in college. "The social aspect of pickleball is appealing to a lot of people," Zarka added. "The majority of pickleball players are very friendly and helpful, and they are passionate growing the sport they love so much."

Zarka is such a fan he became certified by the USA Pickleball Association as an instructor and hosts free clinics for beginners (paddles and balls included). And as the ultimate expression of his obsession, he opened an entire shop dedicated to pickleball in San Marco called Jax Pickleball Store.

Dylan Walters' introduction to pickleball was more like divine intervention.

"Me and my friend were bored one day. We found [his parents'] paddles in the garage and started hitting the balls around," Walters

said. "His dad heard us and came out and asked if we wanted to learn how to play."

The 12-year-old was a natural and has since gotten his own paddle but had to find a new partner, he said, since his friend would rather play video games. "I like it because you can get out your frustrations and run around but not get too tired," he said. "It's cool that kids have an activity that they can do with adults." He's currently trying to convert his dad, an avid tennis player.

Fortunately for Walters, youth pickleball in Jacksonville has gotten a big boost with the launch of the First Dink Foundation. Similar to First Tee, the non-profit organization, which held its first clinic in August, teaches kids how to play the game while also encouraging socialization and building important skills like communication, teamwork, responsibility, patience and respect.

Executive Director Sam Veal, who first learned of pickleball four years ago while in Maryland for a wedding (and was immediately "hooked"), started First Dink in October 2021 because he saw the potential and felt "the community needed it." (FYI, a dink is a type of shot in pickleball.)

"Kids need to get away from the screens [computers, phones, TVs] and get outside and find other ways to occupy their brains," he said. "Pickleball is a fast-paced, healthy activity ... [and] teaches life skills for kids to grow and develop and become productive and responsible members of society."

Another sign pickleball is booming locally is the appearance of pickleball courts, especially in the historic neighborhoods. Thanks to campaigning by addicts like Zarka, the City of Jacksonville has converted tennis courts at Southside Tennis Complex in San Marco and Boone Park in Avondale into pickleball courts and installed six new courts at Ringhaver Park across from NAS Jacksonville.

For those who prefer to play in a temperature-controlled environment, indoor courts are available at the Ortega Life Center at Ortega Methodist Church (for a nominal fee) and Winston Family YMCA in Riverside (gym membership required). And there's always the option of creating a pop-up pickleball court in a parking lot, driveway or even a patio with a portable net and tape to mark the lines.

Whether it's for exercise, socializing or just trying something different, playing pickleball can be a real life changer. Just be warned, it can be highly addictive and may lead to bad puns. That said, get out there and "relish pickleball."

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THE WAY WE WERE

Connie Toney Andry

BY MARY WANSER
Resident Community News

Connie Toney Andry was born on May 1, 1952, the fourth in line of six. “Two boys, two girls, two boys,” she said. Her paternal grandparents, Tom and Mary Toney, had owned several commercial and residential properties along San Marco Boulevard. Her family lived in one of the apartments above Gene’s Barbershop that is now Hollingsworth Showroom.

Within a short time, Connie’s family moved next door to the upper part of a duplex that faced Cedar Street, another home her grandmother owned and lived in the lower half of. That house has since been torn down along with the huge fig tree that was in the yard. When not picking its fruit, one of Connie’s favorite things to do as a little girl was to walk across the street to Clark’s Super Market. “If we were super good, my grandmother would buy us bottled Cokes and creamsicles,” she said.



St. Vincent’s Hospital School of Nursing, Connie Toney circled, May 12, 1973

When she was four years old, Connie and her family moved to a place of their own at 2527 Hendricks Avenue. “I made some of my lifetime friends there,” Connie said. There was Billy Meide, and his three siblings, who lived around the corner from her. They had a cousin, Kathy Bonano, who visited often. Interestingly, Billy now lives across the street from Connie. And Kathy, whose married name is Williams, now lives around the corner from her. The Toney and the Meide families liked that all their children played together because they had come from the same Arabic culture and shared the same values.

“We played outside all the time,” Connie said. They’d ride bikes along River Road. They’d walk to San Marco Shopping Center. With her eldest brother as chaperone, they’d attend the Saturday children’s matinee at San Marco Theatre; RC Cola bottle caps covered their admission. Mims Bakery was another huge treat, as was a trip to Peterson’s Five & Dime. “My personal favorite was White’s bookstore because I was a reader. I loved Nancy Drew!” Connie said. She and her friends invented The Spy Club. Every time a new book was released in the series, Connie would be the first in line at White’s to get it. “I have the fondest memories of that,” she said.

At Assumption Catholic School, Connie’s favorite grade was 1st with Sister Melissa Anne. “She loved me and nurtured me,” said Connie, who was a shy child and often quite ill. She spent a lot of time in and out of Baptist Hospital. Seeing that Connie needed extra encouragement, Sister Melissa would send Connie to one of her older brother’s classrooms to report on her 1st grade accomplishments, like a special art project, for example. Her brother’s teacher, another nun, happened to be a distant cousin of the Toney family.

After 8th grade graduation in 1966, Connie went on to Bishop Kenny High, where she met her best friend for life, Debbie Warren, who eventually married her high school sweetheart, Mike Reilly, who is now deceased. “Bishop Kenny was just great,” Connie said of her time there. She still faithfully attends reunions.

Following 1970 graduation, Connie attended a three-year-long program at St. Vincent’s Hospital School of Nursing. She worked on the hospital floors and was trained by doctors and chemists. “It was the best education,” Connie said. She lived in the dormitory on

Barrs Street at the river. She is still friends today with her roommate, Pat Warwick from Daytona, who eventually married Chuck Parliament, another Bishop Kenny boy. “It shows how intertwined our lives are,” Connie said. She and Pat were in St. Vincent’s last nursing class. After their 1973 graduation, the program closed, as nursing education changed from hospital-based training to 4-year college degrees at universities. Upon graduation,

Connie secured employment at St. Vincent’s as a pediatric nurse. She worked there until she married Paul Andry from Texas in January 1975.

Connie had met Paul in Miami two years prior at a Lebanese American Club convention. It was summer. They were on a double date. But not with each other. Paul’s date was his fiancé. Connie’s date was Paul’s best friend. On their drive back from south Florida to



Connie and Paul Andry, January 19, 1975



The Andry Family, December 24, 2017

Texas after the convention, the boys stopped by St. Vincent’s to see Connie. “I just fell head over heels in love with Paul,” Connie said, even though it was his best friend whom she had gone on that double date with. When the boys drove away, heading back to Texas, Connie told her mom of Paul, “I’m going to marry him.” They had met only twice.

Following that second meeting in Jacksonville, Paul invited Connie to a party in Texas the following year, in May 1974, even though his best friend still liked Connie. In January 1975, Paul and Connie married at Immaculate Conception in Jacksonville. They went on to have three children.

While raising her children, Connie worked minimal hours outside the home as a PRN nurse, on an as needed basis only. “My primary role was wife and mother, which I just loved,” she said. She was active at the children’s schools—St. Joseph’s in Mandarin, Bishop Kenny, and University Christian—before they went off to college—University of North Florida and Florida State.

As a PRN, Connie began working for Baptist in 1988. She became the first nurse manager for the children’s emergency center at Wolfson. She moved up to director of all emergency services at Baptist and Wolfson downtown, serving the same hospital where she had spent so many stints as a child. Before leaving Baptist, Connie had dropped down to part time and became their first informatics nurse, taking her clinical knowledge and integrating it into the electronic world. After Baptist, Connie did consulting work for St. Vincent’s, helping them transition from paper to electronic documentation. She did the same for a group of Ascension hospitals in Michigan. In 2016, Connie retired after more than four decades in nursing, more than half of them at Baptist.

Over the course of her long career, Connie even moved to Texas for a few years and took part in opening one of the first pediatric emergency departments at a hospital in San Antonio. Paul, of course, was by her side, back in his hometown. “Honestly, I love nursing,” she said. So much so that when COVID hit, Connie felt a need to contribute and worked remotely from home for a

year-and-a-half doing administrative tasks through a Baptist program.

Despite two knee replacements, Connie still plays tennis three times per week. She started playing at 45 at San Jose Country Club.



Paul and Connie Andry with their grandchildren, 2022

Now she plays at the Williams Family YMCA. When not on court, she and Paul volunteer at San Jose Catholic Church and at Sulzbacher.

Now grandparents of seven, Connie and Paul live in Old San Jose on the River in a single-family house built on the same land where, as a young couple with their first two children, they had lived in the River Reach Apartments before the complex was torn down. “We almost live in the exact spot,” Connie said. Their three grown children and six grandchildren live nearby.

The closeness of the Andry family doesn’t stop them from teasing Connie about her upbeat attitude that just won’t let up. Everything, to her, is more than half full, never near empty.

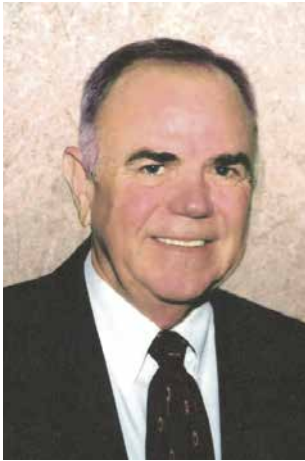
“My tagline is CTBH - choose to be happy!” she said.



Paul and Connie Andry, Quebec City, October 8, 2019

Charles Warren Turner

JUNE 26, 1933 – AUGUST 21, 2022



Charles Warren Turner passed away on Sunday August 21 at 89. He was born June 26, 1933 in Shreveport, Louisiana to Charles Warren Turner Senior and Hallie Rae Mayer. Charlie grew up in Poplar Bluff, Missouri where he was the smallest player on the football team, with the biggest personality. His nickname was "Bulldog," for his tenacity and unstoppable work ethic. You just have to read his high school yearbook to know how well he was liked.

In his civilian life, Charlie owned and ran Wilkerson and Company, an office furniture, interior design, and space planning business with locations in Jacksonville, Tampa and Orlando. Wilkerson was one of the top Herman Miller retailers in the state until he sold the company and retired in 2000.

Outside of the office, he was on the boards of the American Cancer Society, the YMCA and the downtown Rotary club and remained active in them for many years. He played a mean game of tennis before his knees decided they were finished with the sport. That's when he became an avid boater and loved spending time on the water on Turn'r Loose. He was also just as content to sit on his dock or porch watching the sun set and planes do touch-and-go's.

Charlie attended Penn State, pledging Beta Theta Pi and participating in ROTC. He grew a foot in his first year, his height finally matching his stature. He received a BS in business which he put to good use later in life. After graduation, he worked as a lineman on the railroad while waiting to join the Navy. After that job, he said, basic training was a breeze. He went on to become a fighter pilot, flying Douglas A-1 Skyraiders, the last propeller fighter plane in the Navy.

Anyone who knew Charlie was a friend. The man never met a stranger and was quick to smile and ask about your day. He was a loyal friend and a loving family man who gave excellent advice and was a rock to people who loved him.

Charlie is survived by his wife, Connie, brother George Mayer, his son, Charles (Chuck) Warren Turner Jr., his daughters Anne Buchanon, Elizabeth (Liz) Moyer and Emily Turner Bowen, grandchildren Alex and Meghan Tilger, Madeiline Strickland, Elizabeth Turner, Charles and Marshal Raison, Turner Bowen, and great grandchildren Elroy, Rex and Randall Tilger.

The Navy brought him to NAS Jax where he settled down and started a family. Charlie transitioned to the Reserves before retiring as a Lieutenant Commander after 20 years of service. The flying days were special for Charlie and he loved telling tales of rum running and competitions with jet pilots in the years after.

Memorial services were held at the Oaklawn Cemetery Lodge Chapel, with a reception and celebration of life that followed at San Jose Country Club.



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If you notice a lump or other change in your breasts, talk to your doctor.

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