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FEBRUARY 2023, VOL. 16, ISSUE 02



Greenscape co-founders named 2022 Outstanding Tree Advocates for the state of Florida

Susan Fisher Davis and the late Ann Baker co-founded Greenscape in 1975 after becoming concerned about the lack of trees being saved or incorporated into fast-developing Jacksonville. They raised private funds to plant 200 trees in the city's downtown, where the tree canopy had been almost entirely replaced with concrete. Finding enthusiastic public interest, they continued funding tree plantings in parks, schools and roadways all over the region. Today, Greenscape is credited with adding over 350,000 trees to the urban tree canopy. It is the oldest nonprofit tree advocacy organization in the state and the second oldest in the country. Groups like it are now found in every major city.

"Susan and Ann were smart, savvy women who didn't take 'no' for an answer," said Executive Director Lisa Grubba. "They were years ahead of their time and so many of their early ideas are still relevant today. They got people together — citizens, elected officials, city managers — and got them thinking about and excited about our tree canopy. We owe a lot to their vision and hard work."

Davis and Baker were chosen by the council "in recognition of exceptional vision, leadership, and contributions to urban forestry activities and programs."

Though she passed away in 2011, Baker's daughter, Sally Baker Lee, is still an active board member of Greenscape and her other children continue to support the work as well. Grandson-in-law, Luke O'Steen, has recently served on the board. Davis, though now retired, also continues her interest in and support of Greenscape's work.



District 5 City Council member LeAnna Cumber led a press conference at CSX headquarters Jan. 19.

Darkness and Light

A beacon of hate unites a community and reveals the darkness of politics

BY LINDSEY GAST
 Resident Community News

A beam of light momentarily turned downtown into a beacon of darkness, as antisemitic actors projected a cross and swastika across the face of the CSX building on Jan. 14. But the actors' intended goal of hate appeared to have had the opposite effect, as the city of Jacksonville immediately rallied behind its Jewish brothers and sisters, passing an emergency bill at the Jan. 24 city council meeting.

The legislation, originally penned by Council Member LeAnna Cumber, prohibits messages from being projected onto a building without the owner's approval and consent. Regardless of the content, the light violators could be charged with a second-degree misdemeanor, punishable by up to 60 days of jail time and a \$2,000 fine.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

REROUTING...

Finding your location on the new City Council district map

Jacksonville's Supervisor of Elections Mike Hogan says roughly 200,000 voters will soon be receiving updated voter registration cards reflecting their new City Council and school board districts, as well as their new voting precinct locations for the upcoming March election, following the court order in the ongoing redistricting lawsuit against the City of Jacksonville.

SEE PAGE 14



A stroke of brilliance

Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside has completed its 1,000th WATCHMAN procedure. WATCHMAN is designed to reduce the risk of stroke in people with non-valvular atrial fibrillation by closing off the left atrial appendage, where most stroke-causing blood clots are formed. Atrial fibrillation is an irregular, rapid heartbeat that can make patients more likely to have a stroke.

"Some patients have frequent falls and are at high risk of injuring their head, leading to a bleed in the brain. Others have bleeding or suffer from side effects from blood thinners," said interventional cardiologist Dr. Samer Garas, who performed the 1,000th WATCHMAN procedure. "We are always looking for new treatment options for our heart patients and WATCHMAN provides some patients with that additional option."

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PEELING BACK THE LAYERS OF SCANDAL

Duval citizens could learn more details about failed JEA sale

BY LINDSEY GAST
Resident Community News

The Duval County Republican Executive Committee (REC), which serves as the governing body of the Duval County Republican Party, unanimously approved a resolution calling for the creation of a statewide grand jury to investigate the failed attempt to sell JEA. The resolution describes the attempted sale of JEA as “potentially one of the greatest schemes to defraud [Jacksonville] taxpayers in the history of our city” and calls on the right of Duval citizens to know the details surrounding the culpability of those involved in the sale.

Approved through emergency consideration at its Jan. 16 meeting, the resolution will be sent to Gov. Ron DeSantis, asking him to petition the Florida Supreme Court to impanel the statewide grand jury to investigate “potential violations of Florida law” and the “actions of those public officials, private individuals, and business entities who intentionally misled the citizens of Duval County regarding the proposed sale of JEA, who concealed material facts regarding the proposed sale, or who attempted to improperly influence the valuation process and the Invitation to Negotiate.”

“It’s perfectly defensible to say ‘Gee, we want to do a valuation process and figure out what JEA is worth to the city as an asset,’ but the way this evolved over time, especially when the conversation began with this notion that JEA was in a death spiral, clearly indicates there was an intention to deceive the voters of Duval County. That’s not good,” said Robin Lumb, REC committee member and former chair.

The resolution, presented by Duval County Republican Party Chairman Dean Black, was initially proposed by Jax Integrity, a group that advocates for transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct reforms. Fifty REC members sponsored the resolution.

In a Jan. 15 e-mail from Lumb to Black and other party leadership, Lumb said the reasoning behind the resolution was “self-explanatory.”

“The key takeaway from these discussions is that the current federal grand jury investigation [which indicted JEA CEO Aaron Zahn and finance chief Ryan Wannemacher in 2022 on conspiracy and wire fraud] has probably run its course, and, unlike state grand juries, that federal grand juries do not issue reports that detail their findings. Consequently, the citizens of Duval County will never know what was happening behind the scenes when JEA was put on the auction block,” wrote Lumb.

“I’m not accusing anybody of having committed a crime,” said Lumb. “All we have at this point are a lot of unanswered questions and a thorough need to go back over what happened and get answers so this kind of thing doesn’t happen again.”

Florida statewide grand juries can investigate violations of Florida law that are beyond the reach of federal prosecutors, issue indictments, as well as reports that document acts of malfeasance and wrongdoing that might fall just short of actual criminal conduct.

“This city has a serious problem with institutional corruption, influence peddling and self-dealing,” said Lumb. “I think the governor would be doing the citizens of Duval County a favor if he not only petitioned for a grand jury to investigate the failed scheme to sell JEA, but if he broadened this mandate to look into corruption generally inside Duval County government.”

The process depends on DeSantis petitioning the Florida Supreme Court; Lumb encourages all Duval County citizens to appeal to him to do so. Citizens can reach the governor’s office at (850) 717-9337 or submit their request at www.flgov.com/email-the-governor.

“It requires Gov. DeSantis to decide he’s going to act on it, so the ball is in his court. I think he’ll look at it and give it serious consideration,” Lumb said.

Another storage facility breaks ground



Early January saw the site of the former TD Bank branch cordoned off as excavators worked to clear the site.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The former TD Bank at 4520 San Juan Avenue is no more and residents can expect a new CubeSmart self-storage facility in its place.

The 1.5-acre site was cordoned off by caution tape and construction barrels early last month as an excavator continued to clear it.

According to county records, Tampa-based BW Roosevelt San Juan, LLC purchased the property in Feb. 2022 for just over \$1.6 million. A building permit reflects the new climate-controlled three-story building will be 105,800 square feet. Contractor for this project, which will cost an estimated \$7.5 million, is Bay to Bay Properties LLC.

CubeSmart has storage facilities across the country, including 176 in the state of Florida. This location will be the 13th in Jacksonville.

CORRECTION/CLARIFICATION:

Resident News prides itself on the accurate and calculated reporting of the facts and details within our stories, while reporting on important issues of the day for our readers. We regret any and all errors that may occur while gathering the details.

The article titled “Source of Murray Hill odor issue still unresolved,” written by Karen Rieley, that appeared in the January 2023 issue of *The Resident News* incorrectly reported that the City’s Environmental Protection Board (EPB) had issued a consent order for confirmed complaints of objectionable odors made in September and October 2022 that requires IFF (International Flavors and Fragrances Corporation) to pay a compliance plan settlement fee of \$14,997 to 16 persons from 16 separate households. In fact, IFF is required to pay the fee to the City, not to individual households.

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Disenchantment over Daily's Review board defers approval

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Jacksonville's Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) deferred conceptual approval of site plans for Daily's LaVilla three-story mixed-use project.

At a Jan. 12 meeting, board members expressed their resounding dissatisfaction with the proposed project designs, with Board Vice Chair Linzee Ott stating while she loved the mixed-use approach and Daily's itself, there "is not a lot that I love about this conceptual proposal."

The estimated 87,000-square-foot project is intended for a full block in the LaVilla neighborhood, bordered by Bay, Broad, Jefferson and Forsyth streets. It will feature 16 filling stations along with a multi-story building offering a ground-floor market and restaurant concepts on the second and third floors. The rooftop will offer an extension of the dining services along with a full-service bar.

A Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) staff report was presented at the meeting supporting conceptual approval subject to several recommendations, including any and all deviations the project would require.

First Coast Energy, L.L.P., Daily's owner and operator, is local to Jacksonville and operates Daily's locations throughout the state of Florida, primarily in Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Gainesville and Broward County. This proposed project, attorney Staci Rewis explained during her presentation to the board, is "intended to be a First Coast Energy Daily's flagship store because of the mixed-use and the importance of it being right at the entrance and exit of downtown."

Rewis, along with Steven Diebenow, is a partner with Driver, McAfee, Hawthorne and Diebenow. Both represented First Coast Energy at the meeting. Rewis argued Daily's would fill a vital need for LaVilla by providing a much-needed "urban neighborhood grocery store," which, she pointed out, the area lacked.

Diebenow later reiterated that point by stating, "For this area, the neighborhood market concept, the bodega concept

with addressing a need in this neighborhood is one that I don't think should be overlooked."

While many board members appreciated the idea of the project, it was the proposed design that had them withholding their support.

"I can't fault the idea," said Board Member Craig Davisson. "The concept of doing a fuel and market and entertainment, I can't fault that idea, but the project fails completely in execution." "The use of a fueling station, I think it is appropriate and needed in this section of downtown, but this combination does not hit the mark," echoed Ott. "Downtown has a ton of really great momentum as does LaVilla, specifically, and I think if we want to continue on that trajectory... I think Jacksonville, we need to hold ourselves to higher standards with our downtown development projects and so that is what I would like to see for this flagship store."

Additional concerns were raised regarding the design's focus on vehicular circulation and parking versus pedestrian accessibility, which Diebenow addressed.

"This is a piece of property that is traffic-centric because of its unique geographic location, so the notion that it's going to become...a pedestrian garden or the poster child for pedestrian travel is very, very much a stretch through no fault of the property at all, no matter what the use is," said Deibenow.

"It's not just a gas station, it's not just a restaurant, it's not just a rooftop bar," he continued. "It's all three uses all put together in one place. Remember, the overlay authorizes this use by zoning exception if it's a mixed-use project. Well, the mix of uses requires more parking; the mix of uses requires vehicular access. It just does."

DDRB ultimately deferred the item. DIA Strategic Initiatives Coordinator Ina Mezini wrote in an e-mail, "By code, a workshop is required for deviation requests — so that the Board and the public can better understand the request. The idea put forth at yesterday's meeting was that the Board may be able to vote on the Conceptual Approval immediately following the workshop, if they so choose."

Currently, there is no set date for the workshop.



COURTESY OF DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD JANUARY 12, 2023 AGENDA PACKET.

Renderings of the proposed Daily's multi-use project in LaVilla.

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ANTI-SEMITIC, HATE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM COVER ...

“We know this won’t be the thing that stops hate, but it will make it that much harder,” said Adam Chaskin, CEO of the Jewish Community Alliance during a press conference. “I am very proud that the city of Jacksonville stepped up with this legislation.”

At the press conference, attended by fellow council members Michael Boylan, Matt Carlucci, Randy DeFoor and Reggie Gaffney, Jr., Cumber cited six separate incidents over the past six months as the impetus behind the bill.

“Antisemitism is as old as time, but we must find every legal avenue to stop it. We need to be the leader in the state and in the country to stop these messages. Let me be clear, these are not isolated incidents,” she said.

“We look at combating hate and bias like an octopus with numerous arms,” said Mariam Feist, CEO of the Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida. “Elected officials passing a bill like they did, is one of those. It makes a very strong statement: There is legal, punitive action if one does this.”

Feist insisted that the community is indeed coming together to combat bias and hate at its roots, noting that David Miller, on behalf of the Miller family, made a \$1M grant to do so. Since the inception of the Together Strong Community Fund, businesses like Florida Blue, Vystar, Haskell, Baptist Foundation, the Jaguars Foundation, and CSX have all invested, as well as other philanthropists.

While the passing of the bill was expected to be the highlight of the city council meeting,



Bryan Tucker, vice president corporate communications for CSX, addresses the crowd at a Jan. 19 press conference as, L to R, council members Randy DeFoor, LeAnna Cumber, Matt Carlucci, Michael Boylan and Jewish Community Alliance CEO Adam Chaskin look on.

public commentary from some showed frustration over feeling like the problem had been ignored for other communities. The verbiage in the bill was intentionally content-neutral in order to protect all marginalized communities, as well as the central, protected tenet of free speech.

“This legislation is the perfect intersection of what is right and what is constitutional,” said Council Member Randy DeFoor.

The bill also became a sort of political football, shining light on procedural issues for the council, especially in light of the upcoming mayoral race. Two identical and competing pieces of legislation were presented to the Office of General Counsel (OGC): Cumber’s, 2023-0048, as well as 2023-0044, introduced by council Members Terrance

Freeman, Ron Salem, Sam Newby, Rory Diamond, Ju’Coby Pittman, Tyrona Clark-Murray and Nick Howland.

Council Member Matt Carlucci drafted a Jan. 23 communication outlining his issues about the filings of the proposals. In it, he alleged that 2023-0044 circumvented the filing process by requesting a pre-number, which has historically never been used for these types of bills. He claimed that the move introduced an “unprecedented” use of authority by Council President Terrance Freeman. Freeman denied any wrongdoing, claiming it is well within the rules to request pre-numbers as they send out the bill for additional support.

Order is important in that the bills are assigned numbers, and thereby voted on, in the order in which they are received. This

action resulted in Cumber’s bill being dismissed later in the meeting, despite being submitted to the OGC first.

Carlucci, at the meeting, said, “This is not a political statement. If we file a bill and someone jumps ahead of us, that is not right, that is not fair. Council rules, traditionally, have always said first-in-first-out. I have never, ever, seen such behavior in all my life. There comes a point where we need to give credit where credit is due.”

Council Member Joyce Morgan echoed that procedures “...do matter. They absolutely do matter.”

Notwithstanding the political drama, most all council members reiterated their support of the bill’s content and intent, passing the resolution 18-1.

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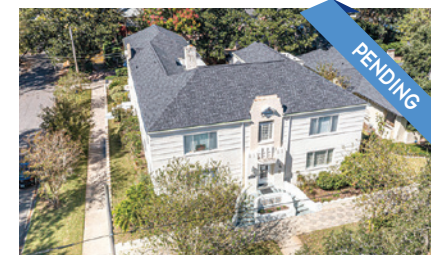
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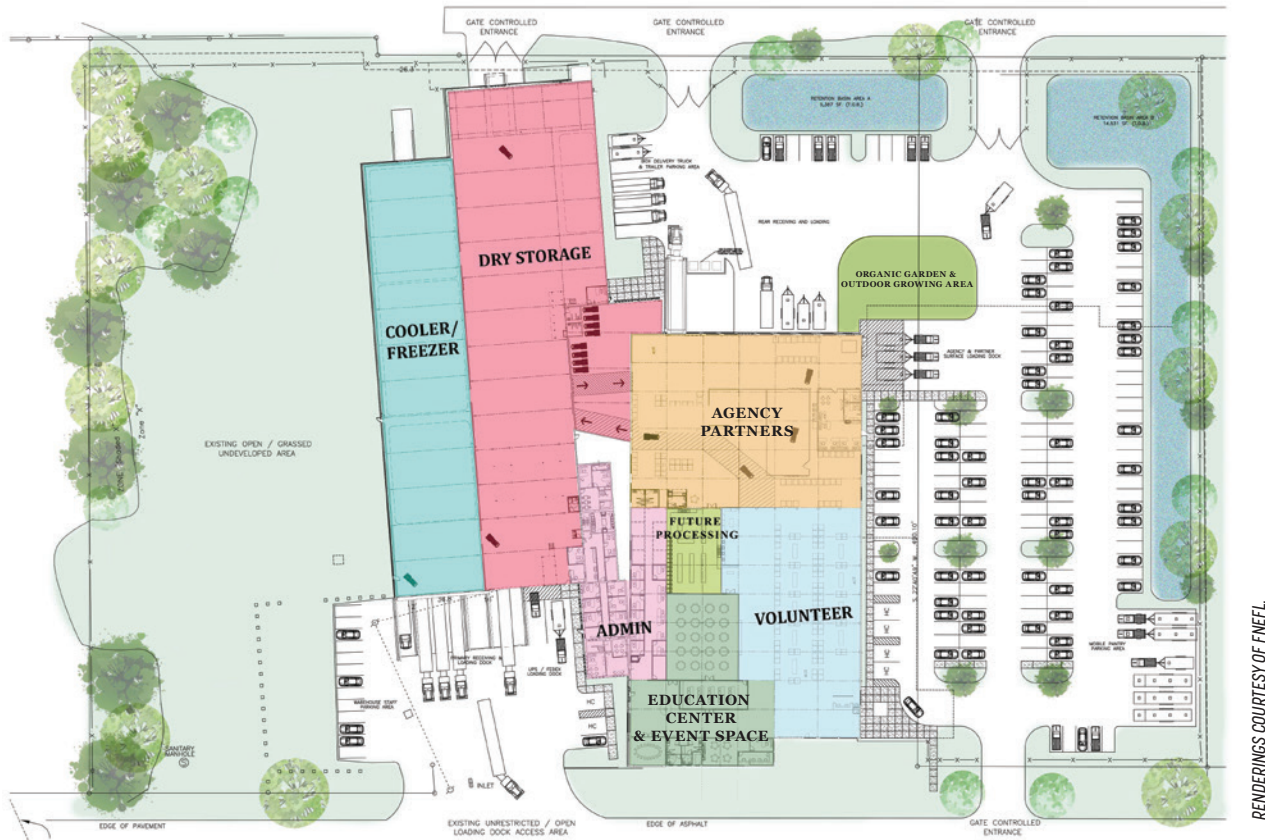
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Fueling Expansion

Feeding Northeast Florida doubles down



A pair of conceptual renderings of the new 121,000-square-foot food bank facility at 5245 Old Kings Road.

“Getting healthy, nutritious food into the hands of those in need is our top priority at Feeding Northeast Florida.”

SUSAN KING
FNEFL PRESIDENT AND CEO



BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

2022 ended on a high note for Feeding Northeast Florida (FNEFL) as it announced the purchase of its new food bank facility in the final days of the year.

Renovations are in store for the new space at 5245 Old Kings Road — a 121,000-square-foot warehouse complex covering 12 acres of land — and FNEFL hopes to see construction begin early this year and wrap up by the end of it.

According to a FNEFL press release, this new space more than doubles its current facility, which “currently operates out of two smaller warehouses for the collection, inspection and distribution of food throughout its service area.” The nonprofit organization is “the area’s largest community food bank,” serving eight counties in the northeast region, including Duval, St. Johns, Baker, Nassau, Putnam, Bradford, Baker and Clay.

In the press release, FNEFL cited a significant increase in demand for charitable food bank reporting a demand 25% higher than “during the height of the pandemic.”

At the annual Empty Bowls Luncheon in October last year, FNEFL President and CEO Susan King stated, “There’s 25% more people who are trying to access food assistance now than those days. It’s just not on the news. In our organization, we refer to this as a silent crisis. Everything looks on the surface to be improving, and good and hopeful, but there really is a big part of our community that continues to suffer.”

This new purchase for the organization — which closed in Dec. 2021 — will reduce costs for the organization while increasing efficiency and allowing for the expansion of “food assurance programs such as nutritional education

programming, additional space for partner agency training and community building, and expanded volunteer opportunities.”

“Getting healthy, nutritious food into the hands of those in need is our top priority at Feeding Northeast Florida,” King said. “This new campus will allow us to expand both the depth and breadth of our services. We are so grateful for the support of our community in helping us continue our mission to end hunger here at home.”

The Conlan Companies is the project’s general contractor with Thomas Duke Architect and Micamy Design Studio as the design team.

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Stewarding the urban core:

The Emerald Trail dream becomes reality

BY KAREN RIELEY
Resident Community News

Creating a trail encircling Jacksonville's urban core and its surrounding historic neighborhoods is no longer just a pipe dream. Local nonprofit Groundwork Jacksonville has raised funds and work has begun on The Emerald Trail, a 30-mile urban trail that will engage, educate and inspire residents and visitors alike.

The trail will highlight the geographic diversity unique to Northeast Florida. When completed, the trail will link San Marco, Brooklyn, Riverside, Lackawanna, Mixon Town, Robinson's Addition, College Gardens, New Town, Durkeeville, Hogans Creek, Phoenix, Eastside, Springfield, Downtown and LaVilla. Visitors will travel along the banks of McCoys and Hogan creeks and walk the riverwalks on both sides of the St. Johns River. The trail will link to 16 schools, two colleges and 21 parks, with 13 additional schools and 17 parks located

within three blocks. Twenty of the trail's 30 miles will be built new.

"Jacksonville is incredibly spread out, and the suburbs have little relationship to the urban core," said Kay Ehas, Groundwork Jacksonville's CEO. "I hope the trail will be a social connector as well as a physical connector."

Lori Boyer, CEO of Downtown Investment Authority (DIA), says that the trail will have major economic impact on the city.

"The Emerald Trail will help us recruit workforce to Jacksonville, especially younger workers, which makes the city attractive to businesses considering moving here," said Boyer. "It will increase property values and redevelopment opportunities in neighborhoods that are currently underutilized, which increases tax revenue to support schools, police and other city services."

Boyer says a number of developments, either planned or already underway, have access to the trail in mind, including One Riverside (at the former Times-Union site), the Lofts at Brooklyn and LaVilla's new Johnson Common Townhomes.

People can already see the project taking place in the LaVilla segment. McCoys Creek Boulevard from Cherokee Street to Margaret Street has been removed and new culs-de-sac with parks have been constructed on the following streets: Sunshine, Crystal, Leland, Smith and Broward. Nixon Street has been reconstructed and provides access to nearby properties and roadways. Greenways, landscaping and sidewalks have been added.

Bridges on Stockton and King streets will be replaced with new bridges at higher elevations. Bike paths and sidewalks will be added to both bridges.

Groundwork Jacksonville has engaged with neighborhood stakeholders, business leaders,



Members of the Rotary Club of Jacksonville with Groundwork Jacksonville CEO Kay Ehas during a tour of McCoy's Creek.

fundraisers and the City to plan the trail. It hopes to have the trail completed by 2029, with one segment under construction and one in design at the same time. The LaVilla link connecting Brooklyn and LaVilla communities to the S-Line Rail Trail in the Railyard District should open by the end of March with opening festivities in April. Cost is projected at \$8.9 million. The Hogan Street segment between Riverwalk and FSCJ is in design now with construction expected to begin in late summer 2023, with a projected cost of \$7.9 million.

The Riverside spur will be the trail's third project. Groundwork Jacksonville is currently

raising funds for this link. Local Rotary clubs have committed to raising \$250,000 over the next three years to fund completion of the trail from Memorial Park to the Riverside Arts Market.

"We wanted to be involved because we have the most government, civic and private leaders as our members, and we thought it was important for us to get out front to set an example for the rest of the community," said

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 ...

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Jim Agee, president of the Rotary Club of Jacksonville.

According to Agee, the Emerald Trail fits into all of Rotary's focus areas, in particular community economic development, disease prevention and treatment and peace-building conflict prevention.

"This can tie the whole city back to the river and be transformational," said Agee. "Ten years from now people will say this is when Jacksonville turned the corner and started using that jewel of a river."

"We will be the first community service organization to put some investment in the trail," said Tommy Grimes said, chairman of the Rotary's Emerald Trail Campaign. "We saw this as an opportunity for all Rotary clubs to support this together."

According to Grimes, other cities' similar trails are realizing \$10 in revenue from every \$1 they have invested in the trail. Also, for every \$1 invested in the trail, there is a \$3 reduction in healthcare costs for the community.

In late May 2022, the Jacksonville City Council approved legislation to raise the Local Option Gas Tax by six cents per gallon to generate \$1 billion over the next 30 years for major transportation and infrastructure improvements. The council earmarked \$132 million of that revenue to build the trail. It designated the Jacksonville Transportation Authority to oversee projects for The Emerald Trail, with the Riverside link as its first construction project on the trail.

A number of corporations have donated to the project; for example, VyStar Credit Union gave \$275,000. Private donors have stepped up to the plate as well, like Steve and Michael Pajcic, who have made a four-year pledge of \$200,000.



The Riverside Spur of the Emerald Trail kicks off at the Fuller Warren Bridge and ends at Memorial Park.

"My brother, Gary, and I used to put our canteens on our belt and hike the creek behind our house to Westbrook Creek which flowed into McCoys Creek," Steve Pajcic said.

"When I first learned to ride a bike, my dad would take me to the great park in Murray Hill behind the Dreamette to ride our bikes down the incline and into Hollybrook Creek which

feeds into McCoys Creek," said Michael Pajcic. "It will be a joy to now be able to ride bikes with my daughter in the same area and for everyone to see it reopened to the world."

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Riverside resurfacing: For better or for worse?

BY KAREN RIELEY
Resident Community News

The Florida Department of Transportation is in the preliminary design phase to resurface Riverside Avenue (SR 211) from San Juan Avenue to I-95, and that may bring about other changes along Riverside Avenue that some residents find less than desirable.

A hybrid public meeting about the proposed improvements will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023 at the FDOT Jacksonville Urban Office Training Building, 2198 Edison Avenue. The open house will begin at 4:30 p.m., followed by a public comment period at 6 p.m. Meeting attendance is also available online at nflroads.com/VPH, and by phone at (631) 992-3221, access code 816-697-148. Both virtual and in-person participants will be given equal opportunity to ask questions and make oral statements for the public record.

“Rallying neighbors to attend this hearing will be vital to the project’s success,” said Brooks Dame, executive council assistant for Randy DeFoor, city council member for District 14.

According to Hampton Ray, FDOT community outreach manager, these design improvements may include the elimination of some on-street parking locations, improvements for bicycle and pedestrians, as well as access changes or other design features suggested by the engineer of record.

“FDOT is only considering the removal of on-street parking at low-volume, least-utilized parking locations, and locations where there is a high-crash history due to poor line of sight,” Ray said.

In a written response to DeFoor and Angie Nixon, state representative for District 13, who asked Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP) for its position on proposed changes, Shannon Blankinship, RAP executive director, said, “This

project is a prime opportunity to improve the corridor, especially to provide some much-needed traffic calming... and these plans do not appear to do so.”

“We feel that removing so much of the parallel, streetside parking along the corridor would cause more problems than it solves, including making it less safe for drivers, bikers and pedestrians,” she said.

She noted that removing parked cars blocking vehicles’ view within a certain distance of intersections can work; however, she expressed concern that the proposed project appears to be implementing clear zones to all driveways as well as roadway intersections through the corridor.

“This effectively opens up the corridor which has proven to result in increased speeding,” Blankinship said. “Those evicted parked cars will still have to park somewhere, and they will likely move to the narrow side streets, which homeowners already regularly complain about.”

Blankinship noted that the proposed project also didn’t seem to address other projects currently in the works with various other traffic-calming plans, such as the St. Johns Avenue traffic calming included in the city’s Capital Improvement Plan for 2022-2023, raised crosswalks similar to the newly installed one at Park and Margaret streets at 5 Points, and lowering speed limits.

“There is no indication that [the St. Johns Avenue traffic-calming] efforts were coordinated with or even considered for this [Riverside Avenue resurfacing] project based on the current designs, despite the large overlap in effort,” Blankinship said.

“Whenever roadways are resurfaced, professional engineers and designers evaluate the roadway and consider improvements for safety, and to bring the existing roadway up to the current standard,” said Ray.

Ray said that the initial design will not be adopted by FDOT without public input and the opportunity for the public to weigh-in on high-use, on-street parking locations.

“The project design is not finalized, and no formal hearing has been scheduled at this time,” he said.

“The Avondale Merchants Association is definitely staying on top of this project, and we are staying in touch with our City Council representative, Randy DeFoor,” said Bronwyn Benoit, incoming president of the association.

“ OUR GOAL IS TO SEE HOW WE CAN BETTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY HELP THE AVONDALE MERCHANTS AND RESIDENTS. WE ONLY BECAME AWARE OF THE PLAN AT THE END OF LAST YEAR. WE KNOW SOME DETAILS HAVE NOT BEEN FIRMED UP, AND WE WANT TO KNOW EXACTLY HOW THIS PLAN IS LAYING OUT BEFORE WE MAKE A STATEMENT.

- Bronwyn Benoit
Incoming president for the
Avondale Merchants Association

“Our goal is to see how we can better and more efficiently help the Avondale merchants and residents. We only became aware of the plan at the end of last year,” Benoit said. “We know some details have not been firmed up, and we want to know exactly how this plan is laying out before we make a statement.”

Final design for this resurfacing is not expected to be completed until mid-2023, with construction slated for mid-2024.

Between printed issues of the paper, Resident Community News will post on its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/residentnewsjax) updated information about the project and any public hearings.

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Conceptual designs in progress for downtown's Shipyards West Park



A 10-acre park is planned for Jacksonville's Northbank, between Catherine Street and Hogans Creek.

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF JACKSONVILLE'S DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT AUTHORITY.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Designs are underway for Shipyards West Park, a new public park slated for the 10-acre space along the St. Johns River's northbank between Catherine Street and Hogans Creek.

According to a press release, Agency Landscape + Planning, LLC has joined "a core design team of designers and engineers," which includes WXY and Haskell. This team will work together to create conceptual designs and schematics for the park that will "honor the site's unique historical and ecological heritage, transform the identity and use of

this underutilized gem, strengthen the connection of the waterfront to the city and the community, and intentionally link city center to the sports and entertainment neighborhood through welcoming, walkable and vibrant connections."

The plan for Shipyards West Park was first conceived as part of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund's Riverfront Activation Plan, released in August 2022.

Led by Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority (DIA), this project is overseen in conjunction with the city's Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department.

"This is an exciting time in history for downtown Jacksonville," said DIA CEO Lori Boyer in the release. "We are connecting

people, creating opportunity and embracing the beautiful views and majestic aura of the St. Johns River. Creating a world-class destination riverfront park system in downtown is a top priority for the DIA, and the completion of Shipyards West Park is key to making that vision come to life. We look forward to providing the citizens of Jacksonville a space they can feel proud of."

A panel of specialists will provide support for the design team, including oversight and expert advice on "cultural, environmental and economic" factors as the project moves forward. This panel's additional duties are to ensure "every voice in the community is heard and every aspect of the waterfront's future is thoughtfully considered."

While there is no set date for the submission of any conceptual designs, DIA expects it to be available for review sometime during this first quarter of the year. Public input and feedback remains a crucial component of this project.

"Community engagement is critical to this project," wrote DIA Strategic Initiatives Coordinator Ina Mezini in an e-mail. "Throughout the planning process, there will be many opportunities for community members to share their ideas and feedback to inform decisions along the way."

Mezini added community members interested in following the project's progress are encouraged to visit www.shipyardswest.com, send e-mails to hello@adgmark.com or call the team at (904) 800-8685.



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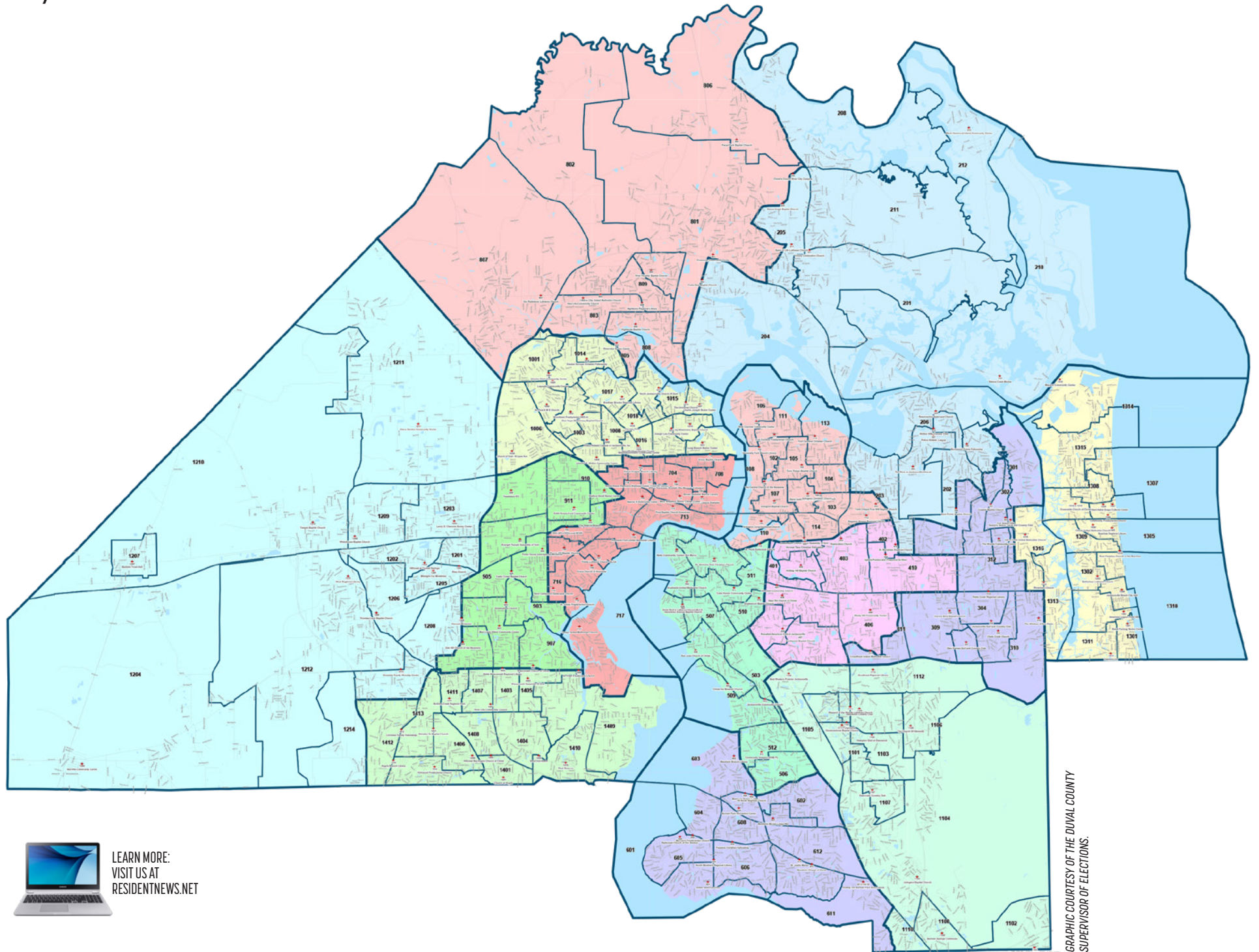







Jacksonville's March elections to use court-ordered remedial City Council district map

Duval County Supervisor of Elections City Council District



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BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

An estimated 200,000 voters will be impacted by the new City Council district lines and precinct locations in the upcoming March election.

This is the latest development in the ongoing redistricting lawsuit against the City of Jacksonville.

At a Jan. 10 meeting, the City Council approved the new precinct boundaries and polling locations for nine impacted districts. The boundaries for the remaining five districts will remain unchanged.

The impacted districts are districts 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14.

A press release from the Duval County Supervisor of Elections Office, issued on Jan. 18, confirmed the court-ordered map, with these new boundaries, will be in effect for the upcoming election on March 21.

Last November, the City Council approved and submitted a redrawn map to the court for consideration (Maroon Map IIIIE Fix).

Three alternative maps were also submitted by the plaintiffs — the Jacksonville branch of the NAACP, Northside Coalition of Jacksonville, Inc., Florida Rising Together, Inc. the ACLU of Florida Northeast Chapter and 10 private citizens.

In a court order the following month, the court rejected the City's submitted map, instead ordering the City to implement one of the plaintiffs' maps — Plan 3 — as its remedial map for any upcoming elections, "...beginning with the regular 2023 Council and 2024 School Board elections and until entry of a final judgment in this case."

The plaintiffs' Plan 3 map, the court wrote, "most closely adheres to the legitimate redistricting criteria advocated by the City Council and requested by the public."

The court expanded on the merits of the plaintiff's map, stating its boundary lines for districts 2 and 12 are identical to the City's Maroon IIIIE Fix map. Per the court, some of Plan 3's additional merits include that it:

- "does not divide Springfield or downtown;"
- "keeps the Woodstock and surrounding neighborhoods together in District 9 to a greater degree than the Remedial Plan;"

- "keeps Murray Hill, Riverside, Avondale and Ortega together;"
- "unites Chimney Lakes and Argyle Forest [in District 14];"
- "keeps San Mateo in District 2;" and
- "complies with the provision of the Jacksonville City Charter that requires districts to be in as 'logical and compact [a] geographic pattern' as possible."

In the final days of the year, the City filed a motion for a stay of "the district court's order" and requesting "permission to use the City's remedial map for all upcoming elections."

On Jan. 6, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit denied the motion.

In an e-mail, Supervisor of Elections Mike Hogan confirmed all impacted voters will be notified by mail "well before" the upcoming election. Each will receive a new voter information card providing their new City Council and school board districts along with their new precinct location and a sample ballot listing "all the candidates that specific voter is eligible to vote for."

"Our website has excellent information for every voter," he added. "On the homepage of our website, there is a link entitled WHERE

DO I VOTE [sic], when the voter clicks on that link, they will be prompted to enter their residential address which will then provide them with their precinct information and location."

Voters without access to a computer are encouraged to contact the SOE office at (904) 255-8683 and any available staff member can provide assistance.

This new map has had immediate impacts on the upcoming election, including District 10 Council Member Brenda Priestly-Jackson's withdrawal from the election. She submitted her notice of withdrawal to the SOE on Jan. 12 and shared a photo of the two-page letter on her Twitter account.

Though she cited "varied reasons" for her withdrawal, she wrote, "...two overarching reasons for my decision are that I believe the current interim remedial map used for redistricting unjustly draws 85% of Black neighbors into the new boundaries for District 10 and the waiver of the residency requirements for nine of the 14 single member council districts erodes the Jacksonville Charter."

Residents unsure of their City Council district or polling locations can visit www.duval elections.org.

Roadwork begins along San Juan Avenue



Duval Asphalt Products begins work on San Juan Avenue.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Construction has begun on San Juan Avenue (SR 128) from Herschel Street (SR 211) and Roosevelt Boulevard (U.S. 17).

Road work began late last month and will reduce the four-lane corridor to three lanes. The new roadway configuration will also include a center turn lane.

“The modifications to the roadway will promote safety by reducing left turn and angle crashes at the intersections along the corridor and improve mobility by installing bike lanes,” wrote Florida Department of Transportation Community Outreach Manager Hampton Ray in an e-mail.

The project will also include updated traffic signals and “curb and gutter improvements.” Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) will be installed west of Fair Street.

Awarded to Duval Asphalt Products, the project totaled \$992,783. Barring unforeseen weather or circumstances, it is expected to wrap mid-2023.

Underground progress: *Infrastructural work continues at Southbank’s RiversEdge*

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Progress continues for RiversEdge: Life on the St. Johns, the 32-acre Southbank project that broke ground in 2021.

Ramiro Albarran, managing director of the project’s Dallas-based developer Preston Hollow Community Capital, LLC said the infrastructural work, which began last year, is approximately halfway complete at this point. Conduit work for the dry utilities, including electrical and cable internet, is set to begin as well.

“We are, I would say, about halfway through the infrastructure development cycle,” Albarran said. “We should have roads in place later this year, visible paths towards the end of the year as well.”

Once completed, the RiversEdge development will include 134,000 square feet of retail space and 200,000 square feet of office space as well as 147 hotel rooms, 950 residential units and a 125-slip marina. It will also feature four public park spaces.

Work on the public parks is expected to begin this summer and Albarran hinted at several surprises in store for these areas, which he said will be unveiled later in the spring.

“We’re not gonna reveal all of the surprises that are coming to the parks but there’s some spectacular pieces that are gonna be part of the parks that should all be in place by summer of next year,” he said. “I think the excitement of having the public realizing that they’re gonna have a very special asset in their backyard is something we’re excited to bring to the city and we’ll be making a more formal unveiling of that sometime in the spring before the rain and the heat starts in Florida.”

Once all infrastructural work is completed, the project will move on to vertical construction. Currently, Toll Brothers remains the only confirmed vertical developer for the project.

While the majority of the work and progress thus far has been underground and, therefore, invisible to the public, Albarran added the project is very near to a stage where the public will be able to see visible progress.

“A lot of work and a lot of money has been spent getting the infrastructure to where it is today, which is not as visible but just as important,” he added.

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Incidents highlight alternative actions for JSO, communities

Officials have new measures for combating crime, dereliction

BY KAREN RIELEY
Resident Community News

Repeated gun violence incidents at the Scottish Inn at 2300 Philips Highway have underscored the need for increased crime-control measures in Jacksonville. Early morning on Dec. 31, 2022, police officers found a man shot multiple times on Mark Avenue, a street right behind the Scottish Inn. The man later died. On Nov. 5, 2022, officers responding to reports of a gunshot victim at the Scottish Inn, witnessed a car pulling into the inn's parking lot. A man standing in the parking lot subsequently opened fire on the car. When the suspect refused to drop his weapon, the officers opened fire. During a follow-up investigation into the officer-involved shooting, officers found a man inside a room dead from at least one gunshot wound. These recent actions have caught the attention of the Nuisance Abatement Board.

Council Member LeAnna Cumber, who represents the San Marco area within District 5, took action against matters of violence in 2021, drafting legislation for the creation of a Public Nuisance Abatement Board to help the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO).

"The crime on Philips Highway is one of the reasons I ran for election in 2019," said Cumber. "Sex trafficking and drugs are

something that the city needs to get a hold of. The area has dramatically improved during the past four years thanks to the new apartments and businesses, but more needs to be done."

Cumber says she went on a SWAT narcotics arrest with JSO officers, and that led her to go back to her office to figure out what she could do to help.

"I drafted the legislation for the Public Nuisance Abatement Board, modeling it after the state board, chose what city departments would be represented on it, and interviewed all the candidates," she said.

The nine-member Public Nuisance Abatement Board is authorized to assist victims of crime, and penalize those who commit crimes or those who permit conditions to exist that give rise to crime or excessive calls for service to JSO and Jacksonville Fire & Rescue Department (JFRD). Appointed members include representatives from JSO; JFRD; the City of Jacksonville's Neighborhoods Department; a Florida Bar licensed attorney; two developers, property managers or realtors with extensive experience — one with multi-family residential property operations and one with commercial property operations; public health services or child protective services; and two community advocates.

Since spring 2021, the board has met five times and dealt with two nuisance properties: Downtown East, formerly known as Franklin Arms Apartments, 888 Franklin Street, and the Argyle Forest Red Roof Inn, 6099 Youngerman Circle in Orange Park.



In addition to the two businesses that have gone before the board in 2022, two more cases are going through the system, according to Cumber.

In response to questions about whether the Scottish Inn would be presented to the board for consideration as a public nuisance, given the recent shootings occurring there at the end of last year, Police Lieutenant Robert Lestrage, who leads JSO's Blight Abatement Unit, said, "I cannot address specifically the cases I will be presenting to the board, but any property that has experienced violent crimes and other crimes outlined in 672.04 is subject to presentation."

"To date, I have not received any other complaints about properties on Philips Highway," he said.

"The board doesn't see the cases prior to a board meeting," said Josh Cockrell, former vice chair who is serving as the temporary chair of the board following the recent death of Board Chair Bryan Mosier. "I expect to see a number of additional problems addressed in 2023. We can levy fines against their property that may turn into liens, and charge daily fines. Properties can be shut down in long-road scenarios."

"The board and JSO recommend doing a CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) study on properties where disrepair or faulty security systems may be contributing factors in the overall crime issues at a property," said Lestrage.

The Public Nuisance Abatement Board labeled the Downtown East Apartments a public nuisance in August 2021 after the complex had received seven felony arrests in six months, including charges of murder and attempted murder, and more than 200 calls for service to JSO.

Ongoing violence at Orange Park's Argyle Forest Red Roof Inn, including shootings there on Oct. 8, 2022, led the board to declare the motel a public nuisance as well.

"I've requested that they start the process on the Scottish Inn," said Cumber.

Any place or premises can be declared to be a public nuisance for issues — called qualifiers in the code — concerning prostitution and prostitution-related activities; the unlawful sale, delivery, manufacture or cultivation of any controlled substance; unlawful possession of a controlled substance; criminal gangs; human trafficking; dealing in stolen property; pain management clinic violation; or forcible felonies against any individual.

The process begins with a law enforcement officer who makes an arrest or confirms an incident or occurrence of any statutory violations and submits a copy of any reports or offenses to the Blight Abatement Unit.

The Blight Abatement Unit thoroughly researches all of the calls for service received by JSO in the previous six months, and looks for qualifiers based on a detailed list in Code of Ordinance 672.04, to determine whether the issue should be presented to the Public Nuisance Abatement Board.

The board clerk prepares a case folder for a complaint, and requests a hearing before the board. All parties involved have an opportunity to present evidence and argument on all issues involved, conduct cross-examination, submit rebuttal evidence and be represented by counsel.

“ THE GOAL OF THE BOARD IS TO GET THESE BUSINESSES TO DO WHAT THEY NEED TO DO TO STOP THE NUISANCE. THE BOARD TELLS THE BUSINESS THE STEPS IT NEEDS TO TAKE TO STOP THE NUISANCES.”

— LeAnna Cumber
Council Member,
San Marco area within District 5

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Big Fishweir dredging and habitat restoration underway



Construction equipment and signage has already been staged for the project to dredge and restore Big Fishweir Creek.

BY JOEL ADDINGTON
Resident Community News

Residents near Big Fishweir Creek should soon notice the start of an \$8 million-plus project to dredge and restore the waterway for fishing and swimming.

The following is the latest from Program Manager Jim L. Suggs of the US Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District Small Projects, via the corporate communications office:

After a contract was inked last August, a notice to proceed was issued on Oct. 19, 2022, and a pre-construction meeting with Underwater Mechanics Services, LLC of San Mateo commenced. The contractor began mustering equipment and personnel last month and staging them on the now-cleared north end of the creek.

Work is ongoing there, including staging for dredging Little Fishweir Creek. Big Fishweir Creek has been considered an essential fish habitat and

the project is more than a decade in the making, so construction is welcome news for anglers.

The project aims to restore the creek habitat by removing sediment and exotic plants, adding vegetation for manatees and other native species, and restoring wetlands.

The start of construction came after a year-long delay in the procurement of a contractor.

The contract with Underwater Mechanics Services calls for dredging portions of Big and Little Fishweir creeks to make the waterways friendlier to boaters, paddlers, wildlife and fishing enthusiasts.

In 2012, the cost estimate was \$3.8 million, which rose to some \$6.5 million before recent inflation pushed it beyond \$8 million. This is more than a 100% increase in the last decade.

The City of Jacksonville and the federal agency have agreed to split the costs 35% and 65%, respectively.

Big Fishweir Creek is an urban tributary of the St. Johns River running south of downtown and enters the “big river” just north of the Ortega River.

The contract also includes standard turbidity monitoring, endangered species monitoring, vibration control monitoring, channel debris removal and related incidental work, the Army Corps said.

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Radiothon raises \$249K for Tom Coughlin Jay Fund

The 15th annual Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Radiothon, held on 1010XL on Nov. 30, raised a record-breaking \$249,784.

“I’m truly amazed at the generosity of the 1010 XL listeners in times when a carton of eggs costs \$6,” said 1010XL General Manager Steven Griffin, “and equally amazed how the hosts, producers, radio staff and Jay Fund volunteers came together with a singular focus to, year-after-year, produce these results in only one broadcast day.”

Since it launched in 2008, the Radiothon has raised more than \$1.5 million for the Jay Fund.

The Jay Fund provides financial, emotional and practical support to families tackling childhood cancer, and the money raised helps First Coast families pay their bills and put food on the table, so they can focus on caring for their sick child.

During the challenging economic times of 2022, the Jay Fund has seen a 65% increase in requests for help with emergency household expenses compared to last year.

“Helping families tackling childhood cancer is more important now than ever,” said Keli Coughlin, CEO of the Jay Fund.



Jay Fund Radiothon

JTA appoints new board leadership



Debbie Buckland



Ray Driver, Jr.

Debbie Buckland has been appointed to serve as the new board chair for the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) Board of Directors for 2023. Buckland’s new appointment was approved at the board’s nominating committee meeting in December.

Buckland had previously served as vice chair since 2021.

“Since 2019, Debbie Buckland’s contributions to the JTA board of directors have helped the JTA provide

mobility solutions to Jacksonville and the entire Northeast Florida region,” said JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford, Sr. “I am looking forward to having her as our newest board chair as we continue to serve the citizens of this region.”

Buckland has played an active role as past chair of several vital Jacksonville organizations, including the JAX Chamber, Downtown Vision, Inc. and the American Cancer Society, while remaining an active member with Wolfson Children’s Hospital Women’s Board, Jacksonville Women’s Network, the Truist Jacksonville Advisory Board and the Women’s Giving Alliance. In 2019, Buckland was inducted into the First Coast Business Hall of Fame and recognized with the DTJAX Downtown Achievement Award.

Last November, the Association of Fundraising Professional Florida, First Coast Chapter recognized her as its Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser at its 2022 National Philanthropy Day luncheon.

At the same meeting, the nominating committee also appointed Ray Driver, Jr. as vice chair. Driver previously served as the 2022 board secretary. Driver has been practicing law for over 20 years, and is a founding partner of Driver, McAfee, Hawthorne & Diebenow.

Governor Ron DeSantis appointed both Buckland and Driver to the JTA Board of Directors in 2019.

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Two New Leaders for United Way



Coretta Hill

James Ellout

United Way of Northeast Florida added two new members to its leadership team, which oversees the organization's work to improve economic mobility in Northeast Florida.

Coretta Hill returns to United Way on Feb. 13 in the newly created role as chief operating officer. She will be tasked with strategy development and improvements to operational efficiency. Hill previously spent more than 18 years with United Way in Southwest Georgia and Northeast Florida, where she most recently served as vice president of volunteer and community engagement.

James Ellout joined United Way in January as the vice president of community impact. He will be responsible for developing and leading high-impact community initiatives in the areas of basic needs, financial well-being and racial equity. Ellout comes to United Way after nearly a decade focusing on student readiness with City Year Jacksonville.

"Our impact on the community is driven in large part by the talent on our team," said Melanie Patz, president and CEO. "Coretta and James both bring significant insight and experience to their roles, along with a fresh perspective that will help us transform the way we work, and how we serve Northeast Floridians."

Wiles to replace Kimbleton as Director of Public Affairs



Katharine Wiles

Nikki Kimbleton

After nearly four years of service to the City of Jacksonville, Director of Public Affairs Nikki Kimbleton left Mayor Lenny Curry's administration in January to relocate to Denver, Colorado with her family. Curry has tapped Katharine Wiles, the previous Assistant Director of Public Affairs, to fill the position.

"It's been an honor to have Nikki as part of my administration. Her dedication to serving the citizens of Jacksonville is second-to-none, and she managed every aspect of this role with skill and grace," Curry said. "I am confident of her continued success as she moves on to new and exciting endeavors. It's been a pleasure to serve with Nikki, and she will be greatly missed."

Wiles started with the City of Jacksonville in October 2021, after spending the last decade working on local, state and national elections, as well as public policy and government affairs initiatives with veteran nonprofits and hospital networks. She will continue to work in conjunction with Chief Administrative Officer Brian Hughes, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Charles Moreland, and Chief of Staff Leeann Krieg.

Ferrell wins fellowship for social justice in education



Shaneka Ferrell

Shaneka Ferrell, six-year counselor at Douglas Anderson School for the Arts, was selected for the Wolfburg Fellowship for Social Justice in Education. The Wolfburg Fellowship, established in 2020 through the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, provides up to \$7,000 for educators to

deepen their knowledge of issues related to social justice, diversity and inclusion, and to implement an aligned action research project in partnership with students.

Ferrell will use the funding to attend conferences to discover best practices in the areas of equity and social justice. She plans to send two students to the University of North Florida Bridges Summer Camp, and will also conduct a mentorship and research study with two senior students to understand how a student-created, student-led, Black-performing visual arts production could lead to greater educational equity in performing arts schools.

"This lack of diversity and inclusion within the educator workforce has resulted in a lack of sense of belonging, professionally, which also does a disservice to students," said Ferrell. "A more diverse and inclusive school climate can be created through the implementation of culturally responsive and sustaining practices."

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Elevate and strengthen:

New president for Avondale Merchants Association

After three years, Tasha Brooks has stepped down as president of the Avondale Merchants Association and former Vice President Bronwyn Benoit has succeeded her.

Benoit was sworn in on Jan. 10.

"I think it's gonna be an easy transition," Brooks said. "[Bronwyn] was my vice president for the past three years. She knows the ins and outs: the e-mails, the social media, our events and how we go about things. She pretty much...has a running start for 2023."

Under Brooks' leadership these last three years, the merchants association has undergone a rebranding and seen a significant growth in membership from businesses along the Avenue — St. Johns Avenue, the heart of Avondale and where the bulk of community events are held throughout the year.

"We had about 20% participation out of all the members of the Avenue; by the end of 2022, we've had 80% participation," she said. "They started to trust us again and see things happening and changing [and] I think they showed that with their participation."

This is a crucial time for the merchants association, Benoit said, as it continues to build on the momentum it has generated under Brooks' leadership and as new president, she hopes to elevate and strengthen the association and, by extension, the community.

"I think our focus is the same but elevated," she said. "We want to make sure we are doing everything we can to make Avondale stronger, better and safer for both merchants, employees, residents, all of that."

More events will be added to the calendar in this new year, while some existing events will get new looks. Benoit said Music on the Avenue "will have a little bit of a new look and feel to it." Likewise, Benoit hopes to maintain strong communication with the merchants of the community during her presidency and reach out to both business owners and residents to discuss questions, ideas or issues as they arise. And while she's proud of all the association has accomplished these past few years, she said it's important to keep discussing new ideas for the future as the association and the community continues to grow.

"As an Avondale native, I'm really looking forward to trying to assist in great changes and continue to get stronger," she said.



Bronwyn Benoit

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRONWYN BENOIT.

A new leader for Women's Board



Women's Board President Kendra McCrary and Immediate Past President Robin Albaneze at Flaunting the First Coast, the Women's Board 2022 Winter Design Show.

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital finds itself with a new leader at the start of a fresh new year.

Kendra McCrary will succeed Immediate Past President Robin Albaneze, who served for the last two years.

"I was so happy to see The Winter Design Show come to fruition and enjoy a wonderful Florida Forum," Albaneze wrote in an e-mail. "The pandemic had slowed us down for a while but I am glad to see the new energy that was created through our events."

McCrary will now lead the board for the next two years.

"Kendra is the perfect person to lead this organization for the next two years," Albaneze added. "She also sees an exciting Future for The Women's Board. I have left it in excellent hands!"

Maxey named Elevate Jacksonville's new executive director



George E. Maxey

George E. Maxey has been selected as the new executive director for Elevate Jacksonville. With more than 25 years of leadership experience in the education and nonprofit sector, he has a proven track record for guiding children and families toward academic achievement.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Maxey was inspired by a childhood teacher to pursue his own career in education. After receiving his bachelor's in education from Kent State University, he began his professional teaching career. His commitment to student-centered learning aligns with Elevate Jacksonville's mission to "build long-term, life-changing relationships with urban youth, equipping them to thrive and contribute to their community."

Hats off to CAP

The Cathedral Arts Project celebrates 30 years

Beginning on Jan. 30 — Cathedral Arts Project Day, by mayoral proclamation — the Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) launched its "Celebrating 30 Years Empowering Children Through the Arts" exhibit. This marks the first in a yearlong series of events celebrating the arts education organization's 30th anniversary.

Featuring artworks from former CAP program students from 2006 to 2022, the exhibit will be on display at St. John's Cathedral until Feb. 12. In addition to the artwork, the exhibit also showcases a CAP historical timeline, marking the organization's milestones over its three decades in operation.

"For 30 years, the Cathedral Arts Project has stayed true to its mission to make quality arts education accessible to all children, and we will continue to expand our programs as we pursue this goal," said President & CEO

Rev. Kimberly L. Hyatt in a January press release. "At CAP, we know from our data that nourishing a child's creative spirit and innovative thinking also supports their ability to reach their full potential as a student and garner a better understanding of their own humanity."

Gail Weltsek first founded CAP in 1993 with her son and a group of volunteers. While its very first dance class could accommodate only 10 students, today CAP has reached more than 31,000 students and provided these children "with professional arts education in art as therapy, dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts."

In fulfilling its mission "to empower every child's creative spirit, elevate arts educators in their field and advocate for access and equity in arts education," CAP recently embarked on a new objective to fully understand schools'

challenges to provide critical arts education. To find solutions to those challenges, CAP launched its "LEAD artlook" map in 2019 to track data identifying "deficits in funding, resources and programs in the arts offered by public schools." Two years later, CAP's map was able to discern that "84% of principals were in need of art supplies and equipment, while 63% expressed that a dedicated arts budget would be beneficial to their student community."

"CAP is an organization pursuing systemic change in how we deliver and evaluate the impact of arts education on children," said Kristine Cherek, CAP Board Chair in the release. "Our important work has impacted the lives of generations of children in Northeast Florida over the past three decades and will continue to build on its incredible foundation and proven track record."

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

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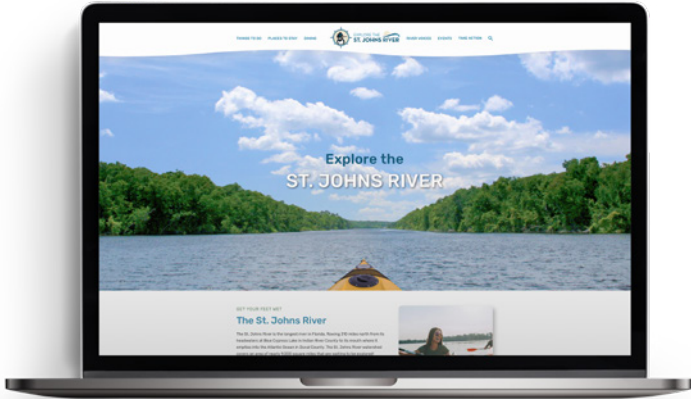
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St. Johns Riverkeeper launches new recreation website



Screenshot of new site home page

St. Johns Riverkeeper launched a new website, exploresthejohns.com, where visitors to the site can search various activity categories in order to learn about and plan outings throughout the St. Johns River watershed.

“An important part of our work at St. Johns Riverkeeper is to educate people about the wonders of the St. Johns, and introduce them to the many beautiful and special places throughout the river’s watershed,” said Jimmy Orth, St. Johns Riverkeeper executive director. “The St. Johns is Florida’s longest river, and one of the most unique and important waterways in the United States. Our new website is intended to make it easier for the public to get out and explore this national treasure.”

The website allows users to discover places to explore along the 310-mile St. Johns, including the lakes, creeks, tributaries and natural lands that comprise the river’s nearly 9,000 square mile watershed. In addition to parks and outdoor recreation, the site highlights local businesses that are a part of the river community, including waterfront eateries, hotels and fish camps.

“Through this process of discovery, we also hope to establish in the community a greater sense of appreciation and stewardship for this amazing river,” said Rebecca Vecera, St. Johns Riverkeeper communications specialist, who encouraged users to provide feedback on their own favorite spots along the St. Johns.

Community Foundation selects 2023 Chair



Michael DuBow

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida announced last month that Michael DuBow will be the 2023 Chair-Elect of its board of trustees.

As such, he will succeed current Chair of the Board Judge Brian J. Davis, effective Jan. 1, 2024 for a two-year term.

A Jacksonville native, DuBow is vice president of the DuBow Family Foundation, where his role involves overseeing grant-making initiatives. He has been on the board for The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida since 2014.

Additionally, DuBow has been active in several nonprofit organizations and initiatives. He currently serves as the Wolfson Children’s Hospital Board Chair and is a trustee of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. DuBow previously served as president of the Jacksonville Jewish Center.

MOCA director leads in D.C.



Caitlin Doherty

Caitlin Doherty, the executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Jacksonville, has been appointed as one of 55 members on the Meridian International Center’s Cultural Diplomacy Leadership Council in Washington, D.C.

The council is a network of leaders and advisors around the United States and the world who believe in employing the arts and culture as a tool of diplomacy and global engagement.

Council members include prominent cultural figures, many representing major arts and cultural institutions, such as the National Museum of African American Art, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Shakespeare Theatre, the National Gallery of Art, Canada and the Smithsonian Museums.

This appointment underscores MOCA Jacksonville’s impactful programming and exhibits while bringing positive attention to the University of North Florida, the city of Jacksonville and the strengths of the cultural sector in Northeast Florida.

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The Greenhouse Bar plants roots in new Brooklyn store



A dream three years in the making was realized this past November when co-owners Lauren Henry and Jennifer Ness opened The Greenhouse Bar in Brooklyn.



A dream three years in the making was realized this past November when co-owners Lauren Henry and Jennifer Ness opened The Greenhouse Bar in Brooklyn.

Blending the ideas of their own separate businesses — Henry’s mobile bar and Ness’s furniture company — with their shared love of plants, the two women created a space where plant lovers and novices alike can grow their plant collection and enjoy a coffee, cocktail or snack.

The fact that they were able to open their brick-and-mortar store in Brooklyn was “even more exciting.” “We definitely, when creating this vision, wanted to stay in the neighborhood where we live and reside, so being able to set our roots in that same neighborhood was extremely important to us when we were looking for a space,” said Henry. “I think it’s even more exciting because Brooklyn is really up-and-coming and becoming more developed every day, that we’re able to say we’re part of the beginning of something.”

Novice plant owners need not worry when purchasing their first plants at The Greenhouse: Ness and Henry will point them to low-maintenance “staple plants” and educate them on basic care to help them build “...the confidence in knowing they can take this on.”

The Greenhouse menu includes coffees, craft cocktails and other libations along with pastries and small bites. Each month, the menu will also feature one or two signature coffees and cocktails created in-house by a Greenhouse staff member.

The Greenhouse is located at 200 Riverside Avenue, Unit 2.

Rodriguez joins Berkshire Hathaway



Amanda Rodriguez

Amanda Rodriguez has joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty’s Metropolitan office, with locations in Avondale and San Marco. She brings a strong background in management and design.

“We are so glad to have Amanda join our family, and we know that she will shine here at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices,” said Josh Cohen, Broker/Manager of the Metropolitan office.

READ USA receives \$1M match

READ USA has been selected to receive a \$1 million match donation from the Michael Ward and Jennifer Glock Foundation, due, in part, to four-year donation commitments made on behalf of their donors. The donation will help provide a stronger, more sustainable future for the organization to expand its research-based approach toward solving the literacy crisis in America.

READ USA aims to close the literacy gap in the community through books and good teaching. Teen tutor ambassador Jamilah Lipscomb, 17, said the program builds children’s confidence not only in reading, but also learning in general.

“It helps you to not only shape the lives of the kids you’re helping, but also shape your own,” she said.

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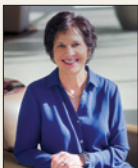
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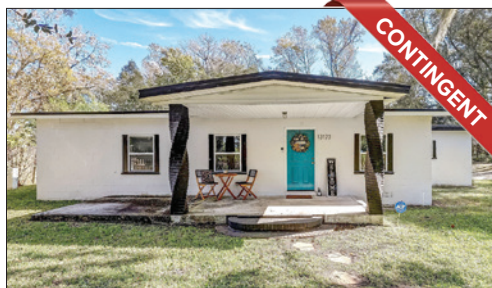
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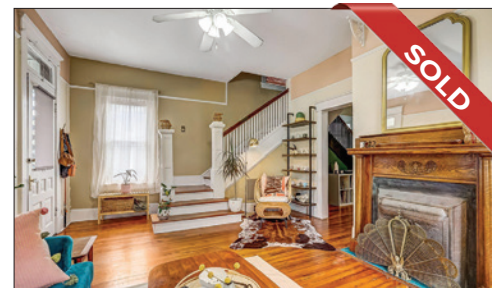
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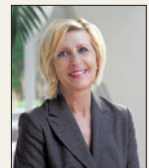
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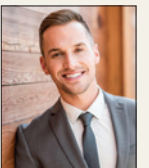
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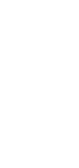
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Father Sebastian Mot with Pam Toundas and Father Nicholas Louh of St. John the Divine Greek Church



Dean Porter with Mary Hamilton and James Pyle



During the groundbreaking, supporters came together to honor the milestone and Hunger Fight m of dirt to christen the site; on hand for the groundbreaking were (l to r) Stefanie Stark, Hank Duck Sherri Porter, Dean Porter, Daniel Davis, Dr. Sam Santelices and Thomas Duke.

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Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital’s Florida Forum speaker series wrapped its 2022-23 line-up with Olympian, entrepreneur, women’s healthcare advocate and mother Allyson on Jan. 18 at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts. With 11 Olympic medals and 18 world championship medals of which are gold, thus surpassing Usain Bolt’s record-setting gold medals — Felix is one of the most decorated track and field athletes in history. Her advocacy and leadership in sport has now transcended into a larger role as she’s become a leader in women’s health and maternity issues. Not only an advocate for health and equality, she’s now crafting her own athletic and lifestyle shoe brand focused on shoes that fit women’s feet, not the industry standard built around men’s measurements. The lineup for the award-winning season included best-selling author Bill Browder, who appeared back on Sept. 20, followed by television news personality, Jenna Bush-Hager, who visited the City Nov. 8, followed by Felix’s latest visit in January.



Mia Jones with Edward Ford



Gary Willets with Steve Kunz and Glen Feeley



mission. Special guests tossed the first shovels
worth, Chad Clarke, Christi League, James Pyle,

HUNGER FIGHT FIGHTS HARDER

Hunger Fight is raising the bar — and the roof — in the fight against hunger in Northeast Florida. The nonprofit broke ground on Jan. 19 on a new 15,000-square-foot warehouse and office space at 404 St. Johns Bluff Road North. The move will take Hunger Fight out of a small, rented space tucked back in an industrial park to a large, owned, street-frontage building.

Dean Porter, vice president of operations for Hunger Fight, said transitioning from a rental situation to building ownership will reduce logistical expenses, and ultimately turn recurrent rent into a debt-free mortgage, which he hopes to have paid off within two and a half years through their capital campaign.

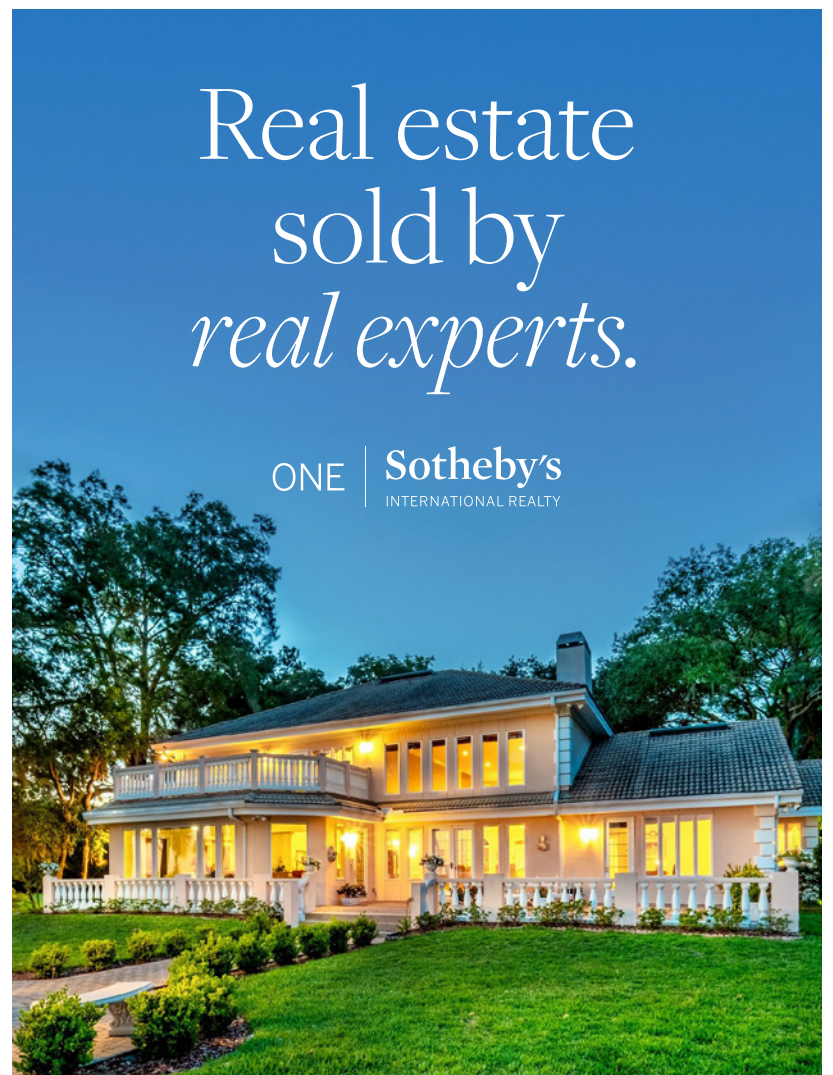
“Just at today’s rent rate, we would be able to provide an additional 500,000 meals to children and families in need, as well as 20,000 books back into the community. Every single year,” he said.

In its current space, Hunger Fight is at maximum capacity for meal distribution at about 6 million meals. By building the new building to its preferred specs, Porter estimates they will be able to jump to a capacity of 15 to 20 million meals per year.

Based on renderings, the new design will feature more than 4,800 square feet of conditioned storage, 7,200 square feet of warehouse space, a 437-square-foot cheese room, and a wash area and office. The structure will better serve the growing needs of the organization, with more space for food storage. Roof clearance is increasing from 14 to 32 feet, allowing them to rack more than double the pallets. Its pallet bays will increase from 220 to 520.

The external space will also benefit the organization. Available parking will increase from 8 spaces to 90, allowing Hunger Fight to host its own signature event in November, as well as others.

“This is a milestone. If you’d asked me 10 years ago where we’d be, I would have never dreamed that...all of our support, our community has come together to help us and give us support,” said an emotional Porter at the groundbreaking event. “Without our community, without our donors, our corporate donors, our community partners, our volunteers, we’re nothing. We’re just a vehicle. The last 10 years, my wife’s dream has come together. So, thank you.”



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Florida Yacht Club celebrates Change of Command

Announce slate of officers, first female Commodore

On Sunday, Jan. 22, the Florida Yacht Club held its annual Change of Command ceremony, transferring the post of Commodore from Past Commodore Timothy V. Monahan to longtime Ortega resident Margaret "Liza" Barnett Emmet for the 2023 calendar year. Barnett Emmet is the first female to hold the title in the club's nearly 150-year history.

The Club welcomed guests, members and special friends to the celebration along the banks of the St. Johns River, complete with cannon blasts and a breeze that would have made Buzzards Bay look tame during the afternoon ceremonies. Following the outdoor festivities, the crowd mingled and mingled during a reception in the club's Grand Ballroom of the club.

During her remarks, Barnett Emmet shared many fond memories of playing tennis as a child, running around the club and enjoying her upbringing amongst family and friends. Her grandmother, Mrs. Betty Adams, was talked about fondly: She was craft on the tennis court and a lot of fun to be around, according to Emmet.

"She would always say, 'Liza, don't hit it so hard,' and then hit the perfect drop shot. She played well into her 80s. It was the stuff dreams were made of...I wish that for all of you."

Barnett Emmet took time to thank her family and her husband, Patrick Emmet, as well as Tim Monahan, Past Commodore. She made sure to thank fellow Flag Officers and staff that help to run a tight ship at the Ortega-based club.

"Thank you to our current Board, and all the past Commodores that have come before me today. Each of you established the foundation of the Florida Yacht Club, leading us through challenging times and creating a place we all love and call home," she said.

Barnett Emmet is the 113th Commodore in the history of the Florida Yacht Club.



"The Wolfpack", best friends of Liza Barnett Emmet travelled to support their girlfriend as she embarks on her tenure as Commodore. Pictured are Frances Webster, Katherine Robinson, Liza Barnett Emmet, Serena Vann, Stacey Galbraith and Carson Hobby.



Nathan, Will, Holly and William Allen



Julia Jackson with Austin Emmet



Shep and Eleanor Colledge

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- L. Allen McDonough, Jr. — Rear Commodore
- Herschel T. Vinyard — Secretary
- William O. Derr, Jr. — Treasurer
- B. Russell Brockman — Tennis Chair
- Kimberley Collins — Food & Beverage Chair
- Harrison R. Frazier — Pool & Fitness Chair
- C. Stewart Green — Entertainment Chair
- Matthew E. Kenyon — FYC150 Building Committee
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A keg standing ovation

Remembering the inaugural Riverside Craft Beer Festival's unexpected success

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

When the Rotary Club of Riverside hosted its inaugural Riverside Craft Beer Festival in 2014, rotarian and event co-chair Chris Croft never imagined it would be as successful as it was.

He never imagined, for example, that all the beer distributors would run out of beer, thus forcing the club to stop selling tickets. He also never imagined he'd have to stand guard beside his car while fellow rotarian Jeff Thompson was quite literally stuffing cash into the center console of his Expedition from ticket sales.

"We weren't expecting the turnout we got," he said. "It was more than anything we expected."

Between event sponsorships and the day's ticket sales — mainly in cash but some via credit card — the Rotary Club netted approximately "\$75,000 after expenses," Croft said. This was an astronomical increase from the profits raised from the golf tournaments the club had hosted years prior.

"At the time we were happy to make \$20,000 at our golf tournament," he said.

Croft organized that first festival with Ben Davis, rotarian and founder of Jacksonville brewery Intuition Ale Works. In the years since, the Riverside Craft Beer Festival has evolved to accommodate the growing crowd the Rotary Club has come to expect at this annual event, which has garnered the attention from breweries, distributors and visitors from across the country. Some things, however, have not changed, including the reason the club hosts the festival in the first place.

Proceeds from the beer festival are reserved for charity, Croft explained. Some of the funds raised are earmarked for the club's foundation to support its own charitable projects,

but the bulk of the money is donated to the Community Hospice and Palliative Care's Community PedsCare® program.

"Our club is always focused on helping children so it's worked out great," he added. "...We were excited to be able to help [the Community PedsCare® program] as much as we have."

"Over the past seven years, the Riverside Rotary Foundation has raised over \$450,000 for the Community PedsCare® program through the Riverside Craft Beer Festival," wrote The Community Hospice and Palliative Care Foundation Executive Director Annie Tuttle in an e-mail. "The impact this has had on Community Hospice & Palliative Care® is quantifiable- from this partnership, 19,142 days of care have been provided to children with life-limiting conditions. Community PedsCare® is a nationally recognized pediatric program that provides palliative and hospice services to children (prenatal to age 21) without a financial burden to families."

With the recent growth Jacksonville has seen and the growth it's projected to see in the coming years, Rotary Club of Riverside Incoming President Tim Gaskin said the Riverside Craft Beer Festival provides an opportunity to showcase the Jacksonville craft beer and food scenes to both new visitors and residents.

"Twenty years ago, we may have seen 400 or 500 people," he said. "Now we'll see 1,000. It makes a tremendous difference and it does give all these new residents an opportunity to see what Jacksonville's all about. There's plenty of parking. It's easy to get to. It's just an all-around good event for people to visit and partake in a lot of the area's breweries all in one place."

The festival is free and open to the public, although a wristband is required to sample the beers. The ninth annual Riverside Craft Beer Festival will be held on Sunday, Feb. 26 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Riverside Arts Market. Details, including ticket purchases, can be found at www.riversidecraftbeerfestival.com.



From The Resident Archives: Gregory Orr, Brother London and Bob Dickson with Scott and Dale Orr. Taken at the 2019 Riverside Craft Beer Festival.



The Resident Archives: The \$75,000 check presentation from the third annual Riverside Craft Beer Festival. Shown in the photo are former festival co-chairs Chris Croft and Matt McLaughlin and Past Rotary Club of Riverside President Teresa Risley alongside John Erstling, former senior vice president of community engagement and philanthropy at Community Hospice and Palliative Care and Terry Eason, former director of Community PedsCare.



From The Resident Archives: Mario Baugh, Eustachius Roberts and Ali Brin with Bill Hallowes, 2019 Rotary Club of Riverside President Rob Alexander, Michael Reddaway and Emma Newton. Taken at the 2019 Riverside Craft Beer Festival.



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Marcis Borum shares photos of the old Ford Motor Plant, when it housed Borum High Performance Boats.



An exterior shot of the old Ford Motor Plant during the 1970s, when Borum's father and grandfather — Don and Otis Borum, respectively — manufactured boats at the former automobile plant.



An interior shot of the old Ford Motor Plant, filled with Borum boats in various stages of completion.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARCIS BORUM

From the open road to the open sea *Borum Boats' chapter at the old Ford Motor Plant*

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Since last October, Jacksonville has been preparing to bid farewell to the old Ford Motor Plant as time inevitably draws it closer and closer to total demolition.

In November, The Resident reported on the Land Use and Zoning (LUZ) committee ruling supporting Amkin Hill Street LLC's appeal of Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission's denial of its application for a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the factory. The following week, the City Council upheld the LUZ ruling, thus allowing the property owner to move forward with the demolition.

Since the publication of that article, Marcis Borum — the son and grandson of former tenants of the old Ford Motor Plant — reached out to The Resident to share his memories of his family's 10 years manufacturing boats in the former automobile plant.

In the 50 years it was in business — from 1940 to 1990 — Borum High Performance Boats manufactured more than 10,000 boats, Borum said, but the 10 years the business was housed at 1900 Wambolt Street remains a special time for him. A three-ring binder of sales documents, news clippings and old photographs serves as the legacy

of his family's business — the binder his father took with him on every business trip that was then given to Borum by his mother after his father passed.

Seated at the conference table at The Resident's office, Borum pulled photos from the binder in their protective plastic sleeves showing the old Ford Motor Plant as it was in the 1970s, when his family was there.

"There was still black paint in underground tanks, oil in underground tanks," he recalled. "And if I remember right, when I was a kid, I remember there were rails, like train tracks but they were just in the concrete for the assembly line."

"The building was so much nicer," he added. "It was almost like Ford hadn't left that long ago and it was so well maintained."

'Bright' may not be a word that immediately comes to mind as one views the rundown structure sprawling out over the St. Johns River beside the Mathews Bridge today, but Borum said that's precisely what it was when sunlight came streaming through the skylight and windows lining the sides of the building. Light filled the open space, bouncing off the walls and ceilings and illuminating everything so well, not a single light bulb was needed to enhance it during the day.

"Well they didn't have fluorescent lighting [when the plant was built]

— you're looking at Edison bulbs back then — so you had to have as much natural light and that's what was really cool that I remember, that kinda stuck to me, how much natural light there was. It was so well-lit, naturally... Everything just lit up and it would glow" he said, pointing to a photograph of the building's exterior and all of the intact windows running the length of the building's side.

Later, his grandfather and father — Otis and Don Borum, respectively — did install fluorescent lighting, he added.

Borum said he's sad to see the building go, but acknowledged that kind of riverfront property has become extremely valuable commodity.

"I think if it wasn't on the river, Jacksonville would probably do something about it," he speculated. "But now we need to probably sacrifice that history and that building being there to move forward and for Jacksonville to grow. Because we gotta grow, right?"

In accordance with a floor amendment at that October City Council meeting, the Jacksonville Historical Society (JHS) has conducted its documentation of the plant, engaging the services of photographer Mark Krancer and preservation advocate Ennis Davis to complete the project.

JHS Chief of Staff and Communications Director Kate Hallock confirmed demolition of the building has already begun.

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YMCA announces honoree, details for Giving Tree Gala



In the wake of this success, a committee was formed to plan an annual event that would honor the life of Mr. Gay in perpetuity by creating the W.W. "Bill" Gay Community Impact award. This award would be given annually at a Gala to an individual based on the tenants of his life. The recipients are judged on their Faith, Family, Philanthropy, and Community Impact. In 2022, the first in person "Giving Tree Gala" was held. This moniker was founded on Mr. Gay's love of pecky cypress that adorned his office. The recipient was Hugh Greene, former Baptist CEO. The community and businesses responded and over \$180,000 was raised! The proceeds impacted hundreds of families across the First Coast.

from those that found him by their side through the toughest of life's battles. John has an immeasurable impact on many organizations, but none so much as the YMCA. John has volunteered in just about every role imaginable, but his two greatest impacts are leading the charge to revamp the Yates YMCA into the new Winston location which this event benefits, and the search and selection of the current YMCA CEO Eric Mann. Both achievements helped launch the Y into greater successes which in turn improved the lives of so many across our area.


Planning for this year's event is well underway. The Jessie Ball duPont Center downtown will be transformed in an elegant award atmosphere with fun activities including live music, a well curated silent auction, a speakeasy lounge with art on display, and many other surprises. Inside and outside the "Party in the Park" motif will include greenery, lampposts, and more. A who's who of attendees will share a superb meal while learning more about Mr. Carey and the Y and capped off with the award ceremony. Stick around for salty and sweet snacks in the speakeasy, with dancing and live music into the night. On behalf of the committee, we invite you to join us in March to honor the legacy of Mr. Gay, the impact of G. John Carey, and the community through the YMCA.

This year, a committee of 26 members voted on a list of potential recipients and selected G. John Carey as the recipient of the award. John's life mirrors Mr. Gay's focus on serving others and viewing his successes as blessings that should be shared with others. He found great success in the real estate industry developing properties on behalf of St. Joe Company, Flagler Development, his own firm Whitehall Partners, and culminating with his recent success leading VanTrust Real Estate locally. John's faith runs deep, and he is fiercely loyal to both his relatives but also to those coworkers he has adopted as family over the years. Already we are hearing stories

BY MIKE BIAGINI
Volunteer Advisory Board Chairman of Winston Family YMCA

On March 25, the YMCA will hold its 2nd Annual Giving Tree Gala benefitting the flagship Winston Family YMCA branch in the Brooklyn area of Riverside. The event sprang to life out of the loss of W.W. "Bill" Gay in

2020. At the time, the family and city planned to celebrate his life, but each time the pandemic made such an event impossible. Late in the year, volunteers from the Y approached the family and offered to help plan a virtual event that would also raise needed funds for continued services during those trying times. The event was held in his honor in March of 2021. It was a great success both as a celebration and a fundraiser for the Y.



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Valentine's Day: It's not for the faint of heart

BY KERRY SPECKMAN
Resident Community News

For a holiday that has very little (if anything) to do with religion, politics or history, Valentine's Day sure does divide people.

On one hand, you've got the lovers who can't wait to celebrate (translation: brag about) their soulmate/best friend/life partner (mostly by blabbing all about it on social media) and the hopelessly romantic singles who just know their meet-cute moment is right around the corner. On the other hand, there are the cynics who can't help but roll their eyes while proclaiming Valentine's Day a "fake holiday" and the only love being celebrated is corporate America's love of money.

Valentine's Day is a lot like love itself: romantic, stressful, confusing, disappointing and full of surprises. Just take it from these folks.

**Some names have been changed to protect the innocent, the guilty and the just plain rude.*

Literally Lovesick

A self-described sucker for romance, K.C. Rogers was thrilled to be going out for Valentine's Day at Taverna since it's where she and her boyfriend, Jason, went on their first date. As the holiday got closer, however, she said Jason started "acting weird." When he called the morning of Feb. 14 to cancel their dinner plans because he was sick, she could tell something was really wrong. "He knew it was my favorite day of the year. Plus, he never gets sick," she said. "I started thinking about how he had been acting so distant the previous week, and it all made sense: He wanted to break up."

Rogers was so distraught she had to leave work and spent the day sobbing and trying to figure out what went wrong. That night, Jason called and asked if they could go to lunch to talk. Her stomach dropped, but she figured she might as well get it over with. At lunch he apologized for canceling

their dinner plans at the last minute and acting weird in general ... then he got down on one knee and proposed, something he had been so stressed out about doing on Valentine's Day, he literally made himself sick. All's well that ends well, though, since they're getting married this fall.

Return to Sender

Long-time Riverside resident Kevin Roberts had his "first real crush" in seventh grade. The object of his affection was a girl in another class. Let's call her Kelly Reynolds. "I went to bed each night just praying that she would pay attention to me," he said. As Feb. 14 approached, Roberts remembers going to the local drug store and buying "the biggest, frilliest Valentine's Day card I could find."

On the big day, Roberts asked a mutual friend if she would deliver the card to Kelly on his behalf. "Only minutes later, the friend returned, with my card still in her hand and simply said, 'She doesn't want it.'" he said. "It hadn't even been opened."

And he hasn't given anyone a Valentine's Day card since. (I'm not crying. You are.)

Accidentally Perfect

One thing that wasn't news at "The Florida Times-Union" for two decades was Robin Hughes, who worked in advertising, carrying a torch for columnist Charlie Patton. The office gossip finally found its way to Charlie, and on Valentine's Day 2001, he called Robin to ask her out on a first date. "I was beyond thrilled!" she recalled. "I had such a big crush on him, and for him to call me ON Valentine's meant he was thinking about me." According to Robin, the date was a huge success and she was "very smitten."

One night at a party, Robin was sharing the story of how she and Charlie met and absolutely gushing about how romantic it was for him to call her for the first time on Valentine's Day. Charlie, who was standing next to her listening to the story looked right at her and said, "I didn't have a clue it was Valentine's Day."

Charlie and Robin Patton will celebrate their 21st wedding anniversary in May.

The Ghost of Friendship Past

It was an unspoken rule with Kelsey Mitchell* and her friends: the ones who didn't have dates on Valentine's Day would all go out together. Two years ago, it was only Mitchell and her friend Jonathan* who didn't have dates. When they were making plans, she jokingly said, "This isn't a real date, right?" Jonathan responded by saying that going on a date with her would be like dating his sister. Cut to Feb. 14 which they spent at a decidedly unromantic pool hall. Jonathan got extremely drunk, took Mitchell's hand and confessed he was in love with her at which point she freaked out and excused herself to the bathroom. When she returned a few minutes later, Jonathan apologized for making her feel uncomfortable and offered to take her home. "After that night, he totally ghosted me, and we never spoke again," she said. "I was so confused and hurt and disappointed. Still am. It's like he broke my heart and we never even dated."

= Movin' on up!

"I was dating this guy Gary* who traveled a lot for work and was going to be out of town on Valentine's Day," said San Marco resident Staci Miller. "I told him it was no big deal since I think it's a stupid holiday anyway." She planned to spend the night at home alone until a freshly-single friend begged her to meet her out for one drink. Against her better judgement, she agreed.

Within minutes the friend started talking to a guy at the bar, so Staci took the opportunity to visit the restroom. On her way back to the bar, she spotted Gary, who was not only in Jacksonville but on a date ... on Valentine's Day ... with another woman. "I couldn't believe it! I was shocked to see him — and her — obviously, not to mention very confused and pissed off!" she said. She made eye contact with him but decided to keep walking like nothing happened. Just then a guy tapped her on the shoulder. "He said hello and asked me, 'Do you have a name? ... Or can I call you mine?'" Staci recalled. Despite it being the "worst pick-up line in the entire world," she couldn't help but laugh. She and Jason spent the rest of the night chatting, dated for six months and got married last year, and she invited Gary to the wedding since he's the reason she even met Jason. The jerk didn't even RSVP.



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Love Story Lives On in Unexpected Place

BY WINDY TAYLOR
Resident Community News



George and Hazel Utsey

Some parks are magnificent, sprawling affairs, with dramatic vistas and exotic flowers. Other parks are small, tranquil slivers of serenity in a bustling world, overlooked by most but meaningful to those who know where to look.

The same is true of love stories.

Harrison Conyers, an Ortega Forest resident, has spent the last two decades faithfully tending small-but-mighty Columbus Park in honor of his grandparents, George and Hazel Utsey. Columbus Park is a U-shaped piece of land bounded by Baltic Street, Iroquois Avenue, and Roosevelt Boulevard. Under Conyers' care, the park has been transformed from eyesore to oasis.

"Twenty years ago, the park was nothing but dirt and some dying live oak trees," Conyers said, shaking his head at the memory. "The City used to park maintenance trucks there. It was a horrible reflection on our neighborhood."

Conyers, who currently serves as the supervisor of military affairs for the Veteran's Department, started rounding up support for a project to make the park more appealing to the neighborhood. "I connected with Dr. Rich and Cheryl Hardin from the Ortega Preservation Society and our councilman Jimmy Overton. Both came to the table with some funds, so we sat down with the parks department and designed a park with curbing, and a wall, a sidewalk, and a garden. I wanted to name the garden after my grandparents."

George and Hazel Utsey, Conyers' grandparents, hailed from South Carolina. "My father grew up dirt poor in St. George; he had a sixth-grade education. My grandmother was from Aiken, and she went to college and became a teacher."

When they met, it was love at first sight. "She went to St. George for a function, and they fell in love," Conyers said. "She was engaged to somebody else at the time, but (my grandfather) swept her off her feet." After getting married, they traveled the Southeast, following George's routes as a regional sales representative for Haggar Slacks, finally choosing to settle down in Jacksonville in the mid-1930s. They purchased



Conyers oversaw the installation of the brick entrance to the park.

a home in Fairfax Manor, and George founded a shoe company — the iconic Utsey's Shoes.

"A lot of people remember the Avondale store," Conyers said. "Getting your first pair of Buster Browns, having an ice cream from the freezer."

When he wasn't selling shoes and slacks, George devoted himself to his community. He was the first chairman of Goodwill in the community, as well as helping to found the Meninak ("Men in Action") Club and Ortega United Methodist Church. Hazel, meanwhile, raised the couple's two children, and founded the Fairfax Manor Garden Circle and a Methodist Women's group.

Despite their busy schedules, the Utseys remained devoted to their family. "Every Christmas, or Easter, or Labor Day, the whole family gathered at their house," Conyers said. "They owned a lake place in Keystone Heights, and every Saturday

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 ...

we were down there churning ice cream and fishing. They were the hub in the middle of the family. Everything went around them.”

Conyers has incorporated subtle nods to his grandparents in the design of Columbus Park. In the garden, he used plants that his grandmother had at her home — azaleas, camellias, hydrangeas, and sasanquas. Partnering with Greenscape and JEA, Conyers has planted 28 new trees over the last 15 years, so that as the mature live oaks deteriorate, new live oaks — and redbuds, and hollies, and red maples — are already established.

Ortega residents are grateful for Conyers’ work. “The park is a little gem to enjoy in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the day,” said Pat Mason, who walks by the park almost daily. “Dog walkers in the neighborhood have noticed the improved upkeep and care of the park,” added Kathy Stark, who also lives nearby.

Conyers, who now lives in his grandparents’ home, sees the park as a love letter to his neighborhood. “I love Jacksonville. I do this because I love this community. My grandparents passed a better community to me, and that’s what I want to do for my kids. I love doing what I’m doing.”

If you are interested in assisting Harrison Conyers with the maintenance of Columbus Park, you can find him on Facebook or NextDoor.



The park is a little gem to enjoy in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the day. Dog walkers in the neighborhood have improved upkeep and care of the park.”

— Kathy Stark



A camellia in honor of Hazel Utsey.



A recently-planted sapling, part of the partnership between Conyers and Greenscape.



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The end of an era

Terry Roberts soon to retire; Terry's Kitchen coming under new ownership

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News



Terry and her late husband Gary Roberts.

Terry Roberts never imagined 23 years would go by quite so fast.

And yet, here she is — soon to be retiring sometime in March and looking forward to this next chapter of her life.

In her wake, she will leave Terry's Kitchen — a neighborhood institution on St. Johns Avenue — under the new ownership of Anita Adams, but retaining the same name, staff and menu the community has grown to love over these last two decades.

"We've shared a lot of good things, sad times, everybody's been so kind and so good," she said, emotion welling up in her voice. "It's just kinda crazy."

"It's been great being a part of the community and knowing so many people, feeling the support and being a part of their lives," she added. "Helping them cook and helping them to help other people — a lot of times they pick something up, it's for somebody because they're having a hard time and it makes me feel good to help them help somebody else."

Roberts began thinking more and more about retiring in the latter part of 2022 and had even signed with a broker in October to begin searching for a new property owner when Adams walked into her shop to deliver a resume. It would be another two weeks before Roberts was able to call her back and when Adams joined the team, Roberts knew she would be a perfect addition — though she didn't know just how perfect until one day, Adams raised the question: Had Roberts ever thought about retiring?

Roberts recalled, "The next day, I said, 'Well can we talk? Actually I've thought about it more than not lately. I think it's getting time. Why are you interested?' She said, 'Absolutely.'"

Terry's Kitchen will officially pass into Adams' hands sometime in March, although a specific date has not been set. The transition leading up to her official retirement is "a little chaotic," Roberts said, as she has to move her belongings from their normal places and find new homes for them all, but knowing she's leaving Terry's Kitchen in such competent hands is making this move that much easier for her.

"Anita just is gonna be a great fit," she said. "She's already known the community from Let Them Eat Cake — [her former Avondale-based] business. She started working with me in October and we just clicked...I've had a good time getting to know her: She's got a great sense of humor, loves to cook as I do. I think it's gonna be a really good transition and the people who have seen her behind my counter are really excited to see her."

Moving forward, Roberts has a few projects in mind to fill her time. Her late husband, Gary, was a collector of many things and Roberts said she has no fewer than nine trombones to sell along with some other items.

"I'm excited to see what is my future," she said. "I guess [I'll be] looking for open doors and open windows."



Roberts and her late husband Gary, with Perry Russell at Terry's Kitchen when it opened in March 2000.

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United Way shares ‘next chapter’ at luncheon



United Way of Northeast Florida President and CEO Melanie Patz addresses guests at the Jan. 10 luncheon.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

where every person has a chance to do better than the generation before, regardless of the color of their skin or the zip code in which they were born. That’s the community I want to call home and the one I know we can build together.”

Patz also announced the allocation of the from \$1 million of philanthropist MacKenzie Scott’s \$20 million gift, received late 2020. Scott’s gift constitute’s the largest one-time donation in the organization’s history.

That first \$1 million from that gift will be distributed into three separate investments, all of which will go towards affordable housing in Jacksonville. The decision to allocate the funds thusly emerged from a two-year period of deliberation, research and conversations with business, nonprofit and community partners “to better understand their most pressing concerns and how United Way and this gift could play a role in addressing them,” Patz explained.

“Unsurprisingly, the issue of affordable housing quickly rose to the top of the list,” she said, “particularly when we go deeper into the racial disparities in home ownership.”

To help determine recommendations for additional investments, United Way created the Affordable Housing Task Force, co-chaired by Aundra Wallace and Mari Kuraishi. Wallace is a United Way board member and the president of JAXUSA Partnership; Kuraishi the president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. At the luncheon, Wallace discussed the rising problem of affordable housing as Jacksonville’s population continues to grow.

“It is projected that the Jacksonville region’s population will grow by approximately 84 residents per day through 2025 — a rate that’s

four times that of the entire United States,” he said. “...As we surpass the one million resident population mark, we’re truly coming into our own as a city, however as we continue this ride, it is important that we do not leave anyone behind.”

Affordable housing, he added, has become a “humanitarian issue.”

In a press release following the event, United Way broke down how the \$1 million allocation will be invested: \$600,000 will be invested “in a home improvement program operated by Groundwork Jacksonville in partnership with the North Riverside Community Development Corporation (CDC) to support the rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes in the Lackawanna and Mixon Town neighborhoods.”

An additional \$300,000, the press release explained, will go into the Restore & Repair program — a program run by the Historic Eastside CDC and Lift Jax. These funds “will

help longtime Eastside residents make improvements to their homes, ensuring they can stay in place and prosper in safe, stable housing in the neighborhood their families have called home for generations.”

The press release said the remaining \$100,000 will go to LISC Jacksonville “to scale a successful program that creates and preserves homeownership by resolving issues with heirs’ property rights.”

“This money will help keep these homes in the hands of their owners, reducing homelessness, building wealth and strengthening our community,” Wallace added at the luncheon.

The luncheon ended with a performance by Reese the Poet, a spoken word artist who specializes in storytelling. Reese brought his audience to their feet after his performance during which he reminded them:

“One changed life can change the world.”

United Way of Northeast Florida kicked off 2023 with a luncheon officially introducing Melanie Patz, its new president and CEO, and sharing several announcements for the coming year.

The luncheon was held at the Jessie Ball duPont Center on Jan. 10, which, coincidentally, also marked the end of Patz’s first 100 days as president and CEO.

She spoke of the great need that continues to exist here in Jacksonville, citing the 97,000 calls United Way’s 211 helpline responded to in the last year.

“We envision a different future,” she said. “One where Northeast Florida is a community of opportunity, a community where everyone has hope and can reach their full potential;



Grant recipient partners: (From left to right) Gloria McNair, Groundwork Jacksonville; Suzanne Pickett, Historic Eastside Community Development Corporation; Melanie Patz, United Way of Northeast Florida; Dylan Ford, Groundwork Jacksonville; Kay Ehas, Groundwork Jacksonville; Travis Williams, Lift Jax; David Garfunkel, Lift Jax; Dr. Irvin PeDro Cohen, LISC Jacksonville; Padrica Mendez, North Riverside CDC.

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JUNIOR RESIDENTS

Debutante Coterie presented at 145th Christmas Ball



PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET MASTERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

The 2022 Debutante Coterie made their final, formal bow Dec. 21, 2022, at the Florida Yacht Club's 145th Christmas Ball. Debutantes presented were, front row, L to R: Peyton McDade Philips, Shelby Gray Flanigan, Chloe Nichole Schiavone, Arabella Rhyne McCart, Ashley Howton Eller; back row, L to R: Julia Knox Auchter, Brooke Anne Geddes, Caroline Vason Lyerly, Hadley Jane Hodge.

Eight YoungArts winners for Douglas Anderson



L to R: Samantha Nelson, Giovanni Martinez, Maurice Chakour, Camille Faustino, Jessie Doherty, Trinity Quito, Gianna Yaccino. Not pictured: Ryan James.

Eight students at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) have been named YoungArts winners for 2023. Winners in the Merit category are: Maurice Chakour, Jazz/Guitar; Giovanni Martinez, Jazz/Trumpet; Ryan James, Film; Jessie Doherty, Theatre; Samantha Nelson, Theatre; and Gianna Yaccino, Modern-Contemporary. Receiving the Honorable Mention award are Camille Faustino, Visual Arts; and Trinity Quito, Pop Vocal Performance.

YoungArts is an arts development nonprofit that invests in the creative freedom of exceptional young artists. Students ages 15-18 receive cash prizes between \$100-\$10,000 for the award levels of Finalist, Honorable Mention and Merit. They also receive space, funding, mentorship and professional development. Winners are selected by discipline-specific panels of artists through a blind adjudication process.

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Fackler Publishes Children's Book

Laura Fackler, science instructor and Dean of Students, Episcopal School of Jacksonville, St. Mark's Campus, recently published the children's book, "Bedtime for Bun Bun."

"Bedtime for Bun Bun" is about a young rabbit who does not want to go to bed, even though it is past her bedtime. Her family tries many different things to help her fall asleep. Readers follow along to find out if any of them will work.

"The real Bun Bun is a four-footed member of our family who provides lots of inspiration for stories," said Fackler, who has long wanted to write a children's book. "I was a very active child and I am positive my parents would have been thrilled if I had gone to bed easily. I loved bedtime with my own daughters, it is truly a precious time."



Laura Fackler

Bolles Turns 90

Students across all four Bolles campuses gathered on Jan. 5 for a special Founders' Day convocation, commemorating the school's establishment 90 years ago, on Jan. 5, 1933.

The convocation featured videos highlighting Bolles' rich history and the enthusiasm surrounding the school's 90th birthday. Students also shared brief histories of their respective campuses, and lower school students recited poems about why they love attending Bolles. Faculty and staff distributed bracelets to lower school students that read, "Happy 90th Birthday, Bolles," while upper and middle school students enjoyed Founders' Day cupcakes.



Sixth graders hit the hay(ride)

Sixth graders at San Jose Episcopal Day School partook in a cherished tradition for their grade — the Annual Hay Ride. By day, the students donned jeans and cowboy hats and enjoyed a selfie station. In the evening, students rode the hay ride to Jacksonville Carriage Company, and fed some farm animals. Parent volunteers helped host the event, which also included a barbecue dinner and fireside s'mores.



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To learn more about the school and its programming, go to **douglasandersonSOTA** on Facebook, or online at **da-arts.org**.

Please visit the www.da-arts.org for more information and audition requirements.

Miles of Smiles

The 14th annual Wolfson's Children Challenge

A very different kind of team took to the field at 121 Financial Ballpark on Jan. 28: Rather than baseball players, the field was filled with friends and families participating in this year's Wolfson Children's Challenge.

This is the 14th year for this charitable event, which "brings our community together to help ensure that every child receives world-class care." Participants joined in one of several marathons, including the 55K Ultra, 30K Run, the 1-Mile Fun Run or the 55K Relay.

This year's "Wolfson 55" and their families were honored and celebrated at the event in ceremonies throughout the day.

The event comes on the heels of the Wolfson Children's Challenge Telethon, held in partnership with News4JAX, which raised more than \$80,000.

This year's fundraising goal for the challenge was \$125,000.

The Wolfson Children's Challenge was inspired and co-founded by Paul Wilson, a parent who watched his son Luke undergo two surgeries at Wolfson Children's Hospital just hours after his birth. Since that inaugural event, the annual challenge has raised more than \$3 million.



A photo from The Resident's 2020 Archives: A young family joins the Wolfson Children's hospital mascot at the 2020 Wolfson Children's Challenge.

Sixth graders know how to lead

Sixth graders at Riverside Presbyterian Day School (RPDS) annually commit to over two and a half days of community service each January through Project LEADS. This year, students volunteered with Sanctuary on 8th Street, MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation, Family Promise, Catholic Charities, Jacksonville Humane Society, Ortega Gardens, Presbyterian Social Ministries and UCOM.

Project LEADS is a servant leadership program designed to build students' desire to serve, and a belief that anyone can serve. RPDS begins teaching about servant leadership in pre-K, and Project LEADS is the capstone service moment for students to celebrate and demonstrate how they've grown as leaders. Many students return to their chosen nonprofits in the spring to continue volunteer service.



Staff member Denise Fleming and Brie Gay at Family Promise.



L to R: AJ Franklin, Ryan Correia, Margot Pedrick and sixth-grade teacher Emily Morena at Sanctuary on 8th Street.



Parke Jones at Catholic Charities.

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Baldwin cast in The Diary of Anne Frank

Carolina Baldwin, a junior at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, will assume the role of Margot Frank, Anne's sister, in the Apex Theater Studio's production of "The Diary of Anne Frank." She is the only Duval County resident in the cast, which consists of Apex Theater Studio instructors, as well as other local teens.

Baldwin stated she wanted to be a part of sharing history, and the message of what hate can do to our society. Anne Frank's diary is the foundation of one of the most famous and haunting stories to emerge from the Holocaust. Anne, Margot, their parents and the Van Daan family hid in a secret annex space for nearly two years as the Nazis deported Jews to their deaths. Margot Frank, like Anne, also had a diary, but it was never found.

The show is directed by George Judy, and Ian Mairs serves as the managing director. This is the first time Judy and Mairs have produced the show on the First Coast.



Carolina Baldwin, left, and Eva Gassert play the roles of Margot and Anne Frank, respectively.



The cast of Apex Theater Studio's "The Diary of Anne Frank."

There is so much to love about The Covenant School of Jacksonville

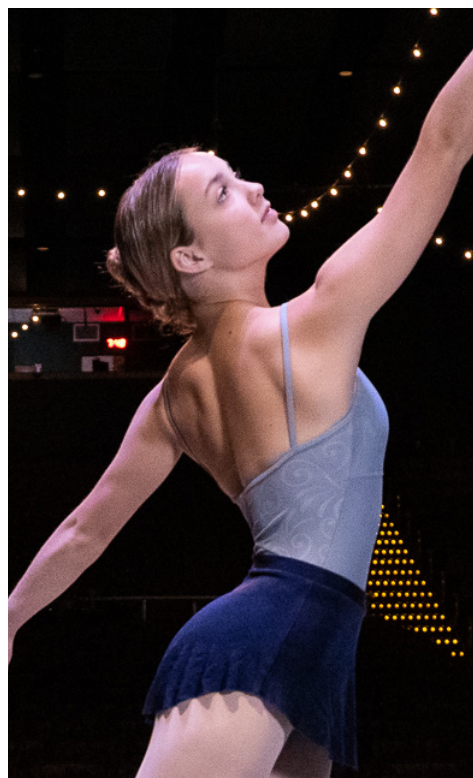
There's a distinctly different school in town that is adored by all. Faculty and students from all across the city share their perspective about the difference they have found on campus at The Covenant School of Jacksonville.



"I am thankful for our beautiful, God-given campus where children have an opportunity to learn," Mrs. Michele Lueders, a Covenant grandmother shared with us. "Whether they are in-side or outside the classroom, the learning environment is God-centered, biblically-based, pleasant and inviting. The teachers and administrators are loving and truly care about all aspects of the students' lives. I love Covenant and all it has to offer my grandchildren and our whole family."

Covenant cultivates a Christian community that lovingly educates and edifies. "Teaching at Covenant is unique because we are all running with the same goal in mind - bringing God the glory and serving these precious children and their families." Mrs. Jamie Vaughn, a fifth grade teacher shared. Former Miss Covenant, Delaney Ferguson, credits Covenant for "an amazing education, which will undoubtedly help me excel in college and succeed in life. However, I have gained something far more important than knowledge in different subjects — I learned to be confident in myself, and more importantly, in my faith." Luke Akerstrom started his school career at the school and found a place of love, support, and compassion. When he returned to Covenant for high school, he found the same place. "There isn't anything more comforting than knowing your child spends his days being encouraged in God's love and His plan for his life," his mom said in a recent interview.

Student after student has willingly shared things they love about the school. From endearing coaches and fine arts teachers, unique environments and caring faculty and staff, there is so much to love about Covenant. You can experience the difference yourself via tour or the Open House event this month. Visit www.wearecovenant.org/now-enrolling for more information.



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JCDS JAGS PRIDE NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE



Jacksonville Country Day School (JCDS) recently celebrated its 2023 Jags Day on Friday, Jan. 20, allowing students to flaunt their dress code by displaying their Jaguars pride — a tradition that has endured through all the fashion trends that have come and gone since the '90s. Take a look at these then-and-now photos of JCDS students from their 1997 Jags Day and their most recent one.



L to R: Kevin V. Searcy, David L. Searcy, John V. Searcy, Luke Whipple, John D. Searcy and Christopher V. Searcy.

A LEGACY OF EAGLE SCOUTS

Luke V. Whipple has achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout, the highest honor for the Boy Scouts of America. Whipple held his Court of Honor at his family's parish, St. John's Cathedral, on Jan. 7. This ceremony capped a family tradition of Eagle Scouts dating back nearly 100 years.

Whipple is the eighth Eagle Scout for the Searcy family, who lives in the San Marco area. Patriarch William H. Searcy took a Boy Scouts course in 1925, eventually becoming a Scout Master and winning the Silver Beaver Award. He and his wife, Mildred I. Searcy, had three sons: William H. Searcy, Jr., Howard L. Searcy and John V. Searcy. Each son became an Eagle Scout.

John V. Searcy continued the heritage. He and his wife, Nina, had two sons: Kevin V. Searcy and David L. Searcy. Each son had a son, Christopher V. Searcy and John D. Searcy. These fathers and sons are all Eagle Scouts. John and Nina's daughter, Jill S. Whipple, is the mother of the family's newest Eagle Scout, Luke.

Eagle Scouts pledge to live their lives according to the 12 Boy Scout Laws and Oath. To become an Eagle Scout, scouts must earn a total of 21 merit badges and demonstrate scout spirit, service and leadership.

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LOCAL FOLKS

Matt Monroe

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News



Monroe playing his horn at Church of the Good Shepherd

Meet Matt Monroe of Riverside — father, teacher, musician.

Matt is a single dad of two sons: 11-year-old Maverick and 9-year-old Quentin. “I love reading to them,” Matt said. They’ve enjoyed H.G. Wells’s “The Time Machine” and “The Invisible Man”. They have a set of Roald Dahl books that they are making their way through with titles like “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” and “James and the Giant Peach.” “My older son reads a ton on his own now,” Matt said. When not reading, they like movies at Sun-Ray. Matt said of his sons, “They are both budding musicians. So, sometimes, I’m practicing with them”— Maverick on the viola and Quentin on the cello. Both play piano.

The three enjoy being outdoors together, too. Maverick is into archery. His grandmother bought him a target for the backyard. It’s a small, fake buck rather than a bullseye circle. “It’s a blast, not something that everybody does in their backyard in Riverside,” Matt said. Quentin is into baseball. One of his favorite positions has been catcher, but now he’s starting to pitch. “It’s an exciting new chapter,” said Matt, who has served as coach on various teams.

In addition to being a dad, Matt is a music teacher at Jacksonville Classical Academy. He teaches mainly sixth and seventh grades, but sometimes younger ones as well. His classes include choral groups, singing groups, music history and music theory. Outside the classroom, Matt offers private horn lessons.

As a professional musician, Matt is a hornist in a variety of symphony orchestras and ensembles. He is also the producer of A Lonely Horn, a YouTube channel established in 2015 with weekly shows dedicated to the performance of music on the French horn. Matt started the show not long after he and his family had moved to Jacksonville from Chicago on account of his former spouse’s job. “I was looking for stuff to do and places to play,” he said. As a freelance musician, Matt had more opportunities in Illinois than in Florida. The move was a slow transition for him, but Matt did not remain idle.

He wanted to make the French horn, his passion, entertaining and accessible to a variety of people. He knew he could do that via the internet. “It was also a way to connect with friends, let people know what I was doing,” he said. Matt used the videos as a form of advertising his availability for gigs and for lessons, too. He also intended for the videos to highlight the spaces where he was recording from. In Jacksonville, those included churches like Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd and Riverside Presbyterian. There were other venues as well. Still a member of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra at that time, which is near to his former Chicago home, Matt would sometimes travel back to Michigan to play and record.

The weekly shows consisted of Matt playing a piece of music and then giving

a brief talk about the piece, its composer and history. The music had been recorded in the various venues where acoustics were appropriate. The talks were usually recorded from home. His young boys in the background add to the charm of some episodes.

Matt began the channel alone. He recorded approximately 16 episodes of himself playing. He’d use his iPhone on a tripod. “My goal was to see if I could do it all by myself, just so I could keep it simple and affordable. It was an experiment, at first,” he said. Matt’s channel now has well over 200 subscribers and nearly 1,500 views. His current students like to watch sometimes, and they have requested that Mr. Monroe record an episode at the Academy. Matt agrees that might be fun, and he would like to get back to producing more episodes. What he has done so far “was a really good start,” he said, but he desires now to get professional help with the recordings to get better quality out of the productions.

Overall, Matt’s life has had many ups and downs since he’s moved to Jacksonville, but he’s found so many great things here. “I love the Riverside neighborhood,” he said. The walkability of the community reminds him of where he grew up in Portland, Oregon. The house he lives in now is historic, as was his parents’ house where he spent his childhood, both built in the same era. “So, it feels like home to me,” he said.

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FROM MY EMPTY NEST PERCH

BY SUSANNA P. BARTON
Resident Community News

Any parent who has raised children in our neighborhoods is grateful for one community asset above all others — Wolfson Children's Hospital. Whether you live in Ortega or south San Jose or somewhere in between, you are just a car seat-click away from one of the best children's medical facilities in the country. This is a blessing of the highest order. And this is not normal. Most sick children and their families must travel great distances — sometimes by helicopter or ambulance or traumatic transport — to receive the lifesaving care they need. As residents of our neighborhoods, we are practically next door to it.

I bet you have an "I'm Grateful for Wolfson Children's Hospital Story." I know I do — several in fact! So, here's the plan: I'll jump in with mine, while you sit there quietly and reflect on yours. Then we'll end with a recounting of the greatest Wolfson Children's Hospital story of all — one that trumps (and inspires!) your story, mine and everyone else's.

So here goes — I am grateful for Wolfson Children's Hospital because:

- ...they fix Cat Scratch Fever there! Yes, it's a thing. (And apparently, it's kind of a Jacksonville thing because Dr. Hugh Carithers Sr., one of the founding doctors of Riverside-based Carithers Pediatrics, came to Jacksonville as a Cat Scratch Fever expert in the 1940s — who knew?) Our daughter, Marley, developed a golf ball sized bump under her 18-month-old armpit one time after Christmas in 2002, on a Sunday of course, which incited a panicked dash to Wolfson Children's Hospital for a look-see. Admission to Wolfson was like getting whisked up into a Ritz-Carlton hotel where smart, calming people appear out of nowhere and take care of everything in such a loving way, which was so amazing and perfect because all I could muster in that moment was to stare slack-jawed at Marley in her crib cage and daydream of wheeling that inescapable bed home with us — to take naptime up a notch. This mom was of no help. Thank goodness for all the non-freak-outable medical professionals in the room who

diagnosed Marley with Cat Scratch Fever, removed her swollen lymph node and sent her home a few days later good as new (sans cool crib cage).

- ...when the Little Sister challenges 8-year-old Brother to swallow the fake handcuffs key right before the big Texas road trip and he eagerly accepts, Wolfson will show you where it is in his tummy and reassure you it will come out the other end tout suite, no pun intended.
- ...they also fix Big Baby Adults. Years ago, my husband David was really ticking me off because he kept getting the bends every time he went scuba diving, which was often and super annoying and potentially deadly, gah. He'd end up in a hospital hyperbaric chamber for the day to decompress and I would deeply covet his situation because, with two young children at home goading each other to eat fake handcuff keys and such, that sounded like a real vacation. Turned out, David had a small hole in his heart, also known as a Patent Foramen Ovale, or PFO. They are no bueno for scuba divers and are very common — in INFANTS. So, when time came to repair that heart hole, David was wheeled into a surgery suite at Wolfson Children's Hospital — in little socks and an ill-fitting child-size gown, lol. The surgery tools and expertise, however, were just the right size. Thanks to the heart doctors who treated my big 40-year-old hubs at Wolfson Children's Hospital, David now sleeps with the fishes — just kidding, he swims with them...and real deep, too, with that patched-up heart of his.
- ...they can alter the outlook of lives around the world. That hospital forever changed the smile of our 12-year-old Afghan houseguest, Hikmat, a decade ago. A disfiguring cleft pallet brought shame on her family in their remote Afghan village. Hikmat hardly stood a chance between her gender and her appearance. Thanks to the nonprofit Solace for the Children, which brought Hikmat and a dozen other young patients from Afghanistan to Jacksonville for respite and medical treatment, Hikmat got a life do-over at Wolfson Children's

Hospital. She was seen and treated by one of the best plastic surgeons in Northeast Florida — Dr. Dean Glassman, God rest his soul. Like every other Wolfson patient at the end of her treatment, Hikmat was wheeled out to the parking lot in a little red wagon with all the balloons and flowers she'd gotten during her stay. And she went back to Afghanistan a few weeks later with a new grin — and renewed hope.

Hope is at the center of it all — whether you were hoping for a crib bed, a key sighting in the potty or opportunities a healed cleft pallet might lend your family. Wolfson Children's Hospital is that place for so many people in our neighborhood and around the region. There is no story that more poignantly explains why than the story of a neighborhood family's experience at Wolfson Children's Hospital many decades ago. The Cavert and Martin families' tragedy is the genesis of Wolfson's renown today.

I will quote liberally from the history page of the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital website:

"Extraordinary undertakings can spring from extraordinary loss. In 1972, Richard and Ray Martin lost a premature twin daughter, Abbie. At that time, Wolfson Children's Hospital did not have the equipment necessary to support one premature infant, let alone two. Surviving twin Annie had to be transported in the back of her parents' station wagon in an incubator to Shands Hospital in Gainesville, where she stayed for almost five months. Rather than place blame or hide from this overwhelming tragedy, Abbie's family faced it head on. Ray's mother, Ellen Cavert, worked with the late pediatrician Dr. J. W. Hayes to find a way to bring visibility to Wolfson Children's Hospital and raise funds to strengthen it. The result was The Women's Board, which would become a powerhouse in Jacksonville philanthropy."

Ellen Cavert and her family were San Marco-area long-timers and change-makers. Like many neighbors you may know, the Caverts took their pain and turned it into a blessing for others. The article "Sweet Spirit Still Soars," written by Nancy Belote Felton and published in the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital's "Flaunting the First Coast" 2022 Winter Design Show magazine, articulates how Cavert's faith and dedication to others created a legacy of hope in Northeast Florida.

"Until I was placed in these circumstances, I had no idea so little equipment was available in Jacksonville to care for critically ill newborns," Cavert reminisced during an interview more than 20 years ago. This evidence forever changed the focus of her community involvement. "I wanted to do everything I could to prevent this situation from being repeated in other families' lives."

Cavert's formation of the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital — which began as a humble act of grace and community spirit — helped transform Wolfson into the lifesaving, healing place it is today. Let's be grateful for that first and foremost! I would love to hear how you answered the "I am grateful for Wolfson Children's Hospital because..." prompt, I know we'd hug and cry ugly happy tears for days over these shared experiences of mending and renewal. I imagine your list, like mine, also includes gratitude for the top shelf doctors, healthcare workers, nurses, administrators and volunteers who restore children's health (and parents' sanity!) in our community each and every day. And together, as residents of our wonderful historic neighborhoods, we can thank our lucky stars we live just down the street from a place built on HOPE. Grateful, indeed.

Susanna Barton never did find that key, but she also never really looked. 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 geri-dog Dot 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. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.

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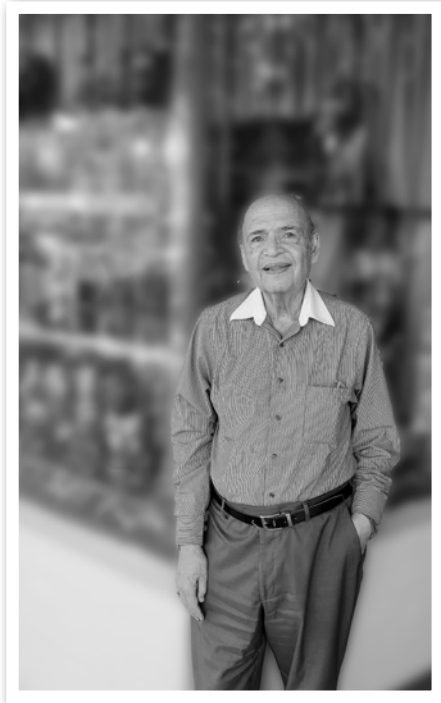
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THE WAY WE WERE

Hooshang Harvesf, Ph.D.

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Dr. Hooshang Harvesf came to the United States from Persia as a young, educated man in the early 1960s but took his schooling even further by completing the Ph.D. program in economics at The University of California, Berkeley. His father had always stressed this advice: "Get an education first. Then, do whatever it is that makes you want to wake up in the morning and do it." To honor his father's wish, that's



the same business, the same name and the same owner at the same location for such a long period of time.

When he first arrived on St. Johns, there were only two or three restaurants around. The other establishments were all retailers. "What has happened since is that the nature of business in Avondale has changed. Now, it's less retail and more entertainment," Hooshang said. Today, there are 16 or so eateries nearby, whereas 90% used to be retail shops.

Beyond Avondale, Hooshang commented that the Jaguars have made a big change in



exhibited is through Hooshang's holiday window display. "God knows, if I had a penny for each picture taken of this window, I would have millions of dollars from it," he said.

enter Hooshang's shop and inquire about it. "It's a challenge because we cannot take certain nutcrackers out of the window without upsetting some people. Seriously," he said. The challenge is to add new ones every year without taking any away. Carolyn Patterson, the window dresser, has designed shelving in an attempt to make that possible. The nutcracker display brims, and Hooshang recalls overhearing one visitor telling his girlfriend on the phone, "Eat your heart out! You think you have a collection?"

Hooshang is not sure where that young man was visiting from. People come from far and wide to visit Jacksonville and the Shoppes and his store. Over the course of four-plus decades, Hooshang has made an interesting observation about the residents of Jacksonville. It has been his experience that the people who live at the Beach, stay at the Beach. They seldom cross over. The people who live in Southside, it seems, have a hard time crossing the bridge to the other side of town. For them, it's like crossing into another state. "I never understood that," he admitted. But they do cross. And Hooshang is grateful.

What initially drew Hooshang here to Jacksonville after Berkeley is that his brother had established a pediatric practice here. Hooshang had just earned his doctorate, and his mother was coming to visit the United States for the first time. He and his brother had hoped she might feel as comfortable here as they did. They wanted to convince her to stay, and she did. She lived out the last 18 years of her life here.

One of the many reasons Hooshang likes living and working in the Avondale area of the city is that it is well maintained. "It has always, always been kept up," he said. Also, Memorial Park is close by.

"I love Avondale! And I love the people."



exactly what Hooshang did. While earning his degree, he knew that someday he would open a shop. Once he was handed his diploma, he immediately set out to realize that goal. He became the owner and operator of Hooshang Oriental Rug Gallery, Inc.

"To this day, to this minute, I don't know why I like what I do. I have no idea," Hooshang said. Perhaps it's the daily being surrounded by hand-knotted pieces of art, anywhere from 300 to over 1,000 knots per inch. Perhaps it's the natural fiber—wool, silk, and cotton—that has him intrigued. Maybe it's the nostalgic pull reminiscent of his boyhood. Maybe it's the yearslong labor of love that has gone into each design somewhere overseas that Hooshang appreciates; he has a natural eye for quality and uniqueness. Whatever it is, it has kept Hooshang wanting to wake up every morning for the past 45 years and get to his business of selling and servicing oriental rugs.

On Sept. 15, 1977, Hooshang first opened the doors of his retail shop to the public. And every day since then feels to Hooshang as if it's his first. An excitement still wells within him as he turns the key in the lock at 3571 St. Johns Avenue, as it did that Thursday morning more than four decades ago. Hooshang is a humble man, but there is one thing about which he boasts. His is the only store in the Shoppes of Historic Avondale that has retained

Jacksonville at large. "I am a fan like everybody else is," he said. And it's not only because he lives here that he says that. He likes them!

Because of his longevity in the community, many residents refer to Hooshang as "The Mayor of Avondale." The truth, however, is that he has never held public office despite his love of the people here and their love for him. One of the ways the mutual affection is

While touring Royal Street in New Orleans in 1978, Hooshang spotted two Superman figurines in a store window. He was neither a fan nor a critic of the superhero, but Hooshang purchased both pieces. He still does not know why. When he returned to his hotel room with them, he realized they were nutcrackers. When he arrived back home to Jacksonville, he set them in his shop's window. That's how his collection started. Today, he owns over 1,000 nutcrackers. "I feel like they are no longer mine; they belong to the people," he said.

Those first two turned into hundreds that Hooshang has been displaying annually for so long that each nutcracker has its own followers who come religiously at Christmas to visit. If a particular piece happens not to be in the window that year, the visitor will



IN MEMORIAM

Wade Lee Hampton

DECEMBER 2, 1928 – JANUARY 14, 2023

Wade Lee Hampton, 94, passed away peacefully on January 14, 2023 surrounded by his family. He was born on December 2, 1928, in Vida, Alabama, the son of Wade Vanderbilt Hampton and Birdie Lee Crider Hampton. He was the youngest of six siblings, Wista, Rudolph, Frances, Leon and Eddie. Wade was a graduate of the Billingsley School and graduated from the University of Alabama in 1953, where he was the president of the Student Body of College of Business Administration, a member of Beta Alpha Psi, Delta Sigma Pi and Chi Alpha Phi honor societies and the Delta Chi fraternity. He was elected Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities and was designated a Distinguished Military Graduate. After completing U. S. Army ROTC, he served as a first lieutenant in the U. S. Army in the finance corp and was stationed in Korea.

Wade's professional life began as an accountant with Southern Bell Telephone Company in Atlanta, Charlotte and New York. When he transferred to Jacksonville, he met and married Anne Celeste Koger in 1962. He later worked for Koger Properties, Inc., and its successor entities, until his retirement in 1999. The next fifteen years were spent at Manormor Sotheby's International Realty as a Realtor and Broker of record. He also held the CCIM designation.

Wade served as president of numerous local organizations including Hope Haven Children's Hospital, San Marco Preservation Society, North Florida Hunter Jumper Association and Memorial Park Association. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

He was a member of the Meninak Club of Jacksonville, Ye Mystic Revellers, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Yacht Club. He served in various roles at Riverside Presbyterian Church including as an Elder, Head Usher and was on the Board of Trustees.

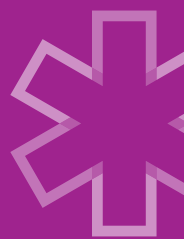
He was a unique gentleman who brightened the days of all who knew him. In retirement Wade enjoyed travel, spending time with his children and grandchildren and tending to his garden. He was a "collector" and had a small shop, Antiques & Such, where treasures were sold.

Wade was preceded in death by his parents, siblings and wife, Celeste Koger Hampton. He is survived by his children, including sons, Wade McKissick Hampton (Darlene), Peter Winthrop Hampton (Joye), a daughter, Anne Hampton Langley (Sam), and grandchildren: Jessica Langley Dawson (David), Dylan James Langley (Sade), Edwin Craig Langley, Ashton Trumbull Hampton, Wade Mathews Hampton and Reid McKissick Hampton and great grandchildren Olivia Naomi Benjamin, Ulysses Tobler, III and Aaliyah Noelle Langley. He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

The family would like to thank his caregiver, Tysheana Peterson, for her tremendous kindness, love and support over the last two years.

A private burial will take place on Friday, January 20 at Oaklawn Cemetery. A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, January 21 at 11 AM at Riverside Presbyterian Church with a reception following in Kissling Hall. In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to Riverside Presbyterian Church.

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James Judge

JANUARY 28, 1967 - JANUARY 14, 2023



“ JIMMY FOUGHT AN EXTREMELY COURAGEOUS FIGHT IN HIS BATTLE AGAINST ALS. HE WAS WIDELY LOVED, AND HIS PASSING IS DEEPLY FELT THROUGHOUT CURRENT AND RETIRED MEMBERS OF NOT ONLY THE JACKSONVILLE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, BUT THE JACKSONVILLE COMMUNITY.

- Sheriff T.K Waters, Jacksonville

JSO assistant chief James Judge passes away after battling ALS

The Jacksonville community has lost a beloved member and honored First Responder. On Jan. 14, Lieutenant James Judge passed away after a valiant and courageous battle against ALS.

In the wake of Judge's passing, Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters released the following statement:

"Today, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office lost a valued member of our family. Jimmy Judge was a nearly 32-year veteran of our agency who served with honor and distinction. Jimmy was the longest-tenured lieutenant when he was appointed by Sheriff Mike Williams to serve as Assistant Chief. Jimmy fought an extremely courageous fight in his battle against ALS. He was widely loved, and his passing is deeply felt throughout current and retired members of not only the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, but the Jacksonville community."

"On behalf of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, I send my condolences to his wife, Shannon, and their son, Jakie. Please join me in keeping Lt. Judge's family members and loved ones in your thoughts and prayers at this difficult time."

In 2020, The Resident featured Judge as its "Community Hero" after being nominated by the community nonprofit organization, the Downtown Dwellers. The Resident shared the Downtown Dweller's nomination of Judge, whom the organization called "the embodiment of the police services we value."

Judge is survived by his wife and son.



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FOR SALE

FOR SALE



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41571 CELLAR CIR - \$310,000

4 BR / 2 BA / 2,402 sqft.



1375 MAYBERRY LN - \$298,000

3 BR / 2 BA / 1,684 sqft.

FOR RENT

FOR RENT

FOR RENT



1031 RIVIERA ST - \$2,400/mo.

3 BR / 1 BA / 1,200 sqft.



4512 ASTRAL ST - \$1,435/mo.

2 BR / 1 BA / 1,100 sqft.



2114 HERSCHEL ST UNIT B - \$1,250/mo.

1 BR / 1 BA / 750 sqft.