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APRIL 2023, VOL. 16, ISSUE 04

RUNOFF ELECTIONS AHEAD FOR JACKSONVILLE MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL SEATS

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Several candidates will move on to runoff elections in their respective races later this spring following the Duval First Unitary Election on March 21.

Daniel Davis (REP) and Donna Deegan (DEM) emerged as the two candidates with the most votes, securing 24.72% (41,505 votes) and 39.43% (66,192) respectively. Because no single candidate secured the majority vote, the two candidates with the most vote (Davis and Deegan) will face each other once again in a mayoral runoff election on May 16. Joining them in their own runoff elections — specific to The Resident's readership — will be:

- Property Appraiser: Jason Fischer (REP, 30.65% — 50,864 votes) and Joyce Morgan (DEM, 47.64% — 79,071 votes)
- City Council At-Large Group 5: Charles Garrison (DEM, 25.83% — 42,163 votes) and Chris Miller (REP, 36.79% — 60,052 votes)
- City Council District 7: Joseph Hogan (REP, 31.52% — 4,486 votes) and Jimmy Peluso (DEM, 34.72% — 4,942 votes)
- City Council District 9: Mike Muldoon (REP, 47.03% — 3,387 votes) and Tyrone Clark-Murray (DEM, 14.75% — 1,062 votes)

Candidates in Districts 2, 8, 11 and 14 will move on to May runoff elections as well.

The following candidates all secured seats on the city council in the March election:

- At-Large Group 1: Terrance Freeman (REP), with 65.13% (100,297 votes)
- At-Large Group 2: Ron Salem (REP), with 53.22% (88,080 votes)
- At-Large Group 3: Nick Howland (REP)*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Representing Lee and Cates Glass, Inc. were Gold Sponsors Tommy Lee III, Nee Cee Lee, Lauren and Thomas Lee IV



Jacksonville leaders, personalities cook up favorite dishes for charity

Jacksonville celebrities, media personalities, business leaders and government officials traded in the various hats they wear on a daily basis for a chef's hat as they served up their favorite dishes at the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary's 37th Annual Celebrity Chefs Tasting Luncheon and Silent Auction on March 23.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Roadwork underway for Beach Boulevard

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Motorists traveling down Beach Boulevard (State Road 212) in the St. Nicholas area will continue to see construction between Schumacher and San Mateo avenues.

According to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) website, construction began in this past October.

The website outlines several proposed improvements for this project including the "installation of a mid-block pedestrian crossing between Kenneth Street and Camden Avenue; installation of new mast-arm signals and pedestrian signals at San Mateo Avenue and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Laurie Kirchoff with Jan and Lou Walsh, Penny and Bob Ellison, Connie Turner, Jamie and Mickey Ross

CELEBRATING THE IMPACT OF SERVICE

Guests gathered at TIAA Bank Field's Lower East Gallagher Club on Saturday, March 11 for Catholic Charities Jacksonville's annual Black and White Soiree, hosted by the nonprofit's Divine Society. The fundraising event included a cocktail reception, live music and more to celebrate the organization's impactful Feed a Family campaign.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23



Sydnee Moegenburg and Kiele Rife

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Wolfson's first female wrestlers take to the mat

Juniors Kiele Rife and Sydnee Morgenburg are making school history at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies as the school's first two female wrestlers to square off on the varsity mat.

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letter TO THE EDITOR

Dear Supporters, Volunteers, Sponsors, Anglers and Friends –

In March 2007, the one phone call our parents feared, and we fear, became a reality for the Roberts family. I know where I was when Gary called me that Sunday morning, he needed the fewest words possible. There is a seriousness when your best friend says his son is in the Trauma Center at Shands (now UF Health) fighting for his life. After a tragic and sudden fall, Clay Roberts was gone to soon, never to recover.

Within weeks, the Roberts had assembled a group of close friends at their home and laid out an ambitious agenda for a nonprofit to be named In River Or Ocean (IROO) in memory of their son. It happened to be Clay's email address. A cornerstone of the organization was a scholarship awarded to a graduating Senior athlete at Bishop Kenny High School who exhibits Clay's best attributes, male or female.

The Clay Roberts Memorial Scholarship and Inshore Slam Fishing Tournament has always been an opportunity for volunteers to give back to the Roberts and to provide local fishermen with nothing but fun on the water with minimal rules, high payouts and a celebration of Clay's joy of the water.

To all our anglers and sponsors — we are grateful, and we are blessed — thanks to your participation and contributions. Through all 13 (Covid caught us too) annual tournaments, our fundraising projects have grown the scholarship's fund.

We are happy to announce that we reached our goal this year and the Clay Roberts Memorial Scholarship has been funded in perpetuity at Bishop Kenny High School. I know of two smiling faces looking down, and a bunch of board members smiling up.

In 2020, we lost Gary, Clay's father, my best friend. Gary lost his fight with an illness, but we all knew he was prepared to go peacefully. He knew that Clay was waiting to greet him, rod in hand, bait ready, boat and gear aboard a boat bound for the river — or the ocean — we were all sure there was a joyous reunion for both father and son.

In addition to the scholarship, IROO has created two additional endowments at Bishop Kenny — a music endowment in Gary's memory (he loved to play the Trombone) and a soon-to-be-named marquee on campus.

The bad news is very simple: The Board of Directors of In River Or Ocean has decided to no longer put on the Father's Day weekend Clay Roberts Memorial Scholarship Slam Tournament. Trust me, words couldn't express our disappointment, but the time has come.

To the contrary, the board has decided to explore other ways to reach out to the angling community, especially the Junior Anglers that the Roberts loved to see at the weigh-in. Gary's wife and mother to Clay, Terry Roberts and her daughter Casey, wanted to be sure special thanks were reiterated to all who have shared in the enjoyment of the tournament for so many years — from fellow board members to sponsors and anglers of all stripes.

I hope everyone who has ever been touched by the Roberts family still holds that Saturday before Father's Day as a special day in your hearts and remember all those good times Gary had with all of us, while Clay watched over us as well.

Please follow us and share our news and updates on Facebook at InRiverOrOcean.

Sincerely,
Bill Parker, Pres/Tres
In River Or Ocean

A family tradition

Joe Carlucci follows father, grandfather to City Council after winning District 5 race



Joe and Victoria Carlucci with their boys on Election Day.

Republican Joe Carlucci has been elected as the new city council member representing Jacksonville's fifth district.

The two-person race pitted Carlucci against fellow Republican Morgan Roberts, whom he defeated by securing 63.72% of the 13,086 votes cast in the District 5 race for the 2023 Duval County First Unitary Election on March 21.

District 5 is one of eight districts (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12 and 13) and four at-large groups (1, 2, 3 and 4) to elect its new city council

representative last month. The two candidates earning the most votes for the remaining districts and at-large council member. His grandfather, Joe Carlucci, also served on the Jacksonville City Council before eventually moving on to the Florida State Senate.

Carlucci now follows in his father's and grandfather's footsteps to Jacksonville's City Hall. His father, Matt Carlucci, ran unopposed to continue serving as the Group 4 at-large council member and grandfather Joe Carlucci Sr. also served on the Jacksonville City Council and, eventually, the Florida State Senate.

"I am very thankful for the opportunity to serve this community and have already started putting together plans for improving our parks and infrastructure starting this year," Carlucci wrote in an e-mail. "I appreciate all the prayers and support I received all along the way of my campaign. Now the work begins and I feel prepared for the job in front of me."

Carlucci and the rest of the new city council will take office on July 1.

RUNOFF ELECTIONS | CONTINUED FROM COVER

- At-Large Group 4: Matt Carlucci (REP)*
- District 1: Ken Amaro (REP), with 66.36% (6,607 votes)
- District 3: Will Lahnen (REP), with 53.42% (5,881 votes)
- District 4: Kevin Carrico (REP)*
- District 5: Joe Carlucci (REP), with 63.72% (8,307 votes)
- District 6: Michael T. Boylan (REP), with 64.87% (9,437 votes)
- District 10: Ju'Coby Pittman (DEM), with 64.56% (6,331 votes)
- District 12: Randy White (REP), with 64.79% (7,723 votes)
- District 13: Rory Diamond (REP), with 86.97% (11,310 votes)

*These candidates ran unopposed in their districts.

Election results and statistics for all the races from the March 21 election are available to review on the Duval County Supervisor of Elections' website (duvalelections.gov). The deadline to register for the May 16 general election is April 17. Following that election, the newly elected city officials and representatives will take office on July 1.

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New life breathed into landmark tower

Adaptive reuse ahead for downtown's historic Independent Life Building

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News



A rendering of the renovated Independent Life building as a mixed-use multifamily development.

After years of standing abandoned, the historic Independent Life Building in downtown Jacksonville can expect a transformation into a 21st-century mixed-use development.

Last month, a permit was filed with the city for the adaptive reuse of the 19-story building at 233 West Duval Street, converting it into “a multifamily residential [building] with ground floor commercial.”

The estimated cost for the project is \$23.3 million. DFI General Contractors LLC is the contractor.

According to city records, “interior demolition of non-[load] bearing walls” was permitted in 2021, along with the removal of lead and asbestos and two elevators, at the cost of \$1 million.

The Independent Life building was designed by KJB Architects and construction was completed in 1955. It was the home of Independent Life and Accident Insurance Agency for 20 years before the company relocated.

After changing hands several times in the interim period and standing abandoned for several of those years, the building was sold to PEP10 LLC in 2019 for \$3.7 million, according to county records. The following year, the city council approved the building’s designation as a local landmark.

This has been a project several years in the making for developer Augustine Development Group. According to the December 2020 Downtown Development Review Board final approval packet, the mixed-use development will feature 135 residential units on the second through 16th floors. Along with commercial tenants, the basement and first level will feature a grocery store and restaurant. An amenity deck will

occupy the 17th level; the 18th will have a commercial kitchen while the top level will be home to a “Sky Lounge.” The designs in the final approval packet were done by Dasher Hurst Architects.

Site plans also detail the recreation of the historic “Independent” sign on the tower’s south face.

“We look forward to seeing this project move ahead,” wrote Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer in an e-mail. “Having the Independent Life Building restored and repurposed will be beneficial not just for that building, which has been vacant for some time, but for the group of historic properties around it. And once the work is completed, the building will promote the growth of Downtown and the entire community by providing a new housing option for prospective residents and adding to Downtown’s mix of dining, nightlife and commercial options.”

The Jacksonville Historical Society (JHS) remains a champion of adaptive reuse for the city’s historic buildings. Last year, JHS CEO Dr. Alan Bliss argued, unsuccessfully, for the adaptive reuse of Jacksonville’s Old Ford Motor Company plant. In an e-mail, Bliss said JHS “applauds the developers of the old Independent Life building” for their plans to adapt and reuse the historic building.

“Preserving historically significant buildings works best when they serve an economically sustainable purpose,” he wrote. “After all, buildings get designed and built in the first place in order to serve an economic purpose.



The Independent Life building was completed in 1955 and stands at 233 West Duval Street.

Historic preservation results from the same calculation. Even though real estate markets and construction techniques change, old buildings, when adapted to the 21st century, continue to generate value for their owners, their occupants and their neighborhoods. That’s why the Jacksonville Historical Society applauds the developers of the old Independent Life building. The building is a physical storytelling device about Jacksonville’s many decades as the ‘Hartford of the South’ — the regional epicenter of the insurance industry in the United States.”

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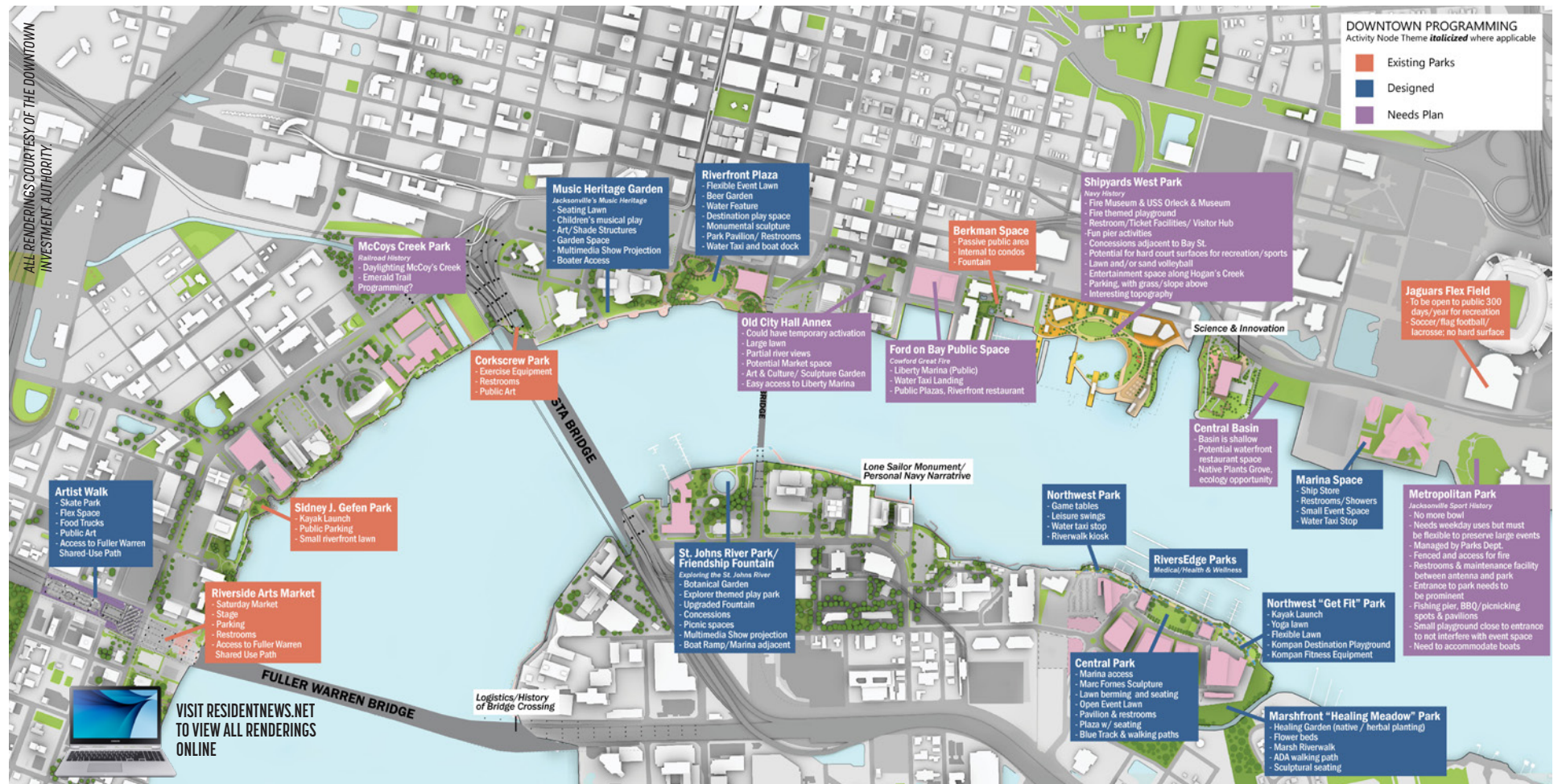
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A map detailing the anticipated parks along Jacksonville's riverfront and their various stages of progress.

Riverfront activation gets helping hand from Conservancy, nonprofit groups

An update on pocket parks and projects ahead

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Last August, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund released the Activation Plan for Jacksonville's

Downtown Riverfront — a plan “informed by hundreds of hours of conversation...with stakeholders from across Jacksonville’s neighborhoods” to activate and revitalize the invaluable North- and Southbank real estate — through both public and private developments — to create what it believes will be the City’s

“social, cultural and economic spine, bringing the community together to play, learn, innovate and celebrate.”

Since then, the riverfront activation has continued to build momentum as plans for various developments moved through the city’s approval and permitting process or broke ground on actual construction. These developments include RiversEdge: Life on the St. Johns, One Riverside Ave and the Hardwick at Ford on Bay, to name a few.

Additionally, the highly-anticipated Emerald Trail — the 30-mile urban trail connecting

The Riverfront Parks Conservancy will serve as stewards of these parks once they come online, providing support and resources as needed to maintain them. Part of that stewardship involves acting as a conduit between the public and the city, passing along community feedback, but that is a smaller role for the organization, explained Riverfront Parks Conservancy Board Chair Barbara Goodman.

As time goes on, there will be various things that the parks will need that the city might not be able to accomplish,” said Goodman. “So we would be fundraisers to get funds to

Holy Week and Easter Mass Schedule

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Holy Thursday, April 6: 7:00 pm
 Good Friday Liturgy, April 7: 3:00 PM
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 Easter Vigil, April 8: 8:30 PM
 Easter Sunday, April 9: 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, and 12:00 PM



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“ We are looking at how can we activate there and what are all the various different opportunities, so that is one place that will receive our focus.”

- Riverfront Parks Conservancy Board Chair Barbara Goodman

15 Jacksonville neighborhoods and linking to 21 parks, 16 schools and two colleges — continues to progress. In February, The Resident reported on the trail’s early phases of construction taking place in LaVilla while its “Hogan Street segment between Riverwalk and FSCJ is in design now with construction expected to begin in late summer 2023...”

Another vital part of the riverfront activation, though, is the creation and development of public green spaces along the river. Achieving that activation is not something that the city can accomplish alone, however, and a new nonprofit has joined the numerous organizations already established to help Jacksonville’s downtown flourish, with a mission specifically focused on the downtown riverfront parks.

The Riverfront Parks Conservancy was first announced in February at Riverfront 2025: A Look Ahead, a public event hosted by the City of Jacksonville’s Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services and the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) in partnership with in collaboration with the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Riverfront Parks Now and Build Up Downtown detailing the plans in place for riverfront parks and the organizations that support them.

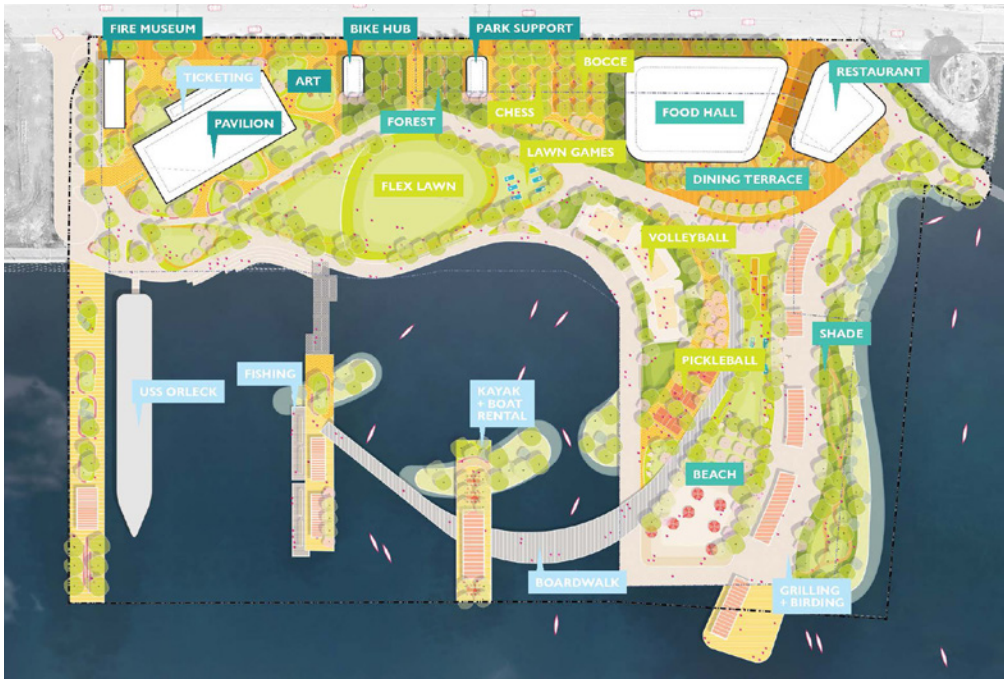
help provide something in the parks or to activate the parks or to help in some other way — providing volunteers, being there on the ground. That kind of support to help the city just in the sustaining of the parks.

Its first area of focus will be the Southbank’s St. Johns River Park — home to Friendship Fountain — which is expected to be the first of the new riverfront parks to come online.

“We are looking at how can we activate there and what are all the various different opportunities, so that is one place that will receive our focus,” Goodman explained. “We also have received a grant to do family and youth programming around health and wellness — no specific location has been selected for that. We put out an RFQ [Request for Qualifications] that just closed and we will be meeting as a board to go through the applications to hire somebody to assist us with that effort.”

Several other parks and amenities are either in design or already under construction along Jacksonville’s north- and southbanks.

“The destination parks on the riverfront will be great new places to play and relax, and they’re also an important part of the master plan for Downtown revitalization,” wrote DIA



Still in the infancy stages of design, the Shipyards West Park will provide different areas of focus, from history to community to recreation.



The RiversEdge: Life on the St. Johns development will feature a network of four parks with various trails throughout for the community to enjoy.

CEO Lori Boyer in an e-mail. “The public investment in these high-quality facilities is a key driver of further private investment in Downtown. These destination parks will also enhance the quality of life for Downtown residents and workers, and for the entire community while providing visitors with new things to see and do in Jacksonville. We’re very pleased to see them moving forward, and we also thank the many partners involved in the development of the parks — this was a true community effort involving both the private and public sectors. The involvement of the advocates like Riverfront Parks Now and the recently formed Riverfront Parks Conservancy to assist with funding, programming and maintenance are key to the success of this multi-faceted project.”

Other projects discussed at Riverfront 2025 include Artist Walk, the Music Heritage Garden, Riverfront Plaza, Shipyards West Park and the Parks at RiversEdge. Below is a brief summary of each:

ARTIST WALK

Location: Beneath the Fuller Warren Bridge at the park space between Riverside Avenue and Park Street; connects to the Emerald Trail

Features: Plaza space for programming/special events; synthetic turf lawn and areas for food trucks; seating areas; skate park designed by California Skate Parks; stage area

Commencement Date*: 2023

Completion Date: 2024

According to City of Jacksonville Chief of Natural and Marine Resources Jill Enz: “These under-the-bridge projects go a long way in reconnecting neighborhoods. A lot of the larger freeway projects during the City Beautiful movement really disconnected neighborhoods and so this is the potential to reconnect different parts of the neighborhood and really create interesting spaces that are shaded and that don’t get rained on.”

MUSIC HERITAGE GARDEN

Location: Adjacent to the Jacksonville Center for Performing Arts

Features: Celebrates Jacksonville’s “rich musical heritage,” “richly planted,” rebuilt, custom-designed shade structures on bump-outs.

Commencement Date: 2023

Completion Date: 2024

Enz added, “This garden space and this park space is going to be dedicated to [artists hailing from Jacksonville] and interpreting what type of music and different genres of music that they represent.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ...

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A rendering of the skate park that will be a part of the Artist Walk, located beneath the Fuller Warren Bridge between Riverside Avenue and Park Street.



The Music Heritage Garden will celebrate Jacksonville's rich music history.

RIVERFRONT PLAZA

Location: Former site of The Landing, adjacent to the Music Heritage Garden and Main Street Bridge

Features: A large flex lawn in the center, coming from Laura Street; playground space with one entry/exit point; cafe area beneath playground space; small splash pad; beer garden; fountain that can also be a reflecting pool or play space; rain gardens with boardwalks; open flex lawn area.

Commencement Date: June 2023

Completion Date: December 2024 (Phase 1)

"This park went through a design competition about a year ago and this was the design that was selected," Enz said. "It was completed and done by Perkins & Will. There are some design refinements as we went through the process and those have increased the amount of play space. The playground has increased in play space and

the lawn has changed slightly different in form, but holistically the same."

SHIPYARDS WEST PARK

Location: Between Catherine Street and Hogans Creek, accessed by East Bay Street

Features: Home to USS Orleck Naval and Jacksonville Fire museums; food hall; pavilion area; restaurant and dining terrace; pickle ball and volleyball areas; flex lawn and lawn games; beach area; chess and bocce ball; grilling and birding areas.

Commencement Date: Late 2023

Completion Date: 2025

According to Abigail Fiala, landscape architect with Agency Landscape + Planning, the west side of the park — with the aforementioned museums — will have a historical emphasis and the eastern side will focus more on community gathering

with the remainder of the park "offering moments for flexible recreation as well as more structured and unique recreation opportunities."

"We are still in infancy and looking for feedback," she added.

RIVEREDGE TRAIL & PARK SYSTEM

Location: RiversEdge development

Commencement Date: 2023

Completion Date: June 2024

RiversEdge: Life on the St. Johns, developed by Preston Hollow Community Capital, LLC will feature four different public parks, each with different features and amenities that will create unique experiences for the community

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ...

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to enjoy. These parks have yet to be named and are currently designated based on their locations within the development.

NORTH WEST RIVERFRONT PARK

Features: digital kiosks; synthetic lawn; leisure swings; water taxi stop; interactive art piece; gathering and seating area

“We wanted to ensure this was a relaxing environment with great views of the river and this is really the pedestrian entrance in the parks system,” Anna Walling with Kimley-Horn, the civil engineer for the RiversEdge development.

CENTRAL RIVERFRONT PARK

Features: plaza areas; walking track; event lawn; pavilion; central art piece custom-designed for the park

“This is going to be, as I said, a very unique space,” Walling said. “It is going to be the centerpiece of the entertainment district of this development. So it’s going to be a place where you can connect with people, it’s going to be a meeting place and it’s also going to have a world-renowned art piece.”

NORTHEAST PARK

Features: four entrances; enclosed play space with two different age-based play equipment plus fitness equipment for adults; synthetic lawn spaces; interactive play equipment; leisure swings; yoga/event lawn; misters; flexible open lawn; kayak stand.

Walling stated, “This is a park that we’ve worked very closely with the City of Jacksonville Parks Department and the Downtown Investment Authority to ensure we were providing a place for play and activity and creating an environment where you can practice health and wellness as much as possible.”

MARSH BOARDWALK

Features: 1,400 feet of boardwalk stretching from the Northeast Park to the Marsh Front Park with shorter routes leading to a lookout or looping back to the Marsh Front Park.

MARSH FRONT PARK

Features: medicinal gardens with signage explaining the medicinal uses for plants in the gardens; synthetic, flexible lawn spaces; outdoor seating; pollinator plants

*All commencement/completion dates listed above provided by the DIA; dates are subject to change.

At the Riverfront 2025 event, Boyer added, “All the way from the Fuller Warren Bridge to Metropolitan Park, the riverwalk is funded and either constructed or in various stages of design with construction plans forthcoming. On the Southbank, that entire loop is either under construction or funded for construction and has already been designed.”

According to Riverfront 2025, additional riverfront parks include Gefen Park, McCoys Creek Park, Music Commons and Metropolitan Park.



The Riverfront Parks Conservancy will first focus on St. Johns Park and Friendship Fountain once it comes online.



The Riverfront Plaza will sit where The Landing once was and offer different spaces for the community to enjoy.

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Beach Boulevard; and new sidewalks, curb, highway signage, roadway striping and various other safety improvement.”

Mid-block pedestrian crossings function the same way crosswalks at a traffic light, providing “a dedicated safe area for pedestrians to cross the street, utilizing a signal for vehicle control and street lighting for better visibility at night. Drivers will get a flashing red light, indicating they must stop while pedestrians safely cross the road.”

“The accidents are happening because people are running the red light, nine out of 10 times. We will have some cars that are pulling in front of other cars making a left onto Walton [Street] but for the most part, people are running the red on San Mateo crossing over to Walton and they’re blinded by the overpass.”

- Louis Joseph

The new mast-arm signals at San Mateo Avenue and Beach Boulevard are being installed “to address ongoing angle and left-turn crashes,” according to an e-mail from FDOT Community Outreach Specialist Daryl Goss.

In his e-mail, Goss cited several reasons the mast-arm signals were selected for this project and the specific location they are being installed, including minimizing the traffic interruptions during construction. Maintaining the existing strain pole signals, Goss explained, would have resulted in necessary right-of-way acquisitions and the installation of additional poles on all four

corners of the intersection since diagonal layouts are prohibited by current FDOT criteria.

Goss added the new mast-arm traffic signals will also be more wind resistant.

“This is of critical importance to maintaining/restoring the traffic grid during and after strong weather events,” he wrote. “It should also be noted that Beach Boulevard (State Road 212) is a vital transportation artery and a designated hurricane evacuation route.”

Mudville Grille, a St. Nicholas staple since the 1990s, sits at San Mateo Avenue and Beach Boulevard and has seen its fair share of the car accidents at that intersection. Owner Louis Joseph remains doubtful the new signals will help reduce the number of collisions.

“The accidents are happening because people are running the red light, nine out of 10 times,” he said. “We will have some cars that are pulling in front of other cars making a left onto Walton [Street] but for the most part, people are running the red on San Mateo crossing over to Walton and they’re blinded by the overpass.”

Goss’s e-mail, however, detailed additional features of the proposed design to reduce collisions and property damage and improve safety at that intersection, including:

- “moving the southbound stop bar closer to the intersection for better sight distance;”
- “adding nearside, dual signal indications for northbound/southbound traffic;”
- “adding retroreflective backplate borders to the signals in all directions;” and
- “enhanced street lighting at the crosswalks for the pedestrian safety; and constructing a bulb-out (extending the sidewalk into the parking lane to narrow the roadway) at the southeast corner where the building has been hit from red-light running.”

The cost of the project is estimated at \$1 million and Traffic Control Devices LLC is the project’s contractor. According to the FDOT website, the project is expected to wrap this summer, barring any unforeseen weather or circumstances.

Charity Tastes Good for The Salvation Army



Major Candice Biggers, area commander Jacksonville with Major Timothy Roberts, St. Johns County, Major Keath Biggers, area commander Jacksonville, Lieutenant Colonel Melody Davis, divisional women’s ministry leader for the State of Florida and Lieutenant Colonel Kent Davis, divisional commander for State of Florida.

The Salvation Army Women’s Auxiliary hosted its 37th Annual Celebrity Chefs Tasting Luncheon and Silent Auction on March 23 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center. Local celebrities, media personalities, government officials and business leaders dished up bites of their favorite recipes, while participants bid in an eclectic, silent auction filled with artwork, collectibles, services and getaways. All attendees got to take home a commemorative cookbook containing the recipes from the tasting, and all proceeds went to benefit the programs of the Salvation Army of Northeast Florida.

Chefs featured at the 2023 event were Virginia Anthony, Ron Autrey, Noble Beckwith, Terrance Freeman, Paige Hakimian, Joseph Hinrichs, Kawanza Humphrey, Melissa Ross, Rob Storm, Nicole Thomas and Andrea Williams.

“It’s always an honor for us to collaborate with community partners and businesses when we work to serve our community’s needs,” said Major Keath Biggers, Northeast Florida Area Commander. “We appreciate their support of The Salvation Army here in Jacksonville. Help at this event helps sustain program services provided through The Towers Center of Hope.”

Since its inception in 1985, the more than 70 ladies of The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida Women’s Auxiliary have provided hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours and raised more than \$2 million for The Salvation Army.



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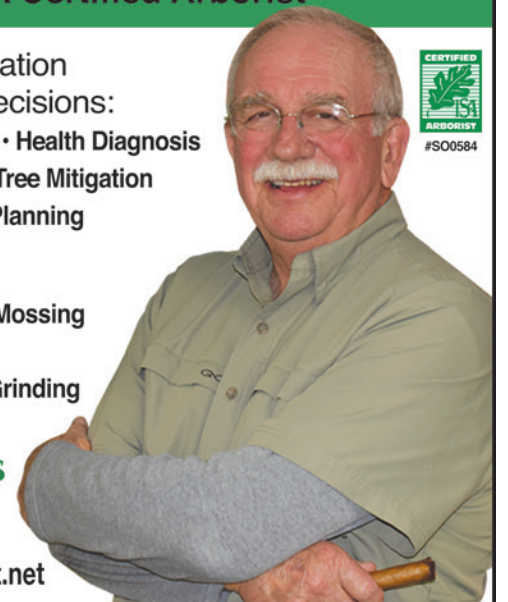
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Planning for a resilient Jacksonville

Comprehensive resiliency strategy for city in the works

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The City of Jacksonville’s Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) Anne Coglianesi hosted a series of public meetings in February to allow residents and stakeholders to learn more about Jacksonville’s Comprehensive Resilience Strategy.

City resiliency, the presentation explained, “is the ability of city systems to adapt and thrive in the face of acute shocks (sudden, extreme events that threaten a community) and chronic stresses (long-term pressures that weaken the fabric of a community over time).”

According to the presentation, examples of acute shocks include events involving intense weather phenomena (hurricanes, tropical cyclones and other storms), extreme rainfall, winds or temperatures, energy insecurity, infectious diseases, cyber attacks and hazardous materials incidents whereas chronic stress would include more recurring or extended, long-term factors like rising sea levels, coastal erosion, drought, aging infrastructure, and poverty — to name a few.

While Jacksonville has faced “its share of challenges in its 200-year history,” the presentation stated, it will continue to “face new and increasing challenges in its future; particularly those brought on by climate

change...Jacksonville is a city that is constantly evolving and poised to adapt again to meet future challenges.”

To meet these future challenges, the city is preparing a resilience strategy that will take “a comprehensive approach to preparing for and adapting to the shocks and stresses [Jacksonville] may face...”

This resilience strategy plans for a 30-50 year vision “for a resilient Jacksonville.” The presentation broke down the strategy into the following components:

- Objectives: “Capturing the social, environmental and economic aspects of resilience;”
- Risks and vulnerabilities: “Science and data on threats facing the city;”
- Actions: “Prioritized built projects, programs and changes to policies and operations;” and
- Implementation: “lead and partners, timeframe, funding.”

During its assessment of risks and vulnerabilities, the City will “analyze data on where and how much shocks and stresses threaten this vision [for Jacksonville], and who and what is most vulnerable.”

“Key stakeholders inside and outside city government will support the development of resilience opportunities, which will be evaluated and prioritized based on how they measurably address risks and achieve our objectives,” stated the presentation. “The final resilience strategy will include a set of implementable actions for achieving

Jacksonville’s vision for resilience despite the risks we face.”

As a city comprised 35% by water and wetlands, flooding remains a major factor for Jacksonville and its neighborhoods and, as the presentation stated, that risk of flooding will only increase in the coming years.

“Jacksonville will experience more inland flooding due to more intense rainfall events (precipitation) and the associated stormwater runoff [and]...more coastal flooding due to sea level rise and from stronger coastal storms.”

A graphic on its website — resilientjacksonville.com —depicted where and how different types of flooding (rain-induced, riverine, compound and coastal) can impact different areas of Jacksonville.

Coglianesi declined the request for an interview, however a public affairs representative for the city confirmed via e-mail that Jacksonville’s comprehensive resilience strategy is expected to be completed by the summer.

Coglianesi is the first person to hold this position for Jacksonville and was confirmed by Mayor Lenny Curry in September 2021.

Chief resilience officers first appeared on the world stage through the Rockefeller Foundation’s “100 Resilient Cities” initiative in 2013. The initiative was meant to “help more cities build resilience to the physical, social, and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century.”

OneJax, UNF part ways

The OneJax Institute Board has voted unanimously to dissolve its affiliation with the University of North Florida (UNF), seeking instead to re-activate its independent 501(c)3 nonprofit status.

“OneJax is proud to have been a part of the UNF community and appreciates the mutually beneficial relationship we have enjoyed with the university these past 11 years,” said Kyle Reese, OneJax executive director. “The current political climate in our state is impacting every state university, and we do not want the core mission and vision of our 53-year-old organization to be restrained or restricted,” Reese said.

UNF President Moez Limayem said it’s been his experience that affiliations and collaborations like the one between UNF and OneJax change and shift over time. Both parties will be working together to develop a transition plan.

“[The board’s decision] is not an unusual occurrence,” Limayem said. “We part as friends, and I wish OneJax well as it continues to pursue its work in the greater Jacksonville community.”

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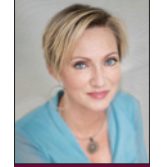
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Bisnow hosts “Jacksonville State of the Market”

Expert panelists discuss factors in Jacksonville’s commercial real estate

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

A panel of commercial real estate experts spoke on several industry topics at the Jacksonville State of the Market event on Wednesday, March 15.

The event was hosted by Bisnow, a worldwide business-to-business platform for the

commercial real estate industry, and held at The River Club in downtown Jacksonville.

Downtown Investment Authority CEO Lori Boyer made the opening remarks, during which she discussed the momentum and growth building in the downtown area, both in residential and commercial opportunities.

“Florida remains one of the fastest growing states in the country — for a variety of reasons — and Jacksonville is one of the fastest growing cities in the state of Florida,” she said. “That factor alone has major impact



Moderator Joseph Loretta led panelists Mike Balanky, Katherine Mosley, Matt Marshall, Adam Moorhead, Melissa Spaeth Banko and Aaron Bowman in a discussion about the growing landscape of Jacksonville commercial real estate at the Jacksonville State of the Market event at The River Club on Wednesday, March 15.



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on the investment opportunities, development opportunities, business growth, etc. within the city.”

With 7,500 residents currently living in the downtown area, Boyer said downtown is on track to clear 10,000 residents within three years, at which point, downtown will begin to generate “self-sustaining momentum” in terms of retail.

Despite the fact that businesses are reducing the amount of space they use following the pandemic with more people working remotely, Boyer said, the level of activity on the streets has returned to 2019, pre-pandemic levels.

“That’s a positive data point for us in terms of downtown overall,” she said.

The expert panel was comprised of Chase Properties President and CEO Mike Balanky, Founder and Principal of Banko Design Melissa Spaeth Banko, JAXUSA Senior Vice President Aaron Bowman, Tribridge Residential Principal Katherine Mosley, RISE: A Real Estate Company Senior Vice President of Development Matt Marshall, EXP Commercial Broker Associate Adam Moorhead with Half Associates Operations Manager Joseph Loretta moderating.

The panel fielded questions from Loretta, ranging from how the region is changing because of development and projects currently underway in Jacksonville to what has changed Jacksonville in terms of demand and job growth.

“Financially, [the City is] extremely healthy and extremely strong right now,” said Bowman, who also currently represents District 3 on the city council. “Our growth, our property values, our investment in the city is making everything...all the plans are aligning very well on us financially being able to do what we wanna do.”

The “big thing” Bowman said, echoing Boyer, is the migration of new residents coming to Jacksonville. He stated Jacksonville’s population is growing by 75 people a day — mainly young people “that want to start a family, that want to have a quality of life.”

“What does that bring — that brings the need for housing, for product, for supplies, for schools and that is not gonna change,” he added.

Mosley expanded on that, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic “left a permanent change in Jacksonville.”

With full-time remote working or hybrid schedules becoming a more regular arrangement for many businesses, people are expanding their radius when it comes to finding a home and branching out beyond the areas near their places of business.

“Pre-COVID, people were really tied to living where their office was around the country,” she said. “Obviously COVID opened that up...People moving to Florida, moving to Jacksonville, so we’ve seen that at our properties...I’m amazed at where people are moving from, it’s all over the country.”

Mosley also cited what she saw as a shift in density from Jacksonville’s southside market — “10 years ago, that’s where you wanted to be” — to the downtown area as activation continues in that area as well as the riverfront, with all the amenities either currently under construction or planned to come online in the next few years.

“I think seeing some of the changes — the riverwalk, the activation, the smart infrastructure — has really kind of set the framework to have the lifestyle that people are looking for in downtown,” she said. “...We really see people making a choice now where they wanna live not based on proximity to their office but the lifestyle, the personality of the neighborhood.”

Balanky spoke of the evolving downtown landscape and the momentum generated by both the increasing migration of new residents and the major developments planned or already under construction, adding that once all these new developments come online “... we will finally achieve the critical mass that we’ve been missing for decades downtown.”

Among other topics, the panelists also touched on how increasing costs in development and construction costs are being handled.

“We’re grinding through it is probably how I would describe it,” said Mosley.

Marshall said he didn’t see prices coming down, rather he expects them to continue to increase a bit, mainly because of rising labor costs.

“Labor is a big issue because of inflationary factors — groceries, etc. that we’re all faced with — well, everybody that works on these construction sites are faced with the same thing so labor is actually increasing,” he said.

Bisnow will return to Jacksonville later this year in August for another event discussing construction and development.

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Residential Roundup for the Southbank

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Recent years has seen the landscape of San Marco undergo extensive change as it continues to grow as a desirable destination, both for businesses and residents. Developments continue to flourish in the historic community and it's not an unfamiliar sight to see ongoing construction at various locations throughout the neighborhood.

The Resident has reported on the progress of several residential developments over the years. As San Marco and the Southbank continue to welcome new residents to its community, The Resident has compiled a list of said developments, including those completed in recent years, those currently under construction and expected to begin leasing shortly and those still in early stages of construction*:

*The following information was compiled from the developments' websites. Because pricing and availability change daily and the websites are updated to reflect the most up-to-date rates, The Resident only compiled unit types and square footage in the list please. For details regarding pricing, please contact the developments directly.



Looking down Bertha Street at The Exchange (on the left) and The Barlow (on the right).

OPEN NOW:

THE BARLOW

Location: 1900 Olevia Street

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 296

Unit Types:

- 1B/1BA (four layouts), 632 to 843 sq. ft.
- 2B/2BA (two layouts) 1,156 to 1,166 sq. ft.
- 3B/3BA (one layout) 1,450 sq. ft.

Pet Policy: Maximum of two pets per units (no exotic animals) with breed restrictions; \$15/month pet rent with nonrefundable pet deposit of \$300 for the first pet and \$200 any additional animal.

Parking: Unassigned garage parking with the option to reserve assigned parking a monthly fee.

www.barlowaptsjacksonville.com

Occupancy: 92% (as of the week of March 13)



A tree-lined street shot of Prudential Drive's Broadstone River House.

BROADSTONE RIVER HOUSE

Location: 1655 Prudential Drive

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 263

Unit Types:

- Studio (two layouts), 632 to 634 sq.ft.

- 1B/1BA (four layouts), 651 to 761 sq.ft.
- 2B/1BA and 2B/2BA (four layouts), 909 to 1,149 sq.ft.
- 3B/2BA and 3B/3BA (two layouts) 1,383 to 1,592 sq.ft.

Pet Policy: Maximum of two pets per unit (cats and dogs; weight limit per pet: 75 lbs) with breed restrictions; \$20 minimum monthly pet rent with \$350 to \$700 nonrefundable pet fee

broadstoneriverhouse.com

Unit Types: 92.5% (as of the week of March 6)

THE EXCHANGE

Location: 1810 Bertha Street

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 196

Unit Types:

- 1B/1BA (four layouts), 632 to 843 sq.ft.
- 2B/2BA (two layouts), 1,156 to 1,166
- 2B/2BA Loft (one layout), 1,522 sq.ft.

Pet Policy: Maximum of two pets per unit (no exotic pets allowed) with breed restrictions; \$15/month/pet pet rent with nonrefundable pet deposit of \$300 for first pet and \$200 each additional pet.

www.theexchangejacksonville.com

Unit Types: 90.82% (as of the week of March 13)



The future site of the Lofts at San Marco East, situated along Philips Highway at St. Augustine Road, expected to come online in Summer 2024.

THE LOFTS SAN MARCO

Location: 1450 Flagler Avenue

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 38

Unit Types:

- Loft Style 1/1BA, 474 to 922 sq.ft.
- Loft Style 2/2BA, 1,100 to 1,404 sq.ft.
- Loft Style 2 (two-story)/1BA, 841 to 878 sq.ft.
- Two-story Townhome with balcony, 1,775 sq.ft.

theloftssanmarco.com



A ground-floor view of the riverfront Southerly at Southbank, located on Prudential Drive.

THE SOUTHERLY AT SOUTHBANK

Location: 959 Prudential Drive

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 185

Unit Types:

- Studio (seven layouts), 404 to 645 sq.ft.
- 1B/1BA (nine layouts), 671 to 844 sq.ft.
- 2B/1BA and 2B/2BA (10 layouts), 860 to 1,178 sq.ft.
- 3B/2BA (one layout), 1,714 sq.ft.

Pet Policy: Maximum of two pets per unit (no exotic pets allowed) with breed restrictions; \$15/month/pet pet rent with nonrefundable deposit of \$300 for the first pet and \$200 for each additional animal

www.thesoutherlysouthbank.com

EASTBOROUGH SAN MARCO

Location: 1906 Promenade Way

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 226

Unit Types:

- 1B/1BA (nine layouts), 632 to 958 sq.ft.
- 2B/2BA (six layouts), 1,097 to 1,293 sq.ft.
- 3B/3BA (one layout), 1,473 sq.ft.

Pet Policy: Maximum of two pets per unit (no exotic pets allowed) with breed restrictions; \$15/month/pet pet rent with nonrefundable pet deposit of \$300 for first pet and \$200 each additional pet.

www.eastboroughjax.com

Occupancy: 4% (as of March 22; development opened this past January)

OPEN SOON:

THE HENDRICKS

Location: 1520 Alford Place

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 133

Unit Types:

- Studio (one layout), 614 sq.ft.
- 1B/1BA (five layouts), 602 to 869 sq.ft.
- 2B/2BA (two layouts), 995 to 1,057 sq.ft.

Pet Policy: "All pets are required to complete our Pet Screening profile which requires vaccination records, medical records, etc. We do not have any breed restrictions currently at The Hendricks."

www.thehendricksapartments.com

Special Note: The Hendricks is slated to open this summer. According to its website, prospective residents are able to submit applications or visit the leasing office located at 2016 Hendricks Avenue) for more information.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION:

LOFTS AT SAN MARCO EAST

Location: 3036 Philips Highway

Lease or Own: Lease

Units: 172

Unit Types:

- Studio (one layout), 476 sq.ft.
- 1B/1BA (one layout), 666 sq.ft.
- 2B/2BA (one layout), 948 sq.ft.
- 3B/2BA (one layout), 1,183 sq.ft.

www.loftsatsanmarcoeast.com

Estimated completion date: Summer 2024



A view of the Station at San Marco from Hendricks Avenue. The new development is expected to begin pre-leasing later this year.

THE STATION AT SAN MARCO

Location: 1230 Hendricks Avenue

Lease or Own: Lease

Number of Units: 345

Unit Types:

- Studio, 577 sq.ft.
- 1B/1BA, 731 to 862 sq.ft.
- 2B, 962 to 1,414 sq.ft.

Estimated completion date: Late 2023 (with pre-leasing expected to begin third quarter of 2023)

TERRACES AT SAN MARCO

Location: 1609 Bridgeton Drive

Lease or Own: Own

Number of Units: 27

Unit Types (Townhomes starting in the upper \$600,000s):

- The Atlantic — two to four bedrooms, 3.5BA, 2,085+ sq.ft., four stories, two-car garage
- The Elder — two to four bedrooms, 3.5BA, 1,844+ sq.ft., four stories, two-car garage

Estimated completion date: Spring 2003

www.tollbrothers.com (search Jacksonville, FL to find development)

For more information about the townhomes, interested parties are encouraged to register for the VIP List.

City approves right-of-way funding for Lasalle Street pump station

The San Marco community is one step closer to seeing progress on the long-awaited pump station on Lasalle Street.

In February, the Jacksonville City Council unanimously approved the appropriation of \$900,000 for the right-of-way acquisition of a residential property at 936 Lasalle Street in order to begin construction of the Lasalle Street pump station, a project that has been in discussion and in the works for several years now.

The property in question, sitting on 0.12 acres, is a duplex the City appraised at \$480,000, as explained in the amended bill summary.

At the February 28 City Council meeting, Council Member At-Large Matt Carlucci countered concerns regarding the property's sticker price by arguing this acquisition will, by merit of the pump station replacing it, save money for the City of Jacksonville in the long run.

"When this area overflows and floods from water, then what you have is potholes, you have cracked asphalt, you have sidewalks that have to be replaced," he said. This is millions of dollars of infrastructure work that needs to be done. So by putting this pump station in place, it will save literally millions of dollars of infrastructure work."

"I don't want the price tag to overlook the importance of what this will do, the remedy it will provide and the money it will save in infrastructure repair," he added in closing.

"It's great to be able to finally see this project come to fruition," said District 5 City Council Member LeAnna Cumber later in a telephone interview. "It's really going to make an enormous difference in the flooding in the San Marco area during big storms and even some smaller ones."

Compared to the existing pipes, which rely solely on gravity to redirect flood water out to the St. Johns River, the pump station will actively pump water back to the river. There are currently two other pump stations in the San Marco neighborhood.

Cumber explained this new pump station will provide drainage for Lasalle Street and "the whole area of San Marco Boulevard," which suffered extensive flooding from Hurricane Irma in 2017.

"Irma obviously was an incredibly unique and tragic storm, but then on the commercial side the area that was hit the most was that stretch of San Marco Boulevard and a lot of those businesses have had a hard time coming back and that stretch has kind of struggled in the last few years," Cumber said. "It will certainly help and the businesses can know that

the station's there to be able to pump out the water again in the Irma-type flooding when you have the river crest over but also in the storms we get here in Florida where you just have this massive amount of rain dumped in a very short period of time."

In the coming months, residents can expect to see workers begin to prepare the pump station site, which will include demolition of the duplex.

Cumber said she expects the site to be ready for construction by June. The project as a whole is looking at an end date in 2025, from the construction of the pump station and its facilities to upgrading the piping and the outfall pipe.

"This is a relatively complicated project because we're part of the old city and we have a lot of the old pipes. You kind of peel the top layer of San Marco off and there's a lot going on underneath..." she said. "Once you kind of peel that back, you have to make sure you're connecting all the right pieces and what we do there doesn't have an unintended consequence down the road."

Permitting for the project can begin once the sale of the duplex has closed and the City holds the title. While the demolition contractor is yet to be determined, the design build firm selected for the pump station is Haskell.

North Florida real estate up in February

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA

COUNTY	MEDIAN PRICE	MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET	INVENTORY
Duval	\$315,000	49	Up 4.3%
Clay	\$349,995	66	Down 0.3%
St. Johns	\$510,000	48	Up 1.9%
Putnam	\$200,000	62	No change
Nassau	\$366,000	44	Down 3.7%
Baker	\$285,495	99	Down 10.4%

Home sales in Northeast Florida increased in February, which is traditionally rare at this time of the year. The combined number of single-family homes, condos and townhouses that closed in the region rose almost 26% from January to February, demonstrating that the housing market within the six-county area is alive and well, despite low inventory and higher prices.

"Love was in the air for real estate this February," said Diana Galavis, 2023 president of the Northeast Florida Association of REALTORS®. "Closed sales were up...this is a reflection that buyers are comfortable with the fluctuating market and were ready to make a move."

With an active inventory of 4,811 in February, the number of single-family homes in the region showed a 174% increase

from a year ago. The median sales price for single-family homes throughout the region remained at \$360,000, the same as the month before, while the median price per square foot of homes slightly decreased to \$196. This is a sign that a different product mix may be selling in the market as larger homes sell for more money, but often at a lower dollar amount per square foot.

As the median sales price of single-family homes stabilized, so did the Home Affordability Index for single-family residences in the six-county region. In February, the index again registered at 76. A higher number means greater affordability. An index value of 100 means that the average family has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

George Saoud joins DIA Board of Directors

Lawyer, real estate entrepreneur and small business owner George Saoud is the newest appointment to Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) Board of Directors.

Appointed by Mayor Lenny Curry, Saoud is set to replace Todd Froats. Saoud's first full term will expire June 30, 2026. He has served as the in-house legal counsel for Fidelity National Financial for 13 years, where he is currently state underwriting counsel and vice president. He owns and manages The George Management Company and is the creator of The Lark, "an upscale urban loft that displays and promotes fine art by local and regional artists."



George Saoud

"As a Jacksonville native, Downtown has always held a special place in my heart. From childhood memories exploring with my father to now as a new father, I'm excited to play a role in shaping its future. The momentum building in Downtown over the past few years is truly inspiring, and I'm honored to contribute to that progress through my appointment to the Downtown Investment Authority," Saoud said in a March press release announcing his appointment. "I look forward to working with fellow community members to create a vibrant and thriving Downtown for generations to come."

The DIA's nine-person board of directors consists of members who "serve as leaders in their respective fields, including real estate, finance and Downtown business ownership" and "guide the DIA's projects and initiatives on an unpaid, volunteer basis." Of those nine, five are mayoral appointments; the city council president appoints the remaining four. All are then confirmed by the city council.

"On behalf of the DIA Board, staff, collaborators and the constituents we serve, I am honored to welcome George as the newest member of our Board of Directors," said DIA Board Chair Carol Worsham in the release. "George brings a unique combination of real estate, legal, financial and Downtown business ownership expertise to the board. We welcome his talent, perspective, time, and most importantly, eagerness to serve Jacksonville."

That's How the Cookie Crumbles



Crumbl Cookies marked the opening of a new location at 2039 Hendricks Avenue, Suite 214, with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting on Thursday, March 16. The location officially opened to the public March 17. Locally-owned and -operated by Steve Seegmiller, Chase Zollinger and Branson Hadfield, the store will provide more than 50 career opportunities to Jacksonville locals.

The store features more than 275 weekly rotating flavors, including favorites like Milk Chocolate Chip, Cornbread, Cookies & Cream, S'mores, Key Lime Pie, Peppermint Bark, Caramel Popcorn, Buttermilk Pancake and Galaxy Brownie. Local residents can enjoy the cookies in-person, or through delivery, curbside pickup or catering. They can also be shipped nationwide.

"I started to recognize that I wanted to be a part of a company that places value in creating memories with family, which led to us opening our first store," said Seegmiller. "Deciding to open in San Marco was an easy decision! We love the engaging and friendly people, and couldn't be happier to be a part of this amazing community. As local business owners, we are looking forward to sharing delicious cookies with our neighbors."

The store will be open weekdays 8 a.m.-10 p.m., 8 a.m.-midnight Fridays and Saturdays, and closed on Sundays.

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Supporting the Sanctuary

Four new members join board of Sanctuary on 8th Street



Stephanie Day Lara Leinenweber Dwarakesh Ravichandran Rhianna Scyster

The Sanctuary on 8th Street has recently added four new members to its board of directors: Stephanie Day, Lara Leinenweber, Dwarakesh Ravichandran and Rhianna Scyster.

Day has been in Jacksonville for more than 20 years and works at Episcopal School of Jacksonville’s Institutional Advancement office. She believes deeply in the mission of the organization and is eager to join the board and continue its work. Leinenweber, a graduate of University of North Florida, grew up in Atlantic Beach. Her community involvement prior to joining the board includes being a mentor for Take Stock in Children as well as a tutor with Habitat for Humanity’s after school program.

Ravichandran is a project delivery manager with Ernst & Young, and values increasing the availability of digital resources and knowledge to underserved children. He hopes to be able to leverage and share his company’s resources to bridge the digital divide with Sanctuary students. Scyster is a fervent advocate for equitable practices and policies in K-12 education. She is dedicated to improving her community through justice work, policy development and servant leadership.

New signage under construction for The Bolles School’s San Jose campus



A rendering of the new tower under construction at The Bolles School’s San Jose Campus

Drivers traveling along San Jose Boulevard will soon see new signage for The Bolles School’s San Jose campus in the form of a new tower with a digital sign echoing the architecture of the campus and its neighborhood.

Construction on the new tower began in January and is expected to wrap up in May, according to The Bolles School Senior Director of Communications and Marketing Jan Olson. It is replacing a billboard that was struck down by a vehicle. In an e-mail, Olson explained it has taken the school nearly two years to move through “sign ordinances, zoning and other steps.”

“We are excited that this new digital signage will face both north and south on San Jose to assist us in promoting school activities and events, summer camps, admission season and other things school related we need to promote to the public,” Olson wrote.

The base of the tower will also provide storage for the campus’s track and field equipment.

Luke Architecture, P.A. is the architect on the project; the Mayan Group, LLC is the contractor.



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The Florida Real Estate School by Pier 21 Realty, LLC Hosts Grand Opening



Aiden and Phil Simonetta

Broker-Owner Philip Simonetta and his Realtor son, Aiden Simonetta, have opened the doors of their new company, The Florida Real Estate School by Pier 21 Realty, LLC. On March 11, they welcomed more than two dozen guests to tour the office and classroom spaces at the Cassat Avenue headquarters. One attendee of note was Escrow, the black cat who serves as Pier 21's resident mascot.

The grand opening event included a full Italian spread of baked ziti, which Phil cooked himself; an array of salads; and sweet desserts to balance out the taste buds. To close the celebration, Phil gave a Real Estate Career Day presentation to visitors interested in joining the profession.

The Simonettas' unique firm operates as both a real estate brokerage and a licensed real estate school, authorized by the Florida Real Estate Commission (FREC) to provide a comprehensive suite of licensing courses. In addition, Phil will be organizing weekend workshops as part of a mentorship program. "Through my travels of all the years being involved with real estate in one form or another, I decided that with all my experience, it's time to give back," Phil said.

This Jacksonville office is the first of four that the father-son duo have planned. Though in operation only a short while, the company has already gotten more than 300 likes and followers on Facebook.

Library Scores With Sports Exhibit



Nancy DeLander Beecher

The Bill Brinton Murray Hill Library at 918 Edgewood Avenue South has unveiled a new sports photography exhibit by Nancy DeLander Beecher. The exhibit features local professional, college and amateur sports including hockey, football and baseball.

Beecher is a resident of Riverside, studied photography at the University of North Florida and is a member of the Friends of the Bill Brinton Murray Hill Library Board. Her extensive

work in sports, nature, events, journalism and advertising photography has appeared in print publications, exhibits and online over the past 25 years.

Frontz Joins Berkshire Hathaway



Ross Frontz

Ross Frontz has joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty at its Metropolitan office, with locations in Avondale and San Marco. Frontz attended Jacksonville University and has lived in Northeast Florida for the past 34 years, which gives him vast knowledge of the area's various neighborhoods.

"We are so glad to have Ross join our family, and we know that he will flourish at Berkshire

Hathaway HomeServices," said Josh Cohen, broker/manager of the Metropolitan office.



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Harbinger Signs Turns 60



Steve Williams

Harbinger Sign celebrated its 60th anniversary on April 1 with an on-site event that included a new exhibition opening at the Florida Mining Gallery — Harbinger Sign’s on-site art gallery — as well as live music, food and drinks. This exhibition will be the last for the gallery, as the owners’ focus is on the company’s future expansion.

Avondale resident Steve Williams, who has helmed the company since 2019, envisions the next chapter of expansion as one that drives new markets while leveraging technology advancements to better serve their clients.

“In many ways, we have the entrepreneurial spirit of a startup,” said Williams, the company’s CEO. “Adaptability and versatility have always been hallmarks of our resilience and success over our six decades of operation, and today we are in a growth mode, expanding into new markets and offering new solutions to support client brand activations.”

In recent years, Harbinger Sign has expanded throughout the Southeast, and now has offices in Atlanta, Dallas, Birmingham, Nashville and the Tampa Bay area, as well as their headquarters here in Jacksonville. It operates as a full-service sign company that offers painting and facade refurbishment, and will soon phase in architectural lighting.

Dordel Named Top Cookie at Girl Scouts



Wendy Dordel

Wendy Dordel has been named new CEO for Girl Scouts of Gateway Council (GSGC). She will provide leadership to girls and staff across 35 counties in North Florida.

“The committee was impressed with her dedication to connecting people to the right work, through coaching and education, as well as her commitment to being a transparent and authentic leader,” said April Harrell-Devine, GSGC board chair. “She has a proven

record of engaging volunteers and driving membership success.”

With more than 20 years of Girl Scout executive experience under her belt, Dordel has previously served as vice president of Council Consulting at Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), oversaw the Girl Scouts Overseas division, and was key in launching the membership and operations team at GSUSA.

“Girl Scouts has provided me with life-long friends, mentors and opportunities. I am delighted to join the amazing staff and volunteers of Girl Scouts of Gateway Council in delivering the same lasting impact experience to the girls of North Florida,” said Dordel.

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Bolles Website Wins MUSE Award



Screenshot of Bolles' award-winning site

The Bolles School's website, Bolles.org, was honored as a Silver Winner in the Website — Schools/Universities category of the 2023 MUSE Creative Awards, an international competition for creative professionals who inspire others to greater heights. The redesigned Bolles.org launched in early November 2022 with a fresh, new look with streamlined navigation, visual upgrades and powerful video testimonials to reflect the school's commitment to excellence and vision for the future.

The MUSE Award notes that "The Bolles School website offers prospective families an immersive glimpse into the school's unique educational offerings and vibrant, welcoming community. This has been achieved through a progressive modern design that delivers impactful messaging using distinctive layouts, bold typography, impactful photography and expressive movement to bring the school's unique story to life online. The website also functions as an entry point for current families, staff and alumni to access their internal communication portals."

Bolles was among The Loomis Chaffee School, Benedictine University and The New School as award winners in the Website — School/Universities category.

'Fellowship, healing and hope'

Angels for Allison hosts memorial service for 'Angel Families'

The Allison Brundick Haramis Foundation — also known as Angels for Allison — hosted its annual memorial service for Angel Families on Saturday, Feb. 25 for a morning of "fellowship, healing and hope for the families of have lost a child."

The event was held in partnership with the Jacksonville Public Library and at the main library branch in downtown Jacksonville, at the branch's outdoor Betsy Lovett Courtyard.

More than 100 guests attended, including volunteers, board members and friends and families who have lost a child — known by the nonprofit organization as Angel Families. The name of each child was read aloud during the service and Angels for Allison Board President Drew Haramis — Allison's mother — and Kimmy Clark, mother to Chanzc, "poignantly addressed the families about their personal experiences."

Live music was provided by the Darren Ronan School of Music and student artists unveiled an art installation "of 12 angels to honor the angel children," which remained on display at the library for the month of March.



Angel moms Kimmy, Andrea and Megan



The Berini angel family

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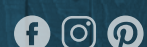
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Celebrating San Jose

Annual San Jose Episcopal Day School gala raises \$94K

San Jose Episcopal Day School (SJEDS) held its annual gala fundraiser on Saturday, March 18. Themed “Celebrate San Jose,” the event was attended by 150 guests and raised more than \$94,000 in support for the school’s ongoing educational programs and initiatives. The gala featured live and silent auctions, a paddle-raiser fundraiser, and live music from Paradigm Party Band.

“The Celebrate San Jose Gala Fundraiser was not only a wonderful opportunity to support the school’s mission, but also a chance to bring together the community in a fun and engaging way,” said Brian Pargman, director of development for SJEDS. “It is clear that everyone who attended had a fantastic time, and the success of the event is a testament to the dedication and hard work of all involved.”

Among those involved behind the scenes were parent volunteers Shelby Bennett, Forrest Holland and Courtney Stoner, who worked tirelessly to decorate the rooms and make the gala a success for the parents, teachers, trustees and friends in attendance.



David and Kate Medill



Dr. Sloane Castleman, Annie Albright, Sean Way and Kim Way



Michelle and Brian Pargman



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YMCA GATHERS LEADERS, PATRONS AND HONORS DIFFERENCE-MAKERS

The YMCA of Florida's First Coast welcomed guests to the 'The Jessie' downtown, to rally around civic leaders at its annual Giving Tree Gala. The nonprofit, with more than 14 branch locations in North Florida, counts on its board, staff and invested partners to bring value and quality of life services for youth, families and businesses in the community.

The highlight of this year's annual event was the Community Impact Award, awarded to philanthropist and developer G. John Carey, who exemplifies the character traits of the award's namesake, Mr. W.W. "Bill" Gay. Mr. Gay believed in the power of giving back, leading by example and providing for those less fortunate.

"Mr. Gay was committed to serving the Jacksonville community and I share his passion for providing essential services," shared Carey. "I am honored and humbled to be selected as the 2023 W.W. "Bill" Gay Community Impact Award recipient."



Jane Mandadori with Delroy Parkinson



Honoree John Carey with his wife Ann and son, Whit Carey



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CATHOLIC CHARITIES' SOIREE SUCCESS

It was an evening to remember for many guests that joined Catholic Charities and their Divine Society to celebrate the work of the nonprofit, its goals and annual achievements. The Black and White soiree was held at the Lower East Gallagher Club at TIAA Bank Field, Saturday, March 11. Guests wandered the outdoor terraces overlooking the pitch where the Jaguars take to the field for home games while sipping wine and cocktails, dining on freshly curated meals, while dancing the night away to live entertainment by the Bay Kings Band.

The gala raises funds, by way of donor, sponsor and ticket purchasers, to ensure faith is able to be put into action to serve the most vulnerable in our community. By advocating for justice, human dignity and quality of life, Catholic Charities Jacksonville is able to reflect the compassion and 'God in Christ'-centered mission, serving countless residents throughout North Florida.



Antoinette Vitale with Chris Bolen

Leslie Quaritius with Lisa Benton



Patsy and Terry Moore with Margie and Jorge Morales, Catherine Childers and Bill Hackelton



Allison Reed with Sam Abbott, Dominick Aurelio, Samantha Smith, Catherine Fudal and Samantha Jarrett



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LOCAL FOLKS

Linzee Ott

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Community Engagement Coordinator at Office of the State Attorney, 4th Judicial Circuit. That's the somewhat mysterious title held by San Marco's very own Linzee Ott. She is often asked, "What the heck does that mean?" It's a position that was custom made for her. She calls it "a God thing" the way the story unfolded.

When Melissa Nelson was elected state attorney in 2017, she recognized the importance of establishing trust between her office and

local citizens. She envisioned forming relationships with a variety of sectors already in place, and she looked to create a non-traditional position to fill with someone who could help the state attorney's office better serve the people who would come through the criminal justice system — making referrals, for example, to fill needs they might have for housing, transportation, education and the like. Melissa Nelson met Ott, who had a background in legislative policy in Tallahassee and D.C., and knew she'd be the ideal person to fill such a position. Nelson was right. "It's been really great. I love people, and I love the community," Ott said.

When not working at the prosecutor's office for her livelihood, Ott is heavily involved with the San Marco Preservation Society, and has been for the past six years. In 2019-2020, she was the youngest person in the organization's history to hold the role of board president, only 27 at that time.

"As a result of my volunteerism with the San Marco Preservation Society, I discovered a love for and an interest in urban planning and design," Linzee said. She sought independent education in those topics and, as a result, was appointed to the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) in April 2022. She participates in projects that come to DDRB for review of design standards. "I've really been enjoying that," she said.

Linzee's community service work has also included a stint on the board of Theatre Jacksonville, the longest continuously running community theatre in the state of Florida.

"They're a really fantastic local organization!" Linzee said.

"It's such a wonderful city," Linzee said of Jacksonville. "It's not the same city it was 20 years ago when I was growing up. There's a lot going on here, and I'm happy to contribute to it."

Linzee does have a soft spot for the San Marco section. She appreciates how well designed it is, made with the pedestrian experience in mind. The commercial square, the sidewalks, the tree canopy, signage, and on her list goes. "All of these things make a place enjoyable and comfortable," Linzee pointed out. She felt she liked it here before. Since taking those urban planning and design classes, now she knows the reasons why.

Another endearing aspect of San Marco for Linzee has been the San Marco Theatre. For her 30th birthday last year, she was surprised to see her name on its marquee, a gift arranged by her best friend and her mother. "It was very special to me that they did this," Linzee said, as she had been attending movies there for her entire life. "I'm very sad," she said about the recent closing, and will continue to hold fond memories.

With the small slice of time that Linzee has left after her work and volunteer hours, she enjoys eating. "I'm a foodie," she admitted. "I love eating at new Jacksonville restaurants that I haven't tried before." And she loves that in San Marco she can walk to many of them. "I'm spoiled because my activities are all within a seven-minute radius, and I have access to really great stuff near me," she tells people.




Linzee Ott kayaking at Alexander Springs

Linzee enjoys being on the water, too. "I'm a big kayaker," she said. She also paddleboards. Linzee's desire is to see most of Florida's springs someday. It's not quite a bucket list because there are so many springs throughout the state to visit, more than 700 in fact. "That's an ambitious goal. But I do want to see a lot of them," she said. She's already been to about a dozen, and Silver Springs stood out to her as "absolutely beautiful" and "stunning!" There she saw alligators, turtles, monkeys, manatees, and more that she had not expected.

Linzee admits to being one of those people who swore she would never live in the same town where she grew up, not even in the same state. And yet, this is where she resides and works and volunteers and recreates. She said, "I always thought I wanted to live internationally, but I have ended up right back where I started, and I love it!"

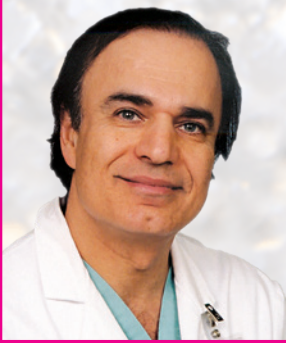


Linzee Ott, photo by Angelica Pompy



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River City Dancing With The Stars spotlights local dancers, benefits Jacksonville Children’s Chorus

Seven local leaders and their professional dance partners will face off on April 15 in a friendly dance competition for the mirror ball trophy and the title of River City’s favorite dancer. The Jacksonville Children’s Chorus (JCC) began producing River City Dancing With The Stars (RCDWTS) to raise money for singer scholarships and ongoing programming for the chorus.

This year’s competitors include Tamara Baker, Mark K. Bennett, Ashley Folladori, Melissa Fulmore-Hardwick, Adrian Rust and Sarah Small, who are working with professional dancers William Brand, Brian Brocato, Roseanna George, Heather Kornick, Zeljko “Jake” Lukic, Gilberto Maldonado and Daniel Nicolaescu from All About Ballroom dance studio.

One of the contestants, St. Nicholas resident Tamara Baker has been an entrepreneur since the age of 12 when she started a dance camp for young girls. Her engineering and construction career began in 1992, and since then she has held many different positions including rodman on a survey crew, draftsman, drill-rig manager, truss designer, geotechnical engineer, structural engineer and business owner. She can run business meetings or crawl under dusty buildings.

After working at a national design-build firm, Tamara decided to start her own business, Baker Design Build, in 2004, at the age of 32. Her company is a successful design-build consulting firm with average annual revenues of \$12,000,000. Baker Design Build recently

topped the Florida Fast 100, an annual list highlighting Florida’s growing business.

Tamara has been an adjunct professor at the University of North Florida, teaching mechanical and electrical systems, structures, surveying, drafting and estimating. She is a member of the Southside United Methodist Church, Assumption Catholic Church, St. Nicholas Preservation Society, the Associated Builders and Contractors, the Florida Structural Engineering Association, The Rotary Club of South Jacksonville and the Cathedral District of Downtown Jacksonville. She has three children, Brandyn Baker, Olivia Belle Baker and Nathaniel Banks Baker.

“I am hoping to represent the architectural, engineering and construction industry well this year and hope to inspire other downtown businesses to support the Jacksonville Children’s Chorus,” Baker said.

“We have a shortage of engineers and scientists today, and I truly believe that when children are exposed early to music and the arts, they are more open to scientific careers in the future,” she said.

Baker is taking dance lessons one to two times each week and has started running again three times a week.

“I feel great,” she said.

Another contestant, Sarah Small, who lives in Jacksonville Beach, is vice president of membership, sales and marketing for Gate Hospitality Group. She has personally set a goal of raising \$25,000 for Jacksonville Children’s Chorus.

She is a trustee member of the Chamber of Commerce, supporter of the FSCJ Artist Series and The Florida Theatre, and an alumna of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce’s Hightower Emerging Leaders Fellowship. She also serves on the executive board for the Northeast Florida Chapter of the Professional Club Marketing Association, Mason’s Voice and is an avid supporter of the American Heart Association and Make a Wish Foundation.

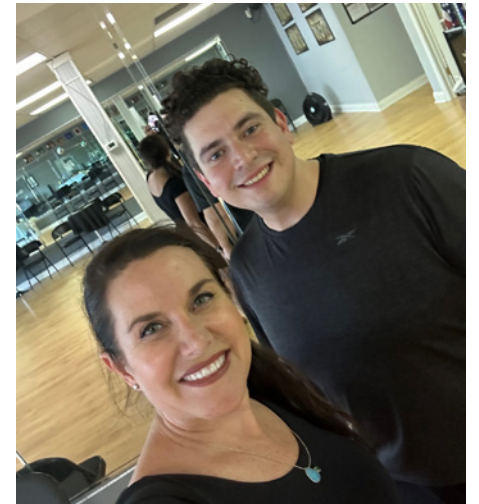
“JCC enriches lives, encourages creativity, culture and teaches a sense of confidence that its alumni can take with them for a lifetime,” Small said.

Small practices at least two hours a week with her dance partner to help learn the dance and genre style that she has selected.

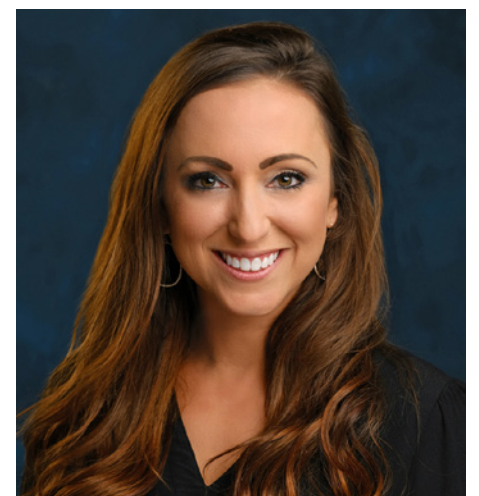
“It has been a journey that I will remember forever,” she said.

To vote with a donation for your favorite dance team, visit www.rivercitydwts.com/contestants. All proceeds benefit the Jacksonville Children’s Chorus. JCC’s scholarship program ensures that every child who desires to participate may do so regardless of a family’s inability to afford tuition. More than 44% of children who participate receive financial aid.

The 2023 River City DWTS will be held in UNF’s Lazzara Performance Hall on April 15, 6:30 – 9 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. General admission tickets are \$50 each; reserved tickets are \$80 each; and VIP tickets are \$150 each.



Tamara Baker rehearses with professional dancer William Brand to prepare for the River City Dancing With The Stars competition.



Sarah Small

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Real estate education, though essential, is not typically provided by brokerage firms. Real estate professionals, traditionally, practice under one company and fulfill their licensing requirements through a separate institution. But welcome to a new era. Enter Pier 21 Realty, LLC. Family-owned-and-operated by Broker Philip Simonetta and his Realtor son, Aiden, Pier 21 is a unique combination of brokerage and school, an independent non-franchised company headquartered on Cassat Avenue.

Phil Simonetta has over two decades of expertise in Florida's real estate, having been involved in consulting, financing, and structuring businesses in the entertainment and restaurant fields. He draws on knowledge from this broad background that average agents just don't have. He has seen real estate professionals through a variety of trials and tribulations.

"The national statistic is 80% of people who are in this business now will not be in it in two years," Simonetta said. He believes the reason for that is no one truly trains and mentors them through the practical application of the theories and principles they are mandated to learn. "A book can teach you how to get a real estate license but not how to deal with a client on a personal level during a transaction," he said.

Simonetta's goal is not only to help clients find their dream homes and acquire their investment properties but also to empower real estate professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive, thereby improving the industry success rate. That's why he and his son operate Pier 21 Realty, LLC as both a real estate brokerage and a real estate school.

BROKERAGE

Pier 21 is a full-service brokerage that represents buyers as well as sellers. The firm handles both residential and commercial transactions, including but not limited to strip malls and development communities. Simonetta has access to available programs and grants, and he taps into creative solutions that address auctions, short sales, and foreclosures.

"Most real estate agents enter a property into the MLS and pray that buyers will come and see it," Simonetta said. He's different. He takes a more personal and proactive approach, and his reach extends much farther. Pier 21 advertises properties in 140 countries and in 18 different languages, catering to foreign investors as well as people searching the nationwide MLS listings.

Pier 21 clients also benefit from a bit of complimentary consultation, which comes naturally to a man like Simonetta, who himself has owned a variety of businesses. He's happy to offer hints and tips to his clients on how they might make their establishments more profitable. "I've literally turned empty fields into homes. I've started cigar lounges from nothing and sold them to major

corporations," he said. One of Simonetta's restaurant successes is that a sandwich shop he owned earned the 2009 Best of Philly Cheesesteak Award from Fox 29 News Philadelphia. He is no stranger to successfully turning properties.

"Real estate is a simple business. From the back end, there are 23 steps to closing a deal, 12 pages to a contract, 4 pages in a listing agreement, and there are addendums. But it's a hard job," Simonetta said. The paperwork is the same no matter the size of the deal. It's the connection that's established, the communication between the parties, and the expertise brought by the professional that make all the difference. That's the difficult part. And that's where Simonetta stands out.

"Every client I have ends up being a friend," he said. He sees the industry from a different perspective than most. For Simonetta, it's not only about making money and closing deals. It's more about empathy for him. He values relationships and puts his clients above himself, but it's never his intention to solicit property owners already listed with other brokerage firms. It's a philosophy of integrity that he's passing on to his son and to their Pier 21 agents.

SCHOOL

In addition to offering a broad spectrum of brokerage services, Pier 21 Realty, LLC is authorized by the Florida Real Estate Commission (FREC) to provide a comprehensive suite of professional education options meant to meet state requirements.

As a qualified real estate school, Pier 21 is an optimal choice for pre-licensing classes, ones intended for those aspiring to become certified agents. Once the state test is passed, Pier 21 educates agents to advance toward broker status. The school then provides the required continuing education classes for both agents and brokers to maintain their credentials. Pier 21 also offers the post-licensing enrichment that is mandatory for license renewals.

Classes are available in multiple formats to suit participants' learning styles and scheduling needs. The Florida Real Estate School by Pier 21 Realty, LLC brings one of the highest quality distance education programs available with on-demand virtual modules if traditional classroom courses and live Zoom sessions are not preferred.

There's also the convenience of a virtual store on Pier 21's school website. It carries study materials that are specifically designed to help advance a real estate career. Available are textbooks written by industry experts and published by preeminent names such as Dearborn. Also find there a list of links to a wealth of other real estate resources, whether you're an enrolled student or not.

Because Simonetta is such a proponent of quality relationships, he offers paired pricing at The Florida Real Estate School.



That means couples desiring to pursue their real estate education together at Pier 21 are granted tuition discounts. At Pier 21, a couple might mean a military member and spouse, a brother and sister, two friends, or business partners. Students decide whom to pair and enroll with.

FUTURE

A visionary, Simonetta already has his sights set on what the future holds for himself, his son, and others who are passionate about the real estate industry. Though he chose Jacksonville to launch this unique realty concept of brokering and educating within the same firm, he plans to establish Pier 21 satellite offices by the end of next year in Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, and Naples.

Beyond the FREC-approved curriculum, Simonetta also intends to organize weekend workshops as part of a mentorship and apprenticeship program with topics like 'Walking through Contracts' and 'Acquiring and Relating to Clients.' Though Simonetta is currently licensed in Florida and North Carolina, these general classes applicable to all states will be held nationwide online and locally in person. They will be open to all real estate professionals, no matter whose company they work for.

Simonetta is eager to engage with other real estate brokerages and support the industry at large because he has a heart to help people. As good as Simonetta thinks the real estate business is today, "I want it to be better tomorrow," he said.



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ANIMAL HOUSE

Heartworm Disease Updates

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA
Resident Community News

During a conversation with Dr. Howard Acree of Cedar Hills Animal Hospital, the question came up regarding the necessity to continue monthly heartworm treatment for my senior dog Sylvia, 17. Sylvia is in excellent health for her age but only enjoys brief walks outdoors due to anxiety caused by her near-total blindness. Staying indoors limits her exposure to the mosquitoes that carry heartworm disease, which prompted the discussion.

Dr. Acree assured me that monthly heartworm prevention medication is still necessary year-round for all dogs, even indoor dogs and especially in Florida. He said heartworm-infected mosquitoes could survive Florida's mild winters and fly inside homes through open windows, doors, or into cars or garages to infect unprotected pets. It only takes one mosquito bite to transmit microscopic heartworm larvae, causing heartworm disease. Dr. Acree began his veterinarian practice in 1987 and is a former Veterinarian

of the Year, honored by the Florida Veterinary Medical Association.

Because heartworm disease is found in every state, with consistently high numbers of cases throughout the U.S., heartworm prevention, early detection and treatment is an ongoing scientific focus of veterinarian research. Heartworm experts strive to reduce the number of confirmed cases while improving diagnosis accuracy, prevention choices, treatment options and safety. The American Heartworm Society (AHS) provides regular disease prevention updates that explain how mosquitoes transmit heartworms, how to prevent and treat the disease, and what pet owners must know to protect pets.

At the 17th Triennial Heartworm Symposium presented by AHS in New Orleans last September, 40 speakers from three continents convened to present their heartworm research and related clinical topics. This international symposium comprised the latest scientific data on all aspects of heartworm disease.

"Heartworm disease continues to be one of the most common and costly diseases confronting the veterinary profession," said veterinary cardiologist and triennial symposium co-chair Dr. Marisa Ames. "The fact that

heartworm incidence remains far too high — year after year — makes it clear that veterinarians need forward-thinking innovations and practical approaches to this disease." Ames is an associate professor of medicine and epidemiology at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

New approaches presented at the symposium included tactics learned from managing malaria, where the mosquitoes — instead of pets — could be treated in the future. Treatment of the favored host pest would prevent them from carrying or transmitting live heartworms.

Speakers stressed the importance of better information for pet owners about heartworm disease in cats, which can be fatal. Cat owners need to know how often indoor or outdoor, homeless, and feral cats are diagnosed with heartworm disease and that it can be fatal. There was also an emphasis on developing more accurate diagnostic protocols for feline heartworm disease.

Speakers also noted that climate change has contributed to the heartworm disease crisis. Historically, traditional winter freezing temperatures throughout the mid and northern U.S. reliably killed mosquito populations. Now dramatically fluctuating winter temperatures allow mosquitoes to survive.

Urban sprawl has also contributed to the robust heartworm population by creating "heat islands." Urbanized areas experience higher temperatures than undeveloped land. Paved surfaces, rooftops, buildings and infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun's heat far more than natural landscapes such as forests, grasslands and water. The "heat islands" create perfect year-round survival zones for mosquitoes to breed and spread heartworms even during colder weather.

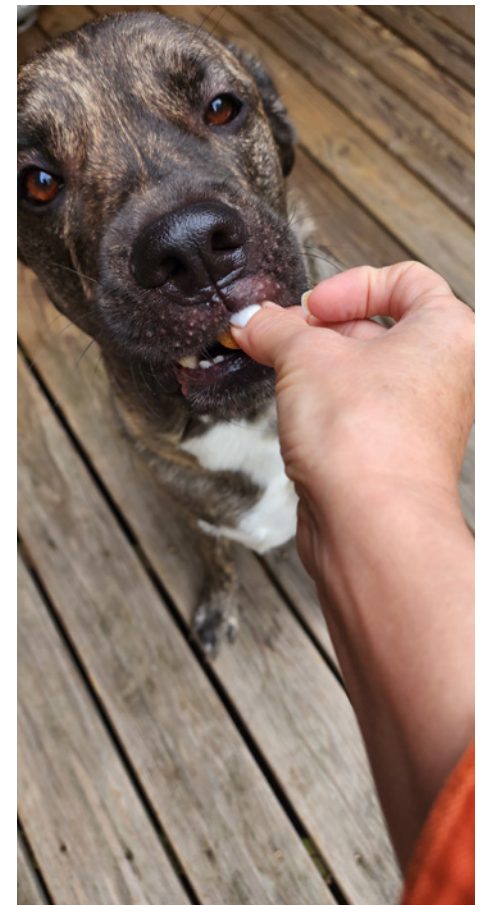
Untreated heartworm disease can be fatal to dogs, cats and ferrets. When an uninfected mosquito bites a heartworm-infected animal, it becomes infected, ensuring the continuous cycle and spread of heartworms. Heartworm-infected mosquitoes bite pets and transmit microscopic heartworm larvae into the pet's bloodstream. The heartworm larvae travel to the heart, lungs, and blood vessels, where they live and mature. They can grow up to 12" long and continuously breed.

Prevention treatments, oral, injectable, or topical prescription products, are necessary for indoor and outdoor pets and may include other ingredients to protect against fleas, ticks, and parasites. Monthly heartworm prevention medications can be safely given to puppies and kittens at eight weeks old. Pets must have the proper amount of heartworm prevention medication circulating in their bloodstream to kill heartworms. Heartworm prevention medication will not kill adult heartworms.

If an animal tests positive for heartworms, the goal is to first stabilize the pet's overall health and any symptoms before treatment. Then the veterinarian will administer the FDA-approved medication determined to be safest for that pet based on its physical condition, stage of heartworm disease, age and other contributing factors. Heartworm disease medication kills all parasitic adults and immature heartworms carried by infected mosquitoes.

Once a dog is infected with adult heartworms, the veterinarian may administer one of the FDA-approved arsenic-containing drugs, like injectable Melarsomine. Arsenic-containing drugs quickly kill adult heartworms but are dangerous treatments that pose risks to pets and can have side effects.

Some veterinarians consider doxycycline safer because it is less toxic with fewer side effects than arsenic-based heartworm



treatments. Doxycycline is a slower process that gradually eliminates all heartworms. However, the additional time required by doxycycline to eliminate heartworms, permits internal damage to continue. This delay causes some veterinarians to reject this treatment option except in specific cases.

Pets are monitored during heartworm treatment for possible side effects. After heartworm treatment, the pet should be re-tested for heartworms before resuming monthly heartworm preventive medication to ensure successful treatment.

Some pets never show signs of heartworm disease until its advanced stages, while in others, there are noticeable symptoms: persistent cough, tiredness after mild activity, labored breathing and decreased appetite. If untreated, heartworm disease damages the pet's heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys, eventually causing death.

Overheating must be avoided during heartworm treatment and recovery, and exercise restriction is necessary to minimize cardiopulmonary complications. Research has documented a direct correlation between the pet's activity level and the severity of heartworm disease, according to the AHS.

If a pet tests positive for heartworms, discuss treatment options with your veterinarian. If you foster or consider adopting a heartworm-positive dog or cat, discuss care and treatment with the agency representatives. Pets in foster care receive all veterinarian treatment free from their shelter clinic until they are adopted.

Pets with heartworm disease that receive proper veterinarian treatment and care can recover and live normal lives with low chances of any long-term effects, according to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine (FDA) and the AHS. Heartworm disease is not contagious between pets.

Current guidelines from the AHS also recommend that using an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered mosquito repellent can increase protection from heartworms by repelling mosquitoes. Additionally, pet owners should remove any standing water to eliminate mosquito breeding

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ...

sites and restrict outdoor walks to daylight hours, avoiding prime mosquito feeding periods.

There is no FDA-approved treatment for killing adult heartworms in cats or pet ferrets, but heartworm prevention medication treatment is available. Pet owners should consult their veterinarian regarding the best options for these pets.

Although cats are susceptible to heartworm disease, they naturally resist infection, unlike dogs. However, because of complications with diagnosing and treating heartworm infection in cats and ferrets, misdiagnosis or failure to diagnose is common.

Due to their smaller size and other factors, cats can become acutely ill even from a single-worm infection. They may never show any clinical signs of heartworm disease, and even a small number of heartworms can cause severe disease and are potentially life-threatening.

The FDA warns pet owners that heartworm prevention medications require a veterinarian's prescription. Internet sites or stores that sell these medications without a prescription are not legitimate sources for heartworm prevention medication. They could be selling dangerous products with toxic ingredients of unknown origin that could harm pets.

At a pet's annual veterinarian check-up and vaccination visit, there should always be a yearly heartworm blood test done on all dogs seven months and older. Annual testing ensures that any infection is detected and treatment can begin to minimize harm to the pet. If the pet is negative for heartworms, the vet will provide the prescription for monthly prevention medication.

Experts remind pet owners that no drug is 100% effective and even one missed monthly dosage could result in an infection, especially for pets living in heartworm-hotspot, Florida. The sunshine state is ground zero for heartworm disease that has reached epidemic-confirmed case rates throughout the warm, temperate Southeastern U.S. Unfortunately, some isolated pockets of drug-resistant heartworms have also emerged here.

The AHS invests hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in heartworm research and provides updated recommendations. The society publishes free current guidelines for Canine and Feline Prevention, Diagnosis & Treatment of Heartworm Disease on its website.

Celebrating West Point Founders Day

The West Point Society of North Florida hosted its annual Founders Day Dinner at San Jose Country Club on Friday, March 10. This year marks the 221st anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in March 1802.

The guest speaker was the academy's 61st Superintendent Lieutenant General Steve Gilland, joined by his wife, Betsy. Both were 1990 graduates of West Point. The society hosted more than 75 graduates, several current cadets and their parents, as well as rising North Florida cadet candidates who will join the Class of 2027 this summer.

The ceremonial "Beat Navy" cake-cutting was performed, per tradition, by the youngest and oldest West Point graduates present: Josh Cooksey (Class of 2014) and Robert Morris (Class of 1954). The society's president, Zach Peyton, served as emcee.



Josh Cooksey, Robert Morris and Steve Gilland



Steve Gilland with Brielle, Daira and Jeff Hall



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Zach Peyton, Steve and Betsy Gilland, Tammy Roper, Jason Kirk and Bill Beiswenger



Steve Gilland with members of the West Point Parents Club of North Florida

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JUNIOR RESIDENTS

Scott Named Player of the Year



PHOTO CREDIT RICHARD NICHOLS

Taliah Scott

Taliah Scott, senior at St. Johns Country Day School with a high school career 2,733 points, has been named the 2022-2023 Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Player of the Year. She is only the third player from the First Coast to achieve this honor.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the court, distinguishes Scott as Florida’s best high school girls basketball player. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as

sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners.

“Taliah is a great basketball player,” said St. Johns Girls Varsity Basketball Coach Yolanda Bronston. “But she’s more than a great basketball player. She’s a National Honor Society member, and the hardest working, most committed player I’ve ever coached.”

Scott has volunteered more than 100 hours of her time teaching basketball to young girls at summer camps, weekend training sessions, and the local YMCA. She has also donated her time at the Ronald McDonald House of Central Florida and as a peer mentor. As Player of the Year, Scott receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade’s social impact partners.

The “In” Club

Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida Honor Youth of the Year



Paul Martinez, Cornell Penn, Rona Welch, Youth of the Year Jordyn W. (elementary school), Ambrosia C. (high school), Tyler H. (middle school), and Lendward Griffin

Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida announced the winners of their local 2023 Youth of the Year competition, the organization’s highest honor for young leaders, at the Youth of the Year Awards Ceremony and Alumni Club Reception on Feb. 23 at the Florida Blue Conference Center. The winners are Ambrosia C. for the high school category, Tyler H. for middle school and Jordyn W. for elementary. All three local Youth of the Year winners attend THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club in St. Augustine.

As the local high school Youth of the Year, Ambrosia will represent Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida in upcoming state, regional and national competitions through Boys & Girls Clubs of America. She will also be the local teen spokesperson, advocate and voice of her peers throughout the year.

“If not for the club, I know there are many kids and teens who would get into trouble out on the streets. Instead, these young people have a safe, fun place to be after school where they get their academic and emotional needs met. I’m thankful for the club staff who lend a helping hand and show all young people that they have a chance to be their best selves and dream big, no matter how out of reach their dreams may seem. They encourage young people that they can do anything they put their minds to doing,” Ambrosia said.



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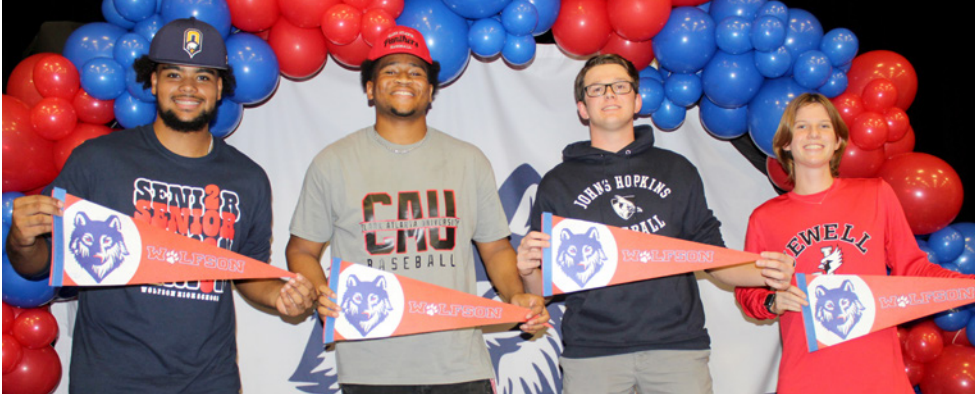
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Four Wolfson Seniors Sign Letters of Intent



Mo Alamo, Alijah Robinson, Joseph Rainbolt and Kaili Wery

The first Wednesday in February traditionally marks National Signing Day, when high school seniors sign letters of intent to play a particular sport for a member school of the United States National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This year, Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies proudly recognized four of its student athletes who will play at the college level.

The Wolfpack student body, family members, teammates, friends and faculty gathered at a special assembly to celebrate the following four seniors:

- Mo Alamo, who will play baseball for Oklahoma Wesleyan University in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.
- Joseph Rainbolt, who will play baseball for Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.
- Alijah Robinson, who will play baseball for Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia.
- Kaili Wery, who will play lacrosse for William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri.

Balek Shines Knowledge on SJEDS Students



San Jose Episcopal Day School (SJEDS) alumna Mary Beth Balek returned to campus in March to speak at the Library Media Center and share her experience with sixth graders. Balek spoke of her journey to earning a degree in civil engineering at North Dakota State University and her successful career in solar energy. Her presentation covered a range of topics, including her early influences, importance of preservation, class requirements and the science of solar farming.

Balek's presentation provided soon-to-be SJEDS graduates with a unique perspective on the opportunities available to them after graduation, and how the skills they learn in school can be applied to a wide range of fields. Her story served as a powerful reminder that with hard work and dedication, anything is possible.

Bolles Students "Break a Leg"

Upon well-wishes of "break a leg," Bolles middle school students enchanted audiences with their production of "Once Upon a Mattress: Youth Edition," an adaptation of the beloved musical famously anchored by actress Carol Burnett. The musical, a spin on the classic fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea," was filled with raucous comedy, melodic songs and powerful performances from Bolles middle schoolers. The performances were held Feb. 24-25 on the Parker Auditorium stage at the Betsy Lovett Arts Center on the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus.



The cast performing in Once Upon a Mattress: Youth Edition

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Wolfson Band and Chorus Earn Superior Ratings

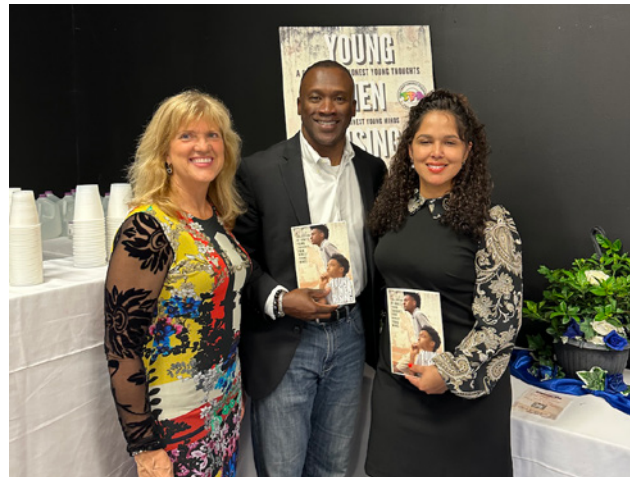


Wolfson Chorus

The 37-member Wind Ensemble of Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies performed with absolute professionalism at the District 17 Music Performance Assessment (MPA) on Friday, March 3. The band earned a rating of Excellent for their on stage performance and a straight Superior for sight reading with numbers like “Scholastics March” by Joseph Compello, “Benediction” by John Stevens, and “American Cameos” by Jay Dawson. The public is invited to hear them play again at Wolfson’s annual Spring Concert on May 16 at 6 p.m. in the school’s auditorium.

Wolfson’s Concert Chorus and Chamber Singers recently attended the Florida Vocal Association District 4 MPA. They, too, received a rating of Excellent for on stage and a straight Superior in sight reading. Conversely, the Treble Chorus earned a Superior rating on stage and an Excellent for sight reading; they will perform again at the State MPA in Tallahassee later this month.

The Performers Academy hosts book signing after publishing an Anthology of Poems written by teen authors



City Council President, Terrance Freeman, with the TPA and AMI Duval Executive Directors

The Performers Academy (TPA) hosted a book release attended by many of Jacksonville’s biggest supporters of education, the arts and youth services. Together they celebrated the publication of an anthology of poetry written by 15 teen boys enrolled in AMIKids Middle School, an alternative education environment for children with troubled pasts.

The event represents the culmination of work through Project P.O.M.E (Product of My Environment), a unique curriculum designed by The Performers Academy to teach poetry writing as a path to mental health and emotional healing.

Lessons in contrasting trending pop culture with classical literature and poetry allow teens to learn to express themselves

in a healthy way. In addition, the students practice their writing and public speaking skills by creating original poems and then sharing with the group. The workshops are conducted for high-risk youth using poetry and other creative writing to guide the young voice towards its own empowerment and to furnish participants with the internal tools that it takes to positively show up for self in often discouraging environments. The learning objectives are accessible and adaptable for all students and can be monitored by the teaching artist and classroom teacher. The outcome for students participating in this workshop series is self-empowerment, especially the courage to tell one’s own story and challenge society’s narrative.

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Flipper Friends

Assumption Catholic dives into dolphin experience

Assumption Catholic School students enjoyed their annual third grade field trip to Marineland in St. Augustine on Thursday, March 9. Along with third grade teachers Mrs. Alligood, Mrs. Elliott and Mrs. Plemons, parent chaperones and students got to enjoy an interactive experience with the dolphins and trainers.

The three classes mimicked simple commands performed by the trainer, and delighted at the dolphins' performance response. For many, the highlight of the day was the ability to touch the dolphins up close. They also had classroom time and got to practice a real-life dolphin "rescue." Called a mock stranding, the dolphin rescue teaches students how to help a dolphin if they come across one stranded in the wild. They work as teams to call rescue, keep the dolphin cool with water and even carry away the dolphin on a stretcher.



Marian Darling, Stella Fullerton and Allie Kling perform a dolphin "rescue."

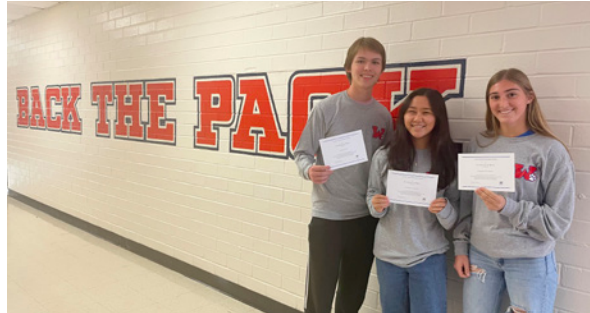


Students Devan Sylvestre, Marian Darling, Christian Singletary, Levi Dillow, Daphne Duncan and Sophia Gjergji dance alongside the dolphins.



Group shot

Wolfson Celebrates 3 National Merit Finalists



Cameron Day, Charlotte Caccam and Campbell Scharer

Three senior students at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies have been named National Merit Finalists. Those Wolfpack members are Charlotte Caccam, Cameron Day and Campbell Scharer.

They are three of the only 15,000 students in the United States who have been recognized as finalists of the 1.5 million students across the country who completed the 2022 PSAT/NMSQT qualifying test for entry into the scholarship competition.

Bright futures await Charlotte at Harvard University in Massachusetts, Cameron at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado, and Campbell at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

For his thoughts on the National Merit Finalist honor, Cameron said, "First and foremost, it is a great honor to be recognized on a national level. On a more personal level, it is very rewarding to see all the effort that I have put into my academics over the years paying off."

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Torkzad Team Takes to Space



Celine Torkzad and Elaine Giles

Celine Torkzad, Class of '27 at St. Johns Country Day School, proved her ideas are out of this world when she participated in a 4-H program, 4-H In Space: Mission Command Team. Torkzad is a member of the winning team of Go For Launch! 4-H In Space, and the team's experiment will be flown to the International Space Station on SpaceX-27, which launched Wednesday, March 15, 2023.

"Through participating in the 4-H In Space: Mission Command Team program, three Clay County youth were able to explore the future of space exploration and space industry jobs, meet an astronaut, and work with other 4-H youth to create a science experiment to test out an idea on how to make living on the moon and Mars a reality for humankind" said Elaine Giles, 4-H STEM Extension Agent with UF/IFAS Extension Clay County.

Through the program, students explore STEM and space topics while working on a viable experiment design that could be successfully researched in space. Torkzad's winning team, team Space Goats, consisted of Torkzad along with Krish Nangia, Cove Searle and Nolan Williams. Their experiment will look at the effects of microgravity on the growth of spirulina in space. It is being developed in partnership with Higher Orbits payload integration partners Space Tango.

Team Space Goats' experiment will be flying with three other Go For Launch! student experiments aboard SpaceX-27, bringing the grand total of experiments sent to space from this program to 17. Torkzad's is the first from St. Johns Country Day School.

"It was certainly my pleasure to work with these future architects of our space industry. They will shape our country's future in space," said featured Astronaut of Go For Launch! 4-H In Space, Jim "JR" Reilly.

Cultural Diversity Curates at Bolles



Bolles students in St. Augustine for Afro-Latino trip.

Bolles upper school students embraced cultural diversity through the recent celebration of Japanese Week, enjoyed alongside exchange students, as well as the exploration of the historical contributions of Afro-Latinos by Bolles' Spanish students.

During this year's Japanese Week, Feb. 27-March 3, students enjoyed dynamic, educational videos about Japan and listened to Japanese music during the change of classes on the San Jose Campus. The week was highlighted by the participation of three exchange students from the Keio School in Japan. During their visit, the Keio students enjoyed taking classes alongside their host students, visiting local landmarks and attending school functions, including athletic games and the Upper School Winter Dance. They also added their valued perspectives in activities that ranged from practicing calligraphy to making Japanese rice balls called onigiri.

Students in Spanish 4 and 5 traveled with members of the Bolles Black Student Union on Feb. 23 to St. Augustine to explore Fort Mose State Park, the first free Black settlement in North America, and the Best-Richardson Museum of the African Diaspora. At the park, students were given the site's history by a guest speaker from the Fort Mose Historical Society, and they collaborated in groups to complete a digital scavenger hunt. The group then visited the Best-Richardson Museum of the African Diaspora, where they were treated to a presentation from founder Gigi Best, who described her own journey with African-American history, culture and literature, as well as her exploration of her ancestry.

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Rotarians raised bets, while raising funds



Rotary Club Members and guests enjoyed poker with friends, pictured are Jeanie Taras with Teri Wanamaker, Traci Jenks and Renee Parenteau

The Rotary Club of Jacksonville gathered members for a fun, Gatsby-themed night out at bestbet, the region's poker attraction for a No Limit Hold Em' event. The glitzy evening, chaired by members Pete Hicks and Pete Denholm, will help raise funding that goes back into the community in many forms, by way of the Rotary Club of Jacksonville Florida Foundation, Inc.

The evening event was held March 2, at bestbet, at 201 Monument Road in the Arlington area. Patrons, both experienced and inexperienced, learned 'when to hold em'...and when to fold em', all in one night.

Winners of the evening were Tim Burrows, Sadat Jaffrey and David Rey, who placed first, second and third in winnings, respectively. The support of the Foundation will help in the disbursement of grants and other programs aimed at enriching the quality of life of citizens in Jacksonville and other portions of the world, where giving is helping fight polio and providing aid in devastated areas, where Rotary funds help mitigate disaster impacts as well.

Corks and Coughlin

The Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Hosts Annual Wine Tasting Gala



ET Thalerand with Coach Tom Coughlin



Charlie Hunt and Caitlin Brunell

More than 800 wine enthusiasts, gourmets, philanthropists, friends and local celebrities joined two-time Super Bowl-winning Head Coach Tom Coughlin at Venue 841 on the Downtown Jacksonville Riverfront for the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Wine Tasting Gala on March 2. Attendees had the opportunity to sample food from some of the area's top restaurants, enjoy a selection of hundreds of wines, and bid in an exclusive silent auction that included rare wine, sport memorabilia and travel packages. Proceeds benefited the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund, which provides financial, emotional and practical support for families tackling childhood cancer. To date, the foundation has provided more than \$17 million in financial assistance to more than 5,000 families.

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BY KERRY SPECKMAN
Resident Community News

April is National Volunteer Month, and if you're one of the 60.7 million Americans who formally volunteer, thank you. Our community is a better place because of you.

Giving back to the community also comes with significant benefits not just for the organization or individuals receiving assistance but also to the volunteers themselves.

Volunteering can improve your health — both physical and mental. People who volunteer find a sense of meaning and appreciation in the work they do, which can lead to reduced stress and decreased physical and mental health issues like heart disease, high blood pressure, anxiety and depression. It provides a sense of purpose and allows you to gain valuable experience. And by volunteering you are creating new relationships and strengthening existing ones. By participating in a positive activity together, volunteers grow closer to each other and the community members they are serving.

As beneficial — and necessary — as volunteering is to our community, not all of us have the time or the resources to devote to an on-going volunteer position. Not to worry, my good-hearted neighbors. There are plenty of other ways to give back without the commitment of becoming a full-fledged volunteer.

- The most obvious way to support local charities is to give money. It can be a one-time gift, a recurring pledge or, if you're feeling really generous, add a charitable bequest to your will.
- Another no-brainer is donating clothes and shoes to a local thrift shop or church.

Give Back and You'll Get Back.

"Local's Care" explores what it means to "live local" and how we can help each other make our community even stronger by supporting each other. Send your ideas, questions, topics — and even your complaints — about living local and showing our neighbors we care to editor@residentnews.net.

(Pro tip: Make sure they are accepting donations before you pack them up.)

- Purchase items from an organization's wish list, like Wolfson Children's Hospital and Friends of Jacksonville Animals, and have them shipped directly. You don't even have to leave your house.
- Leave books at a little freelibrary or non-perishable items at a mini food pantry. (Check out littlefreelibrary.org and littlefoodpantry.org for locations and keep an eye out for them while you're exploring the neighborhood.)
- Contribute art supplies or other classroom necessities to your child's classroom. (Better hold on to any book donations for the time being. Wink-wink.)
- Patronize businesses that give back to the community like V Pizza, that donates free meals and other resources to individuals undergoing cancer treatment and their families; Bitty & Beau's Coffee, that employs individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and Hamburger Mary's, that hosts Charity Bingo every Monday with funds raised going to local non-profits.
- Become a member of a cultural organization like MOSH or the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens or give a membership as a gift. (Bonus: Members get free general admission for a year and other perks.)
- Give blood. In just 30 minutes, you can save two lives.
- Attend a special event like Fin Fest, benefitting the Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center, coming up May 13 at Timuquana Country Club. (Pick up a copy of our free Social Date Book and Charity Register, and you'll find plenty other charity events to choose from. And don't forget to bid on those silent auction items!)
- Buy gift cards from local nonprofits like Theatre Jacksonville or Goodwill.
- Join Target Circle (it's free) and earn votes for local charities to split \$15,000 quarterly. Recent recipients include Volunteers in Medicine, Girls Who Code and NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness).
- Talk to a friend or share a post on social media about a nonprofits that is important to you.
- Finally, eat at one of 14 Jacksonville restaurants, including bb's, Biscottis, Black Sheep, Carmines Pie House, European Street-San Marco, The Garage, Hamburger Mary's, Lola's Burrito Joint and Restaurant Orsay, on April 27 for Dining Out for Life. As part of the event, participating restaurants are donating a minimum of 25% of sales to NFAN (Northeast Florida AIDS Network).

And for those of you who are interested in an ongoing volunteer experience, there are more than 50 nonprofits located in The Resident's service area ranging from animal rescues to art galleries including:

AIDS Memorial Project of Northeast Florida: jaxaidsmemorialproject.com, Aging True: agingtrue.org, American Red Cross: redcross.org, Angels for Allison: angelsforallison.org, Animal Care and Protective Services: bit.ly/COJACPS, Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside Hospital: healthcare.ascension.org, Baptist Medical Center: baptistjax.com, Boy Scouts of America: nfcscouting.org, Champion Women: championwomen.org, Changing Homelessness: bit.ly/changinghomelessness, CIL (Center for Independent Living): ciljacksonville.org, Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens: cummuseum.org, DLC Nurse & Learn: dlcnl.org, Family Support Center: fssjax.org, FemArt Gallery: femartgallery.org, Friday Musicale: fridaymusicale.com, Friends of Jacksonville Animals: friendsofjaxanimals.com, Friends of the Library: jaxpubliclibrary.org, Gateway: gatewaycommunity.com, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council: girlscouts-gateway.org, Girls on the Run: gotrnefl.org, Greenscape: greenscapeofjax.org, Garden Club of Jacksonville: gardenclubjax.org, The Honey Pot Bike Collective: facebook.com/honeypotbikes, Hope at Hand: hopeathand.org, Hope Haven: hope-haven.org, Hunger Fight: hungerfight.org, JASMYN: jasmyn.org, JCA: jcjax.org, Junior Achievement of Florida's First Coast: northflorida.ja.org, Junior League: jljacksonville.org, Kamp Kitter: kampkitter.com, LifeSouth Community Blood Centers: lifesouth.org, The Lotus Flower Project/Kamala's K'loset: thelotusflowerproject.org, Love Cleans: instagram.com/thewelljax, Memorial Park Association: memparkjax.org, Murray Hill Preservation Association: murrayhilljax.com, Museum of Science and History: themosh.org, Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition: nefhealthystart.org, One Blood: oneblood.org, Pine Castle: pinecastle.org, PFLAG: pflag.org, Riverside Arts Market: riversideartsmarket.org, Riverside Avondale Preservation: riversideavondale.org, Renaissance Jax: renaissancejax.org, Ronald McDonald House Charities: rmhcjacksonville.org, San Marco Preservation Society: smpsjax.com, St. Johns Riverkeeper: stjohnsriverkeeper.org, Stronger than Stigma: strongerthanstigma.org, Theatre Jacksonville: theatrejax.com, Wolfson Children's Hospital: wolfsonchildrens.com, Yellow House: yellowhouseart.org, Yoga 4 Change: y4c.org.

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FROM MY EMPTY NEST PERCH

BY SUSANNA P. BARTON
Resident Community News

Last month, we wagged our tails with gratitude for all the house pet friends in our neighborhoods. This month let's give some love to the creatures who make their homes in hidden dens, nests and holes and share the dark, wild spaces beyond our fences and hedges. As author Maurice Sendak said in his famous children's book, "Let the wild rumpus start!"

First, I acknowledge this could be one of the more controversial "Thank You Notes" columns. I will say straight away I LOVE seeing foxes in our neighborhood and consider them a harbinger of good fortune. I am grateful they exist. They remind me that nature was here before my pollen-covered yard, weeds and old landscaping. You may not feel this way. You might have small crusty white dogs or chickens that have been taken out by foxes, hawks and other wildlife. I am so sorry that was your experience. But it does not diminish the gratitude I feel for these furry, feathered neighbors and I plan to prattle on about them for at least a few more paragraphs. So, if this offends you or compels you to call your local wildlife removal service in an angry panic, save us all an apoplectic moment and just. Stop. Reading.

So back to the foxes. They are beautiful, mythical animals. From time to time, a skulk will take up residence on an empty lot in the neighborhood. Life is good when this happens. They scream bloody murder at each other at night, which is invigorating and makes us feel like we are pioneers living on the edge of wilderness, like the Duttons from "Yellowstone." If you're willing to wake up before sunrise — especially on trash days (which is now WEDNESDAYS, by the way) — you will encounter them loping across the streets from

one box bush and lamp shadow to the next, often pausing to lock their gaze with yours — if you are lucky and still and awed.

I feel lucky when I see foxes on early morning loops through Granada. I always stop and admire their saunter. There's something so purposeful and regal about their neighborhood walkabout. Like the rest of us, they're just trying to provide for their families — and like most of us, they can get down on some fresh chicken, too, which unlike humans, gives foxes a real bad rap.

Sadly, this fox-magic is usually a short-lived experience. Empty lots make way for new homes, concerned residents make calls for extermination or the foxes simply make their way to another neighborhood — and then it's boring and quiet in our neighborhood again for a long spell. I'm always happy, though, when they return. I love watching nature win.

My friend, Laura Carriere, sent me photos recently of a coyote sneaking around a neighbor's yard near Vale Orchard and San Jose Boulevard. My reaction was "omg, cool!" Her response was, "Is it though?" While I like it when nature reclaims its territory and messes with our sense of comfort boundaries, I can't deny it imperils our beloved small dogs, cats and chickens. Something to consider, I suppose.

Raccoons are another story. They are smart, and super cute with freakishly adorable tiny hands — but they are very messy. They love trash days more than foxes do and are not shy about pilfering through your cans for the good stuff. We have family in Ortega who spent months trying to keep raccoons out of their trash and I'm not sure how that was resolved, but it was a process. I do think if you make your trash cans inaccessible, raccoons eventually will move on and rankle someone else's litter program.

Possums are not my favorite either, but they can provide some evening entertainment

when you let the dogs out in the backyard, and they are discovered. Like foxes, they scary scream. A ruckus always ensues if dogs are involved. I'll never forget our springer spaniel, Bud, prancing out into the floodlights with a possum in his mouth. We hollered and stomped for Bud to drop the darn thing — you should have seen that creature's death-defying performance. Creepy. But very Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom, nonetheless. It was definitely more exciting than those run of the mill squirrels and rats, which tend to build nests in our crawl spaces before they die and leave gaggy bad smells — and take up residence in Karen, my pristine little Lexus. (Yes, this happened and yes, it was TERRIFYING.) I am generally NOT grateful for squirrels and rats. Or skunks. Or snakes. I did see some nutria at that gamey pond behind the Walgreens on St. Augustine Road a few years ago and I was grateful their habitat was a good three miles away from my house.

Bring on the birds, though. There's nothing more bucolic than watching cardinals and bluebirds and other small birds zip around through the trees and bushes. I even appreciate those confused song birds that start chirping at too-early-thirty right by my bedroom window, calling sunrise in the dark of night when I want to sleep in. And don't get me started on the bigger birds — the owls, the hawks, the eagles. Their presence way up in the tallest trees and streetlights is regal beyond measure. Plus, they airlift those nasty rats out of our yards and into their gullets. I also love seeing egrets and herons and lost seagulls swooping over busy roadways and medians, just doing their Florida thing.

And I'd be totally remiss if I didn't mention the TURKEYS — yes TURKEYS — we had in San Marco a few months back. These neighborhood sightings made my turkey-hunting-husband go mad. He stalks these big dumb beautiful birds all year long in the deep Florida and Georgia woods, sleuthing out their habits and their mating patterns and their turkey ways so when turkey season opens in the spring he is READY. All that, and those gobblers were strutting around just down the street in Alexandria Oaks Park. That's some nerve.

Ducks are also pretty cool. Apparently, a couple of ducks have made their way back to the Duck Pond south of San Marco Square. That's good news, because what's a duck pond without ducks? Their return also means the

water is regaining its health, which also is good news. I wonder if the same is true for Riverside Park? I haven't been there in a while, but I think it had some work to do in the water cleanliness and duck friendliness department.

I'll end on alligators. Nothing represents #FloridaLife more than these large reptiles of the Crocodylian order. They remind us that Florida nature — especially in the swamps and waterways around our beautiful neighborhoods — is powerful and wild, uncompromising and robust. Alligators are the species nominated by their animal peers to keep us human folk in check. That's why every now and then they gobble up a big dog or take down an adult human or small child loitering too close to the water's edge, even at Disney World. So, we go on about our lives, mindful of their presence, respectful of their strength — and cognizant of our pets' proximity to them.

Wildlife is a blessing — a "wild rumpus" of the highest order — and we are fortunate to share our community with so much of it.

Susanna Barton secretly hopes she'll see a sasquatch, yeti or chupacabra on an early morning walk one day because that would really take living in this neighborhood up a notch. She has lived in a house on Granada Park with her husband David, their children Ben and Marley 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. She really enjoys embarrassing-mom-walk exercising later in the morning, napping, reading and catching some rays. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.

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THE WAY WE WERE

Mary Virginia Skinner Jones

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Mary Virginia Skinner Jones came into the world at St. Vincent's Hospital in May 1928 as the youngest child and only girl of Chester and Virginia Skinner, natives of Georgetown, South Carolina. Four years later, her father founded Meadowbrook Farms Dairy in San Jose Forest.



Mary Virginia Skinner Jones in 2022 at her childhood home on Meadowbrook Farms

The family home sat adjacent to the dairy, and so it was on that land that Mary Virginia, a tomboy, shared the adventures of farm life with her two older brothers, Chester and Brightman, the middle names they were referred by. She loved growing up in the country, where she always felt safe. Playing in the haybarn, riding the horses used for herding cows, roller-skating on the milking floor, and floating in wooden washtubs down Christopher Creek were among the simple pleasures the three enjoyed while their mom welcomed folks through the back kitchen door to share her home cooking, as these were the days of the Great Depression.

At 13, while sitting with her family in their study and listening to a sporting event on the radio after Sunday service at Riverside Park Methodist Church, Mary Virginia heard the interrupting news announcement that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Soon after, Chester and Brightman entered the military, and high school girls started dating the Navy men training in Jacksonville.

Mary Virginia's early schooldays were spent at South Jacksonville Grammar School, now The Lofts San Marco. Her parents had intended for her to attend Bartram School for Girls afterwards, but Mary Virginia persuaded them that co-ed Landon High would suit her better. She joined the Lionette drill team and the cheer squad, finding it great fun. Often, her cheer friends would drive over the red bricks of Old St. Augustine Road to practice in the Skinners' front yard. They usually performed locally at what was then called Fairfield Stadium, but once, they cheered at the Miami Orange Bowl.

By 14, Mary Virginia was working in the family business, driving a tractor to bring cornstalks from the field to the silo so they could be used as fodder. At the end of the week, she enjoyed standing in line with the other workers to collect her paycheck. Sometimes, Mary Virginia would hunt on that land with her dad. One day, she killed two turkeys with a single shot.

At 16, with both brothers off to college, Mary Virginia gained use of Little Henry, the family's black Model A Ford. It had four doors and plenty of room for transporting her friends to San Marco Theatre for a movie, to the drug store next door for sodas and snacks, or the lanes nearby for bowling. Though Mary Virginia considered herself somewhat shy, by senior year in 1945, she was so popular that she won the Best All Around trophy and had been elected president of Senior Girls.

With psychology as a major and sociology as a minor, Mary Virginia completed college at Agnes Scott in Atlanta, Georgia. Upon returning home, she taught third grade for a short while at what was then duPont Elementary School. In January 1952, at the same Methodist church she would attend with her family, she married Mac Jones, whom she had met on a blind date.

The newlyweds moved to Elizabeth City, North Carolina, where Mac was stationed as a midshipman. While there, their first child, Malcolm, was born. The family of three moved back to Jacksonville, and Mac joined his father at Graham-Jones Paper Co. near Myrtle Avenue and Logan Street. They soon became a family of four when their second son, Ned, was born, and then five with the birth of Ginny.

Mary Virginia raised her three children in the same San Jose area where she and her two brothers had grown up. As a family, they were active members of Southside Methodist Church. Once her youngest had entered school, Mary Virginia picked up a tennis racket and has been a member of San Jose Country Club's team ever since. She'd be on the court whenever she wasn't serving in one school leadership role or another.

Just as she used to cheer for Landon's team in years prior, Mary Virginia would cheer for Malcolm on the football field, Ned in the pool, and Ginny on the volleyball court. All three had inherited her love of sports. She'd even feed honey to Ned's swim team at meets, whatever it took to support her children and their activities, whether locally through



Mary Virginia Skinner Jones on hunting day, circa 1940



The Skinner Family, 1940s: Charles Brightman, Virginia Brightman, Arthur Chester, Arthur Chester Jr., Mary Virginia

elementary and high school, or out of state for championship events at their respective universities, where she later established endowment funds in their names.

Now, at 94, Mary Virginia retains her love of sports and fun. She's still a Gator fan and has plenty of paraphernalia to prove it. She still joins her tennis team for Thursday lunches when she's not able to play, and she would never think to boast that none but she had one time dined with Virginia Wade on Wade's English estate. She's part of a two-table bridge club with a group of lifelong friends, including Nancy Mahon and Nancy Edwards.

Mary Virginia still travels, too, and can be packed in five minutes, just as Mac had always joked. She says that the destination doesn't matter. Sometimes, it's to their home in Cashiers, North Carolina. Sometimes, it's shopping in Atlanta, Georgia. Sometimes, it's to Ginny's in Tampa. Soon, she'll be traveling to the graduation of one of her five grandchildren in Birmingham, Alabama. In earlier days, she had sailed on the QE2 to Europe and flown to Japan.

For many years, Mary Virginia had volunteered as a Pink Lady at St. Luke's Hospital and served on the board of the Y.W.C.A. She supports Seamark Ranch, The Bolles School and the Jacksonville Symphony, too, believing that every city should have one. She holds membership in the Watsonia and Hibiscus Garden Circles of the Garden Club of Jacksonville.

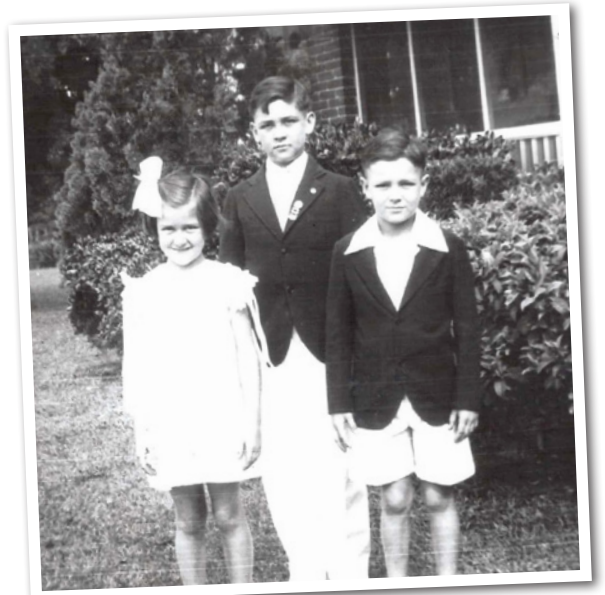
Though in her modesty Mary Virginia usually prefers her generosity be concealed, her lineage is woven into the fabric of the city. Portions of the thousands of acres of land that her father had owned hold today's St. Johns Town Center, Seven Pines, and the University of North Florida (UNF) — making the Skinners instrumental in Jacksonville's history and particularly that of the school, as Mary Virginia and her brothers donated the land for UNF's original campus and subsequent expansion. She

has enjoyed seeing Jacksonville grow into the city it is today.

Since Mac died in 2019, Mary Virginia has sold their San Jose Forest home and purchased an Epping Forest townhouse, which she had renovated. She described her new neighbors as kind and sweet. She introduced herself to

them by hosting a cocktail party for everyone on the street. She walks through the neighborhood daily, visits the mansion for a glass of wine occasionally, eats well always, works out with a trainer regularly and drives herself wherever she needs to go.

Mary Virginia has always loved fulfilling the role of hostess and cooking for her close friends, whom she chooses wisely, as well as her large family, which now includes eight great-grandchildren. With the approach of her 95th birthday in May, she is planning a luncheon for 50 girlfriends and a gathering for family at her home in Atlantic Beach.



The Skinners: Mary Virginia, Chester, and Brightman



Landon High School, 1945.
Mary Virginia Skinner Jones is 3rd from right, 7th from left



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BY PEGGY HARRELL JENNINGS
Resident Community News



COMMUNITY! The dictionary has a lengthy definition of community which includes fellowship and commonality, but the best definition is summed up as: SAM SALEM and WHITEWAY DELI. Since 1975 after taking over his dad's business in Riverside, Sam and Hanan Salem with his sister Anne and his mother, have welcomed generations of people from all over Jacksonville to enjoy the sandwiches and camaraderie of the family-owned gathering place. Known far and wide for the "best tabouli on earth," and the friendliest faces, Whiteway was a home away from home for several generations. On his retirement in 2016 Sam stated in his Letter to Whiteway friends: "Three things make Whiteway special: the familiarity, the comradery and the food. People call Whiteway an institution. I don't see it that way. Our customers are the real institution."

PHOTOGRAPHS! Over 70,000 photos of customers and family were displayed on the walls, posters and in albums. Stuart Boline said, "These photos reflect Sam's love of people and his great spirit. Sam touched so many lives and always beamed a smile to all he knew and those he just met." Dr. George Trotter remarked, "Sam was so dapper and pleasant. He and his family are wonderful people. We joked about the photos. I always said, "NO. I'm on the witness protection program."

Sam Salem was born in Ramallah, Palestine and immigrated to the U.S. in 1957, grew up in Riverside and graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1969. Besides helping his father

after school at the deli, he played basketball and baseball at Willowbranch Park with his brother Charles and friend Billy Finch. Billy recalls going into the Salem's store 60 years ago to buy comic books and an RC Cola. He said, "I walked from our house on Forbes Street to their house on Green Street and Mr. Salem would drive Charlie, Sammy and me to John Gorrie and then take Anne to Lee. Sammy was always 'the little brother.' We played ball all over the neighborhood. My dad would stand at the deli counter and talk to Mr. Salem for hours." Cousin Louis Ballantyne wrote in a remembrance that he enjoyed courtside chats at Boone Park while watching Ryan, Paul or Hanan play tennis. "Sam's favorite topics were The BOSS, Daytona 500, cycling and of course, family." Pat Hazouri, a high school friend, remembers that Sam loved fast cars and scooted around in his Rambler. (Later on, he advanced to a Porsche.)

On a trip to Buffalo, New York to visit relatives Sam met his beautiful bride-to-be Hanan. She told of how they dated long-distance for about a year. "I graduated from high school in June and got married July 26, 1975, then moved to Jacksonville. Eventually my parents followed me here. We have an extended family, and our customers were our family."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43 ...



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MEMORIES: There is an outpouring of stories and love for Sam and his family on social media and the Legacy website all noting his generosity and kindness. The Salems have three children — Amanda Salem Mackoul, Ryan, and Paul (Jamie.) True to form Sammy and Hanan (called Cedo and Tata — Arabic for grandfather and grandmother) posted photos of their grandchildren — Jackson and Alden Salem and Olivia and Frank Mackoul on social media at every opportunity — jumping on trampolines, getting awards, acting and singing in productions, swimming, playing basketball, at the beach, the zoo, pretend sword fighting at Riverside Park and Sam riding bicycles with the kids. Each photo is a testimony to love and family devotion. When Frank was born Sam remarked in a post “another joy in my life.”

Bicycling as well as tennis was a lifelong passion for this exuberant man. Riding buddy and friend Tony Nasrallah explained that they started out at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church at 6:30 am twice a week and traveled 10 or 12 miles through Ortega Forest and back. The men have a long history as Nasrallah’s grandfather and uncles developed the Nasrallah building which is Whiteway Corner. Tony reminisced about skipping school at lunch time and hiding out in the back room at Whiteway to eat.

THE BACK ROOM: The gathering place for reunions, planning sessions, including meetings for the Jacksonville Artists Guild, board meetings (as well as a hideout for errant schoolboys.) Jim Love held his monthly business sessions at Whiteway. Daisy Miller Davidson recalls family meetings in the back room. Called River Club West, Whiteway was the gathering place for the “high rollers, the Big Shots and the everyday Joes.” Davidson said, “The regulars

— prominent men in the community — sat at the center table and talked. You could get all the local news just by listening. All the critical moments of my life have been accompanied by a sandwich from Whiteway. Every day while a student at Riverside Baptist Day School I ate a sandwich from Whiteway (Sam was so handsome — all of the girls had a crush on him); we got food for picnics, for football games, every occasion. Sam always knew what you wanted, remembered everything. The first place I went after my engagement was to Whiteway. Of course, Sammy took a photo. While recovering from a car wreck and hobbling around on crutches I’d go in the back door and eat in the kitchen to avoid the crowd. His mother would be in the back chopping parsley for the tabouli. I’ve walked in, no wallet, he’d say pay me later. You were fed in so many ways. Not just physically but spiritually. Sam and Hanan and Sam’s sister Anne were the heart of everything.”

THE SANDWICHES: Hanan said the first named sandwich was “The Amanda Special” named after their daughter. Then there was “The Anne Beard Special.” Shaara Swallow said she would drive all the way from the beach to get the “Dr. Long.” The Drs. McClow, Clark and Berk ordered 20 sandwiches a week for their meetings according to Becky Rood who worked for the group at St. Vincent’s. She said, “I always got the same thing Turkey, tabouli, and slaw on pita bread with the famous potato salad. The “Dr. Berk” sandwich. After Saturday rehearsals, dancers from Baggs Studio of Ballet chasséd down King Street to Whiteway for lunch. But it wasn’t just a sandwich. Sam’s compassion and kindness provided nourishment for the bodies and spirits of his Whiteway friends.



The Salem Family

THE LEGACY: Besides his personal contribution to people’s lives, Sam was a trustee for MOSH, active in St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Riverside Avondale Preservation Society, the Park and King Merchants Association, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, the Ramallah American Club and was supportive of the former Riverside Arts Festival. Cookie Davis remarked, “He believed in his community and supported it.”

Sam’s service, with several hundred attendees, was held at St. George Antiochian Orthodox

Church with the Very Reverend Father Kamil Al — Rahil officiating and daughter Amanda delivering the moving eulogy. He is survived by his siblings Lily, Anne, Charles (Sharon) and his wife, children and grandchildren.

Sam fed Jacksonville with wonderful food, his smiling face, his humor and stories that made you smile. A friend commented that he hoped to touch as many people’s lives in a positive way as Sam did.” Gordon Terry stated, “He left this world a little better with a life well lived.”



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