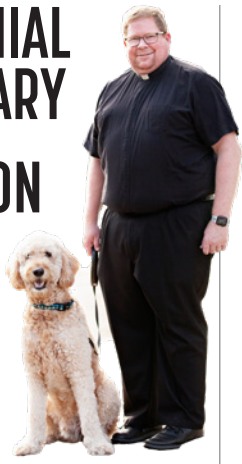


A CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY *for* ASSUMPTION

Alumni, parents and former and current staff gathered at the Assumption Catholic School campus to celebrate the milestone anniversary. SEE MORE ON PAGE 35



VOTER INFORMATION

What to know

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Election Day for the Duval Unitary First Election is coming up on March 21.

By now, voters impacted by the new court-ordered Jacksonville City Council District map — approximately 200,000 voters, according to the Duval County Supervisor of Election's (SOE) office — should have received their new voter information card displaying their updated district and designated polling precinct.

Early voting for the March 21 election begins March 6 and runs until the 19th. Registered voters can visit any one of the 18 early voting sites to cast their ballots during that timeframe. These locations are open Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. A full list of the early voting sites can be found at www.duval elections.com under "Early Voting."

On the 21st, voters must visit their designated polling precinct to cast their votes.

Should a single candidate fail to obtain a majority vote in any race, the top two candidates with the most votes in that race will go on to a runoff election on May 16.

In preparation for the election, the SOE held a Logic and Accuracy Test, as mandated by Florida statute, on Friday, Feb. 24. During this test, election staff members displayed 19 voting tabulators in operation, chosen at random from each Jacksonville City Council District and one early voting site, to ensure "the machines are working properly and counting votes accurately." Four "high speed central count tabulators" were tested as well. Conducted before the Election Canvassing Board, the test was also open to the public and members of the media.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



IN HOMES BY MARCH 5, 2023



For those who traverse the city's traffic arteries through San Marco, beneath the overhead glass walkways of Baptist Health's medical complex, there's a vibrant new streetscape that's garnering a lot of attention. The untitled mural, commissioned by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, has a backstory and it also had its official dedication Feb. 16 -- almost a month to the day after its official completion.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



A star-filled evening

HENDRICKS AVENUE ELEMENTARY'S ANNUAL READING WITH THE STARS

Local stars and celebrities visited Hendricks Avenue Elementary on Tuesday, Jan. 24 to read to students and their parents for HAE's Reading with the Stars, an annual event hosted by the HAE Parent Teacher Association as part of the school's Literacy Week. Stars included former Jaguars player Josh Scobee, Jumbo Shrimp and Chick-fil-A mascots, local ballerinas, a SWAT officer, a firefighter and San Marco Dreamette owner Brian Roes among others.



SULZBACHER CUTS THE RIBBON on final piece of its urban rest stop program

On Feb. 14th, 2023, Mayor Lenny Curry and Sulzbacher CEO Cindy Funkhouser cut the ribbon on Sulzbacher's new Urban Rest Stop Social Services Bus, a joint venture of the City of Jacksonville and Sulzbacher. This mobile unit is the final piece of the Urban Rest Stop Program. It is designed to bring "Housing and Hope on Wheels" to those currently experiencing homelessness in downtown Jacksonville by providing social services, including case management and housing placement. This bus complements Sulzbacher's Healthmobile, launched in 2020, which provides health outreach services to this same population.

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Making the Case for Cumber for Mayor

In my nearly two decades of living in Jacksonville and working with elected officials as a past Chairman of the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, in the legal community as a member of the Jacksonville Bar Association Board of Governors, and in the business community as a small business owner, I have never been as excited as I am right now to vote for such an accomplished and well-rounded candidate for Mayor of Jacksonville.

Councilmember LeAnna Gutierrez Cumber checks every box imaginable (and more) for the ideal candidate to be our next Mayor. First, she has outstanding academic credentials – including earning her law degree from one of the world's top law schools. She served as a public school teacher, labored on some of the most complex civil cases at one of the leading international law firms, and gained substantial transportation policy experience working at the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) under President George W. Bush, and she serves us admirably on the Jacksonville City Council. What excites me most about the prospect of Councilmember Cumber as our next Mayor is her business experience and the corresponding vision she has for Jacksonville. As a fellow small business owner, I know she has personal knowledge of the daily challenges all business owners face. Further, she has unbelievably deep relationships with

some of the nation's most influential business leaders who are ready to invest in Jacksonville. She is aware of the barriers to investing in our city (especially unduly burdensome taxes) and will begin eliminating them on her first day in office. I am excited about the transformation our city will make under her leadership.

In addition to knowing and working with Councilmember Cumber for over a decade, I have similar experience working with the other candidates vying to be our next Mayor – especially Daniel Davis. A vote for Mr. Davis would be a grave error. In almost a quarter century of running for office I am unaware of any meaningful accomplishment or any articulable vision he has for our city. In 2016, I traveled with the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, the Jacksonville Chamber, and Haskell Corporation to the Farnborough, England International Air Show. This is a multi-day International Aerospace Conference and Exhibition. Our Jacksonville Delegation, including Daniel Davis, sat through countless business development meetings with executives from Embraer, Lockheed Martin, and many, many other aerospace firms we were looking to recruit and attract to Cecil Airport. I was disappointed by what I perceived as his lack of interest and contribution to these meetings. It is no wonder why so many CEOs of companies headquartered in Jacksonville are personally

supporting Councilmember Cumber.

The time is now for Jacksonville to vote for competence – and not for someone who has been a long-time friend. We have made this mistake often and have yet to fulfill our potential as a result. We now have the chance to vote for Councilmember Cumber who has sterling credentials and experience. After her first term on the City Council, she is known for her legislative achievements, constituent service, and passion for women & children's issues. She demonstrated the courage to pass one of the nation's most comprehensive sex trafficking bills, and sounded the alarm on our abhorrent 47% reading scores in our Duval County Public Schools while the other leading candidates in this race sat in silence.

Please join me in supporting Councilmember LeAnna Gutierrez Cumber for our next Mayor of Jacksonville. She's the unmistakable conservative choice who will finally help our great city maximize our natural resources and competitive advantages.

Patrick Kilbane, Jacksonville

*Past Chairman,
Jacksonville Aviation Board of Directors*

*Commissioner,
Fourth Judicial Circuit Nominating Commission*

Why Jacksonville Needs Mayor LeAnna Cumber

As a longtime resident, mother, conservative activist and fundraiser in Florida, its imperative voters unite their support behind Councilwoman LeAnna Cumber for mayor.

LeAnna is smart, a mother, former schoolteacher, business owner and attorney who can navigate a successful vision for Jacksonville from businesses down to the countless improvements our city needs.

As Einstein once stated: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result." We have watched political insanity at City Hall for 8 years with virtually no benefit to the community.

This mayoral primary boils down to this: It's us against them, The Sandlot Team (the taxpayers) VS. The Establishment (\$ cronyism).

Crime is up, loud mufflers and drag racing abound, blight and trash are everywhere, panhandlers are at every corner, median or intersection, the homeless have taken over downtown and San Marco, and so called "massage" parlors and gangs have proliferated in our neighborhoods. It seems that nobody cares. Why the indifference? It is BECAUSE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, they cannot be bothered. By establishment I mean, the current mayoral administration and those in the council who work in tandem with their self-serving agenda. The puppeteer with strings to many office holders and councilmen is the mayor's political consultant, (in case you were wondering) and he is Daniel Davis's campaign manager for mayor -Tim Baker. Baker was also named as a "central figure" in the failed plot to sell the JEA.

Mayor Curry is supporting Daniel Davis. If you like being on the receiving end of cronyism and all your new taxes, that's what you'll get more of.

If you liked doubling the gas tax for "infrastructure-" (you can't make this up), they are throwing \$260 million of taxpayer's money at the Riderless

Express to nowhere. Think of how our money could be spent ... more police officers, repair the roads, create new parks, replenish the trees throughout our city, maybe a homeless center with job training.

This is not Bedford Falls anymore, it has become Pottersville but we can turn it around. There is work to be done to restore the beauty and unique character of Jacksonville and the St John's River.

A resolute leader is needed to steer the school board to focus on educating students, i.e.- reading, writing and arithmetic. We must compensate teacher's salaries equally at public and classical charter schools; pay higher salaries to those who have 4 yr. college degrees and are tenured. These children are our future leaders- virtue, excellence and experience matters.

A mayor's job is to focus on the needs of the entire city, not a monopoly of a few businessmen, lobbyists and corrupt consultants who benefit fiscally at taxpayer's expense, more often to the detriment of our community.

This network of elites must be stopped, as there is no attack they won't launch, no matter how dishonest, if someone becomes an obstacle to their agenda.

Other cities are thriving with sensible development and beautiful park systems. We can do this! The city of Jacksonville is a gem, but City Hall cannot run on autopilot with compromised leadership. Something is systematically wrong with Jacksonville and it has to stop.

Voters must take back the fort and send a strong message - enough is enough. LeAnna Cumber is the mayor Jacksonville needs now. Let's do it.

Nancy Peek McGowan

*DeSantis for Governor
State Finance Team 2018 and 2022*

*"Women for DeSantis"
State Chairman 2018*

*Ron DeSantis For Congress
State Finance Co-Chair 2011-2012*

Follow the leader with ethics, judgement and character

It is past time to become informed and push back against the status quo smoldering at Jacksonville City Hall. In fact, it's time to imagine a dynamic future for all - not just a select group of connected individuals.

With citizens still reeling from the unresolved JEA scandal, four recent tax hikes, escalating crime and families burdened by a public school system that has been struggling for decades, we must have a change.

Can Jacksonville finally compete regionally and nationally, provide safety for all families and create true partnerships with our vibrant business, military and educational communities for the benefit of all?

Yes.

With a dynamic mayor, we can finally combine our unparalleled natural and business resources, geographic location and the untapped potential of every citizen to excel and live safely.

That's why I am proud to support LeAnna Cumber for Jacksonville mayor.

LeAnna is an ethical City leader. She is a successful business owner, attorney, and former teacher who will be the mayor to provide the leadership and vision to finally achieve what candidates and elected officials have opined about for decades while serving up mediocrity.

Get to know LeAnna Cumber. It's time to become informed. Her vision is compelling and achievable. Her passion for Jacksonville is infectious.

I am convinced that she has the tenacity, experience, work ethic and proven conservative track record on the Council to achieve success and safety for families and businesses. I'm proud to support her.

Cindy Graves

*Gubernatorial Appointee
2018 to 2022*

*Past Chairman of the
Duval County Republican Party*

*Past President of the Florida,
Federation of Republican Women*

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WWW.VOTEJOECARLUCCI.COM

Paid for by Joe Carlucci, Republican, for Jacksonville City Council, District 5.

STREET MURAL; CULTURAL COUNCIL | CONTINUED FROM COVER



Artist Ansley Randall with Cultural Council Executive Director Diana Donovan

For four days, crews worked alongside renowned local artist, Ansley Randall, completing the 47-by-48-foot ground-based

mural after several consecutive nights of exacting preparation and application of coatings for installation.

The art installation found at the corner of Nira Street and San Marco Boulevard is the first of many colorful murals to be commissioned by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville to enliven intersections citywide in partnership with City entities. As part of the Art in Public Places (APP) program, the murals have a multiplier effect by promoting art and placemaking and offering quality work opportunities for local artists, all while helping to keep asphalt from deteriorating. This unique piece of art has created a colorful commute of semi-permanent paints, shapes and abstract objects.

During the presentation to dedicate the mural, Diana Donovan, executive director of the Cultural Council, thanked officials for their collaboration, assistance and execution on the project.

“I wanted to thank the leadership for making this happen...I also want to thank our partners in the room. I know that we have DVI, Public Works representation and

leadership, we have 1st Choice – our engineering and development firm that partnered with us on this, our APP (Art in Public Places) chair and APP representatives as well as our board of directors,” shared Donovan.

The project was initiated by District 5 City Council Member LeAnna Cumber, who was also present for the ceremonies. “This is very long in coming...I just remember my best friend in high school painting Times Square, rather than people looking up, they were looking down,” said Cumber of the ground-based art and its impact on the viewer. “If we can do it [Public Art], where we are also getting a transportation and safety dual-purpose, I think that’s just incredible.”

Alongside Cumber were officials from the city’s Public Works Department and subcontractors who helped facilitate and advise in crosswalk revitalization to complement asphalt crack repair and specialty pavement coating applications while art is installed.

Randall, who now calls Springfield home, has been instrumental in championing designs reflecting Jacksonville neighborhoods. “If anything, art is a cool thing — you either

love it or you hate the piece — it’s getting you to think outside the box,” Randall said, while describing the uniqueness of public art and her creative process. She founded Jax Is Rad in 2017, a platform which highlights Jacksonville artists, musicians and businesses that contribute to the city’s cultural identity. While accomplished here locally, Randall has murals that also enliven other major international metropolitan cities such as Miami, New York and Bristol in the United Kingdom.

“We are delighted to engage a broad audience of all ages through Ansley’s vibrant artistry and are grateful for our partnership with the City of Jacksonville, which supported infusing public art into improvements that enhance the safety and walkability of the San Marco intersection,” shared Donovan.

The dedication took place at noon in Conference Room 3B at Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center, at 1301 Palm Avenue. Following the speaking engagement, tours were led to view the art from the glass walkways over San Marco Boulevard. To learn more, visit the Cultural Council at culturalcouncil.org.

TaxSlayer Gator Bowl sponsorship extends through 2027

After an announcement extending its Gator Bowl sponsorship through 2027, TaxSlayer has become the “longest tenured entitlement sponsor in Gator Bowl Sports history.”

Gator Bowl Sports Board of Trustees and TaxSlayer made the joint announcement at the end of January. TaxSlayer has been the title sponsor of the Gator Bowl since 2012, which also marked the company’s first foray into the college sports sponsorship space. This latest extension “places TaxSlayer as the eighth longest running title sponsor across college football bowl games.”

“We express our gratitude to the TaxSlayer family for extending their sponsorship of our historical post-season bowl game,” said Gator Bowl Sports President and CEO Greg McGarity in the January press release. “As we enter our

second decade of this sponsorship, we are blessed to work alongside such an incredible partner as TaxSlayer.”

“The TaxSlayer Gator Bowl is an exciting opportunity for us to engage with college football fans across the country,” added Jamie Saxe, TaxSlayer CEO, in the same release. “We’re honored to connect our name with this prestigious event and to reach such a significant milestone in Gator Bowl Sports history.”

According to the release, the 78th TaxSlayer Gator Bowl saw Notre Dame square off against South Carolina on Dec. 30, 2022. That game was the bowl game season’s fifth-highest attended game, behind the CFP National Championship, Rose Bowl, Peach Bowl and Fiesta Bowl.

The date and time for the 79th TaxSlayer Gator Bowl will be announced in May.

Jacksonville awarded federal grant for safe streets program

The City of Jacksonville’s Transportation Planning Division has been named a grant recipient by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to fund a safety plan “targeting zero bicycle and pedestrian traffic fatalities by 2030.”

The city was one of 473 Action Plan Grant recipients selected by USDOT in this first round of funding for its Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) competitive grant program.

A February press release announced the city’s Transportation Planning Division “would be awarded “\$280,000 in federal discretionary grant funding.”

Jacksonville’s action plan is “Vision Zero Action Plan: Targeting Zero Bicycle and Pedestrian Fatalities by 2030 in a Designated Safety Focus City.” According to the release, “development of the plan is the first step in reaching a target of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries among all roadway users by the year 2030.”

Thirty-four Florida applicants, including North Miami Beach, Key West and Atlantic Beach, received funding, equalling a total allotment of more than \$19 million for action plans in the state of Florida.

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Send an e-mail to:
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Carlucci, Roberts participate in District 5 candidate forum



District 5 candidate Morgan Roberts and moderator Kent Justice look on as Joe Carlucci, the other District 5 candidate, speaks to the audience during opening statements at the candidate forum.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The two candidates for District 5 — Republicans Morgan Roberts and Joe Carlucci — joined News4Jax anchor Kent Justice last month in a candidate forum to discuss various issues facing both the San Marco community and the city of Jacksonville.

The forum took place on Thursday, Feb. 9 at the San Marco Community Center.

Justice facilitated the conversation, which was a more casual, informal setting than a traditional debate. Both candidates were allowed a three-to-five-minute opening to introduce themselves to the audience.

“I love this area, I want my boys to love this area, but we need to continue to have progress in this area,” said Carlucci in his introduction. “We need to continue to have the right kind of leaders in this area.”

Carlucci used his introduction to outline five issues he plans to address if elected: economic development, crime, flooding, the train horn and parks.

“I’m ready to lead you,” he added.

In her introduction, Roberts said, “We’re surrounded by opportunity and we are facing some challenges. We’ve got the crime, affordable housing infrastructure and managing all this growth. We’re a large city and these problems are complex issues.”

Roberts detailed how she plans to implement her experience working for a large, complex company to “transform” the system.

“I’m not here to just participate in the system,” she said. “I’m here to bring my skills and transform it.”

Following the opening statements, Justice led the candidates in conversations surrounding six topics: managing growth

and preserving the community, parks and public spaces, the new stadium for the Jacksonville Jaguars and the ratio between public and private investment, homelessness and flooding.

Early voting will begin on March 6 until the 19th. Registered voters can visit any one of the 18 early voting sites to cast their ballots. On March 21 — Election Day — voters must visit their designated voting precincts.

For more information regarding early voting — including early voting site locations — or to find your designated voting precincts, please visit the Supervisor of Elections’ website (www.duval elections.com).

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A front row seat to the riverfront's future

City, DIA partners with local organizations for "Riverfront 2025: A Look Ahead"

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) partnered with the city's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services to host "Riverfront 2025: A Look Ahead" on Wednesday, Feb. 8.

According to a DIA press release, the free community event was held in collaboration with the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Riverfront Parks Now and Build Up Downtown to inform residents about the progress of "destination parks and projects slated for development on the Northbank and Southbank of Downtown..."

These projects include Shipyards West, Artist Walk, RiversEdge and Riverfront Plaza.

Last month, The Resident reported on both Shipyards West Park and RiversEdge: According to The Resident, the DIA is expecting conceptual designs for Shipyards West Park, a 10-acre

park that will sit along the Northbank between Catherine Street and Hogans Creek, sometime in the first quarter of this year. In another February article, The Resident reported that RiversEdge: Life on the St. Johns — across the St. Johns River along Jacksonville's Southbank — is roughly halfway through its infrastructural work.

"Downtown Jacksonville is on the brink of creating a connected network of public spaces that will add to our region's quality of life. Destination parks, public-private developments, and private developments all play a role in this effort," said Director of City of Jacksonville Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services Daryl Joseph in the release. "Together with our collaborators at the Downtown Investment Authority, Build Up Downtown, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and Riverfront Parks Now, we look forward to sharing updates with our most important stakeholders: Jacksonville's residents."

Plans dashed for Southbank apartment complex

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Jacksonville will have to wait longer than expected to see new construction start at 835 Museum Circle after the redevelopment agreement between Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) and Miami-based developer Related Group was terminated earlier this year for the anticipated RD River City Brewery apartment development.

The City Council approved the plans for the development in July 2021. It was expected to feature an eight-story residential complex with 327 multi-family units, an attached parking garage and an on-site restaurant and bar with indoor and outdoor seating.

Demolition of the former River City Brewing Company took place last summer in preparation of the coming development, however this past January, the deal for the incoming apartment complex was cancelled.

In an e-mail summarizing the situation, DIA CEO Lori Boyer wrote, "...the developer, Related Development, LLC (Related), did not meet performance schedule deadlines in the contract and all extensions allowed under the contract had been provided. This terminates the City's obligations to pay incentives but does not alter the Developer's previous approvals of construction plans and they could proceed at any time."

"We're disappointed that this project didn't get under construction before interest rates increased

and inflation impacted construction costs, but ultimately it could be a win," Boyer added. "We may end up with a project that better complements the adjacent St. Johns River Park and our vision for a vibrant, walkable, and mixed-use Downtown."

The Related Group will work on a new design/proposal for the site, Boyer said, and the DIA anticipates receiving that this spring.

Boyer added that this delay will not impact the work currently underway at nearby Friendship Fountain or the St. Johns River Park. Work at the fountain is expected to wrap late spring, early summer this year.

The Related Group declined a request for an interview and/or comment.

“We’re disappointed that this project didn’t get under construction before interest rates increased and inflation impacted construction costs, but ultimately it could be a WIN We may end up with a project that BETTER complements the adjacent St. Johns River Park and our VISION for a VIBRANT, walkable, and mixed-use Downtown.”

- Lori Boyer, DIA CEO

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Former Reddi-Arts location in San Marco prepares for new chapter



RENDERINGS CREATED BY GROUP 4 DESIGN, INC. GRAPHICS COURTESY OF DDRB FINAL APPROVAL PACKET.

An aerial rendering depicting the four proposed stand-alone buildings at 1037 Hendricks Avenue.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The whimsical murals along the exterior of the former Reddi-Arts building at 1037 Hendricks Avenue in San Marco have been painted over and the walls are now a pristine white as the buildings await a new future under new ownership.

According to county records, Chase Properties, Inc. first purchased the property at 1037 Hendricks Avenue in 2020 for \$1.6 million. Reddi-Arts continued to operate out of the San Marco shop until its new shop was ready. It relocated to Springfield in October 2021.

Just a year later, the property was sold again, this time to Kings Ave Properties, LLC, managed by Allen Stevens, for \$2 million. County records reflect a deed recorded on April 8, 2021. Stevens is the president of Dav-Lin Interior Contractors, Inc.

The proposed project went before the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) for final approval in January 2022. The DDRB presentation packet detailed the partial demolition of the existing buildings on the property and the creation of four stand-alone structures.

“...God bless Reddi-Arts and the beautiful art that they’ve created on site, but we have no transparency, no sense of activity in terms of what’s happening in these buildings,” said attorney Cyndy Trimmer, on behalf of the property owner, according to DDRB meeting transcripts.

The proposed designs addressed that lack of transparency, Trimmer said.

“On Building A, we’re creating this beautiful storefront with transparency there, then you have the opportunity with the breezeway that connects back to Kings Avenue,” she explained. “With Building B, we’ve created this little plaza in front of the building and the green walls and trellises to activate that space. And then honoring the Reddi-Arts site, bringing the mural and that architectural feature onto Building C, and creating Building C, then, with the storefronts.

And that’s one of the crowning features, I think, of this project, is that we have completely, then, brought activity and a sense of excitement to this facade with all of that glazing and transparency there.”

The DDRB granted final approval for the project, with staff recommendations and the applicant’s approved deviation request to reduce the landscape area linear feet requirement from 1,630 square feet along Hendricks Avenue to 661 square feet. Board members inquired about and Trimmer confirmed the inclusion of shade trees along each frontage.

Last July, city records show a permit was issued for “demolition of a portion of retail structure, slab and foundations.” This past January, all necessary inspections were conducted following the demolition and the permit was finalized.

The architecture firm on the project is Group 4 Design, Inc.

In a telephone interview, Stevens said he anticipates work on the project to begin this year, although he does not have a concrete timeline in place at this time.

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GEICO INSURANCE COMPANY

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(VERDICT, 8/5/2022)

PERSONAL INJURY: CAR ACCIDENT

**Names changed to protect client privacy*

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LOCAL GLASS COMPANY,
OUT-OF-STATE GLASS COMPANY*

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Station at San Marco on track to complete this year



Construction on the Station at San Marco is expected to complete by the fourth quarter of this year.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Construction is steadily progressing at The Station at San Marco, located at 1230 Hendricks Avenue.

Work on the mixed-use development began last summer and is expected to wrap by the fourth quarter of this year.

Formerly home to the Florida Baptist Convention near the I-95, the three-plus-acre site will soon feature a 345-unit residential complex — offering studio, one- and two-bedroom units ranging from 557 to 1,414 square feet — with luxury

amenities as well as street-level retail space.

Jacksonville-based Block One Ventures, LLC is the developer for the project with FaverGray Co. as the contractor and Atlanta-based Dynamik Design as the architectural firm.

Most recently, the project completed the phase one drywall; currently, cabinets and granite are being installed in the development's first tower, as well as exterior finishes. Once completed, the construction will move on to pre-power inspections and HVAC start-up.

Pre-leasing for the residential units is still anticipated to begin in the third quarter of this year. The developer did not have any details to share regarding the retail components of the project.

Southbank rezoning PUD for self-storage facility moves through DDRB

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Conversations surrounding a proposed self-storage facility in San Marco were reignited earlier this year after a rezoning request for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) — Ordinance 2023-0007 — was submitted.

Last year, The Resident reported on the proposed downtown self-storage bill that would allow more self-storage facilities into the downtown overlay. Met with resounding community opposition, that bill was later withdrawn last summer.

Attorney Steven Diebenow represents The Simpson Co., the Atlanta-based developer and PUD applicant.

In January, Diebenow attended a Town Hall meeting hosted by the San Marco Preservation Society (SMPS) at Aspire Church to discuss the project with community members and address their questions and concerns. During the meeting, he detailed the addition of 16,000 square feet of retail space along the ground floor of what is now a mixed-use development featuring four stories of mini self-storage units above that street level, but was still met with substantial resistance from those in attendance.

2023-0007 went before Jacksonville's Downtown Development Review Board (DDRDB) at a Feb. 9 meeting, during which a staff report recommended denial.

During his presentation to the board, Diebenow detailed the reasons why a PUD is appropriate in this scenario, highlighting the "4,000 [residential] units" coming to the Southbank.

"Specifically, our code allows a PUD to be used in order to add a use. We're adding that not willy-nilly. We're adding it because... the market study demonstrates that there is a need for this use..."

DDRDB Board Member Gary Monahan acknowledged that the proposed rezoning was "not an easy contemplation," but he added, "I think as a supportive use, I think the market demands it almost necessary."

DDRDB Board Member and SMPS Past President Linzee Ott stated that while the project did provide "some activation...it is not the type of activation we need a block or two from the riverwalk when extensive, I mean massive, incredible work is being done downtown to activate our riverwalk."

Should 2023-0007 be approved, Ott suggested adding the condition that the

retail square footage remain the same — a condition Diebenow stated the developer would agree to.

"Is there anything we can do from a condition standpoint to try to make this more palatable," DDRB Board Member William Schilling asked. "I don't know what those conditions are, I don't have those answers, that maybe address some of the citizens' concerns and many of them are very, very valid and I don't want those to go overlooked."

“ I THINK, AS A SUPPORTIVE USE, I THINK THE MARKET DEMANDS IT ALMOST NECESSARY.”

— Gary Monahan
DDRDB Board Member

Ultimately, the DDRB voted 6-to-2 to advance the rezoning request on to city council "with a recommendation to approve with conditions."

Despite that advancement, the ordinance continued to meet community opposition at public hearings, first at a Feb. 14 city council public hearing and again at a Land Use and Zoning (LUZ) Committee hearing on the 22nd.

At the Feb. 14 public hearing, Diebenow informed the council and the public that he, on behalf of the applicant, would be seeking a deferral on the matter, as advised by the Office of the General Counsel, because of legislation regarding an alley closure application "that's pending and working its way through the city process."

In a text message, SMPS President Lauren Carlucci wrote that SMPS is in "full agreement" with the staff report presented to DDRB, adding that the residential units "...that have come online since 2019 were considered when the overlay was drafted and in no way affect the appropriateness of storage units as a use at this location."

The LUZ public hearing has been continued to March 22. The Resident will continue to report on the situation as it develops.

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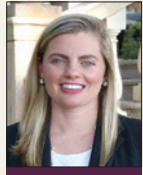
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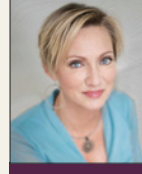
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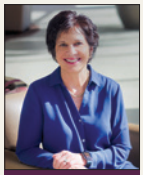
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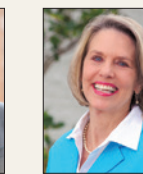
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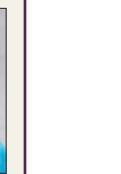
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‘Geography of opportunity:’



Jessie Ball duPont Fund and The Reinvestment Fund present 2022 Market Value Analysis

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Last month the Jessie Ball duPont Fund hosted a community event to discuss Jacksonville’s “housing ecosystem.” To do that, it welcomed

Philadelphia-based The Reinvestment Fund to share its 2022 Market Value Analysis (MVA) for Jacksonville/Duval County.

An MVA, the presentation explained, is “a tool to help residents and policymakers identify and understand the elements of their local real estate markets...[With it,] public officials and private actors can more precisely target intervention strategies in

weak markets and support sustainable growth in stronger markets.”

This is the third MVA The Reinvestment Fund has conducted for Jacksonville.

“We think this is incredibly valuable to understand the real dynamics of housing values here in the city,” said Jessie Ball duPont Fund President Mari Kuraishi.

The 2022 MVA analyzed and discussed a variety of datapoints for the Jacksonville housing market, from median sales prices and how those prices have changed since the previous two MVA’s to how homeownership, rentals, foreclosures and home vacancies have fluctuated in the years between past analyses.

It also identified and discussed “critical themes illuminated by” this year’s MVA.

One of these “critical themes,” noted The Reinvestment Fund President of Policy Solutions Ira Goldstein, is what he calls “the geography of opportunity.”

With the median annual household income in Jacksonville averaging around \$56,000, the MVA underscored the “narrow” areas in the city and county that are affordable for a typical household just meeting the threshold for that average income.

The MVA broke it down further by households earning 80% and 50% of the median household income, showing how the radius of the areas with affordable housing continued to constrict for households with lower incomes.

“We think that these different markets are not only about the housing markets but what they offer to people in terms of access to schools and parks and rec centers and libraries and all the other things that go with space,” Goldstein explained. “If you make half of median income, your geography of opportunity is very, very constrained here.”

The MVA also pointed out that the “geography of opportunity” fluctuates based on race as well, with white residents earning 100% of the median income able to afford “most middle market areas” while Black and Hispanic residents with “typical incomes” have a “similarly constrained geography of opportunity.”

Following the MVA presentation, Jessie Ball duPont Fund Director of Impact Investing Chris Crothers discussed various ways “equitable access to housing” is being addressed in Jacksonville. He highlighted four programs and strategies that are currently underway or expected to begin this year, including the Jacksonville Community Land Trust, the proposed JAX Affordable Housing Fund,

CHDO/CDC Capacity, led by The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida in partnership with LISC Jacksonville and heir’s property work, led by LISC Jacksonville in partnership with Three Rivers and supported by United Way of Northeast Florida.

Later, in an e-mail, Crothers expanded on the importance of the data provided by the MVA, adding that it “can direct policy interventions, as well as investment from the public, private and nonprofit sectors.”

“ WE THINK THAT THESE DIFFERENT MARKETS ARE NOT ONLY ABOUT THE HOUSING MARKETS BUT WHAT THEY OFFER TO PEOPLE IN TERMS OF ACCESS TO SCHOOLS AND PARKS AND REC CENTERS AND LIBRARIES AND ALL THE OTHER THINGS THAT GO WITH SPACE. IF YOU MAKE HALF OF MEDIAN INCOME, YOUR GEOGRAPHY OF OPPORTUNITY IS VERY, VERY CONSTRAINED HERE.”

— Ira Goldstein,
President of Policy Solutions,
The Reinvestment Fund

“...This new MVA shows us that with the appreciating real estate market, there are fewer areas of town that are affordable to residents who have jobs as teachers, police officers, or construction workers,” he continued. “These are jobs that are close to Jacksonville’s median household income—and there are fewer places today where people making a median income can afford to buy or rent compared to three or seven years ago. If we do not act now, it means that many of our neighbors will have no choice but to either move farther out or spend more of their paycheck on housing, making them housing cost-burdened.”

February’s event was recorded and is available in its entirety for viewing on the Jessie Ball duPont Fund’s YouTube channel.

MAPS CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 ...



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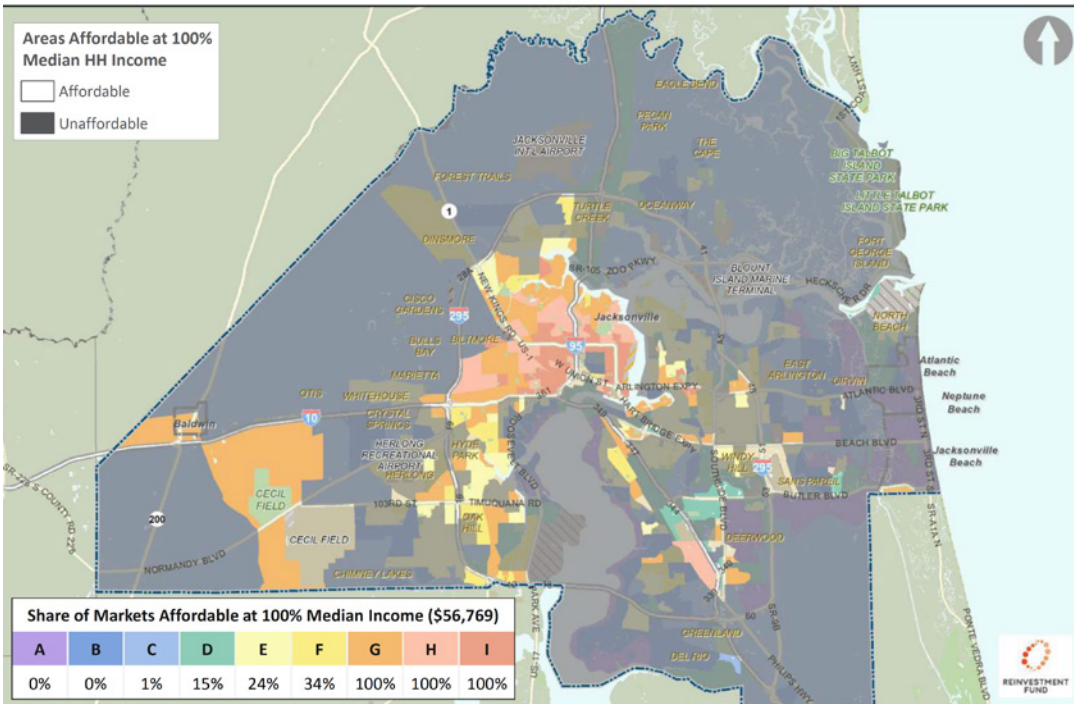
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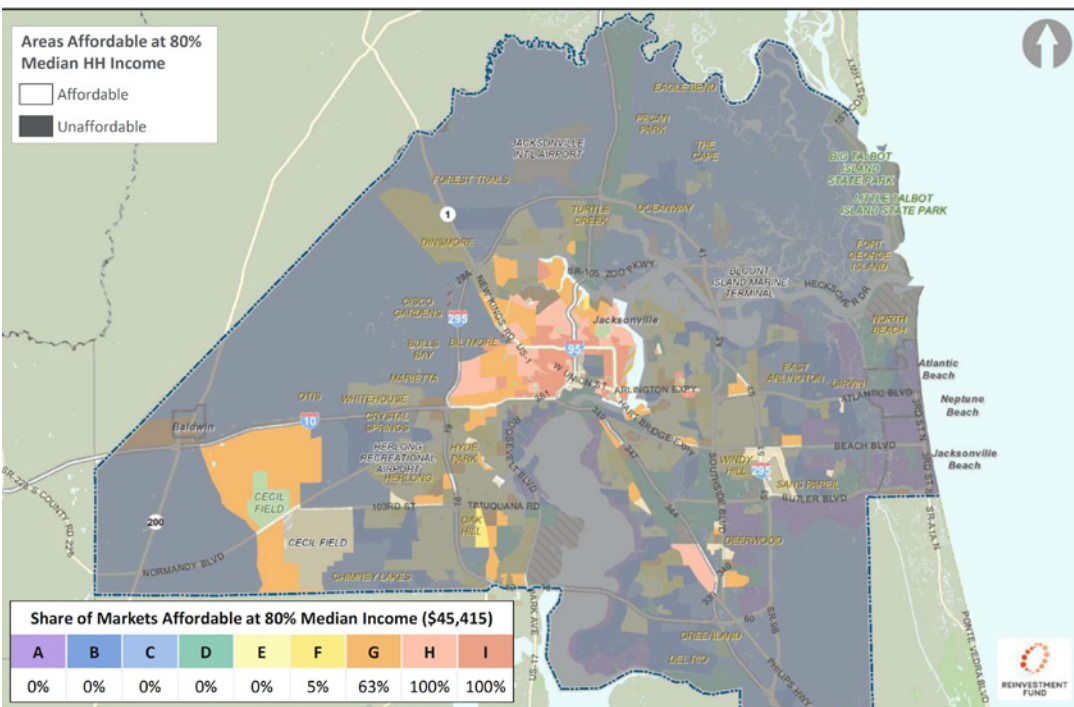
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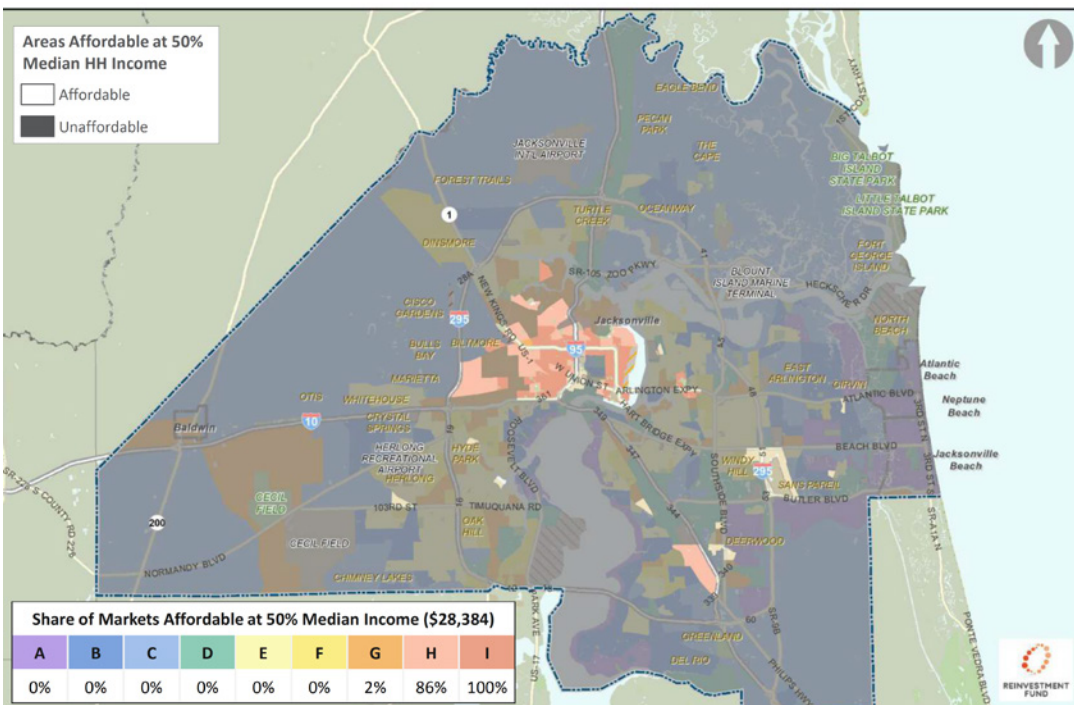
Housing Affordability: 100% Median Household Income



Housing Affordability: 80% Median Household Income



Housing Affordability: 50% Median Household Income



The Reinvestment Fund's 2022 MVA displayed the available areas of affordable housing for households earning \$56,000 (the median household income for Jacksonville) or less in the city's current housing markets.

VOTER INFORMATION | CONTINUED FROM COVER

To view a full list of candidates for all city council districts and countywide seats, or for more information about voting sites and procedures, please visit www.duval elections.com. The following list was taken from the Duval County SOE "Qualified Candidate List," also available on the website.

Mayor:

- Omega Allen (NPA)
- LeAnna Gutierrez Cumber (REP)
- Daniel Davis (REP)
- Donna Deegan (DEM)
- Al Ferraro (REP)
- Audrey Gibson (DEM)
- Brian Griffin (WRI)
- Frank Keasler (REP)

Property Appraiser

- Danny Becton (REP)
- Jason Fischer (REP)
- Joyce Morgan (DEM)

Sheriff

- T.K. Waters (REP)*

Supervisor of Elections

- Jerry Holland (REP)*

Tax Collector

- Jim Overton (REP)*

City Council At-Large Group 1

- Terrance Freeman (REP)
- Eric Parker (LPF)

City Council At-Large Group 2

- Joshua Hicks (DEM)
- Ron Salem (REP)

City Council At-Large Group 3

- Nick Howland (REP)*

City Council At-Large Group 4

- Matt Carlucci (REP)*

City Council At-Large Group 5

- Reginald K. Blount (REP)
- Charles Garrison (DEM)
- Jack Meeks (NPA)
- Chris Miller (REP)
- Nahshon Nicks (DEM)
- Jerry "Tub" Rorabaugh (LPF)

Specific to The Resident readership are the elections for city council representatives in Districts 5, 7 and, in small part, 9. These are the candidates for these districts:

District 5

- Joe Carlucci (REP)
- Morgan Roberts (REP)

District 7

- Joseph Hogan (REP)
- Parrish King (NPA)
- Jimmy Peluso (DEM)
- John Phillips (DEM)
- Kim Pryor (DEM)

District 9

- Shanna Carter (DEM)
- Tyrone Clark-Murray (DEM)
- Celestine Mills (DEM)
- Mike Muldoon (REP)
- TaNita S. Noisette-Woods (DEM)
- Kamren Stowers (DEM)

*These candidates are running unopposed in their respective races.

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An Open Letter to District 5

Over my career, I have had the privilege of working for world class organizations through economic booms and through crisis. Businesses like Wachovia, Wells Fargo, Everbank, and now, Amazon, have taught me many lessons, but none of them is more important than the value of professionalism.

At Amazon, I am directly responsible for a budget and a logistics network many times the size of our city. We connect businesses and goods all across our country. Data based decision making and hard work are essential to making that network function in real time, in the real world.

In many ways, our city is a big business. It has a budget and assets that are measured in the billions of dollars. It has thousands of employees, spread over multiple departments and across a large geographic network. Most importantly, it has over a million customers (taxpayers), who deserve quality services. To achieve this, professionalism is just as important as it is at any other institution. That is why this election is so important.

My opponent, Joe Carlucci, is a good person who has volunteered his time and talent to local groups. His father has a distinguished record and was just re-elected to his 5th term on City Council, unopposed. But a father and son serving together on the same city council is bad business and it's bad for Jacksonville.

All of us can understand the special relationship between a parent and their child. We are called to help them, guide them, lead them. I know this, because I am a mother.

Under Florida's Sunshine Law, all of those interactions would be illegal. Sitting council members cannot have private conversations about city business. Our city council has been sued over this very concern in the past. But, more than the risk of litigation: emotion, favoritism, and influence have no place in the decisions that will affect you and over a million of your fellow citizens. Each and every city council person must be, and be perceived to be, an independent, objective representative.

We are all responsible for making Jacksonville what we want it to be.

Your vote will shape the reputation of our city. We cannot afford to double down on politics as usual.

Morgan Roberts

Candidate for Jacksonville City Council, District 5

San Marco Beer Fest returns to the Square

Local craft brews, live music headline Spring festival

After its successful debut last year, the San Marco Beer Fest is on tap with big plans underway to celebrate year two on Saturday, April 1. Balis Park, in the heart of San Marco Square, will again play host to the family-friendly event — complete with activities and entertainment for all to enjoy — including, this year, four-legged friends.

The San Marco Merchant Association (SMMA), alongside host Aardwolf Brewing Company, is preparing for the local community to come out, join the fun and soak in the sun while embarking on tastings of the finest craft beers in town. The afternoon wouldn't be complete without classic rock by String Theory, who will return to take the stage; following will be John Lumpkin Institute with a performance of jazz selections. Alongside the musical entertainment, 25 vendors will also

be present to offer goods and items for sale, not to mention, food trucks offering a wide variety of dining and beverage options.

With local experts and brewers on-hand, the sudsy event — complete with commemorative tasting glass — is the perfect afternoon for locals to unwind and enjoy their neighborhood. Options outside of the standard beer tastings will also be offered, to include gluten-free options and some non-alcoholic beverages; there's something for everyone to sip on.

"We are excited to expand on the overwhelming success of last year. We feel this year's event will really cement the San Marco Beer Festival as a unique neighborhood staple and community-based fundraiser," shared Preben Olsen, owner of Aardwolf Brewing Company.

The SMMA Board encourages people to come out and meet neighbors, greet shop

owners and mingle with other business partners that value the beautification, maintenance and success of San Marco's merchant corridor.

"The event captures the charm of the whole neighborhood, it's what makes it [Beer Fest] unique...from the beautiful park in the middle of the Square to its shops and restaurants that offer options for enjoyment," said Leah Roesler, SMMA president. "For many beer festivals, you're in a festival space in a parking lot, a grassy field or event venue that doesn't have this charm, that's what makes it special and takes it up a notch."

If your company, organization or family wishes to contribute to the quality of life in San Marco, please reach out to Whitnee Dash-Braithwaite via email — whitneedash@gmail.com to sponsor, donate or participate as a vendor

or volunteer. Ticket purchasing and other details can also be found by visiting sanmarcobeerfest.com, or by visiting Eventbrite.com — enter San Marco Beer Fest for ticketing details.



Episcopal School of Jacksonville announced artist selections for *A Vision for Art* art show

Since its inaugural event in 2019, the *A Vision for Art* five-day art show has gained popularity among art lovers and artists alike. This year's event artist selection committee, led by Preston Haskell, chose 42 unique artists to be part of this year's show. The event will be

held April 21- 25 at Episcopal School of Jacksonville (ESJ), St. Mark's campus. Artists hail from New Orleans, the Carolinas, South Florida, and the greater Jacksonville community. Artistic styles range from traditional oil and acrylic paintings to abstract multimedia pieces.

"With nearly 80 talented applicants, the committee had a difficult time narrowing down selections," said Bebe Alexander, art curator for *A Vision for Art* and art instructor at ESJ St. Mark's campus. "With this curated group of artists, there is truly a style and price point for everyone."

A Vision for Art's public shopping days (April 22-25) are free. To purchase tickets for *A Vision for Art's* Opening Night Celebration on April 21 and to learn more, visit www.avisionforart.com.

Save the date: *Harmon Wages* book signing event

Former NFL player, TV sportscaster and Jacksonville native Harmon Wages is coming to San Marco for a book signing event next month. Wages will be at San Marco Books and More on Saturday, March 25 to sign copies of "*Harmon Wages: The Butcher's Boy*," his recently published biography co-written with Stan Awtrey.

"*The Butcher's Boy*" follows Wages life from birth to present day, celebrating victories and exploring hardships over the course of Wages' 76 years.

The event will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. San Marco Books and More is located at 1971 San Marco Boulevard.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Clifton Thomas named senior director of development for Catholic Charities Jacksonville

Clifton Thomas has been named the new senior director of development for Catholic Charities Jacksonville.

The announcement was shared in a February press release, adding that this new role will allow Thomas to “support major fundraising initiatives for programs, including food assistance, emergency financial assistance, [and] refugee resettlement” among other programming.

To this new position, Thomas brings more than 30 years of experience in leadership and administrative support. Prior to joining Catholic Charities Jacksonville, he managed development and community relations for Life Renewed Counseling, also in Jacksonville, for six years, in his role as executive director. Thomas is active in the Jacksonville community, serving as a Florida State College of Jacksonville adjunct professor and a member of the National Association of Nonprofit Professionals, the Planned Giving Council of Northeast Florida and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

“We’re excited to have Clifton in this important role at our agency, as his experience and dedication to our community will help propel us forward,” said Catholic Charities Jacksonville Regional Director Lori Weber in the release. “We know he will bring positivity, strategy and true leadership to the table as we serve those in need in northeast Florida.”



Clifton Thomas

A swinging success

Daily’s Foundation Annual Charity Golf Tournament raises \$775,000

Golfers gathered at Sea Island last month for two days of golf, a private concert and, most importantly, a good cause: to raise money for the Daily’s Foundation Annual Charity Golf Tournament.

In total, the event raised \$775,000, all of which went directly to various charities: \$600,000 was donated to Nemours Children’s Health; \$150,000 went to the Tim Tebow Foundation; and \$25,000 was donated to HopeKids Nashville, the charity supported by Eric and Jessie James Decker.

“At Daily’s, we believe that building a nicer community begins with a focus on the health and wellbeing of our children and their families,” said Daily’s President and CEO Aubrey Edge in a press release. “Our partnership with Nemours Children’s has allowed us to make a larger impact through their cutting-edge research and targeted care. We are proud



Daily’s President & CEO Aubrey Edge; Nemours Children’s Health Alliance President Jim Digan; Daily’s Director of Marketing Max Glover.

to join them in their mission and look forward to partnering with Nemours for years to come.”

Nemours Children’s Health Alliance President Jim Digan attended the tournament’s event reception to accept the donation, which went towards Daily’s commitment of \$5 million to Nemours Children’s.

Also in attendance at the reception was Charlotte and Micah Lancaster with their son John, who, at two years old, was diagnosed with stage-four cancer.

“World-class care and award-winning physicians make all of the difference when your child is fighting to live,” Charlotte said.

Daily’s partnership with Nemours Children’s dates back to 2019.

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Paul Shorstein returns to Pajcic & Pajcic



Paul Shorstein

Attorney Paul Shorstein has returned to the Law Firm of Pajcic & Pajcic.

In 2008, Shorstein left the firm to practice law with his father, former State Attorney Harry Shorstein. With his father now retired, Shorstein is once again part of the Pajcic & Pajcic team “to focus on personal injury and products liability cases.”

“We can trust Paul to handle the most complex cases,” said Steve Pajcic, who also added that everyone at the firm is “thrilled” to have Shorstein back.

Shorstein’s career began first in commercial loan transactions before moving into the field of criminal law. He served as Assistant District Attorney in DeKalb County, Georgia. He prosecuted “white collar crime, including complex racketeering and corruption cases, as well as other felony cases.”

Trio is tops for Root Ball



Co-Chairs Sally Ragsdale, Debbie Early and Tiffany Davis

Tiffany Davis, Debbie Early and Sally Ragsdale have been named co-chairs for the 2023 Root Ball, hosted by Greenscape of Jacksonville and the Late Bloomers Garden Club. Davis, a San Marco resident, is a Greenscape board member. Early and Ragsdale, Ortega residents, are members of Late Bloomers Garden Club.

The Root Ball, now in its 16th year, will be held Saturday, May 6 at 6 p.m. at The Garden Club of Jacksonville. Themed “Ante Up for Derby Day,” the Kentucky Derby watch party will feature casino games, Derby-signature mint juleps, a bourbon bar and silent auction. All proceeds support the Jacksonville community. Tickets are available at greenscapeofjax.org/events.

North Florida Land Trust interim presidency becomes permanent for Allison DeFoor



Allison DeFoor

Allison DeFoor was named president of the North Florida Land Trust (NFLT) in January after serving as interim president since August of last year.

DeFoor first joined NFLT’s board of directors in 2018. When then-President Jim McCarthy stepped down, DeFoor’s fellow board members asked him to fill the position.

“We are delighted to see Allison take over as NFLT president,” said Matt Ramp, NFLT board chair, in a January press release. “In his brief but extremely active tenure as interim President, he has more than earned the Board’s full trust and proven to be the perfect person for this role at this critical inflection point for NFLT which is poised for unprecedented growth.”

An Episcopal priest, DeFoor has served as the Canon to the Ordinary in the Episcopal Diocese of Florida for the last seven years. With degrees in theology, law and criminology, he’s also served as a county and circuit judge and has been active in conservation throughout the state for much of his career.

NFLT was founded in 1999 with a mission to “preserv[e] and enhanc[e] the quality of life by protecting North Florida’s irreplaceable natural environment.”

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Volunteers in Medicine honors Women with Heart

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) held its annual Women with Heart Luncheon on Wednesday, Feb. 1 at the Florida Blue Conference Center.

Each year, this luncheon celebrates honorees selected for “their commitment to leadership, advocacy, and the health of our community,” explained a VIM press release.

At this 7th annual event, the Women with Heart honorees were Kathy Barbour of Brooks Rehabilitation; Camille Harrison of Florida Blue; Shavondra Huggins, DNP, APRN of University of Florida; Amber L.

Isley, MD of Ascension St. Vincent’s; Akilah J. Pope, MD of the Florida Department of Health; Christine Smith of Baptist Health; and Cindy Stover of TD Bank.

“Each year we celebrate and honor a remarkable group of women who have made noteworthy contributions to the well-being of our community,” said VIM Board Chair Dr. Barbara Darby in the press release. “Our 2023 honorees are truly exceptional by any measure!”

The luncheon raised more than \$110,000, which will go to “free healthcare for the working uninsured.”



Susan Towler, Kristi Aiello and Huson Gilbertstadt Terry Ezell, Bradley May, Dave Medvidofski and Brian Kerr



Eleanor Lynch, Amanda Osborne and Ann Leinenwever



Dr. Diane Raines, Carol Whitefield, Nina Smith and Dr. Theodore Glasser

Riverside Presbyterian hosts 35th annual Capers Gala

Riverside Presbyterian Day School (RPDS) hosted its 35th annual Capers Gala on Friday, Feb. 10.

The gala first began in 1987 in an Omni Hotel ballroom chaired by Jan Andrews and Kitty Crenshaw, both RPDS parents at the time. This year’s event was attended by more than 200 guests ready for an entertaining evening with a good cause: supporting the arts program at RPDS.

Joy McDonald and Caroline Skinner chaired this year’s gala “with support from a dedicated committee of parent volunteers.” The event was held at the Glass Factory and featured live music from the Bay Kings Band, an auction of more than 160 items and dinner from Chef’s Garden.



Annie Roberts, Ginger Greaker, Deena Wallace and Kate Weidlich



RPDS parents and supporters Kelly and Andrew Breiner, Joy and Frank McDonald, Taylor and Stephen Horne



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GOOD FRIDAY

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EASTER SUNDAY

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- 9:30 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt & Flowering of the Cross
- 10:30 a.m. Festival Choral Eucharist

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Souper Bowl win for First Coast children



Attendees each chose a handmade soup bowl, made by students served by Blessings in a Backpack.



Lindsey Gast, Linda Gast and Danielle Guba



Susan Evans, executive director for Blessings in a Backpack, joins student chef Diago Pino, left, and instructor Chef Rey Ocasio-Cosme from the Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technologies.

PHOTO BY @LAURA EVANS

Souper Bowl 6, presented by Sysco Jax, was held on Feb. 8 at the Garden Club of Jacksonville. The event raised more than \$40,000 for First Coast Blessings in a Backpack, which will provide more than 10,000 weekend meals for First Coast children who might otherwise go hungry over the weekend.

The event featured signature soups from more than a dozen local restaurants, as well as three from high school students at the culinary arts academy at Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technologies. More than 210 people attended, each casting a vote for their favorite soup. Culhane's Irish Pub took home the fan-fave vote with its Potato Leek Soup.

Retired Bolles teacher returns to share family's Holocaust experience



Helen Meatte

Retired Bolles teacher, Helen Meatte, returned to the Upper School San Jose Campus to discuss with U.S. History students her family's harrowing stories of loss, suffering and survival in the Holocaust. A second-generation survivor, Meatte described the Holocaust as a slow and deliberate process marked by a pyramid of hate, which begins with prejudiced attitudes that develop into acts of prejudice before intensifying into discrimination, violence and, ultimately, genocide.

Meatte's blonde, blue-eyed mother hid in plain sight in Poland using forged papers and went undetected for five years working at a slave labor camp. Her father's candy shop in Germany was confiscated by the Nazis, but he was able to escape and move to the United States. The rest of their family wasn't as fortunate, with many perishing in Auschwitz.

Meatte is part of the LJD Jewish Family & Community Services Holocaust Survivors Speakers Bureau. She said she feels called to share her family's stories to ensure history doesn't repeat itself.

Robin Pfalzgraf named first executive director for Jacksonville Community Land Trust



Robin Pfalzgraf

The Jacksonville Community Land Trust (JCLT) has hired Robin Pfalzgraf as its first executive director.

The Resident reported on the launch of this nonprofit organization last summer, explaining its mission is to "create homeownership opportunities for low to moderate-income households in order to build 'generational wealth.'"

As its executive director, Pfalzgraf will now begin the process of "making homes available to the individuals or families who desire homeownership within the city of Jacksonville." She comes to the organization with past experience of working with low- and very-low-income families and affordable housing.

"I have been honored to help people meet their housing needs throughout my career," said Pfalzgraf in a February press release. "I see the JCLT as a great avenue to continue to help individuals and families when they do not see a way that they can obtain homeownership."

According to the release, JCLT will soon begin accepting applications.

Let Your Home Blossom



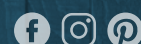
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Couture for a cause

NFSSE's Heart of the Runway

Fashion and fun were on full display at North Florida School of Special Education's (NFSSE) Heart of the Runway Luncheon and Fashion Show.

The 11th annual event was held at the Delores Barr Weaver Therapeutic Equestrian Center on Tuesday, Feb. 14. It was emceed by News4Jax anchor Mary Baer and featured model Heather Crawford from First Coast News.

Models wore the couture fashion of Linda Cunningham by Dillard's.

According to a press release, the fashion show "is one of the ways that North Florida School of Special Education supports its mission of fostering each student's unique abilities revealing their highest potential within an engaged community."

NFSSE culinary team prepared the luncheon's meal, featuring fresh ingredients from Berry Good Farms, NFSSE's urban garden. Entertainment was also provided by NFSSE's theatre program, People Like Us.



Sheila Collier modeling a Linda Cunningham couture gown.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NFSSE



Leslie Jones, Kathy Newton, Erin Skinner, Patty Campbell, Kim Skinner and Mary Virginia Jones



Paige Ray, Laine Silverfield, Ginny Dostie, Jeanie Lynch, Michelle Klimt and Carolyn Mikals



Susan Wingert, Cecelia Carmichael, Meghan Woods, Linda Cunningham, Gina Black and Jennifer Priek



Head of School, Sally Hazelip and Heart of the Runway Honorary Chair, Jennifer Mayo

Free concert held to support the Great Florida Riverway Reunion

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Jacksonville residents kicked back on Saturday, Feb. 4 to enjoy live music at last month's free outdoor concert at the Jacksonville University's (JU) Riverfront Amphitheater.

Hosted by St. Johns Riverkeeper and JU's Marine Science Research Institute, the concert featured local band Snake Bloody Remedy, a "traditional country music and Old Time band."

The live tunes were enhanced by bites from local food truck Twisting Roots.

The concert was one of a series of events taking place on Feb. 4 as part of the Great Florida Riverway Reunion, "from the headwaters of the Ocklawaha River at Lake Apopka to the confluence of the Ocklawaha and Silver Rivers near Silver Springs, to Palatka, near where the Ocklawaha and St. Johns Rivers unite, all the way to Jacksonville where the Great Florida Riverway meets the Atlantic."

"We are excited to provide this opportunity to gather on the banks of the St. Johns River and enjoy a family-friendly concert for an important cause," said St. Johns Riverkeeper Executive Director Jimmy Orth in a press release. "This is also an opportunity for citizens to show up and express their support for restoring the Ocklawaha River, the largest tributary of the St. Johns, which will have a positive impact all the way upstream to our estuary here in Jacksonville."



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Melissa and Karey Stratford



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Former Jag Greg Jones won \$6K for his charity



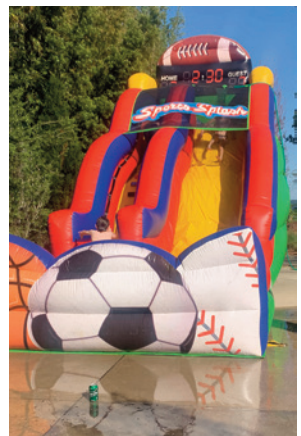
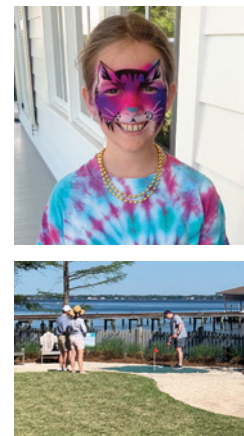
Former Pro Gopher Mark McCumber won \$6K for JALA



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Kristin Keen, founder and CEO of Rethreaded with First Lady, Molly Curry

A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

Rethreaded hosts 12th annual Mukti Freedom Gala



The evening of Rethreaded's Mukti Freedom Gala began with a black carpet champagne toast at The Glass Factory on Saturday, Feb. 25.

Meaning "freedom" in Bengali, the 12th annual Mukti Gala is the local nonprofit's largest fundraising event of the year "both in fundraising and attendance." It was presented by the Jaguars Foundation.

This year's theme was "Through Our Eyes" and the evening included a powerful message keeping in that theme. Guests were able to participate in silent auctions, shopping, raffles and other "opportunities to donate and support Rethreaded's survivor program."

"We are grateful for everyone who participated in the Mukti Freedom Gala this year," said Rethreaded Founder and CEO Kristin Keen in a February press release. "Because of the generosity of the Jacksonville community, volunteers, sponsors and donors, we will be able to provide more than we could have ever imagined for women in our Survivor Development Program."

"We are thrilled to partner with Rethreaded and support their mission to empower survivors of human trafficking," said Jaguars Senior Vice President and Chief Community Impact Officer Whitney Meyer in the release. "The Jaguars Foundation shares the same values of creating positive change in our community, and we are dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering those in need in the Outeast neighborhood, where Rethreaded is located..."

GONE COUNTRY FOR DOWNTOWN

Downtown Vision Inc. hosts 8th annual Downtown Vision Gala

Guests dusted off their hats and kicked up their cowboy boots at Downtown Vision Inc.'s 8th annual Downtown Vision Gala. Proceeds from the evening, which took place on Friday, Feb. 24, went to funding placemaking in downtown Jacksonville. In accordance with this year's theme — "Rhinestone Cowford" — guests attempted to capture their "eight seconds of fame" on the #DJax mechanical bull before hitting one of two dance floors and got down to the tunes of Dean Winter and the Heat under the stars or to DJ Mouth of the South on the indoor dance floor. The evening offered appetizers from downtown restaurants as well as local brews spirits. Guests could capture memories of the evening with photos from a Chic Booth photo booth and participate in the silent auction.



Heather Schatz and Jason Roth



Danielle Moga, Caitlin Doherty, Amber Sesnick and Erin



Taylor Shami, Haley Tinkle, Jennifer and Paul Shami with Tim Pugh



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Jacqueline Stouse and Greg Beach



Cass Owens with Bennie and Jerry Mahanay

Guardo Santos



with Nikki and



Candice and Scott Miller with Strings (the mule)



Lawrence and Alanna Luksha

THE EARLY SHOPPERS GET THE TREASURE

Garden Club of Jacksonville host 2023 Flea Market Preview Party

The Garden Club of Jacksonville hosted its 2023 Flea Market Preview Party on Friday, Feb. 24.

Held at its Riverside Club Room, the preview party was open to members and non-members alike and offered a sneak peek and early shopping for Saturday's main event. Roughly 250 shoppers were able to peruse inventory and grab a bite and beverage while enjoying some tunes. This "gigantic yard sale" offered "enticing items from homes across Jacksonville," including furniture, artwork, books and housewares as well as clothing for men, women and children.



Tawana Brown, Karen Frigo, and Kelly Mixon



Joice Ira and Holly Saenz



Carolyn and James Novelly



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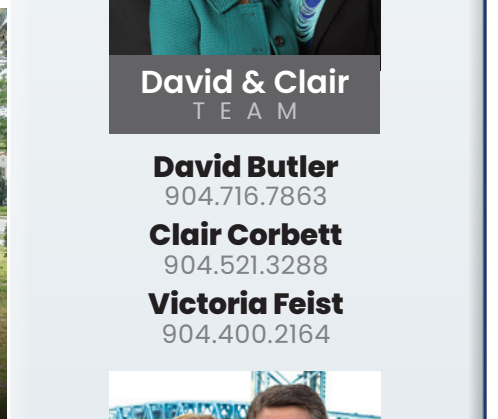
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3BR | 2.5BA | 2,378 SF
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LOCAL FOLKS

Chris & Ashley Woolston

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News



Chris and Ashley Woolston at the finish line



Ashley and Chris Woolston, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Christmas 2020

instructional literacy coach to teachers. Ashley is at Liberty Pines Academy, teaching 6th grade.

The Woolston family includes three rescue dogs. “Winston is 16, and he’s a nightmare. Wendy is 7, and she’s perfect in every way. And Moxie is only 4.” Ashley said. Moxie had belonged to Ashley’s late mother, who had gotten Moxie as a puppy a short time before her passing. Chris and Ashley walk all three throughout San Marco, where they have lived for more than a decade. The five of them frequent Alexandria Oaks Park.

Chris and Ashley are avid travelers. Their list of destinations is lengthy: Bali, South Africa, Thailand, Singapore, Canada, Malaysia, and all around America and Europe. That does not complete the list. “Chris loves hiking, and if there’s an animal, I want to see it,” Ashley said. They’ve bathed elephants, snorkeled with seals, snowmobiled up to Old Faithful, hiked up a volcano at sunrise, and walked the Appalachian Trail. They bring the dogs along to wherever they’re allowed. And if the three must stay home, they have a great dogwalker who pet sits. “The dogs love her more than they love us,” Ashley said.

Locally, too, the Woolstons keep quite active. “Chris is always training for something,” his wife said. Together, they’ve completed several races, including the Gate River Run. They are huge fans of 1st Place Sports, the headquarters that has been supportive of the

couple on their running journey. “They have really knowledgeable staff that help us plan our runs. They’re great,” Chris said.

Ashley coaches cross-country at the school where she teaches. It used to be a simple club, but she turned it into a competitive team. The students are young, so they run 3K instead of 5K races. “Running is such a good skill for anybody to learn,” Ashley said. Bishop Kenny High School often allows Ashley’s team to compete in Duval, even though Rawlings is in St. Johns County.

On the first Saturday of every month, Chris and Ashley can be found in the gazebo at Balis Park. They partner with Desiree Bailey of San Marco Books, who supplies them with a few hot, new kids’ books they read to all who show up. It began during the pandemic as a way to get outside and still see people. After each reading, Chris and Ashley supply toys and games, sometimes it’s puzzles or play dough, for the kids to join in and socialize with each other. “We let them have at it,” Chris said. Coffee is provided for the parents. The Woolstons fund the activities themselves as a service to the community. Sometimes, they try to get other groups involved. They’ve had dancers come and give a performance and have had a couple of local authors make appearances and read their own children’s books. “It’s an informal way to get people together and a way to get kids to enjoy reading stories as well,” Chris said. Ages have ranged from babies through eight-year-olds.

“Our favorite thing is to go to the movies in San Marco. We love the movie theater!” Ashley said. When they see a show, they enjoy a bottle of wine and lots of popcorn. “We love to go to the local restaurants and local bars, too,” Ashley said. To most of these places, they ride their bikes, like to Matthew’s or Grape & Grain. Every Tuesday night, Chris and Ashley join a trivia team at Tepeyolot. “The food is delicious there, and there’s a crew we meet up with,” Chris said.

When they were first married, Chris and Ashley lived in England. They came to Jacksonville to visit Ashley’s best friend who



Ashley and Chris Woolston, Bali, Summer 2021

teaches at Douglas Anderson. Ashley and her friend had so much to talk about that Chris got bored, left their luncheon, and found a house for sale around the corner from where the three had been eating. Two weeks later, the Woolstons bought it.

Chris said, “We love San Marco! We had the opportunity to live pretty much anywhere in the United States. We found San Marco, and we got hooked straightaway!”



Ashley, Winston, Moxie, and Wendy Woolston, Blood Mountain, Georgia

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The Remedy Lounge

An exclusive, modern amenity for the historic Florida Theatre



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEVERINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Remedy Lounge is the third phase of Florida Theatre's multi-year capital improvement plan as the historic theatre approaches its centennial anniversary in 2027.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Downtown's Florida Theatre has unveiled its newest amenity: the Remedy Lounge. The 3,000-square-foot lounge was unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony on Monday, Feb. 13. Mayor Lenny Curry and other Jacksonville dignitaries attended to celebrate this new addition to the historic theatre, which is also its first addition to its public spaces in its 95 years.

A February press release explained this new lounge will be available for the more than 1,300 members and corporate partners supporting the nonprofit theatre and its programming. It will accommodate more than 300 guests (standing) and can be reconfigured to accommodate table seating for 150 people. Its brand-new 25-foot-long full bar will offer an exclusive menu of premium wines and liquors and a craft beer and spirits selection "with an emphasis on locally brewed beverages, such as Manifest distillery and breweries like Intuition, Aardwolf, Ruby Beach and Veterans United."

This new lounge will be located on theatre's second floor. This will allow the former third-floor Donor Lounge to convert to a balcony-level bar for the general public to enjoy.

"We all know the Florida Theatre as a great place to see great performances, but we also know it's aging," said Florida Theatre President Numa Saisselin in the release. "We want our artists and audiences to walk out saying, 'Wow, everything about that experience was first class.' The Remedy Lounge goes a long way to achieving that goal in the front-of-house area."

The Remedy Lounge marks the completion of the third phase in a "multi-year capital improvement plan expected to cost \$20 million." The plan began in 2020 with the addition of "new historically-appropriate seating," more accessible seating and a new assistive listening system and concert sound system. The following year saw a new stage

lighting system installed in the theatre. The next phase of the improvement plan — which will include cosmetic updates and repairs — will begin this summer.

"...The Theatre will close for four months to repair the decorative plaster and paint the lobbies and auditorium; replace the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system; refurbish all of the existing public bathrooms; and move the electrical vault for the building to a higher floor," the press release explained. "Further improvements include connecting the street level lobby spaces, restoring the marquee, and improving the backstage dressing rooms and green room."

This extensive work on the theatre comes as it approaches its centennial anniversary in 2027. In the release, Board Chairperson Leslie Gordon stated, "...Our capital improvement plan is about making the Florida Theatre experience better and making the Theatre's finances sustainable for another 100 years. In addition to improving the customer experience, the financial impact of introducing a new lounge and returning the third-floor bar to the public strengthens the Florida Theatre's fiscal sustainability."

KBJ Architects designed the Remedy Lounge. It was constructed by Auld & White Constructors, "with oversight on behalf of the Florida Theatre by Clark Advisory Services." Individual membership to the Florida Theatre begins at \$250. Those interested in membership can visit www.floridatheatre.com for more information.



The new members-only Remedy Lounge will feature a full bar and offer an exclusive menu of premium wines, liquors, craft beer and spirits.

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Big success for Bishop Kenny's Big Red Ball

Bishop Kenny High School celebrated its Big Red Ball in style at Jacksonville's Deerwood Castle.

More than 400 guests attended the inaugural fundraising event on Saturday, Feb. 4 and enjoyed cocktails, dinner, dancing and a live auction, led by Brian Sexton. The auction alone generated \$17,000. The evening also included private tours of the new event venue's luxury car collection.

"The Big Red Ball exceeded my expectations and it was wonderful to see the community come out and support the students at Bishop Kenny..." wrote Director of Major Gifts and Events Amy Davis in an e-mail.

In total, the evening raised \$120,000. These proceeds will benefit "on-going campus renovation projects and implement additional state-of-the-art technology within the classrooms."



Danna Starratt, Paula Shields and Lani Redington

Terry and Debbie Brown

Randy and Janet Reagor with Lynne Parry



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ANIMAL HOUSE

The serenity of the fishbowl: *A deep dive on tropical fish-keeping*

BY JULIE KERNS GARMENDIA
Resident Community News

An aquarium of shimmering tropical fish could be one of the only tabletop item to instantly calm life's chaos and provide escape from a difficult day, stressful thoughts and feelings just from looking at it. Aquariums induce relaxation and sensory enjoyment by gliding through lush, swaying emerald aquatic plants to the sounds of soothing water among decorative rocks or living coral.

Florida is the number one U.S. producer of aquarium fish and aquatic plants, according to the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services and while aquarium fish rank among the most popular U.S. pets — nearly one in eight households has an aquarium — fish-keeping is not a new hobby.

Encyclopedia Britannica reports archeological evidence of fish-keeping in artificial ponds in Mesopotamia 4,500 years ago and aquariums in 2500 BC. Fish-keeping purposes varied around the globe as well: Where the Egyptians considered fish sacred and worshiped

the Nile perch, Chinese fish aquariums held dinner.

Fish-keeping appeals to all ages and offers much more budget flexibility than other pets. Silent tropical fish may also be the only pet possible in rentals due to limited space, pet restrictions, or where pet deposits and monthly fees are prohibitive.

Fish pets compactly bring the outdoors inside to those with limited mobility, the elderly or the disabled. They are perfect pets for those with allergies or compromised immune systems.

Some keepers say their fish can be trained and can provide non-physical interaction. Fish learn to approach owners for feedings and exhibit responses. They move within the aquarium, reacting to owners' movements.

"The public would be surprised at how smart fish are and the behaviors they display," said Dr. Cait Newport, Marie Curie Research Fellow at Oxford University Zoology Department. "Tropical fish can distinguish one human face from another despite lacking a brain section that homo sapiens and other 'smart' animals (primates) with large complex brains have. Fish lack the neocortex, the most recently evolved brain part that governs sensory perception and language."



Co-owners Neil Magsaki and Rowel Celestino took over Southside Estates' SimpReef — formerly known as FishManiaJax — in 2020. The shop specializes in African Cichlids and other freshwater fish, including community and oddball fish.

Dr. Sylvia Earle's research also illustrated fish intelligence: Fish recognized each other, gathered information by eavesdropping, remembered past social interactions with other fish, and showed affection by rubbing. Fish are good-natured, curious, sensitive, have personalities, and express pain when wounded, Earle reported. Earle is an American marine biologist, leading deep-sea oceanographer, author and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence.

In research conducted by the University of Bern, Switzerland, behavioral ecologists documented fish functioning in complex social systems: Fish helped each other, cooperated, demonstrated reciprocity, and communicated through low-frequency sounds to court other fish, show submission or signal danger.

Scientific research has also showed positive psychological, physical and emotional benefits of fish-keeping. Such research into the health benefits of human-animal interaction has traditionally focused on dogs; however, there is data regarding tropical fish-keeping in "The Effects of Interacting with Fish in Aquariums on Health and Well-being: A Systematic Review," published by the National Institutes of Health.

The 19 research studies included in the report showed evidence of positive effects on mood, happiness, pain tolerance, nutritional intake and body weight from human interaction with tropical fish in private and public aquariums. This research was conducted in the U.S., U.K., Germany, France, Taiwan, and Australia.

When subjects watched tropical fish swim, researchers documented increased relaxation, lowered blood pressure and heart rate. The viewing diverted attention away from stressors or negative mental activity, including anxiety. It promoted rapid emotional and physiological recovery from stress. All studies reviewed for this article advised that more research into the benefits of fish-keeping is needed.

Aquarium requirements for fresh and saltwater fish differ but include the tank, cover, a stand or tabletop, lighting, filtration/aeration, specially treated water and aquatic tank chemicals for necessary pH, alkalinity and hardness. Other items include an air pump to move water and maintain oxygen and carbon dioxide levels. Gravel or other floor covers, a heater, net and food are required. Different fish species need specific gallons of water per fish, light and water temperature consistency to thrive in aquariums.

Maintaining optimal water quality in aquariums is a critical lesson for beginning fish keepers. The presence of oxygen and carbon dioxide in clean aquarium water sustains life in the tank. It depends upon many factors: tank size, water temperature, light and the presence of animals and living plants.

The ideal gas exchange cycle between aquarium fish and plants happens when fish

ingest oxygen contained in water and secrete it as carbon dioxide back into the tank. If adequate light is present, aquatic plants thrive, photosynthesizing carbon dioxide into oxygen.

Moving water is better oxygenated than standing water, which only holds oxygen in the upper layers. Aeration and filtration devices and healthy aquatic plants add more oxygen. In a well-oxygenated tank, organic pollutants and compounds are oxidized and easily absorbed by fish and plants in a balanced, continuous cycle. Oxygen deficiency creates harmful toxins and an unpleasant smell. Regular cleaning is necessary.

Freshwater tanks can include living aquatic plants and decorative rocks or other objects. Saltwater aquariums can feature living coral. Both may include invertebrates and vertebrate



Oddball fish, African Peacock

tropical fish suitable for each type of water and environment.

With thousands of tropical fish to choose from, new fish-keepers should learn as much about fish species, the required care levels, and costs as possible. Generally, freshwater fish aquariums are less costly and more complex to set up and maintain than saltwater fish aquariums.

Bio Reef owner Eddie Miller said that saltwater aquariums' biological and chemical requirements make them more difficult and expensive to maintain. He also said it is essential to know the size a fish will grow, its food and care needs, and its temperament towards other fish.

"We care about the fish and invertebrates we sell and want to ensure they will thrive and have what they need in their new home. They're so intelligent, and the triggers grunt and chatter when annoyed or hungry," Miller said.

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JUNIOR RESIDENTS

Episcopal School of Jacksonville celebrates student accomplishments

Episcopal School of Jacksonville (ESJ) is celebrating the many recent accomplishments of its students.

Eight students — Nia Atcherson, Sofia Davila, Tom Commander, William Rosenberg, Claire Huang, Ryan Napoleon, Garrett Davidsen, Sophia Lipari, Parthiv Reddy and Matthew Salek — won first place for their categories at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair last month. Their victories earned them \$1,600 in cash prizes from universities, local businesses and professional organizations and opportunities to present their projects at the State Science Fair of Florida next month. Additionally, two students were selected for further opportunities: Rosenberg was chosen as the region’s representative for the International Science Fair in Dallas, Texas this May; Reddy will be presenting his project at the Genius Olympiad this June in New York.

Another four ESJ seniors — Kate Adams, William Volen, Sean Ramsey and Ella Bisher — were named National Merit Finalists.

The National Merit Scholarship Program selects students based on scores from “...the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test and by meeting program entry and participation requirements.”

According to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, more than 16,000 students were selected as semifinalists and those wishing to advance as finalists must meet many more requirements including maintaining “a record of consistently very high academic performance in all of grades 9 through 12 and in any college courses taken.”

Additionally, Cate Bryce Anderson, Avery Blalock, Cohen Chesser, Tom Commander, Natalie Do Amaral, Samira Isack, Natalie Rabil, and Caroline Taylor were named Commended Students and seniors Russell Beard, Halle Taylor, and Gael Malone “were invited to participate in the College Board National Recognition Programs (CBRP) for scoring in the top 2.5% of students who identify as BIPOC.”

Feel the rhythm and strike a (yoga) pose

RPDS introduces Music and Movement for early learners



In her Music and Movement class, Mrs. Jennings will walk students through the “fundamentals of music and flexibility.”

Students from Riverside Presbyterian Day School’s (RPDS) PreK 3 through Kindergarten will spend the year learning about the “fundamentals of music and flexibility” with Mrs. Jennings in her “Music and Movement” class. During this weekly class, students about developing their voices and the basics of musics. In between these lessons, they’ll also learn to feel the beat and move to the rhythm with movement dances and exercises. Jennings will also incorporate corresponding yoga moves to go with the week’s story during story time.

“I love seeing the students get lost in a yoga story and expanding their imaginations,” Jennings said. “It is nice to give students tools to help calm their minds and bodies, and also encourage them to express themselves, move around and just have fun.”



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Celebrating the past and empowering the future

Hendricks Avenue Elementary celebrates 80 years



The mantra for HAE's 2022-23 school year outer space theme is "Launching Leaders" and Principal Darrell Edmunds poses beside a bulletin board depicting that mantra on a Friday afternoon.

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

The theme for Hendricks Avenue Elementary's (HAE) 2022-23 school year is "Launching Leaders," an outer space motif that echoes

in decorations throughout the school's entrance, offices and corridors and a theme very fitting for how the school plans to celebrate its milestone anniversary this school year.

Founded in 1942, the school is now celebrating 80 years.

Principal Darrell Edmunds said festivities are planned for Friday, May 26 and will

include a parade with themed attire, floats and "some other accoutrements you would see at a parade." Currently, he explained, the idea is to have each grade level dress in the fashion of each decade spanning the school's lifetime.

Edmunds said the school is empowering its students with the opportunity to plan and design the celebrations commemorating this anniversary.

"One thing that we like to focus on here at Hendricks is having a love of the process and enjoy the work that gets us to our goals," he said. "I think that having that opportunity to plan, not only does it give our students more investment and more connection to that process but a lot of it comes down to making memories and making connections in ways that can last for a lifetime. It's really special stuff for our students to experience. Just me speaking personally, I think it's those kinds of experiences and those connections that help make Hendricks just the amazing place that it is."

HAE is a FranklinCovey "Leader in Me" school. Launched in 1999 by A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina, the leadership model and process is, in part, built around the tenets outlined in the book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen R. Covey.

"A lot of it is based on core paradigms, like every person has genius and every person can be a leader," Edmunds explained. "We've leveraged these philosophies with our staff

and our students to empower them. Empowering the student is also one of those paradigms and with that spirit, we want to give our students the opportunity to take the lead on organizing this event."

Throughout the course of its 80 years, HAE has established itself as a cornerstone in its community and, as such, has seen generations of families pass through its halls. Some teachers now stand before classrooms they once sat in as students. HAE remains a part of people long after they've moved on and grown up and Edmunds said it's "amazing" to see how special the HAE community is.

"I've been here for about two years now... and it was very quickly that I was able to observe that this was a tight-knit community unlike any I had ever been a part of," he said.

Echoing that sentiment in an e-mail, Duval County Public Schools Board Member Cindy Pearson wrote, "Hendricks Avenue Elementary has been the heart of the San Marco community for 80 years. Hendricks has served generations of students well, proving that it truly is 'one of the best schools in the USA!'"

Edmunds added that the community is welcomed and encouraged to participate in the springtime anniversary celebrations. The school is reaching out to families and alumni and current and former staff through social media and newsletters to keep them informed of the plans as they progress.

"Now that we have this plan, we want to get the word out and see about making it as inclusive a celebration as possible," he said.

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- 7/17-21 Japan Island of Technology
- 7/24-28 Antarctica Expedition: South Pole
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Science fair flair

Bolles students win 2 of 3 international spots



Riya Kar and Sarah Park

At February's Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair, Bolles students Sarah Park and Riya Kar secured two of the three available bids for the prestigious International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Dallas, May 13-19.

Park's project, titled "Spark Care+: Personalized Music Therapy for Relaxation and Energizing using a Mobile and AI Approach" won first place in the category of Behavioral and Social Science. She is the first student in school history to win a bid to ISEF two years in a row.

Kar's project, "The Role of VEGF-B and NRP-1 Axis in Regulating Mitochondrial Homeostasis in Ischemic Heart Disease," was completed with research conducted through the Mayo Clinic SPARK Program. She won first place in the category of Zoology.

18 athletes commit for Bolles



San Jose residents Dowl Bowen, Ella Mickler and James Zebroski, Riverside resident Jeb Allen and Avondale residents Jake Hogan and Spencer Surface were among the 18 Bolles student-athletes representing six different sports honored for committing to a particular college or university to continue their athletic and academic careers.

Family, friends, classmates, coaches and faculty gathered in Davis Gym on the San Jose Campus to celebrate this well-deserved achievement. Athletic Director Matt Morris welcomed everyone, and coaches introduced their respective athletes.

Six sign for success



Reese Edwards, Sophia Bailey, Ella Parker, Bradlie Hicks, Aubrey Finn and Ralphie Weakland

Six seniors at Episcopal School of Jacksonville committed on National Signing Day, Feb. 1, to play a sport in college next year. Episcopal held a special National Signing Day ceremony in the Semmes Gym on the Munneryn Campus. Those from the Class of 2023 who signed were: Sophia Bailey, Colorado Mesa University for lacrosse; Reese Edwards, Florida Atlantic University for beach volleyball; Aubrey Finn, University of South Carolina for swimming; Bradlie Hicks, University of Louisville for rowing; Ella Parker, Coastal Carolina University for lacrosse; and Ralphie Weakland, Drexel University for swimming.

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The Florida Theatre Ball

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Students dazzle at 36th annual Extravaganza

BY MICHELE LEIVAS
Resident Community News

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) hosted its 36th annual "Extravaganza" at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts on Friday, Feb. 10.

DA students performed 22 acts in the Moran Theatre for the evening's student showcase in a variety of different artistic categories, including theatre, cinematic arts, chamber orchestra, musical theatre, creative writing, piano and an array of instrumental quartets and combos.

Prior to the performances, guests were able to peruse an art exhibition in the lobby area featuring visual and photographic art pieces.

In a statement from mayor's office included in the evening's program, Mayor Lenny Curry stated, "...This evening serves as a testament to your hard work and skills as blossoming young artists. I also want to recognize the teachers and families who have provided the support, encouragement, and guidance needed for these students to flourish."

The theme of this year's Extravaganza was "Landscape," DA Principal Tina Wilson explained in the event program.

"This evening we will share a small glimpse of our day-to-day scenery at DA," she said. "Our landscape depicts days filled with diverse artistic expression by a community that shares an unwavering passion for both arts and education."

The audience was filled with many notable guests, including several City Council and School Board members, mayors from nearby towns, leaders in the arts and higher education and former DA Principal Jane Condon.

This year's Extravaganza's honorary event chair was The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida President Nina Waters.

"Since 2005, as president of The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida, Nina has directed more than \$500

million in grants to community causes, which has included Douglas Anderson," said Wilson. "Her efforts to connect philanthropic individuals and companies in Jacksonville with community organizations has resulted in a better quality of life for everyone."

Also recognized was Gary McCalla, a longtime DA ambassador, member of the Douglas Anderson Foundation and Extravaganza event chair for the 18th consecutive year. Wilson described him as "a man who needs no introduction" and thanked him profusely for his continued support of the school, its programs and its students.

"DA pulls the talent out of the students," said McCalla in an article about his involvement with DA and Extravaganza as event chair in the event program. "It boosts up kids with unrealized potential who wouldn't necessarily shine in a regular school...The valuable arts training provided by the passionate teachers is evident in DA students' work [a]nd success. Wherever they go to pursue their craft...they are prepared."

This year's Extravaganza "Alumni Shining Star" was Chase Finn, who graduated DA in 2009 and has since built a successful career in the entertainment industry. His resume includes leading the post-production team for Queen Latifah's talk show, post-production supervisor with Conde Nast Entertainment, which allowed him to work with several notable publications including "Vogue," "Vanity Fair," "WIRED," "The New Yorker," "GQ" and "Glamour." He is currently the director of video production for "Goop," Gwyneth Paltrow's lifestyle brand.

Finn took to the stage for an interview with current DA students where he shared experiences, advice and insight on what he's learned during his career.

"At DA, I learned how to tell stories that resonate with people and push them to see the world in fresh ways," Finn said in an event program interview. "It's an honor to come back to Jacksonville, and visit my parents (Kevin and Sherry Finn of Ponte Vedra Beach), and reconnect with high school friends, and share my work with the audience at Extravaganza."



Dancers in the evening's final performance, choreographed by Jennifer Turbyfill.



Dancers accompanying the musical performance of "Masquerade" by Aram Khachaturian, trans. A. Kondratiev.



A powerful choral performance of "The Conversion of Saul" with conductor Jeffrey Clayton.

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Bishop Kenny seniors named Exchange Club of Jacksonville students of the month



Anabel Macchi and Leo Rodriguez are the Exchange Club of Jacksonville's January Students of the Month.

Bishop Kenny High School (BKHS) seniors Anabel Macchi and Leo Rodriguez have been named the Exchange Club of Jacksonville January Students of the Month.

A BKHS press released explained the seniors were chosen "based on outstanding scholarship, leadership, community service, and character."

The Exchange Club of Jacksonville bestows this accolade upon one male and one female each month. The winners will all subsequently qualify for the Exchange Club's student of the year scholarship competition.

In addition to a rigorous academic schedule and various extracurricular commitments, Macchi serves as the reigning Miss Senior High and Miss Bishop Kenny 2022; she is both a National Merit Commended Student and National Hispanic Scholar. After graduating, she plans to attend Vanderbilt University.

Rodriguez is an active in several clubs at BKHS as well as the Crusader cross country and track teams and is a member of the English, Mu Alpha Theta, Rho Kappa, science, spanish and National Honor societies. Since his freshman year, he has completed nearly 200 community service hours. While he is still finalizing his college acceptance plans, he intends to major in finance and economics.

San Jose Episcopal celebrates its teachers with Oscar-style assembly

San Jose Episcopal Day School (SJEDS) Parents Association rolled out the red carpet to celebrate their favorite celebrities — their teachers — for Teacher Appreciation Week. The weeklong celebrations ended with an Oscar-style assembly for the whole school during which nominated teachers were celebrated and honored with awards for which their students nominated them.



SJEDS teachers Emily Jones, Janice Small, Kathy Badgett along with Oscar Hostesses, Allison Weaver



Teachers prepare to walk on the red carpet and receive their "awards."



Parent Association volunteers spent the day walking from class to class handing out goodies for the teachers. (Jennifer Linn and Elizabeth Brannock)

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A high academic standard — coupled with broad arts curriculum — offers students an opportunity to excel in a chosen discipline while preparing them for post-secondary education.

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

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

Five Bishop Kenny students signed on National Signing Day

Bishop Kenny High School (BKHS) is celebrating five of their student athletes who signed college scholarships and were honored as scholar athletes on National Signing Day, which this year fell on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

A BKHS press release announced these five scholar athletes are Jackson Burnett, Michael Leonard, Evan Larson, Jack Newman and Emma Gredenhag.

Burnett, a two-sport athlete who has played football and basketball throughout his four years at BKHS, signed to play football for the United States Military Academy West Point. Leonard, another two-sport athlete — football and baseball — signed with Davidson College to play football.

Larson was the team captain for the back-to-back state champion swim team and signed to swim at Rollins College while Newman will be a first baseman after signing to play baseball for the University of North Florida. He was awarded the Hitter of the Year award his junior year.

St. Michaels College signed Gredenhag to play tennis. Her tennis career began in middle school and Gredenhag “has been playing number 1 singles and doubles on the BK Tennis Team since her sophomore year,” the press release explained.

All students maintain rigorous academic schedules and are active in several clubs in addition to their athletic commitments.



Michael Leonard, Jackson Burnett, Jack Newman, Evan Larson and Emma Gredenhag

Checkmate for chess champions



Landon College Prep K-8 city champions



Hendricks Avenue Elementary K-2 city champions

The 25th Annual Jacksonville Scholastic Chess Championship was held Feb. 11 at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in San Marco. The tournament, sponsored by North Florida Sinus Center, drew 127 scholastic chess players and 23 chess teams to compete. Locally, Hendricks Avenue Elementary won the K-2 division and was runner-up in the K-5 division. Landon College Prep won the city champion spot for the K-8 division, and Stanton College Prep topped the K-12 division.

Individually, six students placed among the top competitors:

- Cassius Foote, Hendricks Avenue Elementary — Third place, Kindergarten division
- Asher Churchill, Assumption Catholic School — First place, First grade division
- Georgiy Zimin, Hendricks Avenue Elementary — Third place, First grade division
- Nolan Gray, Hendricks Avenue Elementary — Third place, Second grade division
- Bavi Whale, Landon College Prep — First place, Sixth grade division
- Arjun Singh, Landon College Prep — First place, Seventh grade division

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Assumption Catholic School celebrates 100 years

BY MARY WANSEER
Resident Community News

Assumption Catholic School celebrated its 100th year in January, making it one of the oldest parochial schools in Jacksonville. Alumni members and students' parents along with former and current staff members gathered on the Atlantic Boulevard campus for food, drinks and fellowship to celebrate the milestone.

The more than 200 attendees included 150 alumni. Among them were Carol Attenvaugh and Juliette Howard from the class of '55 and Dr. Richard Sollee from the class of '59. Also present, from the class of '88, was Father Jason Trull, who is in his 18th year serving as Assumption's pastor and was recently elected vicar general of the Diocese of St. Augustine. Father Trull is one of 14 alumni who work at Assumption.

Principal Maryann Jimenez was there, too. She attended Assumption Catholic School during her early years, began teaching 3rd grade there in 2010, became assistant principal in 2013. She moved into her current role two years later.

The festivities included tours of the school. A celebratory Mass was held at Assumption Catholic Church, as the community remains forever united in the Eucharist. Along with praise and worship, prayers of thanksgiving were offered for God's blessings bestowed. And there have been many.

HISTORY

Assumption Catholic School has a long, successful history from its 1923 beginnings at the corner of Gary Street and Naldo Avenue in a building that accommodated only 110 students.

In 1948, the land was purchased on Atlantic Boulevard, and the shipyard administration building that existed on the site was converted into a school that opened in September of the following year.

In 1955, the present Assumption Catholic Church was built on property adjacent to the school, followed by construction of the convent in 1958 as growth of the parish and the school continued.

The year 1965 found Monsignor Harold Jordan leading construction of what has since been named Jordan Hall as well as classroom space now dubbed Barry Hall, allowing for the old auditorium to be converted into a library and media center.

The current Kohls Hall was erected in 1977, freeing Jordan Hall for school use. A preschool was formed and, in 1996, the original school building was completely renovated.

The "Heritage & Horizons" building campaign began in 2002 and allowed the 2008 opening of the Parish Family Center, which includes a gym and classrooms for music and art. Construction of the Early Childhood Learning Center and middle school addition followed soon after and were open by 2016.

The Assumption campus continues to grow. Renovations of four classrooms in 2022 allowed for an expansive STREAM wing. Plans are underway to renovate the playground in the coming summer. Outdoor spaces will be elevated over the long term.

Assumption's faculty and administration have evolved over time as well. In the early years, the principal and teachers were primarily nuns. But since 1977, the principal and most of the faculty and staff have been lay Catholics. Students learn weekly now from the Sisters of the Home of the Mother during liturgical events and in school retreats. Father Trull has led the development and growth of Assumption's Youth Ministry Program.

LOOKING FORWARD

With 100 years behind them, the Assumption community looks forward to the future, knowing that the school has been built on a solid foundation with Catholic principles and values that remain unchanged in an ever-changing society.



Kelly Nance, 2nd Grade Teacher, Ann Fletcher, 1st Grade Teacher, Karen Plemons, 3rd Grade Teacher, Wendy Nelms, 8th Grade Teacher, Alicia Alligood, 3rd Grade Teacher, Jennifer Jardine, 1st Grade Teacher, Jennifer Churchill, Assistant Principal, Susanna Elliott, 3rd Grade Teacher and Kristin Spears, 1st Grade Teacher



Academic Administrator Kelli Waterman and Principal Maryann Jimenez



Sister Kelly, Julian Valbuena (former Assumption staff member for 15 years as PE teacher, athletic director, and assistant principal), Shirley Valbuena (2nd grade teacher who has been with ACS for 37 years), Sister Paulette and Sister Anna

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We hear these catchphrases all the time, but how many of us are actually doing it? "Locals Care" is a new column by Kerry Speckman that 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 how we can show our neighbors we care to editor@residentnews.net.

Vote like your life depends on it. *Because it does.*

BY KERRY SPECKMAN
Resident Community News

Of all the ways you can show you care about your neighborhood and your city, voting might just be the most important. Oh, sure, it's nice to have neighbors who take out the garbage cans when you're too lazy or forgetful (guilty as charged), or take in your mail when you're out of town. But wouldn't it be even better if all of your neighbors also voted—in every single election—and helped make our city and its people safer, happier and more productive?

Newsflash: Voter participation in this country stinks. In a study by the Pew Research Center, the U.S. ranked 31st out of 50 countries "with highly developed economies and solid democratic traditions" in voter participation. (I guess we can take some solace in the fact that we barely beat out the Greeks, who invented democracy in the first place.) Closer to home, Florida is ranked 25th in voter participation by the U.S. Census Bureau. And here in Duval, our voter turnout for the 2022 general election was three points lower than the state average at 50.4%, according to the Duval County Supervisor of Elections Office. All of that to say, we must get better about voting. With elections coming up this month, there's no better time to talk about why we need to care.

On Tuesday, March 21, Duval County residents will go back to the polls (weren't we just there?) to vote for mayor, city council and property appraiser. Sheriff T.K. Waters, Property Appraiser Jerry Holland and Tax Collector Jim

Overton are running unopposed. If you don't know who you're voting for yet, now is the time to do your research. Visit the candidates' websites and social media accounts. Check out their interviews with local media. Talk to knowledgeable friends and neighbors. Even better, go to an event the candidates are attending and meet them yourself.

If, on the other hand, your voter registration is current and valid but you are not planning to vote, your neighbors have questions. How can you not be interested in how your tax dollars are spent—or not spent? Or reducing crime? Or addressing education issues? Or improving city infrastructure? Or supporting public services? (Remember the Great Recycling Debacle of 2021-22?) Based on a Census Bureau survey of registered non-voters, your reason is likely that you don't like any of the candidates, you're too busy or you forgot. And I'd like to add: You don't think your vote makes a difference.

So, what is a local who cares supposed to do to help the community around election time—besides vote, of course? Allow us to offer some suggestions:

1. Find out if anyone you know doesn't have a way to the polls and offer them a ride. Saving someone a bus trip would be nice, too.
2. Volunteer for a candidate you support. It can be as simple as chatting with friends, or more involved, like making phone calls and leaving promotional door hangers on your neighbors' door knobs.
3. Become a part of the process by volunteering to be a poll watcher or applying to be a poll worker.

4. Employers: Allow staff to come in a little late or leave a little early so they have time to vote.
5. Talk to friends who don't intend to vote. See if you can do anything to persuade them. (Warning: This may involve babysitting...but you'd be babysitting for America!)
6. Encourage others to vote early, especially anyone who uses the old "I forgot" excuse. Early voting begins March 6 and runs through March 19. (If you forget to do something for 14 days straight, especially when you're reminded by your neighbor who cares, you might want to look into ways to improve your memory.)
7. Finally, make sure your neighbors know which district they are in and where they need to vote. With the redistricting, re-redistricting and re-re-redistricting, many folks are confused. At this point, it would have been nice to be able to direct you to the City of Jacksonville's website for the most up-to-date information. Unfortunately, the "current" maps on the city council's webpage are from 2015, with no mention of the considerable changes that have since been made to the districts. (And you wonder why you should vote...)

For more information on all things Duval County Elections, including early voting locations and hours, updated district maps and "Find My Precinct," visit duvalelections.com.

I'm Kerry Speckman and I approve this message.

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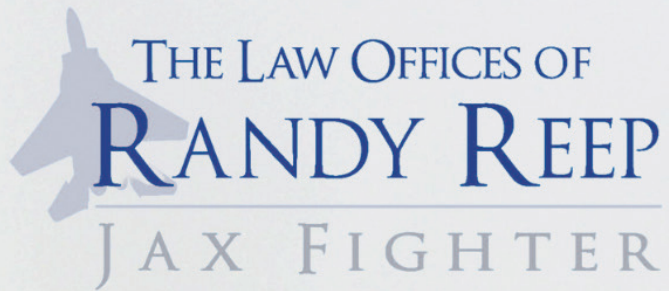
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BY SUSANNA P. BARTON
Resident Community News

It has taken more than two months and a New Year to talk about the December passing of my geri-dog, Emmy Junebug, without wilting into a wailing drivel of snot bubbles and ugly tears. That snarling little beagle stole my heart. This is the job of house pets, I suppose. They come into our lives with extra scoops of unconditional love and joie de vivre and turn our boring old houses into home sweet homes. Emmy J. Schnoogs and her eff-you-all attitude certainly provided this ambiance in our home, for nearly 11 years. Such a doggone legacy — one we are still cleaning out of the carpets today, lol.

I am grateful for the four-legged characters who make our neighborhoods kinder, more interesting places to live — even if they eventually die and leave an emotional mess of us. I'd even go as far to say the pets in our Resident Community are sometimes more interesting than the people who feed them.

Take our remaining geri-dog Dot, for example. She is a very skinny, very anxious French Pointer who wears a cornflower blue fleece 24 hours a day. She is almost completely blind and can't hear a thing, YET she maintains a very active daily schedule that includes such excitement as pillow-thrashing couch parties, kibble-picking, securing the perimeter of the backyard from rats and moles, giving park dogs the what-for and (her favorite), racing up the stairs to play "change the clothes" when Father comes home from work. Dot is definitely more interesting than we are, plus she is making our neighborhood a safer place, one backyard varmint at a time.

Mr. Pickles was the real star of our neighborhood. I mean, it's always fun to see Jim and Susan Towler or their daughter,

Emma, out on a Granada Park stroll, but it was a celebrity-sighting if Mr. Pickles was on the leash. Mr. Pickles was not just famous; he was a legend. Often in costume and sometimes sporting a skin condition or loose tongue, Mr. Pickles was the self-proclaimed Frenchie Mayor of Granada Park. In his Facebook memorial post this summer, his mom of 13 years reflected on Mr. Pickles' robust community service career — greeting neighbors, keeping the park free of lizards and squirrels and traveling to their lake house to get lost in the woods.

Ah, the life of our neighborhood pets.

Piper the rescue dachshund lives across the street from us at the Barakats' house. She's definitely an inside, cat-dog kind of canine but on occasion, she sneaks out an open garage door to share her sausage dog charisma with the neighborhood before she remembers she is OUT. SIDE. (OMG) but can't remember how to get back into the house where Mother is and — oh, the panic. This commotion may, or may not, inspire Dot to give Piper the "What's Yer Name?" from the other side of our front door, because she can't see or hear but, doggonit she can still smell trouble!

I think all the Granada hounds are trying to plot their escape so they can attend the dog party that occurs most mornings on Alhambra Drive West. It's mainly for labs it seems, but word on the street is it's a quality shindig for any dog, two-legged or four. Miller McCormick and his lab pup are usually on the scene along with other morning dog-walkers. I wonder if that sprightly Irish Setter ever attends — the one who prances several yard paces ahead of its owner on daily promenades through the neighborhood. That always amazes me, how some dogs can be off-leash and not be total a-holes — same goes for the German Shorthair Pointer who runs down San Jose Boulevard's sidewalk

with its bike-riding mom. Our dogs would never be that good. They'd see some squirrel and ruin it for everyone.

I can't forget the cats — they, too, are doing their paw-rt to keep our neighborhoods friendly and purr-fect. The Auchter home in Ortega always includes a thriving cat community. Those felines provide everything from emotional support to generous leg buffs and neighborhood pest extermination. An Auchter home wouldn't be complete without at least two-five kitties sauntering about. And what a blessing for their neighbors because — hello, no critters. Now they're into a sweet English Setter named Winnie, who sits in their hedges and watches the cars and the days pass by like a community security officer, not. Sweet Winnie.

My husband David grew up in Ortega and their family's pet legend was a cat named Woemage, that's MEOW spelled backward and that's how he mewed — WOOEWWWMM. Woemage was the stuff of legends and survived horrible 1980s encounters with car engines and bumpers, ones that rendered him tail-less and head-squished and embarrassingly emasculated. Yet, he persisted. I think that cat lived until he was almost 20 — I know he was on the scene when David and I married. I remember the way he click-click-clicked on the hardwood floors at my brother-in-law Ellis' house on Pine Street. Every neighborhood needs an underdog (cat) superhero to inspire, and Woemage was certainly that.

Though, nothing beats the stories of the Surface family's pet squirrel monkey, Max. I'm not sure how he improved the quality of life in Ortega back in the 1980s, or how all that worked having a little monkey in the house, but allegedly he was "fun to sleep with" and David tucked him in one night during a sleepover. Well, the joke was on David because he woke up with monkey poop all over the pillow — and a tiny little primate attempting to suckle him. I think best to stick to dogs and cats — or better yet, fish. And ALWAYS a smart idea to keep pets out of the bed (though I never did).

One of our favorite neighborhood functions to attend was the annual Blessing of the Animals at All Saints Episcopal Church. The kids LOVED taking our four-legged friends to church. We did, too. All of our animals needed a splash or 10 of holy water to just behave for once. It may have worked a little, too, over the years, but I can't say for certain

because our house is still one big piddle stain and they're to blame. On this topic of church and dogs, another favorite sight was Bishop John Howard processing down the aisle with his German Shepherd, who always looked so faithful sauntering up to the cross and settling in by the lectern. Again, our dogs would never be trusted to partake in such pageantry, but it was a blessing to watch a better-behaved pup rise to the occasion.

Regardless, I can't overstate the importance of our neighborhood pets. They may be messy and obnoxious and embarrassing — they may poop on our pillows or dig up our yards — but they unite us in ways we could never manage on our own. They bring us down a notch — and up into greater, more authentic community connections. I miss my mean little beagle. I miss the way she growled if you tried to pick her up, I miss her sleeping on top of my feet like a 100-pound brick and I miss telling funny stories about her on the line. But I am grateful for the way she made our home — and our neighborhood — a sillier, friendlier, more real-life place to be.

Susanna Barton is not getting another dog — or cat — anytime soon, and definitely is not interested in a monkey. 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 when she's not watching terrible reality television, particularly any of the 90 Day Fiancée franchises. Each month, she will share reflections on neighborhood qualities for which she is grateful.

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Al Ferraro will put Families and Taxpayers First

When it comes to the Jacksonville mayoral candidates, Al Ferraro is set apart from the others.

- He is in his second term serving as the District 2 representative on City Council, but Ferraro is far from a career politician. He is a family man and small business owner whose mission to become mayor stems from a desire to make the community better and safer for everyone and to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used wisely.
- Ferraro seeks to burst the political bubbles that foster foolish spending – the kind of spending that continually ends up being a burden to and coming out of the pockets of taxpayers. If elected mayor, he will focus instead on investing taxpayer dollars in areas that help families thrive.
- “In Jacksonville, the taxpayer is never the number one priority. When things in our city fail or go wrong, the taxpayer has to take care of it. The taxpayer has to fix it,” he said. “The taxpayer getting the benefit is not a common result of most things that happen in our city, and that needs to change. As mayor, I would make that change.”
- Ferraro has consistently voted against (taxpayer funded) pay raises for City Council members, and he is the only two-term City Council member who never took a pay raise. Additionally, he voted against the gas tax and then voted to repeal it. He was the only mayoral candidate who voted against the Lot J Development, which would have cost the taxpayers \$230 million.
- He has been a strong voice for his constituents in District 2, establishing hundreds of acres of conservation land, creating a new overlay in his district to fight over-development, and being present and available for all.
- Some of the biggest areas of concern for Ferraro are public safety, core functions, preventing the sale of Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA), preserving historical markers and statutes, and keeping men and boys out of women’s restrooms in schools and public buildings.
- Ferraro fought for JSO funding at the height of the Defund the Police Movement; he led the way in eliminating the crime-attracting internet cafes; and he proposed legislation to fight street solicitation when the citizens of Jacksonville said it made them feel unsafe.
- For the past year, Ferraro has routinely participated in ride-a-longs with the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office in some of the city’s most crime-ridden areas. A ride-along allows the participant to see the streets of Jacksonville from a police officer’s perspective to gain a greater understanding of what their job entails.
- “You also get to see the community’s perspective. I see how the community is afraid to talk because they fear retaliation from the criminals out there,” said Ferraro. “And it’s tough for the police officers to keep arresting these people when the jail is a revolving door and the criminals are continually being set free. I see that first hand and I see what damage it’s doing. As mayor, I would bring attention to that and make sure that the judges and state attorneys are doing their jobs, and that there is plenty of room in the jail.”
- Ferraro said he would add a minimum of 250 police officers to the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office to keep up with the growing numbers of citizens in the city. He also wants to build public trust in the police and in elected officials.
- “You don’t build that trust by sitting behind a desk downtown. As mayor, I would be out there on the streets. I want the community to know they can reach out to me and trust me because I will be there,” Ferraro said. “They won’t have to fight to try to get a hold of me. They’ll see me out in the streets and they can come out and talk with me, tell me their issues, and build up this trust to where we can break this code of silence and people won’t be afraid to come forward and report the criminals.
- “It has worked in District 2. District 2 is the safest area in the city of Jacksonville because we have a program where we have community, along with police, that have eyes and ears on the street. I would continue this on a citywide level.”
- As the city continues to grow, the infrastructure is not keeping pace. New developments and businesses are being established at breakneck speed, while roads and drainage systems continue to remain clogged and fall deeper into disrepair.
- “Everybody has seen that roads and infrastructure have been on the back burner. We’ve got developments going in without real improvements to our streets. Some of our streets are to the point where they need not just to be resurfaced, they need to be widened and improved,” said Ferraro. “We also need to put new roads in because we have a lot of new neighborhoods coming in, putting our existing roads over capacity. Some of the measurements that we use in school capacity, road capacity and traffic capacity are outdated.”
- Another issue Ferraro pointed out is the discrepancy in drainage methods throughout the city. Some areas have drainage pipes that are under the road, allowing for easier drainage with minimal flooding. Other areas have swales and ditches that require a lot of maintenance.
- “As big as our city is, it’s very difficult to keep them clean on a regular basis, so as roads and neighborhoods go in, we need to seriously think about piping and infrastructure so we don’t have the flooding that we do in some areas when we have weather-related issues and large developments coming in,” said Ferraro.
- Although two attempts to sell the JEA have failed, Ferraro is concerned that the publicly owned utility may end up being sold in a stealthy way that goes largely undetected until it’s too late.
- In late 2021, a private company sought to start investor-owned water utilities in a Westside area where an 11,5000 home development was going in. JEA opposed that plan, saying that doing so would set a precedent allowing other developers to do the same.
- “I was the only member of the Land Use and Zoning committee that voted against the proposal,” said Ferraro. “Thankfully, though, that plan didn’t end up happening. JEA and the developer were able to work something out.
- “On the surface, it sounded great, because here is an area of town where the development is brand new and the developer services it’s own utility, but what it does is start poking holes in our franchise agreements. If it’s done at 1% or less at a time, with the number of developments that continue to go up in Jacksonville, those percentages add up, and when more than 50% is sold, JEA would go into a death spiral. As mayor, I would make sure that doesn’t happen – the JEA would not be sold off piece by piece.”
- When it comes to historical monuments and markers, Ferraro opposes the removal of any of them.
- “I just don’t believe in taking down historical pieces of our city. My aim is to build things up in our city as I did with Freedom Park, the El Faro monument, and helping to put 243 acres into our state parks.”
- Ferraro put forward a bill that would allow voters to decide if historical monuments should stay or go, but the City Council voted against putting the question on the November 2022 ballot.
- “When people are talking about monuments and statues, they are not talking about gas taxes, they are not talking about the high cost of food, they are not talking about the high cost of electricity, they are not talking about crime in our city, they are not talking about garbage, they are not talking about the conditions of our roads or the way the houses are flooding, because the way they are putting it out there is they are pitting one person against another, and that is a total distraction that has been put out there deliberately to divide our city and our people.
- “I put that bill out there so people could vote. If they vote to take it down, take it down. If they vote to leave it up, leave it up. But don’t leave this issue open out here to where nothing is happening. We need to put it to bed one way or another. Now they are talking about having a study where people from Virginia come here and explain what we need to do as a city because we have council members who couldn’t make that decision. As mayor, I would not take down any historical monuments – period.”
- Repealing the Human Rights Ordinance (HRO) is something Ferraro said he would look into as mayor, but not because he doesn’t believe in equal rights for everyone.
- “If people are gay, they can do whatever they want. I have my own beliefs and religion, but as mayor, I would protect and serve everyone. I don’t think the government should tell people what to do – that’s not what the government is for. However, when you start telling people they have to recognize a man as a woman, and you are going to put men and boys in women’s restrooms and locker rooms and on teams competing against girls and women – I am 100% against that.
- “I’m not talking about people being able to have safe housing or equal protection under the law. I think if you are an American citizen and you pay taxes and you live in this country, everybody needs to be treated equally – I have no problem with that. But I do not believe that I have to pretend a man is a woman or a woman is a man and I don’t think that they should be in our restrooms or our locker rooms or competing against our women.”
- The heartbeat and slogan of Ferraro’s campaign are putting families first. He says the way to do that is by making the community safer, cleaner, and better for everybody in every neighborhood. Additionally, he wants to see decisions made that are best for the taxpayer – not for the developers, new businesses, and other entities that cause taxpaying citizens and their concerns to fall by the wayside.
- “I give great thought to everything I do, and I don’t do things off the cuff. I don’t do what everybody’s telling me to do – I give it a lot of thought and I think how is the taxpayer better or worse with this? What is good morally for our city, topless bars, or something you can bring your kids to for generations to come? Those are important things to me.”

For more information about Al Ferraro and to learn where he stands on all the important issues, visit www.KeepItRealJax.com.

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Old gravestones resurrected in historic cemetery

BY WINDY TAYLOR
Resident Community News

It's March, and one St. Nicholas resident is putting a new spin on spring cleaning.

Dennis Guilmette is on a one-man mission to clean the grave markers at the historic St. Nicholas Cemetery, and, in the process, is learning about the men and women who rest there. The small cemetery is located north of Atlantic Boulevard, at the intersection of Linden Avenue and Olive Street. It is the final resting place for 240 people and was opened in the middle of the 19th century.

Guilmette is not from Jacksonville, nor does he have any family buried in the cemetery. But from the day he first set foot in it, he's felt a connection. "From my first visit, all I could think of was the beauty and history of those old gravestones and how I wanted to help bring them back to their original state."

He was led to the cemetery by a friend who grew up in St. Nicholas and who knew of Guilmette's photography hobby, which included photographing old monuments. However, the cemetery did not make a great first impression when Guilmette saw it last October. Hurricanes had wreaked havoc on the area. "The cemetery just seemed to have been forgotten," he said. "There were downed limbs from the numerous trees and the mixture of dead leaves and Spanish moss gave sections of the grounds a neglected appearance."

Guilmette was inspired. "I knew that I could do more than simply photograph the gravestones and decided to start cleaning them as well. I did my research and found the proper way to clean them."

Cleaning the stone monuments is a delicate operation, and using the wrong tools can make things worse. "There are so many chemicals that can damage the stone, I had

to be really careful. For the most part, it is simply a mix of water and elbow grease," Guilmette said. "On some of the dirtier stones, I use a product designed for cleaning and brightening gravestones. It has no harsh chemicals and continues to work over time."

Guilmette has deepened his relationship with the cemetery, thanks to an unexpected gift. "One of the neighbors saw me working one afternoon and came over to thank me for what I was doing," he said. "We chatted for a bit and he excused himself and said he would be right back. He returned and handed me Dr. Gilmour's ["A Genealogical History of Florida, as Revealed in Historic St. Nicholas Cemetery," by Dr. Kay Gilmour]. On the cover was the gravestone of Mary Fox, perhaps the best known stone in the cemetery, and one I had just cleaned the day before. When I finally settled at home that night, I couldn't put the book down. It is not only a history of the cemetery, but also details the interred and their connection to Jacksonville. The people buried in the cemetery were no longer just names on a stone."

Monument cleaning at the cemetery is just one part of the community's effort to maintain the historic, and sacred, land. The St. Nicholas Area Preservation (SNAP) uses some of the dues collected from residents to pay for mowing services at the cemetery. Boy Scout Troop 106 at nearby Assumption Catholic Church has undertaken several projects, including the installation of a flagpole. The Knights of Columbus holds a memorial service for veterans buried at the cemetery, in addition to creating wreaths for veteran graves at the holidays.

As for Guilmette, he's happy to do his part to make his neighborhood a brighter place. "Everyone that I have met in the neighborhood has been kind and complimentary and it puts a smile on my face whenever I get to meet them," he said. "I cleaned a gravestone from 1919 and discovered he was the grandfather to one of the neighbors that introduced herself to me. That felt great."



Dennis Guilmette gently scrubs a grave marker in historic St. Nicholas Cemetery.



A before-and-after of the grave of Mary Fox.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNIS GUILMETTE

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THE WAY WE WERE

Martha "Molly" Holmes King

BY MARY WANSER
Resident Community News

Martha "Molly" Holmes King arrived in Jacksonville at nine years of age in February 1941 from her birthplace in Birmingham, Alabama. "Now, I'm 91 and three fourths," she said, and she lives in the same house that she had grown up in on Harvard Avenue in Ortega.



Molly King, February 2023, photo by Carol Curtis

Molly was raised an only child; two siblings had died as babies. Her family was used to household help, so their butler, William Rudolf, moved down to Florida with them. Molly's mother was Jessica Holmes King, a former North Carolina, New York, and Pennsylvania school teacher. "Ladies didn't work after they got married back in her day," Molly said. Frank King, Molly's father, was an executive of Cosco Steel.

Cosco made steel reinforcements for the landing strips at the air base, now NAS JAX, then called NAS Yukon prior to consolidation when the city limits of Jacksonville ended at Verona Avenue. The original landing strips had been engineered of concrete and continually cracked under the weight of planes because of shifting sand underground.

Cosco manufactured ammunition as well, particularly bombs used in WWII. Cosco also had the contract for building three storage units visible from Roosevelt Boulevard. The three are recognizable among the others there now by their flat roofs, intentionally built that way so they could be topped with dirt for planting low bushes to camouflage the units were the area to be raided by air during wartime.

"My daddy had an old Chevrolet," Molly said. It was a 1934, greyish blue in color. She's reminded of it when she watches *The Waltons*. Molly's father would drive her and her mom all around Jacksonville in that car. Years later, Molly would learn to drive on the unpaved roads around NAS Yukon.

Molly did not have to travel far to grammar school; Ortega Elementary was and still is just across the street. She remains in touch with one of her classmates from there, Mary Aichel. As young girls, they had lived just a

block-and-a-half from each other, both attended Riverside Methodist Church, and both their daddies had steel companies. Mary now lives in an assisted living facility up in North Carolina, and she and Molly speak by telephone every so often.

At Robert E. Lee High School, now Riverside High, Molly was president of the Latin Club, secretary of the Spanish Club, and a member of the Dramatic Club, Jubilee and National Honor Society. Always a stellar student, Molly had skipped a couple of grades and graduated with the class of 1948 alongside Elizabeth "Betsy" Ross Lovett, a Jacksonville legend.

Molly spent four years away from Jacksonville for higher education at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She came back home with a bachelor's degree in hand and enjoyed spending time at her family's beach house until her father asked, "Well, are you about ready to go to work?"

Molly said that her dad didn't allow her to be a beach bum for very long and suggested she get a job teaching. But she told him that after so many years of being in "little boxes of classrooms," she'd like to do something different for a time. She landed a position at Atlantic National Bank downtown, which she found quite interesting. That's where she met the bank client who would become her husband.

In 1956, Molly married John Wesley King, a career military man who had worked locally in real estate and insurance. They just happened to have the same last name. Friends would joke that at least she wouldn't have to change the initials on her luggage. It was several years into their marriage when Molly discovered that her husband's cousin had been a college classmate of hers.

Though he grew up in Jacksonville, John was a Georgia native, and that's where the couple initially wed. The following year, Molly's dad insisted that they have a church wedding, so they confirmed their vows before a priest at Good Shepherd.

Molly and John's first home together was in the Willowbranch neighborhood of Riverside. Molly left her banking job to raise their three children: John Jr., Martha "Marcy," and Amanda "Mandy." All three attended Ortega Elementary, just like their mom. One of Molly's grandchildren was also a student there, making for a third generation.

Molly and John moved their young family to Apache Avenue in Ortega. Most afternoons



Molly King, August 20, 1945



Cosco Steel Bomb Factory, Monday, August 20, 1945

when school let out, their children would play kickball with friends. "My front yard was third base, so I continually had a path across my lawn from them playing," Molly said.

"Being in Ortega is a memory in itself. One of the nicest customs that we used to have was every Halloween an open house at the public school," Molly said. It was an annual festival that included a costume contest, a bake sale, and booths of activities to help raise money for the PTA.

Once her youngest daughter was in high school, Molly went to work teaching foreign languages—Spanish, French, and Latin—at Andrew Jackson and Englewood high schools, before retiring in 1993. Ever humble, Molly indicated that speaking four languages "is not very hard."

In 1975 after her mother passed away and her father was alone, Molly and her family moved into her childhood home on Harvard where she still resides today. Her husband passed away two decades ago, and her children are long grown and have grandchildren of their own now. "I had three children and five grandchildren. The next thing I knew, I had 10 great-grandchildren," she said.

Molly has eight cats to keep her company. She calls them the River Rat Patrol of Ortega. She keeps all of them fixed and their nails clipped because "I don't want to get in trouble with the city," she said.

Molly has been a member of the Jacksonville chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution for nearly 50 years and still attends meetings. She is former president of the Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society and continues to work on genealogy as a hobby every spare moment she gets. It has been a constant in her life. "You can never run out. It's like eating potato chips. You never get finished," she said. Currently, she's working on a branch of her mother's family that's in Ireland.

While she was growing up, Molly's family often had reunions, so she was familiar with her second and third cousins. Her husband, however, had not been exposed to his extended family. While she was putting together their son's baby book, which has a family tree in its center pages

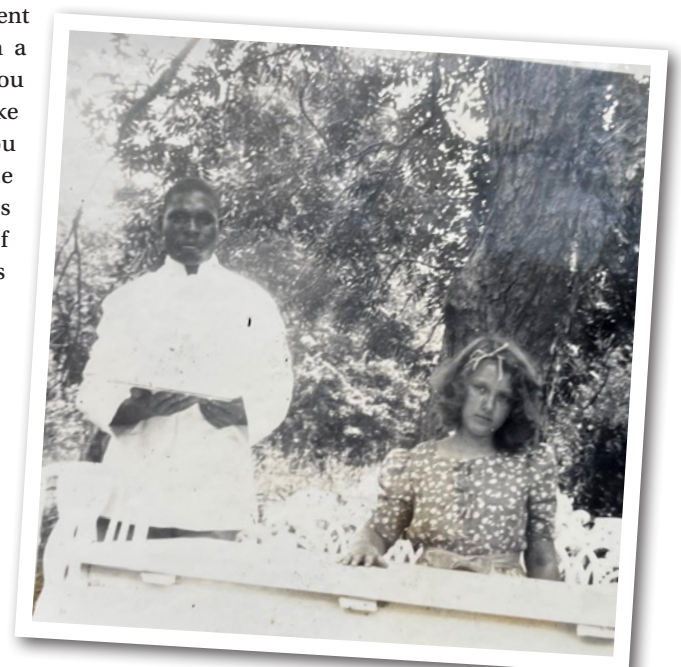
to be filled in, "I thought maybe I'd better check this out. Maybe we are kin after all," Molly said. So, she embarked on research to prove to herself and others that she and her husband, both Kings, were not blood relatives. She found out that her husband's King family had settled in South Carolina in the 1700s but



Molly King and dad Frank, Jacksonville Beach, Sunday, May 10, 1942

that her father's King family had settled in Virginia in the 1600s. They are, surely, two different King families.

Longevity is not unusual in Molly's family. Her great-grandfather was 97 when Molly was born, and she found in an 1850 census report a distant female relative on her mother's side who had seen 100. At nearly 92, Molly keeps active. She never committed to a formal exercise routine, but she has enjoyed gardening in addition to her research. "I'm always doing something. I never just lie down and take a nap," she said. "I just go with the flow."



William Rudolf and Molly King, June 30, 1941

Thomas Wilbur Trout Jr.

JULY 23, 1927 – FEBRUARY 9, 2023

Thomas Wilbur Trout JR, lovingly known as Tom and “Papa,” peacefully went home to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Thursday, February 9th, 2023. Anyone who was fortunate enough to meet Tom knows that he was a uniquely uplifting person who always made time for friends and strangers alike.

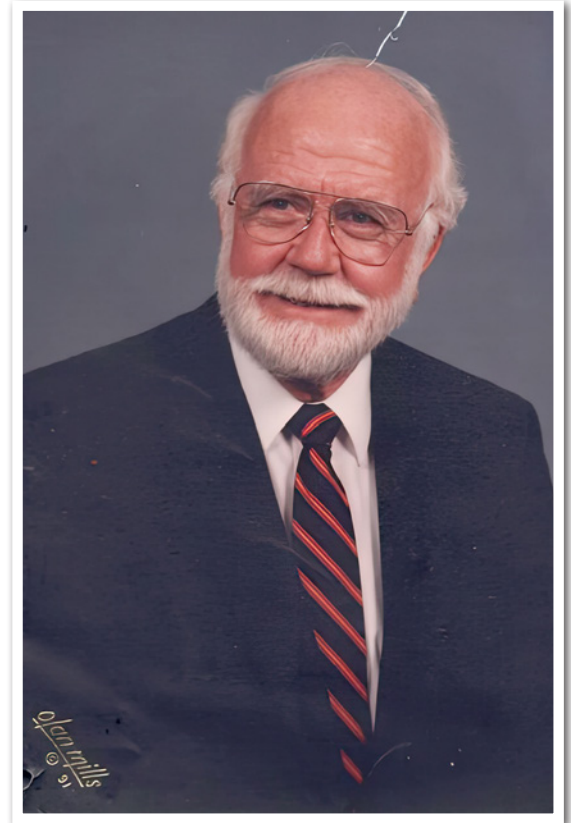
Born in 1927 in Jacksonville, FL, Tom had a rich and storied childhood, growing up in the historic home, Marabanong, and spending his time on the St. John’s River. He graduated from Landon High School in 1945, after which he immediately enlisted in the Navy at the age of 18. He attended both Florida Southern and Stetson Universities where he received a degree in business administration, which launched his career as a successful entrepreneur and as an active member of the Jacksonville business community, including The Rotary Club and The Northeast Florida Builders Assn.

Tom is perhaps most widely known for his prominently displayed billboard sign on I-95 and Bowden Rd in Jacksonville, on which he displayed short messages of wit, wisdom, and humor that have inspired Jacksonville commuters for decades. The Tom Trout construction company and sign have become a true Jacksonville icon, and both will live

on with his son and grandson, Tom Trout III and Tom Trout the IV.

Tom is survived by his wife, Joan Henry Trout, who was truly the love of his life for every moment of every day of their 67-year marriage. Tom and Joan were not only deeply in love every day, but were the best of friends. One story to share is that around 20 years into their marriage when Tom realized his business commitments were cutting into family time, he and Joan spontaneously decided to take up sailing to have dedicated time together; they became avid and accomplished sailors for over 30 years. They also thoroughly enjoyed spending the majority of their time at their lake house in Keystone Heights, FL, where they attended Fresh Start Fellowship Church.

Tom is the proud father of 3 children, Antoinette Silsby (John), Tom Trout III, and Jennifer Porter (Jim). Tom and Joan also have 10 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren and counting, who now and forever will lovingly know him as “Papa.” He and Joan together have served as an incredible foundation and example of kindness, self-sacrifice, and positivity for their entire family and more, which they would undoubtedly attribute to their relationship with Jesus Christ and the strength and purpose He has created in their lives.



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Al decided it was time to go to Baptist Center for Bariatric Surgery, where he had a sleeve gastrectomy, which removes part of the stomach to limit food intake.

After months of eating sensibly and exercising five times a week, Al is 100 pounds thinner. “My phone even didn’t recognize my face,” he said.

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