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about the cover



Bright flowers paired with white or gray pavers, filled with colorful smaller rocks add a fun pop of color to a walkway and gives the home character.

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ONE OF US

Marie Milton

as told to
HOLLY TISHFIELD
Contributed photo

Marie Milton, owner and founder of Three Stories Inn, opened her cozy, novel-themed inn in the heart of St. Augustine's historic district to provide comfort and adventure to any who walk through the doors.

Tell me about yourself and your background.

I've been a nurse for about 25 years. I'm a mother to two sons (20 and 21), and I've lived in Ponte Vedra since 2009. I went into wanting to have my own inn about 20 years in as a nurse, which really came about after I was impacted as my mom's caregiver. My mom battled stage four stomach cancer for eight years, and I was her sole caregiver. We lost her in 2015. Being my mom's caregiver pushed me out of the loop of full-time nursing, so after my mom passed I thought, "Let me try to make the most of my time." After something like that, you learn a lot about time, and how much you value your time.

How did this inspire you to open your own inn?

My life was forever changed after caring for my widowed late mother. I thought, "You know what? I'm going to spend time with my kids now that I have the time after caring for my mother." I thought



about how I could make the most out of the money I got from my mom and decided to invest it in a property. I climbed up from doing the Airbnbs and also doing events within the Airbnbs until I was able to gather enough money and credit. It wasn't until about three years after I started investing in properties that I was able to purchase the Three Stories Inn. I just fell in love with the whole hospitality realm of people that wanted to travel.

Why did you choose St. Augustine for the Three

Stories Inn?

I knew I wanted to pick something that was unique, number one, and I knew it had to be in the historic area because it's well-known for vacation rental situations. I picked this location in particular because I didn't want to disturb the residents, and I wanted to respect the history of St. Augustine, plus this was already a commercial property. Number two, it's also a historic building. It's the house where President Jefferson's great-granddaughter, Maria Jefferson, lived back

in the day. She was part of the Daughters of the Revolution. I went to eat at the previous restaurant that was on the property called Preserve, and I was just curious about the building. When I found out the building was for sale, I jumped on it quickly because I knew I wanted a place where I could be more engaged with guests.

How has the community reacted to the Three Stories Inn?

The community fell in love. I partnered with the other small businesses in town, specifically event planners and wedding venues. We invited them over to check the place out because we felt it's just great for romance, but then we found it's a great place for brides and bridal parties, too. We've had a very wonderful response from the community.

What would you say is your favorite part about what you do?

There are so many things I love about it. I love how it's very present. I'm always engaged with guests coming in. People like to share things, it makes them so happy. We like to provide just, positivity and a warm and welcoming visit. I love being able to provide (every pun intended) this novel approach. The most exciting thing, too, is that the creativity is endless. It's endless, all we can do for our guests.

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Hal Young sits at his dining room table with his father's flag, hat and medals.



Sgt. Richard Young's medals

PHOTOS BY SHAUN RYAN

A WALK TO REMEMBER

At 90, Hal Young walked 80 miles to honor his father

story by **SHAUN RYAN**

"If I'm unlucky not to come back, you can be proud of me because I'm doing what's best for this country, and we have to win this war."

— Sgt. Richard Young, U.S. Marine Corps, in a letter to his parents

When Hal Young was 10 years old, he received news that would upend his world. His dad, Richard Young, who had gone off to fight in the Second World War, would not be returning home.

The boy had trouble believing it. This 31-year-old man who was so well-liked, who never drank or smoked but loved his ice cream, whose favorite word was "wow," was gone. As Hal Young recently recalled, he just wasn't "buying into it."

But still, he would cry himself to sleep at night.

Eight decades would pass before Young would find the closure he needed. And how he found it is the stuff of legend.

THE LETTER

Young's parents divorced when he was just a baby, and it was decided that he would live with his father while his brother lived with their mother.

Richard Young worked for the Holland Furnace Co. and they moved a few times due to the demands of his employ-

ment. Finally, they ended up in Meriden, Connecticut, where they lived with Hal Young's grandparents.

And that's where they were after the bombing of Pearl Harbor when his father joined the military and spoke the words his son would never forget.

As Richard Young prepared to leave for boot camp, his son asked: "Dad, why'd you join the Marine Corps?"

His response: "Son, if you're going to do something in life, you do it with the best."

The family regularly received letters detailing his journey. He wrote of the 37-hour train ride to Parris Island, his disappointment over not being issued dress blues, how he received a test score of 98.3 out of 100, which he felt was not good enough. He reflected on all the night training they did and wondered why the enemy didn't fight in the daytime.

To this day, Hal Young still has 55 of his father's letters.

Those letters stopped coming in 1944. Richard Young of B Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines, 4th Marine Division, was killed on Saipan.

But a Marine who served with him made a point to write to Young's family detailing the man's heroism.

"When we hit the beach on June 15, he was wounded," the letter said. "He refused to get off the island to get the wound taken care of. He went back into battle and was killed saving two other Marines."

Reading this letter aloud more than 80 years later, Hal Young's voice cracks.

"May his son grow up to be a great young boy," the letter continued. "I speak

for B Company in saying he was a son, a father, a brother and a Marine that we will all miss. And may his soul rest in peace."

It was perhaps this letter that prompted Hal Young, at age 90, to walk 80 miles — one for each of the years that had passed since — to honor his father.

THE PLAN

One night, about three or four years after his father's death, Hal Young awoke, sure that he had heard Richard Young's voice say, "It's over," or something to that effect.

"I knew instantly that I had to stop crying myself to sleep," he said. "I had to get my act together. ... I knew he was telling me: 'Get off your rear end; it's time to realize I'm not coming back.'"

Hal Young went on to serve in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1956. He owned a hospital consulting business for 50 years, retiring at age 75. He and wife Joyce ended up in Ponte Vedra Beach, a place Young remembered from playing golf.

He believes he's heard from his father two times since that first incident. Once, prompting him to immediately go and visit his Uncle Cecil, who died shortly thereafter, and once in February 2024, when the message was simply a number: "80."

He didn't immediately connect this to the eight-decade gap between his father's death and the present, but a series of small coincidences relating to that number or to his father seemed infused with meaning.

That's when he re-read the letter from the young Marine in 1944.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43 ■



THE RITZ-CARLTON

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PONTE VEDRA WOMAN'S CLUB'S GREAT GATSBY GALA BRINGS ROARING '20S TO LIFE

story by **HOLLY TISHFIELD**

photo by **TIM WOLAK**

On Saturday, Feb. 22, members of the community donned their best flapper dresses and pinstripe suits for the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club's Great Gatsby Gala.

The club went with a Roaring '20s, "Great Gatsby"-inspired theme at its annual fundraising gala at The Greenhouse at The Yards in Ponte Vedra. The Greenhouse was transformed with opulent feathers, shimmering tablecloths, and jewel-dripping candelabras to immerse guests in the Jazz Age.

"Everybody enjoyed themselves," said Parker Alter, vice president of the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club. "It was fun to watch everybody have such a great time."

The gala was catered by The Local, a popular Duval County eatery with plans to open a location in Ponte Vedra later this year. Guests could choose from freshly made appetizers, salads and hearty entrees as they mingled and enjoyed music from The Chris Thomas Project.

"One of the reasons we chose The Local as a caterer is because they're getting ready to open that brand new restaurant in St. Johns County," said Anne Urban, president of the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club. "To be able to support a new business coming into the community is



Members of the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club

wonderful."

The turnout at the Great Gatsby Gala exceeded any expectations that members of the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club could have imagined, with more than 180 guests this year, compared to last year's 125 guests.

"We knew we had a hit when we didn't know if we would have enough seats for everyone who bought a ticket," said Alter.

Among opportunities for drinking, dancing and dialoguing, guests could make bids on the gala's 80 silent auction items, such as gift cards to local boutiques or hotel stays at luxury resorts in the area. At the live auction, six unique experiences were offered, including river cruises and safari adventures.

Through ticket sales and the success of

both auctions, the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club raised twice as much in fundraising as ever before, setting a new record.

The money collected from the gala will go directly towards supporting the organization's five chosen charities: The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, the Betty Griffin Center, BEAM, Mission House and Port in the Storm. Funds will also go toward yearly scholarships that the organization awards to high school seniors heading to college.

The planning for next year's gala, happening on Feb. 21, 2026, is already in full swing, with the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club brainstorming how to top this year's success and make it even more unforgettable.

'EVENING OF TASTE' CELEBRATES CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

photos by **SUSAN GRIFFIN**



Children's Home Society of Florida (CHS) celebrated its 120-plus years of service with "An Evening of Taste" on April 12 at the Jacksonville Golf & Country Club. CHS provides critical support for children and families to help them thrive and to prevent crises.

The recent event featured artwork by six nationally recognized artists; sales raised funds for CHS. The event was a collaboration between CHS, The Art Center and The Jacksonville Artist Guild, along with student art from community partnership schools.



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Lucky me! I have been a Realtor in my home, Northeast Florida, for nearly 40 years. I grew up in Jacksonville and moved to the beach in my 20s. I studied architecture and interior design in college, feeding my love of homes and style. After graduation, I worked in media, where I learned the art of listening and asking questions, marketing and advertising.

In 1985, I transitioned from media to real estate, joining Watson Realty's Ponte Vedra office. It was meant to be! Serving customers by customizing promotions for their homes and researching housing options for buyers is exciting. The reward of finding a seller or a buyer the perfect match is what keeps me charged up about real estate. In 1990, I moved to the original Marsh Landing Realty, where I learned about lots and builders and the development process.

In 1993, I opened my own brokerage, Berry & Co. Real Estate. Our first listing was The Ponte Vedra Carlyle, 48 new condominiums on Ponte Vedra Boulevard: new homes, premier location, and Lodge membership for every purchaser! It was great foundation for building a robust general brokerage. We have helped hundreds of buyers and sellers with their residential real estate needs. We take pride in our market knowledge – it is the foundation for the extra level of service we provide our customers.

My customers describe me as “one of our most trusted advisors”... “responsive, kind and honest”... “always felt we were in good hands”... “stands out from the rest regarding professionalism, true customer satisfaction and a real passion to do things the right way.” I help make buying and selling real estate efficient, enjoyable and rewarding by offering my knowledge and insights, so my customers can use my experience to help them make decisions.

While homebase for our office is Ponte Vedra Beach, we also are active in neighboring Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach and Nocatee as well as greater Jacksonville. Our real estate market is ever-changing and always intriguing. I'm grateful for the challenges and opportunities each new day brings.



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ROASTING GOOD VIBES:

FLAMINGO COFFEE SHARES LOVE, COMMUNITY WITH EVERY BREW

story and photo by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

There is something about coffee that brings people together, and this belief is what Paul Carr and his business partner Donny Webb have used to build the foundation behind Flamingo Coffee over the past seven years.

The process has been an adventure for sure, according to Carr, but it is a journey that he would not trade for anything, and he looks forward to the roads ahead for the coffee bar and roastery.

Flamingo Coffee began at a grass roots level that started with Carr roasting coffee in his garage and has grown to having three locations expected by the end of the year.

"I was married and kind of searching for what my purpose was because I was involved in marketing and just knew I wanted to create something," Carr said. "That's when I got a job working for Bold Bean Coffee Roasters, which is one of the OG companies locally. That's one of the



Paul Carr was a co-founder of Flamingo Coffee seven years ago in Murray Hill and now the business is preparing to expand to other areas of the First Coast.

coffee world and his introduction to the business side of things.

"I can't say enough positive things about the Burnett family and Bold Bean," Carr said. "I feel like I got my Ph.D. in coffee through those guys, and they are literally a university of coffee."

The two had some passionate ideas and decided to venture off together to follow

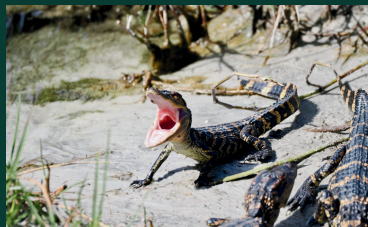


Carr loves how coffee has a way of bringing people together.

their dream and open a location in the Murray Hill area of Jacksonville, which is still located today at 1176 Edgewood Ave. Suite No. 1.

"Bold Bean really saw something in both of us, which allowed us to invest more in each other and that time really built a strong foundation and belief in each that we could do it when that time

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47 ■



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THE RITZ-CARLTON TEAMS WITH WORLD-RENOWNED TENNIS COACH TO DEVELOP CENTER

story by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island offers many amenities many of which are made possible through associations with world-renowned companies to help make the experience the best for its guests, and the latest of these partnerships embarked on is with famed tennis coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, current coach of four-time grand-slam champion Naomi Osaka.

This is not the first time that Mouratoglou and Ritz-Carlton resorts have come together with the goal of developing signature tennis centers, as this will be the third Mouratoglou facility in Florida and the second collaboration with The Ritz-Carlton, joining the Mouratoglou Tennis Center at The Ritz-Carlton Tiburón, Naples and the Mouratoglou Academy in Zephyrhills.

The Amelia Island facility officially opened earlier in April, and the exclusive center offers a variety of training camps, private lessons, and retreats to deliver a premium tennis experience for everyone who takes part.

"I have always seen Florida as a global

hub for tennis, known for its elite training facilities and young talent. Expanding the Mouratoglou brand for a third time here is a natural step forward. This center marks another ambitious effort in bringing a world-class experience to the U.S., and I'm thrilled to collaborate with The Ritz-Carlton to offer our coaching to both guests and local players. I look forward to strengthening this partnership and developing our unique methodology in Florida," said Patrick Mouratoglou.

The center's approach to teaching is one that is unique and seeks to personalize each experience and it is adaptable depending on the various variables, such as age, level of experience, or what the person is hoping to get out of their game play.

This training system originates from the Mouratoglou Academy in Nice, France, where, since 1996, players have benefited from Mouratoglou's philosophy.

As a result, the academy has helped develop top professional tennis talents such as Coco Gauff, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Holger Rune, and many others.

The complex features seven courts, including three outdoor tennis courts and four pickleball courts so that all the bases of a person's desires in the racket sports world are met.

The Mouratoglou Tennis Center at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island will be led by The Ritz-Carlton Amelia Islands' head tennis coach, Rob Lehner, who has more than 15 years of coaching experience, and most recently served as the tennis director at Five Seasons Sports Club, where under his leadership, the number of USTA teams at the club grew from four to 12.

"This partnership is a true reflection of both brands' dedication to offering resort guests and members an unparalleled tennis experience, combining world-class coaching with a luxury destination that promises unforgettable moments on and off the court," said Greg Cook, The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island general manager.

For more information about The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island and its new Mouratoglou Tennis Center, please go to www.ritzcarlton.com/ameliaisland.



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THE THREE STORIES INN

IS WHERE EVERY GUEST BECOMES A STORYTELLER

story by **HOLLY TISHFIELD**
Contributed photos

If you had the opportunity to write your life's story, what would you say? Would you exaggerate the good times, describe lavish parties and dinner outings, or would you focus on the smaller things, dinner at home with your family and fresh flowers on Sunday morning?

The Three Stories Inn, located in the heart of St. Augustine's Historic District, believes that "every stay has a story," and encourages its guests to share their stories, however big or small, while enjoying literary-themed rooms and views of the Old City.

Marie Milton, owner and founder of Three Stories Inn, spent the last 25 years as a nurse while simultaneously raising a family and caring for her late mother, who battled stage four stom-



The Three Stories Inn is located in historic St. Augustine

ach cancer for eight years.

After her mother lost her battle with cancer in 2015, Milton's life was forever changed. She felt a deeper meaning to the passage of time and how valuable it can be. Milton began thinking about other areas of meaningfulness and service and took the leap into hospitality in early 2020 by investing the money her mother left behind into purchasing a property.

"I fell in love with hosting and providing that type of hospitality for guests," Milton said about her career change.

Three years after running multiple Airbnb properties around the city, she purchased the Three Stories Inn in 2023 and opened the property to the public in early 2024.

The inn, nestled at 102 Bridge St., is a historic commercial property where President Jefferson's great-granddaughter, Maria Jefferson, once lived. Where better way to inspire creativity than in a space already steeped in legacy?

"I started the Three Stories Inn because I always wished that I could have traveled more with my late mother, though we couldn't," Milton

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17 ■



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STORYTELLER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

said. “Every time I’d take her for a treatment my mom would always say things like, ‘Sometimes I imagine this is a trip.’ We’d just try to make time stand still. So, for the inn, I thought about how to make the setting unique for someone who goes on vacation, and I figured how about a place where they write their own story?”

The Three Stories Inn contains three boutique apartments themed after the paratext of a story: The Foreword, The Prologue and The Epilogue. And,

yes, according to Milton every pun is intended.

Each apartment is unique with curated book selections and decorum to match, from coasters with author quotes to book-themed cabinets.

The inn is a fully digital luxury vacation property, though Milton still enjoys getting involved with her guests when possible and often works with local creators to leave thoughtful gifts and souvenirs for her guests.

“Guests like to share things. People just get so happy,” Milton said. “We like to provide positivity and a warm welcome. I love being very present.”

The Three Stories Inn is equipped

to handle every guest’s needs, from a romantic two-person getaway to a full-on bridal party. Milton partners with event planners and venues in St. Augustine to provide an unforgettable experience.

Milton wasn’t kidding about inviting guests to share their stories, either. Once per month, she’ll go through nominations and interview guests to listen to their stories. From there, she’ll select a winner and award a complimentary two-night stay.

“It’s meant to encourage people to share their story,” Milton said, “and to be in the present moment with their stories.”

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RAP HOME TOUR FEATURES HISTORIC CHARM AT ITS BEST

photos by
SUSAN GRIFFIN

The 51st Annual Riverside Avondale Preservation Home Tour was held on April 12 and 13, as visitors were invited to tour some of the private homes and businesses of one of the historic communities of the area. The event is a signature fundraising event for RAP, which was one of the nation's original advocacy organizations.





BEACH ACCESS JUST ONE HIGHLIGHT OF SAWGRASS HOME

story and photos provided by
JANET WESTLING

Step inside 3255 Old Barn Road West and experience a completely updated one-and-a-half story home that is perfect for entertaining family and friends. With more than 4,300 square feet of design, this four-bedroom, four-bath coastal contem-

porary is light and spacious, with an open floor plan that connects the large kitchen, dining and great room.

This energy-efficient home has solar energy that converts sunlight into electricity that powers the home. Spectacular water-to-golf views of the third hole of the Sawgrass South Course awaits you from your private oasis in a country club setting.

Sawgrass Country Club, a private member-owned club, is uniquely situated in an oceanfront gated community, with private deeded beach access, in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach. Walk to the beach, watch waves roll in across the shore and enjoy the beauty and mystique of the charming seaside

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ■

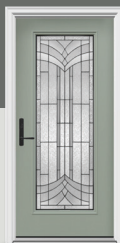


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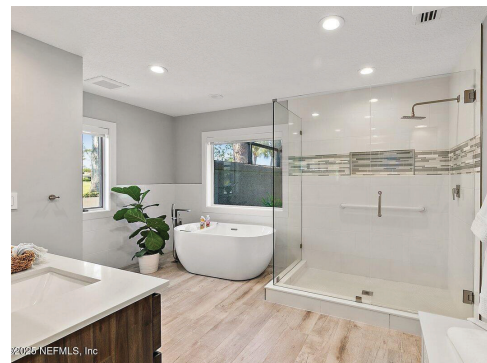
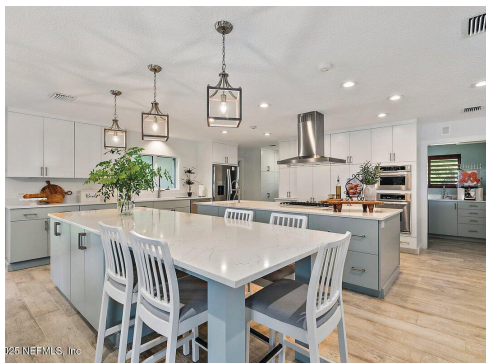
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SAWGRASS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

neighborhood of Old Barn Island in Sawgrass.

THE SAWGRASS EXPERIENCE

The Sawgrass experience offers oceanfront dining, championship golf and a world-class racquet club with 13 tennis courts, fitness center and oceanfront pools.

The unique neighborhood of Old Barn Island with deeded beach access is just a golf cart ride away to the Saw-

grass Country Club and Beach Club, an internationally recognized resort community that continually strives to update and improve the Sawgrass experience.

The 27-hole golf course was the first home of THE PLAYERS Championship and hosted the tournament from 1977 to 1981.

In 2010, the tennis complex was completely renovated to accommodate the Women's Tennis Invitational. The fitness center and aquatic pool were built in 2013. The Sawgrass Country Club Beach Club underwent an extensive multi-million-dollar renovation that was completed in April 2016.

Construction of a new and expanded Golf Clubhouse was completed in 2020 and included a larger pub and bar area, separate banquet rooms, a family activities center and larger men's and women's locker rooms.

With fine dining in the golf club, beach club and outdoor dining by the sea, Sawgrass offers its members and guests a variety of dining options. Ponte Vedra Beach is convenient to Jacksonville, close to the Mayo Clinic hospital and the University of North Florida. Just minutes to the beach, golf, tennis and fitness center, experience oceanfront living and enjoy vacation living all year round.

Enjoy Sawgrass Country Club Living... Simply the Best!



3255 Old Barn Road West in Sawgrass

4 Bedrooms | 4 Bathrooms | 4,333 sq. ft. | \$3,400,000

Step inside 3255 Old Barn Road West and experience a completely updated one and a half story home that is perfect for entertaining family and friends. With over 4300 square feet of design this 4-bedroom 4 bath coastal contemporary is light and spacious, with an open floor plan that connects the large kitchen, dining and great room. This energy efficient home has solar energy that converts sunlight into electricity that powers the home. Spectacular water to golf views of the 3rd hole of the Sawgrass South Course awaits you from your private oasis in a country club setting. Sawgrass Country Club, a private member owned club, is uniquely situated in an oceanfront gated community, with private deeded beach access, in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach. Walk to the beach, watch waves roll in across the shore and enjoy the beauty and mystique of the charming seaside neighborhood of Old Barn Island in Sawgrass!



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RIBAUT GARDEN CLUB HOSTS PRESENTATION ON BIRDS

Annual flower show to be held April 25-26

story and photos by **SHAUN RYAN**

Spring has arrived and so have some very special visitors. Hummingbirds, those smallest of wonders in the avian world, have flown more than 500 miles from points south.

“So,” says Master Gardener Ginger Ayers, “they’re hungry when they get to your house!”

And, being good hosts, those who welcome these tiny travelers will want to feed their guests. They suspend feeders in their landscapes out of direct sunlight, freshly cleaned and full of the nectar that hummingbirds prize. They also may augment their landscapes to include natural sources of sustenance, such as coral honey-



Ginger Ayers speaks about birds during a meeting of the Ribault Garden Club.

suckle, firebush and firespike.

Ayers presents this information — and much more — to a full house during a recent meeting of the Ribault Garden Club. She and Brian Bidwell, co-owner of several Wild Birds Unlimited nature shops in Northeast Florida, are the guest speakers on this bright

March morning.

The Ribault Garden Club is the perfect source of information for locals who want to maximize enjoyment of the landscapes in their own private paradises. Club members and guests meet regularly in their homey headquarters at 705 Second Ave. North, Jacksonville Beach.

With a focus on plants and the beautiful flowers that thrive in the Sunshine State, the club also recognizes the value of butterflies and birds.

In fact, members recently joined Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan as she proclaimed Lights Out North Florida from March 15 to May 15 and Sept. 15 to Nov. 15 to protect migrating birds from window collisions. It's an initiative spearheaded by club member Elizabeth Filippelli of the Duval

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ■

A photograph of an Eastern Bluebird perched on a blue, umbrella-shaped bird feeder. The feeder is hanging from a chain and is filled with birdseed. In the background, there are white flowers and green foliage.

Bluebirds

Always Bring a
Smile

Eastern Bluebird on Flying Bistro Feeder

The logo for Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop features a stylized house with a green roof. A red cardinal is perched on the left side of the house, and a blue bird is perched on the right side. A yellow bird is flying above the house.

Wild Birds Unlimited[®]
Nature Shop

20% OFF
One regularly priced item

Valid in-store at the participating stores listed. Coupon not valid for Seed/Bird Food, Optics, Gift Cards, DSC Memberships, Electronic Feeders or Sale Items. Cannot be combined with other coupons/discounts. Offer expires 5/31/2025.

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(At Murabella)
904.209.5754
wbu.com/staugustine



Some flowers that Ribault Garden Club members brought to the meeting to show off.

RIBAUT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

Audubon Society.

Each year, about a billion birds die in these collisions when they become confused by outdoor lighting while migrating. At the club's recent meeting, attendees were encouraged to sign a pledge to switch off unnecessary lights during these months, just as homes along the shore switch off lighting that confuses sea turtle hatchlings.

The lively presentation by Ayers and Bidwell during the March 20 meeting included video and slides as the speakers explored the worlds not just of hummingbirds but also cardinals, bluebirds, Carolina wrens and more. The presentation dovetailed with the nine principles of the Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program.

These principles are focused on using the right plant in the right place to require less irrigation and less fertilizer and be less prone to pests. Visiting birds are covered under principle number five: Attract wildlife.

For further information on the program, go to fl.ifas.ufl.edu.

Ayers and Bidwell spoke about the birds' behaviors, nesting and plants they prefer. Some of which provide food, while others provide building materials for the nests.

Speaking about cardinals, for instance, Bidwell said, "Plants and bushes that have thorns on them are very good, because they're excellent fliers. They can get in and around there. But it also helps protect them from snakes and other predators."

Wild Birds Unlimited sells bird feeders, bird baths, nesting boxes, plants and bird food, which Bidwell called the freshest in the business as it arrives fresh each week. Staff members



Some flowers that Ribault Garden Club members brought to the meeting to show off.

at the shops are knowledgeable and a great source of information.

"Bringing joy into people's lives is what we do," said Bidwell. "If you go out in the morning and see the birds in your backyard and it brings a smile to your face, it starts the day out right."

Technology can enhance one's appreciation of birds in the landscape.

Ayers spoke about the smart camera, which provides close-up live video of birds at feeders or birdbaths to be watched while at home or at work. Through artificial intelligence, these cameras are capable of identifying the birds, and when a predator appears on the scene, a siren can be sounded to frighten it away.

Another great asset is the Merlin Bird ID app. Free to download, the app identifies birds by the songs they sing. And sometimes that can be a surprise.

"You will quickly become an expert



An extraordinary climbing onion plant was exhibited at the meeting.



This *Euphorbia caput-medusae* was exhibited at the meeting.

as to what's out there in your own backyard," Bidwell said.

The Ribault Garden Club is currently preparing for its annual flower show, to be held 1-4 p.m. Friday, April 25, and 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, April 26. The show is open to the public and admission is free.

The National Garden Club Standard Flower Show will include displays of unique and original entries in four divisions:

- The Design Division: A creative showcase based on the show's theme, the long-popular board game Monopoly. This will include distinctive museum-quality designs.
- The Horticulture Division: The best plants in each category.
- The Botanical Arts Division: A fun interpretation, which may include fairy gardens, dried flowers, wearable art and photography.
- The Educational/Youth Division: This encourages gardening and creativity at a young age.

To learn more about the Ribault Garden Club or the flower show, go to sites.google.com/site/ribaultgarden, email ribaultgc@gmail.com or call 904-246-4641.

STEP INTO SUMMER IN STYLE WITH BOLD COLORS AT YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL SHOPS

photos and text by HOLLY TISHFIELD



Designer: La Fuori



Designer: Hale Bob



Designer: Aldomartins

A'PROPOS BOUTIQUE

Since August 2008, Cathy Maddux Jenkins and A'propos Boutique have brought high-end fashion and show-stopping style to the Northeast Florida area. Tucked away in picturesque Ponte Vedra Beach, the boutique is known for its one-on-one service and experience hosting fashion shows at country clubs and charitable events. As the boutique welcomes in warmer weather, shoppers can expect to see bold, fun colors from some of their favorite designers like Johnny Was, Aldomartins, Frank Lyman, Hale Bob and much more.



ELLIE BING

Ellie Bing brings together the best of clothing, jewelry, accessories, gifts, home decor and local art at a beautiful storefront located in Ponte Vedra Beach. It's a local destination for style, designer outfits and amazing gifts and accessories for every special person in your life. As the days grow longer, so does the perfect excuse to

refresh your wardrobe with colorful outfits and fun, eye-catching fabrics that make a statement wherever you go.

A'propos Boutique

A'propos Boutique is a women's designer clothing store in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida (greater Jacksonville area). We specialize in unique high end fashion and our specialty is helping you dress for any occasion — from denim to cocktail.



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www.elliebing.com • [@elliebing](https://www.instagram.com/elliebing)

IT'S SUMMER CAMP TIME AGAIN!

Here's a look at some of the many summer camp options available locally.

THE LINK

Summer camps will be held between June 2 to Aug. 8. The link is located at 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra in the heart of Nocatee Town Center. Phone: 904-299-3671. Email: info@thelink.zone.

For further information and to register, go to <https://www.thelink.zone/camps-2>. Here's a look at the camps:

LEGO ROBOTICS

Explore the world of robotics and programming in this LEGO Robotics summer camp! Through hands-on building and coding activities, kids will develop essential STEM skills such as spatial reasoning, problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking. Note: These are full-day camps. Ten camps to choose from: June 2-6, June 9-13, June 16-20, June 23-27, June 30-July 3, July 7-11, July 14-18, July 21-25, July 28-Aug. 1

and Aug. 4-8.

CREATIVE CULINARY

Teach your child the importance of healthy eating habits and cooking skills with this Healthy Hands Cooking Camp! This camp covers everything from kitchen safety to proper food handling and preparation. Students will also learn about the pros and cons of packaged foods and how to make informed choices at the grocery store. Best of all, they'll have the chance to create and enjoy delicious, wholesome recipes. Ten camps to choose from: June 2-6, June 9-13, June 16-20, June 23-27, June 30-July 3, July 7-11, July 14-18, July 21-25, July 28-Aug. 1 and Aug. 4-8.

CREATOR'S CORNER

Unleash creativity and craft dream designs. This camp will entail marbling mastery, sugar scrubs and jar art, clothing transformations, resin creations, abstract art, candle making and drama. Students will bring home their fabulous

creations and the knowledge to create them again! Nine camps to choose from: June 2-6, June 9-13, June 16-20, June 23-27, July 7-11, July 14-18, July 21-25, July 28-Aug. 1 and Aug. 4-8.

OLYMPIC STYLE FENCING

This is one of the most popular summer camps. Learn the basics of one of the oldest Olympic sports. Led by Coach Alan Chernomashentsev, an accomplished athlete and experienced coach, students will learn fundamental skills, techniques and rules of fencing. Whether your child is new to the sport or already has the experience, they'll benefit from Coach Alan's expert guidance and commitment to developing good character. Three camps to choose from: June 2-6, June 16-20 and July 21-25.

KIDS CAN CODE

Unleash your inner tech wizard! Sign up for this exciting Kids Can Code

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ■

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The Episcopal experience means learning extends far beyond the classroom. Our graduates *Seek Understanding* as lifelong learners; *Develop a Sense of Self* earned through challenge; *Live with Honor and Purpose*, choosing to lead, do good, and serve others; and *Pursue a Life of Faith*, in a way meaningful to them while respecting the dignity of every human being. Across our Four Pillars — Academics, Athletics, Fine Arts, and Spiritual Life — Episcopal students find their passions while shaping who, not what, they will become.

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PRE-K 3 – GRADE 5
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JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FL 32250
904.246.2466

SUMMER CAMP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

Summer Camp, where creativity meets technology. This hands-on program is designed to inspire young minds and empower kids to become the coders and problem-solvers of tomorrow. Here's what your child will explore with different camp themes to include: Roblox Game Development, Robotics, CodeSpark, Minecraft and Code Combat. With a mix of engaging platforms, interactive lessons and collaborative teamwork, Kids Can Code Summer Camps are the perfect environment to fuel your child's passion for technology. Whether they're a beginner or a budding programmer, they'll gain invaluable skills that make learning fun and memorable. Seven camps to choose from: June 9-13, June 23-27, June 30- July 3, July 7-11, July 14-18, July 28- Aug. 1 and Aug. 4-8.

CODE NINJAS

Code Ninjas is planning camps at five different area campuses.

Transform your child's love for technology into an exciting learning

adventure. Guided by a team of "code senseis," Code Ninjas Camps empower kids to gain valuable tech skills and make new friends.

For information, including dates and prices, or to register, go to codeninjas.com and click "Shop Camps." The camps offer a wide variety of fun experiences for "ninjas" ages 5-14. They cover a wide range of topics from electronics to creative design, including rich content for coding or STEM.

The camps will run on weekdays for 10 weeks, June 2 through Aug. 8 (with an exception for July 4). Camp locations are:

- Ponte Vedra Beach: 258 Solana Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Phone: 904-834-2359
- St. Johns: 2758 Race Track Road, Suite 401, St. Johns. Phone: 904-500-2633
- World Golf Village: 533 W. Twin Court Trail, Unit 704, St. Augustine. Phone: 904-217-0652
- Baymeadows: 8221 Southside Blvd., Suite 10, Jacksonville. Phone: 904-475-2160
- Fleming Island: 1811 Golden Eagle Way, Suite 28, Fleming Island. Phone:

904-375-0653

Here's a look at the camps:

- Creative Studio: Digital Directors: Learn about filmmaking and storytelling.
- Content Creators — YouTube Stars: Learn video editing, scripting and more.
- Lego: RoboDojo — Build and Battle: Design, build and battle Lego Robots.
- Lego: RoboDojo — On a Mission: Take Lego robotics skills to the next level.
- Minecraft & Roblox Adventures for Beginners: Discover the basics of building and coding with these popular platforms
- Minecraft: Modder Gamers & Minecraft: Modding Masters: Take your favorite game to the next level.
- Minecraft: Movie Makers: Create epic in-game movies.
- Minecraft: Redstone Realm: Master engineering and circuitry.
- Minecraft: Robo in the Dojo: Code and control Minecraft robots.
- Minecraft: Digital Data Defenders: Save the digital world with coding and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ■



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SOCIAL SUPERSTARS: 5/27-8/01
RISE & THRIVE: 5/27-7/25
COLLEGE PREP: 6/16-20

BOOKTRAILS: 7/07-11
FARM TO TABLE: 7/14-18
BIKE BUDDIES: 7/21-25
CAMP COURAGE: 7/21-25

SPOTS ARE LIMITED!

>> SCAN TO REGISTER TODAY >>

MandalaFamilyWellness.com/camps



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SUMMER CAMP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

cybersecurity skills.

- Roblox: 3D World Builders & Roblox: World Creators: Build immersive 3D worlds.
- Roblox: The Next Level: Advanced game design and scripting.
- 3D Studio: Creators I: 3D modeling and design.
- Drone Dome — Challenge the Skies! Code, fly and compete with drones.

FIRST COAST CULTURAL CENTER

First Coast Cultural Center is offering a variety of summer camps. For more information or to register, go to <https://www.firstcoastculturalcenter.org/programs-events/art-camps>.

SUMMER CAMP AT ALHAMBRA THEATRE AND DINING

Ages 8-17

Cost: \$510 for FCCC members, \$560 for future members

Each camp week is from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and includes two weeks of programming, the musical showcase, and one meal and one complimentary showcase ticket per registered child.

This year's performance will be announced soon.

Alhambra Camp 2 dates:

- Week 1: July 21-25
- Week 2: July 28-Aug. 1
- Showcase: Aug. 4

SUMMER ART, CULINARY AND DRAMA CAMPS

Exploration Vacation: Florida Life

All weeks are 9 a.m. to

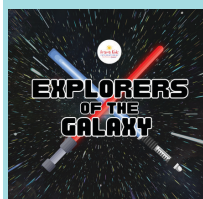
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South Duval / North St. Johns



June 16-20
St. Francis-in-the-Field



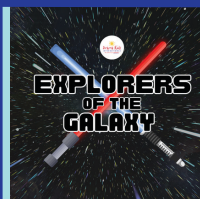
July 7-11
St. Francis-in-the-Field



June 23-27
St. Francis-in-the-Field



July 7-18
MissionWay Church
2 week musical



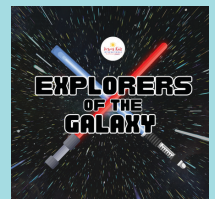
June 9-13
Fleming Island United Methodist



June 16-27
Beacon of Hope
2 week camp



June 16-20
Beacon of Hope



July 14-18
Beacon of Hope

SUMMER CAMP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

3 p.m. Monday through Friday at First Coast Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach.

Cost: \$300 for future members, \$270 for current members

Students ages 6 years old through 12 years old will create 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional works of art using a variety of tools and techniques, led by professional art teachers in a peaceful, safe setting. Each week children will draw, sculpt, build, paint, explore the galleries and more, related to the weekly theme.

Children will not only explore high quality art making techniques, but also search through the galleries (at FCCC location), play outside and observe

the natural world like art detectives!

Theme schedule:

- The Science of Art: June 2-6. In the mornings, children will work with acting coach Sheri Lahris to develop their improvisational skills through small group and individual activities! Children can create new scenarios and imagine endless possibilities given the right techniques and tools, while building confidence. In the afternoon, the children will paint, sculpt, draw, print and play games, while learning about artists and art history and the "A-ha!" moments of creating.

- Who lives at the Shoreline? June 9-13. In the mornings, children will work with acting coach Sheri Lahris to develop their improvisational skills through

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ■

SUMMER PROGRAMS IN PONTE VEDRA BEACH



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Swim, Splash & Play!

Wet or Dry, We Have Something Fun For All Ages!



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110696

\$3 OFF Waterpark Admission

Limit 1 per person per day.
Not valid with any other discounts.
Expires 8.31.25. SKU#8866



18866

SUMMER CAMP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

small group and individual activities! Children can create new scenarios and imagine endless possibilities given the right techniques and tools, while building confidence. In the afternoon, the children will paint, sculpt, draw, print and play games, while learning about artists and art history and the "A-ha!" moments of creating.

- **Natural Florida:** June 16-20. Students will learn about Florida's flora and fauna through exploration and discovery. They will draw and paint native species of plants and animals, and discover prehistoric life that still remains, along with invasive species and the impacts through an artful lens.

- **Sunset Oranges:** June 23-27. Warm colors are a theme this week, along with the study of fruit as it relates to the region, and in art.

- **City Life at the Beach:** July 7-11. What makes beach towns' architecture so interesting? Students will draw, paint and build a cityscape around a beach view.

- **Ocean Textures:** July 14-18. Students will create "sandy," "rough," "salty," "scaly" and more textures out of clay, paint and printmaking, such as Gyotaku fish printing.

- **Under the Sea:** July 21-25. Students will study sea creatures of all kinds, including those more unknown at the depths of the ocean, and represent them in an artful way.

- **Wild Weather in Florida:** July 28-Aug. 1. Campers will learn about local weather, climate and how that causes plants and animals to respond. Then they will create paintings, drawings and stories about Florida's wild weather.

IRISH DANCE

Saturdays from May 10 to June 14

Ages 6-12

Cost: \$150

See website for details.

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<https://tommyhulihanbasketball.com/basketball-camp>

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st-augustine.adventurelanding.com/groups/day-care-summer-camp

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ■



THE KNIGHT SCHOOL

SUMMER CHESS CAMPS!

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WEEK-LONG HALF-DAY MORNING,
HALF-DAY AFTERNOON, OR
FULL-DAY CAMPS
CAMP PRICES STARTING AT \$200



THE BOLLES SCHOOL
SAN JOSE CAMPUS
 MAY 27-20, JUNE 16-20, JULY 14-18, AUG 4-8
PONTE VEDRA CAMPUS
 JULY 28-AUG 1

THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL
 JUNE 2-6, JUNE 9-13, JUNE 16-20, JUNE 23-27,
 JULY 7-11, JULY 14-18, JULY 21-25

FLAGLER COLLEGE
 JUNE 9-13, JULY 7-11

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
 4-DAY MINI-CAMP JUNE 30-JULY 3

J. ALLEN AXSON
 4-DAY MINI-CAMP JUNE 30-JULY 3

JACKSONVILLE COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL
 JUNE 2-8, 4-DAY MINI-CAMP JUNE 30-JULY 3

JEWISH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
 JUNE 9-13, JUNE 23-27, JULY 7-11, JULY 21-25

NOCATEE WAYPOINT CHURCH
 JUNE 16-20

REDEEMER CHURCH PONTE VEDRA
 JUNE 23-27, 4-DAY CAMP JUNE 30-JULY 3

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For more information, contact Scott Holmes (904) 962-SURF


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June 2 - June 6	June 23 - June 27	July 14 - July 18	Aug 4 - Aug 8
June 9 - June 13	June 30 - July 3	July 21 - July 25	

Register at: www.surfintosummer.com

scan code for more info



SUMMER CAMP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

LIMELIGHT THEATRE

11 Old Mission Ave., St. Augustine.

Two camps for kindergarten through grade 3: Broadway Kidz Week (10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, June 2-6) and Fairy Tale Week (10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, June 9-13)

Two camps for grades 4-8: Musical Theatre Intensive Week One (2-5 p.m. Monday through Friday, June 2-6) and Musical Theatre Intensive Week Two (2-5 p.m. Monday through Friday, June 9-13)

Theatre Devising Camp: For grades 6-8. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, July 7-11.

"Spamalot Young@Part": For grades 5-12. 10 a.m. to

1 p.m. Monday through Friday, June 2-27. Performances: 5:30 p.m. June 27 and 28; 12:30 p.m. June 29.

For further information or to register, go to limelight-theatre.org/youth-programs.

YMCA

Summer Day Camp registration is now open. Registration is available online only, and spots are limited.

For ages 5-12. The Brown Family YMCA is located at 170 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 2-Aug. 8.

Registration information, as well as other locations and times can be found at <https://fcymca.org/programs/camp/summer-day-camp>.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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\$250

ENDS ON APRIL 30, 2025

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An afternoon at WASHINGTON OAKS GARDENS STATE PARK

story by **HOLLY TISHFIELD**
photos by **SUSAN GRIFFIN**

Take a stroll through historic Washington Oaks Gardens State Park and you'll spot not only stunning formal gardens and walking trails, but hidden coquina rock formations and acres of coastal scenery.

The property was originally purchased by Jose Mariano Hernandez, a St. Augustine native, in 1818 and named Bella Vista, before Florida became a U.S. territory. In 1936, nearly 100 years later, it was purchased again by Owen D. Young and his wife, Louise Powis Clark, a young couple from New York who planned to use the property for their retirement.

They built a home on the property in 1938 and designed the beautiful gardens that are still visible throughout the park today. In fact, most of what's at the park today was left by the Youngs. The family enjoyed their North Floridian oasis for many years until Mrs. Young donated the



property to the State of Florida in 1964, shortly after her husband passed away.

Washington Oaks Gardens State Park greets visitors with a massive live oak tree, one that's estimated to be between 200 and 300 years old. The rose gardens, which Mrs. Young was very fond of, have seen various changes throughout the years. Still, the park remains true to her wishes that the gardens be maintained in their present form and expanded as funds become available.

In the park, visitors can picnic beneath shady oak trees, hike or take a bicycle ride along various trails, fish and view wildlife from the shady hammocks, and much more.

The property is tucked between the Atlantic Ocean and the Matanzas River, providing breathtaking views of scenery along State Road A1A in Palm Coast.

In spring, bursts of colorful azaleas line the paths of Washington Oaks Gardens State Park, drawing visitors from all corners of the state. Azaleas are fairly common to Florida's landscape, but there's something remarkable about seeing the blooms during the peak of their season.

The park encompasses 425 acres of Florida's original coastal scenery, sprinkled with pavilions, playgrounds, restrooms and a visitor center. Admission is \$5 per vehicle.

The grounds are also a popular destination for weddings, with multiple locations for ceremonies from coastal backdrops to fully blooming gardens that help set the mood.

Whether you're up for an active day of exploration or a relaxed stroll through 20 acres of formal gardens, the experience is yours to shape.

FIRST COAST HEART BALL SEES RECORD ATTENDANCE, RAISES \$1.5M

On March 8, the American Heart Association, a global force for longer, healthier lives, gathered nearly 600 community leaders, volunteers and supporters at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort and Spa for the 2025 First Coast Heart Ball, marking a record attendance.

The event raised \$1.5 million, which will support the American Heart Association's efforts to eliminate health disparities, advance medical research, educate communities and champion lifesaving policies.

The event was a culmination of the year-round Heart of the First Coast campaign that worked to improve and save lives from heart disease and stroke. The First Coast Heart Ball marked a moment in time to reflect, honor and celebrate the progress made through the discovery of groundbreaking research, advancements in equitable health, advocacy efforts at

local, state and federal levels and efforts to equip communities with lifesaving knowledge.

The event also placed an emphasis on the importance of Hands-Only CPR and the American Heart Association's goal of doubling the survival rate of cardiac arrest by 2030. This year's Heart Ball chairs were Anthony Hucker, chairman, president and CEO of Southeastern Grocers, and Elizabeth Thompson, founder and CEO of Intuitive Quest, LLC.

The gala was exquisitely decorated with a tropical theme and included a cocktail hour, silent and live auctions, an Open Your Heart segment and performances by the WE GOT THE BEAT! band and guest vocalist Michelle Lineberger.

The event program was hosted by J.P. Shadrack, senior reporter and editor for the Jacksonville Jaguars. During the event,

Shadrack shared seven local volunteers' compelling stories of survivorship, triumph and local involvement.

"We are immensely thankful to our guests, sponsors and volunteers whose support has been instrumental in the success of this year's campaign," said Caitlin Brunell, executive director for the American Heart Association First Coast. "The fervent dedication and passion from members of our community has served as a heartwarming reminder of what we can achieve when we work together for a common purpose."

More than 50 sponsors supported this year's event, including Life is Why sponsor Florida Blue, Getting to the Heart of Stroke National Sponsor HCA Florida Healthcare and Signature Sponsor Southeastern Grocers.



THE AMELIA OFFERS DAYS OF ICONIC AUTOMOBILES FROM ACROSS HISTORY

story by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

photos by **ADELE MCGRAW**

The Amelia prides itself in having a distinguished field of automobiles of all kinds that carry historical significance and continue to drive the passion that people have had since the creation of automobile, and this year was no different.

The 30th Amelia Concours d'Elegance was held at The Golf Club of Amelia Island at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island in March 6 to 8 with more than 240 vehicles entered in the showcase that ranged from cars and motorcycles from both the customer and racing worlds.

The event even featured a Pivotal Helix, which is an electronic vertical takeoff aircraft.

Iconic vehicles spanned across 35 various classes with a 1938 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900 claiming the prestigious title of Best of Show, at the famed Concours d'Elegance, while a 1967 Lotus 49 was honored as Best of Show in the Concours de Sport division.

The 1938 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900 Chassis No. 412028 is believed to be one of the prototypes for the 1938 Mille Miglia. When it was restored, it was found that the car was an original short chassis model, and the engine had different characteristics than that of the Sport 8C 2.9, including a larger and different exhaust system.

The car was ordered new in 1938 by the famous Italian racing champion Giuseppe Farina and is the only 8C 2900 bodied by Farina.

The 1967 Lotus 49 Chassis No. 49/2



is the second Lotus 49 built. It was debuted by the legendary racer Jimmy Clark at Zandvoort in 1967, marking the first appearance of the Cosworth DFV engine. The car was restored by Classic Team Lotus in 2010.

"For 30 years, The Amelia has shown enthusiasts that while automotive design and competition are always evolving, the enthusiasm for special cars remains steadfast – especially the very best of the best," said McKeel Hagerty, Hagerty CEO, Board Chairman and Chairman of The Amelia. "More than 100 years of classics were present this weekend as thousands of people gathered on the show fields to honor automotive history

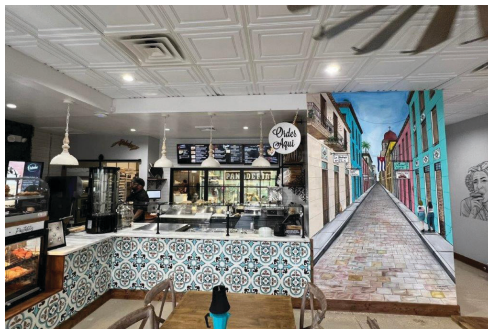
and celebrate car culture. My heartfelt thanks go to our guests, spectators, volunteers and everyone else who helps make this celebration one of the greatest annual events for car lovers, young and old."

New to The Amelia this year was Reverie, an immersive hospitality experience that kicked off the event weekend. Reverie featured exclusive, automotive-themed culinary pairings developed by Chef Zane Nesbitt, Ritz-Carlton executive sous chef.

Seventeen thousand weekend attendees took part in the multiple day festivities through the Saturday events.



Isela Gonzalez and Nelly Santiago



Inside Paladar



Paladar's Cuban is a guarded tradition.

TABLE TALK

PALADAR CUBAN EATERY — WHERE 305 MEETS 904

story and photos by LEIGH CORT

When Isela Gonzalez and Nelly Santiago merged their talents, hospitality goals and business background, they created one of the most authentic Cuban restaurants in Northeast Florida: Paladar Cuban Eatery and Bakery in St. Augustine Beach.

The date was March 24, 2022, with patrons lining up at the door and searching for parking spots along A1A for early morning Cuban coffee (cafecito) and a heaven (cielo) of breakfast pastries. Nobody was more surprised than the two new business partners with their instant success!

Their family stories are touching and magical — both with Cuban heritage and individual journeys that brought them together. Destiny played a role as they chose a perfect name, Paladar, which refers to a small family-run restaurant that brings people together over good food and Cuban culture. Nelly and Isela couldn't be more perfectly suited as they both enjoy lavishing genuine love and hospitality on their guests and private party clients.

There is a comforting moment when you enter their 10-table restaurant, whether sitting on the outside patio or relaxing indoors within view of the colorful mouth-watering display of Pastes, Empanadas and Pastelitos! Here is where you'll experience the real meaning of Paladar — satisfying Cuban tastes and micro-scratch specialties; every dish will tempt your palate.

Imagine strolling a street in Havana in their hand-painted mural; spot Paladar's family photos and mementos. Don't come to eat and rush away. Take time. During colonial times when Cuba was an important port for trade, Isela's ances-

tors brought with them the traditions of its tropical climate. Greatly influenced by a culinary landscape of Spanish, African and Caribbean flavors, fruits and root vegetables are fundamental in Cuban cuisine. Now you're ready to treat yourself to Paladar's traditional menu. Of course, you might have heard about The Cubano, as famous as any one dish connected with its origin. It's a must-try! Paladar's Cuban is a guarded tradition, something that sparkles in the world of gastronomy. Sweet roasted ham, mojo-marinated pork, Swiss cheese, pickles and mustard in pressed Cuban bread.

One warning: If you keep reading, you will get hungry!

For obsessed nacho lovers, Paladar wins the award for Cuban nachos: Succulent shredded pork and ham, topped with queso blanco, olives, onions and cilantro aioli atop a bed of plantain chips! If you can't wait until lunch, it's perfectly okay to enjoy this and all of Paladar's food from early morning until late afternoon closing.

With Nelly's great passion for baking pastries, Paladar first opened to a crowd who are early risers at breakfast — guests who dreamed about starting the day with a “bite of Cuba” and coffee — choosing from her long menu of sweet and savory pastries filled with guava, cheese or meat. Traditional breakfast tostadas brightened beach strolls in the sunshine — then shortly they introduced their abuelas' recipes for beans and rice, maduros to die for and even mariquitas con mojo (crispy plantain chips with garlic mojo sauce). St. Augustine is a hungry-for-great-food tourist destination where the locals often live the same daily tempo as vacationers. Paladar couldn't resist opening for dinner on Friday and Saturday nights too!

From Picadillo (Cuban ground beef with spices) and Ropa Vieja (shredded flank steak) to Shrimp Creole (Camarones Enchilados) and Croqueta Preparada (sweet roasted ham croquette with Swiss cheese on pressed Cuban bread) — dining in or taking out works well with all of Paladar's chef-created dishes and pastry delicacies. A favorite of mine? Camarones al Ajillo (garlic shrimp)!

When Isela (area code 305) met Nelly (904), their plans included more than the popular Paladar. They excitedly merged event talents and created Nostalgia, a small, versatile private space meticulously designed for intimate gatherings for up to 50 guests. Nelly's career on the road planning events and appearances for famous singer “El Puma” Jose Luis Rodriguez, took her around the globe. Isela's Miami reputation for 30 years of high-profile grand affairs, delicious menus and stunning presentations left guests in awe throughout the United States and beyond.

Together, their beautiful Nostalgia is like a little chameleon; it can be transformed from a theme of white-hot Havana nights dance party to an elegantly gowned Bridgerton tea party. Birthdays, bridal parties or baby showers, the two partners are as versatile as their clients' requests. They have pride in perfection, attention to detail, commitment to quality and excitement while creating remarkable events.

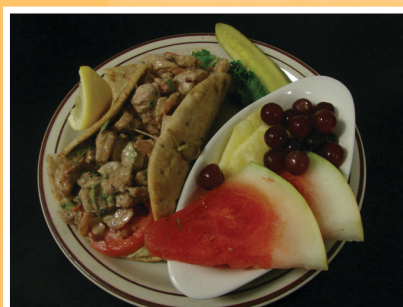
“Ven a hacer nuevos amigos” — come make new friends — at Paladar. I'll be sitting at my corner table enjoying a scrumptious dessert to share with you. Would you like Flan de Queso (custard with caramel), Tres Leche cake or Basque Cheesecake? Let's sip a glass of sangria and practice our culinary Spanish!



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ST. AUGUSTINE FOOD + WINE FESTIVAL SET FOR MAY 7-11

Contributed photo

The fifth annual St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival, named “One of Florida’s Top 10 Food & Wine Festivals” by USA Today, will take place on Florida’s Historic Coast, May 7-11. The St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival, presented by Publix, will once again be a showcase of culinary, beverage and culture that highlights celebrity guest chefs, local chefs, wines, beers and spirits from around the globe. Live music, artisan market and a Publix Cooking Demo Stage are all part of the Saturday, Grand Tasting’s festivities.

The festival’s weekend events are now taking place at Ancient City Farmstead, just 10 minutes from St. Augustine’s downtown historic district, surrounded by 1,500 acres of lush Florida greenery. The facilities include an expansive, luxury air-conditioned barn, where the festival’s VIP Lounges and Sunday Brunch will be held.

The St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival offers a wide variety of 21-and-over events for all tastebuds and budgets, from large scale tasting events to new VIP Lounges. The Mother’s Day Sunday Jazz Brunch is family-friendly, so moms can enjoy the day with their entire families. Guests can save \$15 off all tickets, with promo code FINAL15 through April 30.

St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival 2025 Schedule of Events includes:

RIVER WALK TASTINGS

Wednesday, May 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the historic district at San Sebastian Winery, 157 King St., St. Augustine. Souvenir glass, with live music and food and San Sebastian Winery tastings. Taste delicious bites from La Cocina at the Cellar Upstairs.

HARVEST AWARDS & TASTINGS

Thursday, May 8, at the Hyatt Place, Vilano Beach/St. Augustine, 117 Vilano Road, St. Augustine. The Harvest Awards & Tastings event is an opportunity to taste some of Northeast Florida’s best fine-dining restaurants, presented by St. Johns Food Service and The Ponte Vedra Recorder. A curated group of restaurants have been invited to participate in this event. Professional culinary judges will officiate as the restaurants compete for a coveted Harvest Award, (which requires



the tasting dish to incorporate the use of a local ingredient). Guests will receive a wine glass to enjoy tasting wines and the festival’s official beverages, located throughout the beautiful Hyatt Place Vilano Beach ballroom.

SMOKE ON THE WALK

Friday, May 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Ancient City Farmstead, 395 St. Marks Pond Blvd., St. Augustine. A showcase of barbecue pitmasters, delicious chef creations and unlimited wine, beer and spirits tastings with a souvenir glass. New VIP lounge ticket available this year, which provides early access at 6 p.m., Publix Liquors & Coca-Cola Open Bars, Rosé Garden, signature cocktails, special culinary tastings from Boar’s Head and YAMO Food Truck and much more.

ST. AUGUSTINE FOOD + WINE FESTIVAL GRAND TASTING

Saturday, May 10, 2-5 p.m., at Ancient City Farmstead, 395 St. Marks Pond Blvd., St. Augustine. A fun afternoon of all-inclusive culinary and beverage tastings in the beautiful pastoral farm setting. Tickets include a souvenir wine glass for unlimited beverage tastings from hundreds of wine, beer and spirit exhibitors. The new and private VIP lounge provides early festival access to guests at 1 p.m., and takes place in the new luxury indoor, air-conditioned barn with private restrooms. Guests will enjoy curated VIP lounge tastings from Boar’s Head, YAMO Food Truck, Rosé Garden, Publix Liquors and Coca-Cola Open Bars, Gourmet Bloody Mary Bar and four signature cocktails from the antique Tap on Wheels truck.

The sultry sounds of Laiken Love and the Fellowship of Love Band will begin at 2 p.m. The cooking demonstrations on the Publix Cooking Demo Stage take place from 2:30 to 3:15 p.m. with Chef Rosaria Cammarata, St. Johns Food Service, and from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m. with

guest celebrity chef/author Jeff Johnson. Guests can vote for their favorite tasting bites and drinks in the People’s Choice Harvest Awards, presented by The Ponte Vedra Recorder. 100% of the proceeds raised from the silent auction go to Vilano Beach Main Street; auction closes at 4:30 p.m.

SUNDAY MOTHER’S DAY JAZZ BRUNCH

Sunday, May 11, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Ancient City Farmstead, St. Augustine. This is a family-friendly event. The Sunday Mother’s Day Jazz Brunch is one like no other with an all-inclusive priced ticket featuring live music, brunch buffet with carving station, indulgent sides, made-to-order omelet station and a variety of desserts (something for everybody!). Gourmet Bloody Mary Bar, Champagne, Mimosas and a host of unlimited beverage stations from the festival’s wonderful partners including wine, beer, spirits beverage tasting stations inside the brunch — coffee, iced tea and soft drinks beverages included. In addition to moms receiving a rose upon arrival, the entire family will enjoy being spoiled on Mother’s Day and this festival finale event!

The festival is made possible in part by support from St. Johns Cultural Council, Florida’s Historic Coast: St. Augustine/Ponte Vedra and a 2025 St. Johns County Tourist Development Grant.

The festival’s primary official nonprofit partner is Vilano Beach Main Street, a local St. Augustine 501(c)3 organization. The festival donates a portion of ticket sales and 100% of the Main Event’s silent auction proceeds directly to Vilano Beach Main Street. The festival has also created a culinary scholarship with its nonprofit partner, First Coast Technical College.

Guests are encouraged to arrive early for the weekend events to avoid traffic congestion, for parking, pre-check-in to get IDs checked, wristbands and VIP lounge credentials, which will provide fast access for guests to enter the festival as soon as the gates open. The most up-to-date festival information is available at staugustinefoodandwinefestival.com and the festival’s social media channels: facebook.com/StAugustineFoodWine and instagram.com/staugustinefoodwine.

TABLE TALK

TRADITIONS REVISITED AT 44 AVENIDA MENENDEZ

“To invite people to dine with us is to make ourselves responsible for their well-being for as long as they are under our roofs.”

— Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

story and photos by **LEIGH CORT**

Let's cut loose and discover a new bite in our town that we haven't yet discovered. Making a courageous dining decision and dedicating ourselves to breaking out of food stereotypes that we consider comfort food is a very empowering event and easy to strategize in St. Augustine. Cherish the artistry of food. Meet a new chef. Sample a clever signature appetizer that has seemed out of bounds. Research reviews that you might have ignored in the past. Food is an art form

and so much more than what we eat. Let new flavors linger on your tongue and yearn for a second helping!

Our food has tales to tell, and we love unveiling the history and tradition of celebrated dishes. Culinary heritage began in St. Augustine from the humble years of street food to royalty's tables of elaborate feasts. Our town has captivated visitors and residents as a permanent settlement dating back 400-plus years. Hunting our forests, cultivating our soil and fishing our waterways — wonderful stories of determined people who built our lasting traditions.

From the late 1700s to today, we continue to nurture our Spanish tradition with a treasure chest of recipes and classic cuisine. St. Augustine is proud to dine out, as we see new twists at chef's tables 400 years later. There have been



Saint is located at 44 Avenida Menendez.

tough culinary “shoes to fill” since Henry Flagler built the Ponce de Leon Hotel in the middle of our sleepy Southern town. Imagine four wintry months of the year playing host to some of the wealthiest people of the Gilded Age (1886-1913) dining on extravagant meals — many of them lasting (or struggling) through eight

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 ■

Coastal Casual AT ITS BEST

Specializing in coastal southern cuisine, *Barbara Jean's On The Water* is a favorite among locals and visitors alike, conveniently located in Ponte Vedra Beach and offering picturesque views of the Intracoastal Waterway.



VOTED PONTE VEDRA'S BEST OF THE BEST 6 YEARS IN A ROW

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SAINT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

courses.

Today, eating outside the home is still a treat. We splurge on flavors that are more than one single note — especially when craving the finer things in life with many chefs whose expressive individuality makes us cheer when something new is introduced. St. Augustine is a city of five flags and a symphony of flavors!

Enter the newly opened Saint restaurant. Imagine four centuries of chef's tables that have been set at 44 Avenida Menendez! As early as 1702, the original Espinosa coquina building has undergone many major renovations. Archival stories about the intersection of Charlotte and Treasury streets unveil architectural wonders. One of the oldest homes in the United States, take a tour and peek into this luxurious private dining room. It's a noteworthy spot in American history.

Overlooking the expansive Matanzas River, Bridge of Lions to the East and historic city rooftops to the West, Saint wastes no time making an impression. It's a "palace" that unfolds into many



Executive Chef Derrick Haggerty, River Restaurant Group

stunning spaces. Each corner of the enclosed al fresco garden patio, romantic balconies, intimate stylish dining rooms, Saint's rooftop cabanas within view of fireplace and comfy sofa firepits ... especially the Espinosa dining room with the original coquina walls — all will astound you wherever you choose to dine!

Owners Jeff McCusker and Bob Fleckenstein (River Restaurant Group)

had a vision of "... the fabric of historical context in the community that has been through fires, hurricanes, floods, every act of God and humanity, but has resiliently remained. It's an incredible feeling to be stewards of this historical structure. We were able to protect its authentic identity and value in perpetuity."

Saint is an ultra-fine restaurant positioned on this authentic property. It's a brilliantly luscious creation with St. Augustine history woven into its story. It oozes with classic and contemporary sophisticated warmth. It's an ode to the charm of another era while making every guest feel relaxed amid the subtle glam. McCusker and Fleckenstein knew that downtown St. Augustine had an opportunity to establish an Italian-inspired restaurant. They curated a menu and designed Saint around the city's romantic and historical beauty.

The pivotal role of Executive Chef Derrick Haggerty pays homage to his made-from-scratch kitchen. He's a "gentleman chef" whose deeply passionate knowledge of food introduces

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 ■

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SAINT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

a menu that emphasizes a combination of dreams and ideas that he makes into reality. Yes, it's very approachable and upscale with a brushstroke of Mediterranean and Italian. There's a surprise in almost every dish starting with Saint's "Bread Service" chef-baked daily. It's an irresistible presentation of artisan breads served with a mélange of 3 spreads: Black Truffle Garlic Butter, Whipped Rosemary Ricotta and Wild Blossom Honey.

Creating the cocktail menu expresses Saint's fun personality of dining or sitting at one of the picturesque bars — casual open-air or at the snazzy second-floor grand bar. Trust your instincts and order one of the signatures: Saint Espresso, The Consigliere, Bourbon & Berries or Gabagool (a blend of Grey Goose Vodka, lemon sorbet and Prosecco 22). Light, refreshing and perfect for lunch through late night, the little spoon takes you into the cocktail's floating sorbet; expand your cocktail footprint into lemon heaven!

Oh, the Peppercorn Filet Mignon Carpaccio! As attractive as it's impossible to leave one morsel on the plate, discover a masterpiece of 5-star carpaccio. When served, take a moment and savor the colorful presentation of perfectly paper-thin slices of filet topped with capers, artichoke threads, Grana Padano cheese, sweet balsamic reduction and pickled red onion — topped with baby arugula.

Saint's food and ambiance are in sync, offering guests "fresh, creative and bold" both in the menu and deciding where to sit and enjoy lunch, dinner or anytime. Chef's bill of fare will stand the test of time. It's amazing how dining trends shape today's tastes and lifestyles.

It's nearly impossible to select one of his dishes over another. Each description is tempting, and many of the skilled caring servers (when possible) can offer a few photos that are tucked inside their phones!

Chef Derrick's Lobster Arancini can't be compared to any other Italian rice balls that you might recall from dining in the past. A richly dressed appetizer that could be an entrée any day, three large hand-patted rice cakes are topped with cold-water lobster, smoked mozzarella, surrounded by light Pomodoro sauce and Harissa aioli. A surprise here? The arancini are caviar-topped!

"Cooking is my universal language," said Chef Derrick Haggerty. "I've always done cooking, and now my passion is also to teach, train and develop the next generation — creating a team and inspiring them, which is fulfilling in so many ways. I want to be the best operator that I can be."

One dish could steal your heart from lunch to late night. The Amalfi Coast Seafood Cone is piled high with shrimp, scallops, calamari, loup der mer and spicy tomato sugo. It's a delightful seaside treat where presentation elevates your senses immediately.

In addition to the rich, distinctive menu (take note that you are not going to easily decide during your first visit), the wine list is abundant with Italian selections and affordably priced from New Zealand, Germany, Spain and France by the glass. Toast the moment at Saint and the true reflection of its history in which it was seeded. You don't have to travel far to savor their waterfront courtyard "on the Amalfi Coast." But you will have an experience that provides a unique identity filled with tales to tell of history, outstanding food and friends. It's a love story to celebrate life in the heart of St. Augustine.

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MORE THAN TWO DECADES, MORE THAN \$2 MILLION RAISED

story by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

photos courtesy of **TOM COUGHLIN JAY FUND**

For more than two decades the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Wine Tasting Gala has been a marquee fundraiser annually for the nonprofit organization and serves as a major contributor of aiding its mission of helping the financial burden of families faced with a child battling

cancer.

This year's gala brought together more than 1,100 people from the local community and beyond for a fun night of good wine for a good cause.

The event took place on the field at EverBank Stadium on Feb. 27. and raised

\$372,000 to provide financial and emotional support to patients and families tackling childhood cancer.

On the night, guests had the opportunity to sample 146 wines from Southern

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40 ■

The background image shows the interior of the 1912 Ocean Bar & Rooftop. It features a modern, bright space with large windows overlooking the ocean, wooden floors, and contemporary furniture. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the center.

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[wine & dine]

JAY FUND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

Glazer's Wine & Spirits and an array of food as well with 30 of Northeast Florida's top restaurants represented that included coastal flavors and international cuisine.

Part of the fundraising included an exclusive silent auction that featured memorable travel packages and sports memorabilia.

Since its inception 21 years ago, the Wine Tasting Gala has raised more than \$2.1 million to support local families navigating the overwhelming financial and emotional hardships that accompany a childhood cancer diagnosis.

For more details about the foundation, go to tcjayfund.org and follow the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund on social media @tcjayfund to join the conversation on social media by using #BeThere.



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children Board of Directors at the annual charity fundraiser, "A Night in the Vineyard," at SoNapa Grille. Pictured from left: Austin Burr, Donna Orender, Tanya Ramos-Puig, Edward Burr, Garrison Burr, Maxine McBride and Daniel Davis.

'A NIGHT IN THE VINEYARD' RAISES \$208K FOR THE MONIQUE BURR FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children's (MBF) fourth annual "A Night in the Vineyard," presented by The Shee Family in partnership with SoNapa Grille and Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC), raised a record \$208,000 for the foundation.

Guests enjoyed live entertainment, live and silent auctions, gourmet food by SoNapa Grille, curated wine pairings by RNDC, cocktails and great company, all in support of MBF's mission to keep youth safe.

"As the founder, this event holds a special place in my heart," said Edward Burr, MBF founder and board chairman. "Monique would be so incredibly proud of what we have accomplished, and my

sons and I are so touched that we are contributing to protecting children while simultaneously keeping her memory alive. This annual event has been well attended year after year, and it is incredibly moving to witness our community come together for a shared purpose, and mission — to keep children safe from child abuse. We are so grateful to everyone who made the night a success. Our supporters are true child-safety champions, and they are contributing to a brighter future where children can be children, and we can collectively protect them."

"What an incredible show of support for our fourth annual 'A Night in the Vineyard' fundraising event," said Tanya Ramos-Puig, MBF chief executive officer.

"With our largest raise to date, MBF is poised to continue to provide our life-saving curricula in Florida and around the globe. We appreciated the opportunity to raise awareness for prevention education during Child Abuse Prevention Month and we are thankful to the many sponsors, donors and guests who continue to fuel our work and serve as ambassadors for child safety."

All proceeds from "A Night at the Vineyard" support MBF and MBF Prevention Education Programs — personal safety curricula that educate and empower children and teens with strategies to pre-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42 ■

PHOTOS BY SUSAN GRIFFIN



Edward Burr

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[wine & dine]



Tanya Ramos-Puig and the MC Mary Baer.

BURR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

vent, recognize and respond appropriately to child abuse, bullying, online dangers, human trafficking and other types of child victimization. MBF is dedicated to protecting children and teens from bullying, digital dangers, child abuse, trafficking and exploitation with comprehensive, evidence-based, prevention education. One out of four children will be victimized in their lifetime. However, child victimization can be prevented through education.

Since inception, MBF Prevention Education Programs have positively impacted the lives of 16 million children, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to prevent, identify and respond appropriately to child abuse, bullying, online risks, exploitation, human trafficking and more.

To learn more about MBF's comprehensive, evidence-based prevention programs, go to mbfpreventioneducation.org.

tion.org.

MBF expressed gratitude for its fourth annual "A Night in the Vineyard" event sponsors. Without their support, the event would not be possible.

Sponsors include presenting sponsor The Shee Family, as well as Arc Document Solutions, Boathouse Ponte Vedra, Brette Petway Studio LLC, Carlton Construction, Clockwork Marketing, Daikin Comfort Technologies, Dream Finders Homes, England-Thims & Miller (ETM), Fiorentino Group, Foley and Lardner, GoBright Marketing, GreenPointe Holdings, Jax Utilities Management (JUM), K&G Construction, Lennar Homes, Meridian Waste, Morgan Stanley/Lighthouse Wealth Management Group, Pepsi Co., Perry Homes, Pinnacle Financial Partners, PRI Productions, PV Recorder, Republic National Distributing Company (RND), River Bay Investments, SoNapa Grille, Superior Construction, The Tim and Leah Chapman Foundation, TruTechnology and White Thorne Tree (Deborah Waldeck).

PHOTOS BY SUSAN GRIFFIN



Live music was performed by Bold City Classics.

WALK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"I thought: I've got to do something," he said.

At first, he thought he should walk 80 miles on the Appalachian Trail, with his wife following by automobile.

"When he told me, I bit my tongue," said Joyce Young. "What I wanted to say, I couldn't. I was like: You'll be 90 years old when you do this. Are you kidding me?"

She went online to research the trail. It did not look promising. Finally, she spoke to her husband, offering a better idea.

"She said, 'Tell you what — why don't you walk, first of all, on flat ground? Then, why don't you walk where your father walked?'" recalled her husband. "I said, 'That's it! That's what we're going to do.'"

PREPARATIONS

Young identified the four sites from his father's military service where he wanted to do portions of his walk, which when added up would comprise the entire 80 miles. These were: Parris Island in South Carolina; Camp Lejeune in North Carolina; Quantico, Virginia; and, finally, Arlington National Cemetery.

But a person doesn't just go onto a Marine base and say, "I'm here to walk." And Joyce Young spent a lot of time trying to make arrangements for Arlington, but that was going nowhere.

Fortunately, Hal Young plays golf with people who have all the right connections. Three of them, in particular, cleared the way for him at all of his stops.

Then, in April 2024, the Youngs traveled to the four sites in preparation for the trek.

But walking 80 miles, even in segments of six to seven miles apiece, would be physically demanding, especially for a nonagenarian. Young knew he needed to train.

On the first day, he walked about eight miles in his neighborhood.

"The next day, I couldn't get out of bed," he admitted.

He went for a physical as part of the preparation process and his doctor encouraged him to start with no more than three miles and work his way up. Young went on to train for about five months — and he lost a lot of weight in the process.

"I was 200 and some pounds," he said. "I'm 175 now. It's amazing. Just by plain walking!"

The plan was for Young to carry his father's medals, flag and photo with him

in a knapsack. As more people learned about his project, they asked him to take along photos of their own fathers, also veterans. On the backs of these photos would be notes about the men they depict.

Young ended up taking along photos of 11 of these veterans, including a man who served on Iwo Jima, another who helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp and yet another who was still living at 101 years old — though he died the week prior to the start of Young's walk.

Beyond that, Young used the occasion to raise funds for the Wounded Warrior Project and the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation.

Everything prepared, Young started his 80-mile trek on Oct. 22, 2024.

THE WALK

At Parris Island, the commanding general arranged a full tour for the Youngs, a friend who is a Marine veteran and Joyce Young's brother. The Marine Band performed at a ceremony where the Colors were raised. Then, the visitors had a surprise.

They entered one of the barracks and found the son of Hal Young's niece, Patrick Charles Healey. Unbeknownst to the family, he'd recently joined the Marine Corps and had completed The Crucible just four days prior, which meant he was a full-fledged Marine and therefore allowed to interact with family. (The timing was perfect. Had the Youngs arrived two weeks later, they would have missed him as he would have graduated.)

The general released Healey to spend the day with his family.

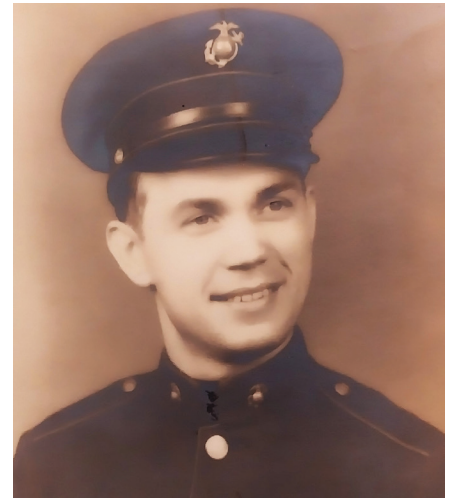
Young walked about 13 miles there over two days — at the rifle range, the parade grounds and the golf course.

The group went next to North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where Joyce Young's brother lived, and Hal Young walked two or three miles there. And then they traveled up to Camp Lejeune, where Young walked another segment of his trek.

Then, it was on to Quantico, where Young walked about eight or nine miles in a cemetery and on the trails around the nearby National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Finally, the Youngs arrived at Arlington where they held a large ceremony attended by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and other members of both families. When they met at the hotel, the group took over the entire lobby.

Also among the attendees was a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sgt. Richard Herman Young

surprise dignitary. According to Young, Karen Durham-Aguilera, executive director of the Office of Army Cemeteries, asked if she could sit in for the ceremony.

"She says, 'Mr. Young, I read everything that happens in the cemetery, but I've got to tell you: Nothing like this has ever happened before,'" Young said.

A TIME TO REFLECT

The walk to honor the memory of Sgt. Richard Young concluded on Nov. 8, 2024, but that wasn't quite the end of the story.

The week after the Youngs returned to Ponte Vedra Beach, they received a call from the Marines, inviting them to the 249th Marine Corps Birthday Ball in Jacksonville, being celebrated by B Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines. There, on Nov. 16, they made a presentation regarding their trek to about 400 Marines and their families.

Looking back at the journey to honor an American hero and a father, the Youngs recognize how it gave Richard Young's son the closure he needed.

"It was like 80 years of sadness went 'Poof!'" said Joyce Young.

"I know it's given me peace," added Hal Young, "but it's given me so much joy the way everybody got together for that weekend."

When he looks at a photo of his father's grave site at Arlington, specially preserved by his daughter on a plaque and displayed in his home, Hal Young can only repeat his dad's favorite word: "Wow."

A solemn moment passes, and he adds with a laugh and a meaningful glance from his wife, "I figure when I'm 95 I'll do it again."

A DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

\$900K raised for music education during Jacksonville Symphony's 75th Anniversary Gala

photo provided by the
JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY

The Jacksonville Symphony's 75th Diamond Anniversary Gala raised a record-breaking \$900,000 in support of its education and community programs on March 1. The total was announced on stage by Music Director and Conductor Courtney Lewis during the "Moulin Rouge"-inspired pops concert.

Held at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, the Diamond Anniversary Gala featured a dinner on the Moran stage presented by Chef's Garden, a luxury auction, a performance co-produced by Spot-On Entertainment and an exclusive after-party.

"We are deeply grateful by the outpouring of support and generosity at this year's gala," said Steven B. Libman, president and CEO of the Jacksonville Symphony. "The funds raised on Saturday ensure we can continue bringing music education to over 70,000 students annually and inspire the next generation of musicians and arts lovers."

The Symphony extended its gratitude to Gala Chairs



Music Director Courtney Lewis on piano and Concertmaster Adelya Nartadjieva on violin

Poppy and Rob Clements for their leadership in making the evening a success, title sponsor EverBank and all the guests who attended and contributed.

"It has been an exciting project chairing the 2025 Symphony Gala celebrating the Jacksonville Symphony's 75th Anniversary," said Poppy Clements. "We are extremely proud to have been part of something so successful that benefits the cultural jewel of our city!"

The event reaffirmed the Symphony's role as a cultural cornerstone of North Florida, combining world-class performances with vital fundraising efforts.

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One of the guests at the exhibit studies Cathy Thomasson's watercolors, titled: "Ground Control," "Major Thom" and "Oddity."



"Vibration," Cathy Thomasson, Acrylic on Canvas, 26-by-26 inches

THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION

Local artist Cathy Thomasson holds her first exhibit

story and photos by
SHAUN RYAN

Having weathered the greatest loss of her life and the extended period of grieving that followed, Cathy Thomasson rediscovered an underused talent and, with it, a new, transformative purpose in life.

With a singleness of mind born of the certainty that she had found what she was meant to do, she picked up a paintbrush and began to create works of art. In a matter of months, she had produced a body of work sufficient in quantity and quality to fill an exhibit. There were acrylics and watercolors, mixed media and installations drawn from nature — all executed with a mastery that belied the artist's relatively short foray into the world of visual art.

"Artists make excuses a lot of times, like: 'Oh, I don't have the right brushes' or 'I don't have a space to paint,'" Thomasson said. But, "if you really want to do this, there is nothing that will stop you."

On March 22, she held that exhibit, "Transformation," at the Blue Jay Listening Room in Jacksonville Beach, a venue owned by her daughter, Cara Murphy. By any measure, it was a success. More than 200 people attended, and she sold 10 pieces.

"I am absolutely still on Cloud Nine



Cathy Thomasson stands next to "Transformation," a mixed media work that she created in 2016. It measures 36-by-36 inches.

from it all," Thomasson said, adding, "It was an incredibly beautiful, wildly beautiful spiritual journey for me to be able to pull this off and to be able to get the affirmation."

It confirmed for her that this new direction in life was the real thing.

A MOTHER'S INSPIRATION

"I got my gift of artistic ability from my mom; she was an incredible artist," Thomasson said.

Growing up on a horse farm in Central Florida, she had always painted pictures and thought that one day she

would be an authentic artist, but life gets busy and other priorities tend to displace the dreams of youth.

As a teenager, Thomasson worked in a clothing store, which sparked an interest in fashion design and merchandising. She went on to graduate from Florida State University with a double major in those very disciplines.

She worked in the retail industry and married, and in 1984 moved to Jacksonville, where she remained after her divorce, finally moving to Ponte Vedra Beach in 1988. Formerly a stay-at-home mom, Thomasson went to work in the home-and-gift industry.

In 2011, she and her daughter opened their own home décor and gift store in Jacksonville Beach, Sidney Cardel's.

The name of the store was inspired by Thomasson's mother, Sylvia Sidney McCardel Thomasson, who signed her own paintings using only her middle name and dropping the "Mc" from her last name.

The store's name was a fulfillment of a declaration Thomasson had made to her mother upon graduating from college: that one day she would have an apparel store named Sidney Cardel's. Though her mother didn't live to see it, Thomasson never forgot her promise.

In addition to retail sales, Thomasson offered interior design at the store.

A PROFOUND TRAGEDY

In October 2014, Thomasson lost the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46 ■

THOMASSON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

love of her life.

Just two years prior, she had met Peter J. Rodrigues, a co-founder of RPC General Contractors. Before long they were a couple.

But on that October afternoon, Rodrigues, 57, went missing.

The former Navy SEAL and Atlantic Beach resident had taken his 27-foot fishing boat, Sea Witch, out in the morning. News reports say he intended to return in the afternoon, but that didn't happen. His boat washed ashore at about 6 p.m. at Hanna Park. There was no one on board and the engines were still running.

The Coast Guard, joined by family and friends, searched 80 hours without success.

"He was gone, and we never found him to this day," said Thomasson. "It took me into a really deep, dark state of depression that I had to find my way out of."

She said she felt lost for a long time.

"When you go through a traumatic thing, nobody ever tells you how to grieve or how long to grieve or what the rules of grieving are," she said. "What I've learned is there are no rules."

An important moment came in 2016 when Thomasson's sister encouraged her to paint something. She bought a canvas and began to paint. Then, she found a linen scarf in her closet and incorporated it into the work. When her sister saw the finished piece, she exclaimed, "You painted a horse!"

And yes, when viewed from the right angle, the scarf looks like a horse, perhaps inspired — albeit subconsciously — by Thomasson's youth and the horse farm.

The artist named her work "Transformation," not knowing then that it would become the focal point of her exhibit in March 2025.

Thomasson said she feels Rodrigues' presence with her every day.

"It's incredibly comforting," she said, confident that "I know one day I will see him again."

A NEW DIRECTION

Thomasson and her daughter closed the store and the end of 2019, just ahead of the COVID-19 chaos. Their timing allowed them to hold a going-out-of-business sale before they would have been forced to close by public



One of the pieces in Cathy Thomasson's "Abstract" series

health mandates.

Thomasson continued to offer her interior design services, which today can be found at sidneycardels.com.

What painting she did consisted largely of murals in hospitals, restaurants and nurseries and paintings for friends and clients. She never painted anything just for herself.

But with the 10-year anniversary of Rodrigues' disappearance coming in October 2024, she sensed a change in her life.

She had hurt her back, which made it difficult to carry around a lot of the heavy tools of her interior design trade. She considered retiring but rejected it.

"I'm just not one to sit still," she said, adding, "I don't want to ever retire from anything."

She had read something once that suggested returning to childhood to rediscover one's talents could help a person identify what he or she really wants to do. The answer for Thomasson was, obviously, art.

"I didn't know if I would ever find happiness again," she said. "But this art, this new path in my life has brought me happiness and joy again. It just has opened up this whole new world of color and joy that I didn't know that I would ever have."

And, having found this new direction, she began to create.

TRANSFORMATION

Thomasson hasn't yet settled on a style that immediately identifies her work. The pieces in her exhibit were eclectic, and she works in different mediums. She enjoys watercolors and mixed media, but her main focus tends to be acrylics.

"I love working with acrylics," she

said. "They are a little difficult, and they dry really fast. That's why a lot of people like using oils better, because they take so long to dry, and you can manipulate them. But with acrylics, they're not as forgiving. So, you have to work quickly before it dries. But I like that, too. It kind of makes me work quicker."

Several of the pieces in the show were abstracts, colorful designs marked by stark black boundaries.

"I love a black outline," she explained. "I love outlining everything. In my world, it makes it pop."

Other works realistically depicted horses, often inspired by photos or videos she had seen. Whenever possible, Thomasson tries to get the photographer's permission before she decides to paint one of these.

A set of three watercolors carry a topographic vibe because Thomasson adds pen-and-ink lines.

"Those pieces are so therapeutic for me, because I can turn on my music and just sit and work on those for hours," she said. "I love those so much, and I'll probably do more of those."

But not everything in the show was a traditional painting.

There was a loveseat, the slipcover of which Thomasson painted to match her abstracts. It marked a connection with her interior design work and was gifted to her through Greg Urso, a family friend who also builds her picture frames. She called Urso, whom she'd met by chance while in Lowes to purchase plywood for some of her works, her "biggest cheerleader."

Other works featured large, painted roots that Thomasson had rescued.

"I'm literally walking my dog in Atlantic Beach, and my neighbor just had all this yard debris hauled to the street," she said. "And I see these giant roots. I look at them every day for about a week. And then, I'm like: I've got to do something with these roots!"

So, seeing potential sitting right before her, she "went in there like a banshee, and I pulled out some of the coolest roots."

She took them home, washed and painted them and mounted them on the plywood she'd been purchasing that day at Lowes.

Thomasson is already planning her next show, which like the first will be held at the Blue Jay Listening Room. The date is Nov. 22.

MOCA REIMAGINES FIRST EXHIBITION

'The Armory South' exhibits artworks from 1924

photos provided by MOCA

MOCA Jacksonville, a cultural institute of the University of North Florida, opened "The Armory South: The 1924 Jacksonville Woman's Club Exhibition Rediscovered" on April 10, and it will run through Nov. 23.

The exhibition reassembles core works from a forgotten but seminal Modernist exhibition mounted in March 1924 by the Woman's Club of Jacksonville and the newly founded Jacksonville Fine Arts Society (now MOCA).

Planned to mark the beginning of the museum's second century in 2025, "The Armory South" will tell several related stories of essential importance to the history of women in Modern art, the introduction of Modernism to the American South and the ideas and relationships shaping American art in the mid-1920s.

The title of this new exhibition is a nod to the 1913 Armory show that propelled the Modern art movement in America. In the same way, the 1924 Woman's Club Exhibition in Jacksonville marked the beginning of Modern art in the South. The exhibition was organized by four Jacksonville women led by Merrydelle Hoyt, a largely overlooked but pioneer-

ing advocate for Modern art in Florida, and curated by the artist Wood Gaylor. It included nearly 200 works by more than 80 cutting-edge Modernist artists, including George Ault, Peggy Bacon, Charles DeMuth, John Dos Passos, Wood Gaylor, Marsden Hartley, Thomas Hart Benton, Walt Kuhn, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Adelaide Lawson, Pablo Picasso, Diego Rivera, Katherine Schmidt, Joseph Stella and Isabel Whitney, among others. Nearly one-third of the exhibiting artists were women.

Until very recently, this remarkable history had been almost completely forgotten.

Beyond its contribution to understanding a forgotten regional history of American art, this retrospective exhibition will bring completely new evidence to bear on open questions important to our broader history of American art. The exhibition will be an opportunity to reconsider both the neglected work of influential women artists and some of the now canonical artworks that shaped Modern art in America in the early 20th century.

A catalog is being created to accompany this exhibition with support from the Wyeth Foundation for American Art. Guest curator is P. Scott Brown, PhD.

The exhibition includes works on loan from the Brooklyn Museum; Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, Massachusetts; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Vir-

ginia; Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College; Forum Gallery, New York; The Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville; the DeMell Jacobsen Collection; the Thomas H. and Diane DeMell Jacobsen Ph.D. Foundation; D. Wigmore Fine Art, Inc., New York; Myron Kunin Collection of American Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Myron Kunin Collection of Art, Minneapolis, MN; Ogunquit Museum of American Art; Portland Museum of Art, Maine; The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art; Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University; Dr. P. Scott and Sally Anne Brown; Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Wesleyan College; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York; Woodstock Artists Association & Museum; Yale University Art Gallery; and Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University.

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COFFEE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

came," Carr said.

Interestingly, they originally just served beer, wine and food at Flamingo but then added coffee with the goal of creating a concept of an all-day café with coffee bar vibes where people can come in morning and get a coffee and then come back at night and order from the beer or wine selection.

After a couple of years in business things seemed to be progressing and they were being embraced by the local community, so the creative ideas began flowing again and they purchased a two-pound roaster that they operated in Carr's garage.

According to Carr, in many ways roasting coffee can feel like a scientist at work

and there are always new challenges and creations to consider.

"There were so many nights starting out, where I could be with my family and the shop during the day and then be in my garage cooking beans late at night," Carr said.

Many of the syrups used to flavor the coffees are handmade and one of the aspects the staff at Flamingo Coffee specializes in is working with each customer to find the right drink for them on that day.

"There's this bar aspect, that I feel like I would get if I went to a craft cocktail bar, where you can just tell someone 'I'm feeling something sweet or I'm feeling something creamy,' and the drink can be modified to however the consumer wants it."

Over the years Flamingo Coffee has ventured into catering as well, which

has allowed them to open up even more avenues and relationships with local establishments such as THE PLAYERS and TPC Sawgrass.

"It's crazy to think how far we've come because now we're in the process of opening two locations here at the seven-year mark."

The new locations will be in the Hanania Building in the Southbank of downtown Jacksonville and on Anastasia Island in St. Augustine. The goal for both locations is to have them open at some point during the summer months.

"We're excited to grow with our community as our community continues to grow and also continue expand into other areas," Carr said. "It's been a fun seven years of just loving on people and finding out new ways to serve coffee to our people. That's really our heartbeat and our passion."



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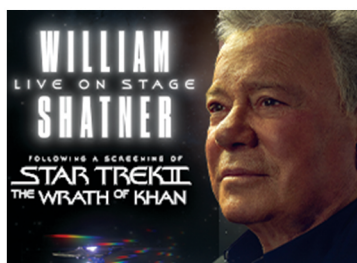
1964 THE TRIBUTE
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