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About this magazine

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FIRST COAST REGISTER

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on the cover

The cover of this Register features a painting by area artist Jami Childers. Read more about Childers and her artwork on page 11. Photo by Tammy McKinley.



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One of Us!

KARLA WAGNER

Karla Wagner is a Florida native who loves film especially when shown at small, intimate venues. The serendipitous closing of a downtown St. Augustine movie house opened the door for Wagner to own a venue that would satisfy movie buffs and serve the community.

What can you share about your background?

I am a native Floridian born in Orlando. I graduated from Rollins College and have worked in the corporate world for over 20 years including banking, events and pharmaceuticals. I grew up in Winter Park near two art houses similar to mine; The Enzian and The Aloma Draft House, where I would spend most of my time watching foreign and independent films with my grandmother who also had a passion for films. I have two beautiful children that inspire me, and one husband of 30 plus years.

What led you to transform the movie theater into a café and cinema?

My husband and I moved to St. Augustine down the street from the theater. One of the reasons we bought where we did was that it had a small cinema within walking distance called “Potbelly’s” that I would frequent. When it closed down for a couple of years I was devastated — what town doesn’t have an art house or cinema? So, I got the idea to buy it and open it back up for the community. I do a lot of charitable causes as well as free events for the town. That’s where my corporate experience, along with my passion for films, came into play.

What is the significance of the name, Corazon?

It means “heart” in Spanish. Since I was finding it difficult to come up with a name that didn’t have “old” in it, I ran a naming contest in the local paper and when “The Corazon” came through, I knew that was the name. It is in the heart of the city and I wanted to create a gathering place for locals and visitors to enjoy the charm of the city and the arts.



Instead of stadium seating, the three theaters have chairs and tables.

Photos by CHRISTINE RODENBAUGH



Oliver Arredondo changes the vintage lighted marquis outside the Corazon Cinema on Grenada Street in St. Augustine.



Karla Wagner stands in the café with exposed brick walls and Edison lights.



Charlie Rodger serves popcorn at the Corazon Cinema and Café.



Chef Nick Ambrose prepares fresh salads, sandwiches, wraps and pizza for service at the café or in the theater during a show.

How have the events changed since the venue opened in 2014?

With two hurricanes in recent years, I was impacted quite a bit by the destruction both times. That's when I started to do more events in addition to showing movies and serving lunch and dinner. The venue's space and the location right downtown lends itself to hosting events. I even have some parking, which makes it very convenient for people to attend. Now I do weddings, graduations, comedy, plays ... you name it.

What do you envision for the future of the Corazon?

That's the million-dollar question — people enjoy the charm of the place and the variety of activities. I want the people to enjoy the experience.

What do you like to do in your free time?

As a business owner, I don't have a lot of free time — but if I can slip in an early morning tennis round robin, that's where I will be!

What is one thing even close friends would be surprised to learn about you?

I am usually very open and most of my friends know everything about me, but maybe that I am not as tough as I appear on the outside. I think we all have our strengths and weaknesses and I have learned over the years not to be judgmental about people's choices in life. One of my strengths is I can hold my own, but I'm also very sensitive at times and I try not to take it personally when it comes to business.

What advice can you offer other entrepreneurs?

I think small business owners have a tough time competing with franchises and bigger businesses. My advice to small business owners is that this takes time, don't be afraid to try something, and you will need to make adjustments. I love my customers' feedback and the support of the community.

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FIRST COAST
Real Estate

PAGES 8-9

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24620 Harbour View Drive
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24760 Harbour View Drive
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24532 Deer Trace Drive
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8110 La White Lane
11 Palm Lane
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758 Sandy Oaks
125 Magnolia Hammock
344 Waters Edge Dr. S.
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137 Lantern Wick
135 Deer Estates Lane
16 Sea Winds Lane E.
601 Citrus Court
600 Ponte Vedra Blvd.
21 Cat Road
101 Duck Bill Cove
121 Nantucket Island Court
112 Annapolis Lane
24761 Harbour View Dr.
518 Ponte Vedra Blvd.
440 Huckleberry
5903 Pheasant Run
24760 Harbour View Dr.
404 Central St.
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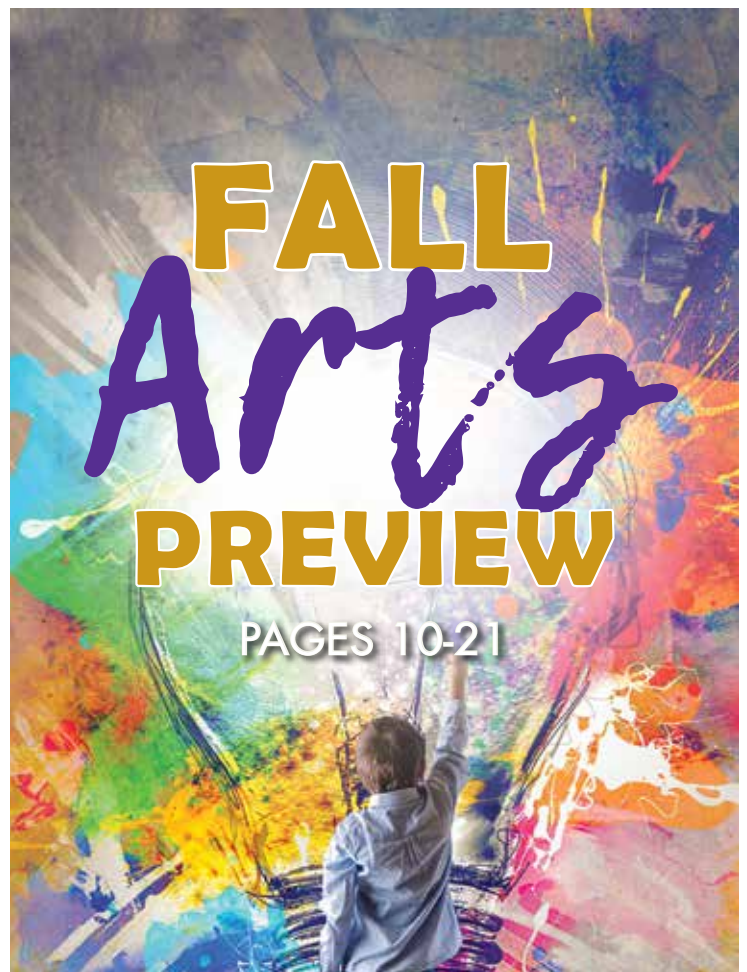
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Out, color & STYLE

Artist Jami Childers' salon in Jacksonville showcases colorful seascapes and other works of art

by PARIS MOULDEN

“I want them to be able to see what I see.”

That's what artist Jami Childers hopes people get from her art. The California native, who relocated to St. Augustine when she was 19, has had a love of art for as long as she can remember.

That love was fostered by her grandfather, who took her one summer to paint, and having an eye for art just kind of came to her naturally.

“I wasn't good at any other school work, but I was good at art,” Childers joked. “I used to do my projects, and everybody else's projects.”

Childers, who now lives in Jacksonville, does a lot of commissioned portrait art, memorializing people's beloved family members, human and animal, in beautiful, lifelike, oil paintings.

But Childers doesn't limit herself to one medium.

“I like to experiment,” she said. “I like to learn new things and try new things. I'm always experimenting with new stuff.”

Childers' art is on display at the High Tide Gallery in St. Augustine, and several other locations around the First Coast, but perhaps the easiest way to check out her work is while getting a haircut or color.

Jami's Barber Salon and Art Studio, located in Jacksonville's Arlington area, is



Artist Jami Childers stands with some of her seascapes at her salon and art studio in Jacksonville.

Photos by PARIS MOULDEN



Childers' art, as well as work by other artists, are on display at Jami's Barber Salon and Art Studio, located at 5842 Atlantic Blvd.

owned by Childers and showcases some of her art, along with some works by other local artists.

Her work can also be seen at the upcoming Pups and Sups Surfing Contest on Sept. 27 and 28 in St. Augustine. She was one of the artists selected by the Guy Harvey Resort to paint a surfboard for the event, which is something right up her alley. Childers says she's particularly fond of water and ocean themed art.

“I like doing seascapes and things like that because you can experiment with the color and water dripping and all different mediums,” she said. “It's a little freer, it doesn't have to be so exact. When you do

portraits, it's really precise, but when you do the other stuff, you can let more of your own creativity come through.”

For inspiration, Childers takes a lot of photographs, particularly of sunrises, when the sky offers an abundance of colors.

“I don't really paint with a message,” Childers said. “I just paint what I like. I want people to be able to experience the sunrise without having to go out to do it. I want them to be able to see what I see.”

For more information on Childers' artwork, go to www.portraitartist-jamichilders.com or visit [portraitartist-jamichilders](https://www.facebook.com/portraitartist-jamichilders) on Facebook.

Dr. Seuss, Dali

SHARE GALLERY SPACE
IN ST. AUGUSTINE,
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by DANIELA TOPOREK



ABOVE: The Cutter family (from left), Mark, Matthew, Sonya and Len launched the opening of the St. Augustine gallery's Salvador Dali and Dr. Seuss exhibit on July 5.

LEFT: A statue of Dr. Seuss's Grinch character stands outside the Cutter and Cutter gallery in Ponte Vedra Beach. The poster of Dali seems to peer at the intriguing figure.

BELOW: Salvador Dali has multiple sketches and paintings involving the Spanish tradition of bullfighting as an ode to Pablo Picasso, who admired the "sport."

Photos by
**DANIELA
TOPOREK**





ABOVE:
Dr. Seuss (or Ted Geisel)\'s "The Great Cat Continuum," shows similar surreal characteristics to Dalí\'s more elaborate paintings hung in museums all over the world.

RIGHT: Salvador Dalí\'s exhibit features five sketches of his series, "Imagination of Objects of the Future," depicting new inventions and concepts that he predicted could be invented during his time.



On Friday, July 5, St. Augustine\'s Cutter and Cutter art gallery launched a new exhibit, featuring the surreal art of Salvador Dalí and the whimsical artistry of Dr. Seuss. The surprising Ted Geisel exhibit displays his "secret work," a world beyond his children\'s books, similar to the works of Dalí. Ted Geisel, by the way, is critically acclaimed American children\'s book author, Dr. Seuss. After July 28, the exhibit moved to the Cutter and Cutter gallery in Ponte Vedra Beach, where it remains on display through Aug. 31.

"We have three different collections for the Dalí exhibit," said co-owner, Mark Cutter.

The main Dalí collection for the exhibit opening was the Argillet Collection, according to Mark\'s brother, Matthew Cutter, who also co-owns the gallery with his family.

"He (Pierre Argillet) was a publisher of Salvador Dalí," Matthew said. "There are not a lot of hands that have touched this collection, so it\'s pretty sweet."

The exhibit displays sketches and paintings illustrating Dalí\'s ideas, of what he thought the future of art and technology would bring, specifically shown in his 'Imagination of Objections of the Future' series.

The Dr. Seuss exhibit is a collection of Ted Geisel\'s classic illustrations, sculptures, taxidermy mounts, political cartoons and unexpected paintings from his "secret art" collection.

Original sketches of classics such as "The Cat in the Hat," "Yertle the Turtle," "The Lorax," and others bring a comforting feeling of nostalgia to those who read the books as a child.

"Read them again (and see) how extremely vital they are to who we are as human beings," said Madeline Kisting, who works for Chase Art Group, the exclusive art representative for The Art of Dr. Seuss. "If everyone understood, "The Sneetches," we\'d all love each other. If Congress would read "Yertle the Turtle" again, we wouldn\'t have any problems, you know?"

Geisel\'s political cartoons depicted issues that are still universally discussed today, such as the portrayal of political parties in his "Talk, talk, talk." comic or, "The Knotty Problem of Capitol Hill...Finding a way to raise taxes without losing a single vote," which speaks for itself.

But what really stood out were the vibrant and unexpected paintings from Dr. Seuss\'s late-night art sessions. Ted Geisel\'s "secret art" showed a different perspective from Dr. Seuss. He combined his imaginative characters and transported them into Dalí\'s world of surrealism, with unique shapes, concepts and colors, like in his painting, "The Great Cat Continuum," that\'s hung at the gallery, opposite of Dalí\'s work.

Len Cutter and his wife, Sonya, opened Cutter and Cutter art gallery alongside their sons, Matthew and Mark Cutter, 21 years ago. Len said that his family-owned gallery was the first to feature the two artists together with their work side-by-side.

"For this show to be in Ponte Vedra Beach, this is worthy of a drive or a walk to see it," Len said. "If this were in New York, Boston or Chicago, people would fly in to see it, but it\'s happening here first."

Fall Arts

EVENTS SCHEDULE

With fall just around the corner, the First Coast offers an array of artistic venues with a variety of events for the season, including theatrical performances, museum exhibits, musical performances and more.

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Aug. 29: JOHNNYSWIM

Aug. 30: Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark (OMD)

Sep. 15: Florida Chamber Music Project Presents: Arturo Marquez and Johannes Brahms

Sep. 16: Don Felder

Sep. 20: Local Natives Spiral Choir Tour with guest, Devon Gilfillian

Sep. 28: Grandson The End of the Beginning Tour with guest, nothing, nowhere

Sep. 30: Bad Suns Mystic Truth Tour with guests, Liily and Ultra Q

Oct. 5: John Medeski's Mad Skillet

Oct. 10: Marty Stuart's Pilgrim Show

Oct. 11: Steven Page

Oct. 17: The Wood Brothers

Oct. 24: The Allman Betts Band with guests, Joanne Shaw Taylor and JD Simo

Oct. 27: Wynonna & The Big Noise

Oct. 31: Acoustic Alchemy

Nov. 2: Here Come The Mummies The Dark Matter Tour

Nov. 3: Florida Chamber Music Project Presents: Franz Schubert

Nov. 22: The Fab Four | The Ultimate Beatles Tribute

Nov. 23: Mason Jennings

Nov. 24: John Oates with The Good Road Band

Dec. 7: Joy to the World: Messiah Favorites and Holiday Carols

Dec. 10: A Peter White Christmas with Euge Groove, Vincent Ingala and Lindsey Webster

Dec. 19: Rockapella: A Rockapella Holiday

Dec. 20: Horton's Holiday Hayride feat. The Reverend Horton Heat with guests, 5.6.7.8's, Voodoo Glow Skulls and Dave Alvin

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Aug. 25: Vampire Weekend with guest, Christone Kingfish Ingram

Sep. 7: Sing Out Loud Festival presents Kurt Vile and The Violators with guest, Reels

Sep. 8: Sing Out Loud Festival presents Jenny Lewis with guests, The Watson Twins and Lucie Silvas

Sep. 13: Sing Out Loud Festival: Propagandhi with guests, The Coathangers, Debt Neglector and GILT

Sep. 14: Sing Out Loud Festival: Hot Water Music with guests, The Menzingers, Subhumans and Kid You Not

Sep. 15: Sing Out Loud Festival: St. Paul & The Broken Bones with guests, Dirty Dozen Brass Band and Aaron Lee Tasjan

Sep. 20: Sing Out Loud Festival: GZA with guests DJ 3 Clops I and Friends, L.O.V.E. Culture and Willie Evans Jr.

Sep. 21: Sing Out Loud Festival Benefit Concert: Kacey Musgraves with guest, Weyes Blood

Sep. 22: Sing Out Loud Festival: The Growlers and Phosphorescent

Sep. 27: Sing Out Loud Festival: Shovels & Rope with guest, Lilly Hiatt

Sep. 29: Sing Out Loud Festival: Son Volt with Early James & The Latest

Oct. 4: Papadosio with guest, S.P.O.R.E.

Oct. 10: Catfish and the Bottlemen with guest, July Talk

Oct. 11: Maggie Rogers with guest, Jacob Banks

Oct. 12: Nahko and Medicine For The People Take Your Power Back Tour with guest, Nattali Rize

Oct. 16: ZZ Top 50th Anniversary Tour with guest, Cheap Trick

Oct. 18: Billy Currington

Oct. 19: Lagwagon & Face to Face with guest, H2O

Nov. 1: Sammy Hagar & The Circle with guest, Night Ranger

Nov. 2 - 3: Old Dominion Make it Sweet Tour

Nov. 8: Elvis Costello & The Imposters

Nov. 13: The Raconteurs with guest, Margo Price

Nov. 9: The Doobie Brothers

Nov. 23: Joe Bonamassa

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106 6th Street North
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
(904) 249-0289
www.playersbythesea.org

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Sept. 20 - Oct. 12: The Wiz
Oct. 25 - Nov. 10: The Toxic Avenger
Dec. 6 - 22: A Christmas Carol

THEATER JACKSONVILLE

2032 San Marco Blvd.
Jacksonville, Florida 32204
(904) 396-4425
info@theatrejax.com

Sept. 13 to Sept. 29: Twelve Angry Men
Nov. 1 to Nov. 17: Something Rotten

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admin@floridatheatre.com

Aug. 30: Poco, Pure Prairie League and Firefall

Sept. 7: Rhett & Link: Live in Concert
Sept. 12: Amy Grant
Sept. 24: Snarky Puppy
Sept. 27: Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox
Sept. 29: The Gatlin Brothers: Larry, Steve and Rudy
Oct. 1: Peppa Pig Live!
Oct. 3: Scott Stapp: Voice of Creed
Oct. 5: Lil Duval: Living My Best Life Tour
Oct. 7: Baby Shark Live!
Oct. 11: Bert Kreischer: Body Shots World Tour
Oct. 13: Benise 'Fuego!' - Spirit of Spain
Oct. 20: Anjelah Johnson: Technically Not Stalking
Oct. 21: Rumours of Fleetwood Mac: 50th Anniversary Tour - The Very Best of Fleetwood Mac
Oct 22: Robert Randolph and The Family Band
Oct. 23: Cat and Nat: #MomsTruthLive
Oct. 24: Switchfoot & Their Fantasy Traveling Music Show: An Evening of Songs and Stories
Nov. 1: Cody Ko and Noel Miller

Nov. 2: RuPaul's Drag Race: Werq The World Tour 2019
Nov. 3: We Will Rock You: The Queen Musical
Nov. 6: Roy Orbison and Buddy Holly: The Rock N' Roll Dream Tour
Nov. 7: Dane Cook: Tell It Like It Is Tour
Nov. 9: The Mighty O'Jays and Friends
Nov. 10: Calling All Divas
Nov. 15: Kevin James
Nov. 16: The Gutfeld Monologues: Live with Greg Gutfeld
Nov. 17: Dwight Yoakm
Nov. 22: Steven Wright
Nov. 23: Disney Junior Holiday Party Tour
Nov. 23: Paula Poundstone at the WJCT Soundstage
Dec. 1: Mystery Science Theater 3000 Live: The Great Cheesy Movie Circus Tour
Dec. 5: Dave Koz & Friends Christmas Tour 2019 with guests, Jonathan Butler, Melissa Manchester, Michael Lington and Chris Walker

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ■



The Cultural Center
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Dec. 6: Leonid and Friends:
Performing The Music of Chicago
Dec. 7: Trisha Yearwood
Dec. 8: The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Show

Dec. 15: Leann Rimes: You and Me
and Christmas Tour 2019

Dec. 20: Rudolph The Red-Nosed
Reindeer: The Musical

Dec. 22: Moscow Ballet's Great
Rusian Nutcracker matinee

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www.jaxsymphony.org

Sept. 28: Fanfare! Opening Night
Oct. 4 and 5: Beethoven's Pastoral
Symphony
Oct. 25 and 26: Brahms Piano
Concerto No. 2
Nov. 1: Beethoven Chamber Music
Nov. 3: Brass, Organ, Winds and
Percussion
Nov. 15 and 16: Ehnes Plays Elgar
Nov. 21: Beethoven's Fifth -
Symphony in 60
Nov. 22: Beethoven's Fifth - Coffee
Series
Dec. 13, 14 and 15: First Coast
Nutcracker
Dec. 14 and 15: Handel's Messiah
Dec. 20 and 21: Symphonic Dances
Dec. 31: New Year's Eve: The Jazz Age

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and Roll
Oct. 6: Hollywood Concert Orchestra
Night at the Oscars
Dec. 18: Holiday Pops with
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra

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St. Augustine, Florida 32084
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Aug. 22: Throwback Thursday: The
Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939)
Aug. 23 to Sept. 5: Ophelia
Aug. 23 to Sept. 5: The Other Story
Aug. 25: St. Augustine Speaks Poetry
Oct. 3 to 6: Hispanic Film Festival
Nov. 2: Dia de los Muertos: A
Dancing Celebration

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Oct. 18 to Nov. 3: The Vandal
Dec. 6 to 22: Twelfth Night

CULTURAL CENTER AT PONTE VEDRA BEACH

50 Executive Way
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida 32082
(904) 280-0614
www.ccpvb.org

*(All events at the Cultural Center
unless noted)*

Aug. 19: Summer Mixer Series
Sept. 7: Ponte Vedra Concert Hall Art
Contest Celebration
Ponte Vedra Concert Hall
Sept. 27 to Nov. 9: 1¢ LIFE Exhibition
Oct. 4: 1¢ LIFE Exhibition Opening
Reception and CCPVB 25th Anniversary
Celebration
Oct. 9 and Nov. 1: Poetry Open Mic
Nights with Ancient City Poets
Nov. 14-16: 29th Annual Holiday
Pop-Up Shoppes, The Lodge & Club at
Ponte Vedra Beach
Feb. 23: Beaches | A Celebration of
the Arts, The Surf Club at Ponte Vedra
Inn & Club

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www.mocajacksonville.unf.edu

May 18 - Dec. 28: Of Many
Ancestors by Josef Albers, Ilya
Bolotowsky, Kota Ezawa, Philip
Guston, Louise Nevelson, Lyle
Owerko, Yolanda Sanchez and
Theodoros Stamos
July 20 - Oct. 27: Camp/Wall/
Flock by Khalid Albaih
July 27 - Jan. 5: Jay Shoots: Home
by Jay Shoots
Aug. 10 - Dec. 8: Animal-Gamation:
Art with a Heart in Healthcare
Aug. 24 - Feb. 2: A Moment in
Beijing by Su Xinping, Weng Yunpeng
and Jizi

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(904) 356-6857
www.cummermuseum.org

Sept. 5: Dinner with Monet
Sept. 11 - 25; Oct. 2 - 16: Art
Fundamentals: Acrylic Painting
Sept. 15: Family Open Studio:
Quotation Station
Sept. 19: Priceless: How I went
undercover to rescue the world's
stolen treasures
an evening with Robert Wittman
Sept. 23: Cummer Amelia Fall
Kickoff
Sept. 28: Art for Tots: Patterns in
Paradise 'Carlos Rolon'
Oct. 12 - 26; Nov. 2 - 16: My First
Art Class
Oct. 30; Nov. 6 - 20; Dec. 4, 11:
Acrylic Painting

Compiled by Daniela Toporek



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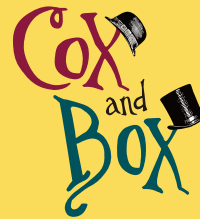


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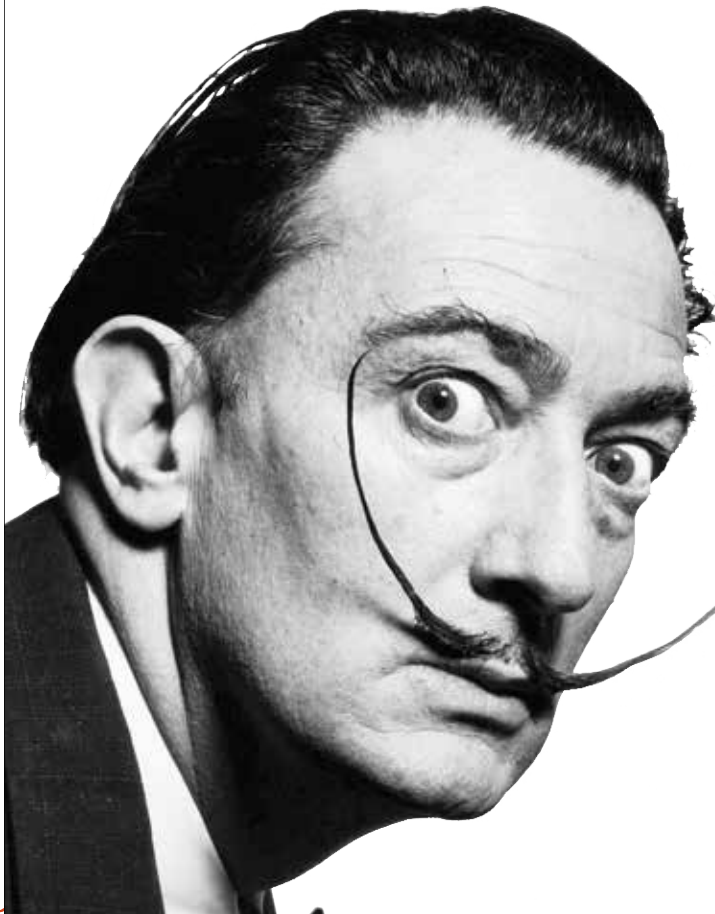
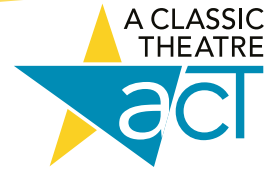
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Artist Brian Barnard paints during a live music performance in Atlantic Beach.

Photos by MARA BUDD and HEIDI CLEAVES SMITH

Artist Brian Barnard finds muse in live music

by PARIS MOULDEN

Fernandina Beach-based artist Brian Barnard knew he wanted to create art in some way, but it wasn't until about 10 years ago he found the right fit for his artistic style.

"I didn't really get into painting until I started college, but I've always been drawing since I was a little kid," Barnard said. "I've always been trying to create something my whole life."

Barnard attended Florida State University and studied art. When he returned to Fernandina Beach in 2006, he began working at Moon River Pizza, displaying his art on the restaurant walls, but he wasn't sure how to make it a career until a musician friend of his approached him in 2009 with a novel suggestion.

The friend was performing an acoustic concert in Fernandina Beach and asked Barnard to do a live

painting at the show. It was his first time painting for a live audience, but it felt like the beginning of something big.

Barnard began painting at concerts around the Jacksonville area. In one week, he earned \$1,000 selling his artwork at two live music events, giving him the motivation to keep going.

"That let me know it was possible to make a living off my art, so I left my pizza job and I've been doing it ever since," he said.

Through his creative connections, Barnard got noticed a lot on the music scene and beyond. He's painted murals in Fernandina Beach, 5 Points, at a video game store on Blanding Boulevard and several other locations, as well as doing commissioned art. He also performs live art shows at events like the annual Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival in Amelia Island, Dancing in the Streets in Neptune Beach and the Art Walk in Downtown Jacksonville.



But the live music scene is where Barnard is at home. He paints at venues around the First Coast, often at 1904 Music Hall in Downtown Jacksonville and Fly's Tie Irish Pub in Atlantic Beach.

"I've just been making my way as a crazy, live painter guy and it really allows me to interact with people and my client base," Barnard said.

While painting during a live music show with tons of people around may seem like a distraction, Barnard said the high energy actually helps his concentration.

"There's so much going on that you don't overthink what you're doing with your artwork, so I find it a real productive environment," he said. "Actually, a lot of times I do paintings from start to finish all in one set at a show, so putting it in parameters and a timeframe helps, because it makes you focus."

Barnard's medium of choice is usually acrylic on canvas or wood, although he also uses spray paint with stencils sometimes. The main thing is the ability to work quickly so he can complete pieces from start to finish during the course of the evening.

"It's a great way of getting my art out in front of people," Barnard said. "Getting out and talking to people kind of makes your art a real, viable thing."

Sometimes Barnard knows what he plans to paint going in, but other times he likes to improvise and see what develops, which is often a pleasant surprise to the audience — and to Barnard.

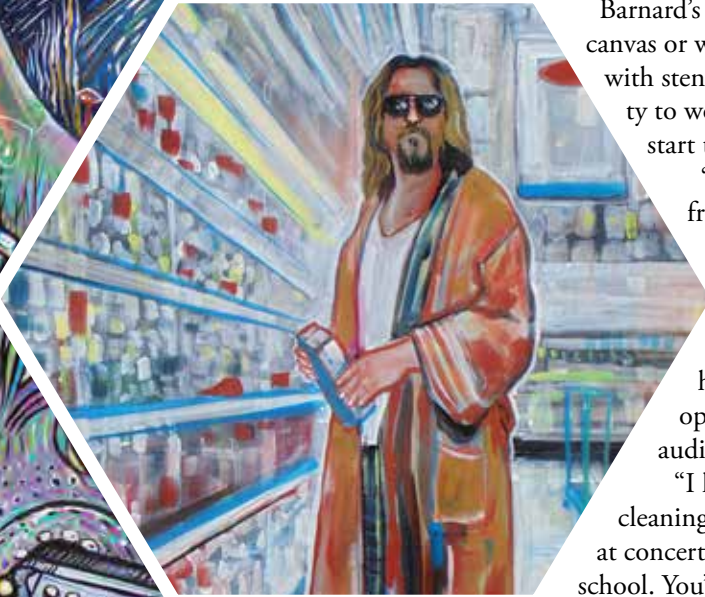
"I like making a mess on the canvas and then cleaning it up," he said. "I tell people painting at concerts is kind of like drawing in your notes at school. You're kind of doodling, but still paying attention to what's going on, and then you end up with this really cool drawing."

As far as subject matter, Barnard said his changes regularly, but often includes pop culture, nature and surreal scenes, along with bold, vibrant colors and visual textures. And as for the music

Barnard likes to paint to, he's also flexible with that, painting in front of crowds who enjoy all types of musical genres, and the combination has been an ideal match.

"It pairs up perfectly," Barnard said. "People who go out and seek live music, in general are very open to artistic experiences."

To check out some of Barnard's artwork, visit @brianbarnardart on Instagram.



Fernandina Beach-based artist Brian Barnard finds inspiration for his unique and colorful works of art at concerts and music festivals around the First Coast.

Photos courtesy of Brian Barnard



Pop art & Poetry

splashes onto First Coast

The painterly abstraction of Sam Francis is most often associated with the American Abstract Expressionist movement.

Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach celebrates 25th anniversary with first national exhibit

The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach presents the eclectic exhibition 1¢ Life from Sept. 27 to Nov. 9 in recognition of the 55th anniversary of the landmark publication, "1¢ Life." Chinese-born artist Walasse Ting had a vision to bring together a community of artists creating works of abstract expressionism and pop-art in the early 1960s. The collection of more than 55 important original graphics and poems was published in the ambiguously titled "1¢ Life" in 1964.

The collection of original lithographs by 28 celebrated artists including Ting, Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein represents the first national exhibition hosted by the Cultural Center. It comes at an exciting time of growth and change as the Cultural Center prepares to transition to a new, state-of-the-art facility.

The opening reception for the exhibit will also celebrate the Cultural Center's 25th anniversary from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 4. The retro event will include 1960s-themed cocktails and bites (fondue and martinis please, shaken, not stirred.) A 1960s jazz band trio, Cats in Bird Land, will set the vibe to music. Guests are encouraged to travel back in time and don their favorite 1960s attire. Did someone say go-go boots?

Ticket prices for the exhibition range in price from \$5 to \$25. Tickets for the 1¢ Life Exhibition Opening Reception and CCPVB 25th Anniversary Celebration are \$90 for members and \$125 for the general public.

For more information about the exhibit and related programming, or to purchase tickets, visit ccpvb.org or call (904) 280-0614.



ABOVE: A pop art lithograph by Roy Lichtenstein is part of the 1¢ Life exhibit.



LEFT: The 1¢ Life Cover by Machteld Appel is part of the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach exhibit from Sept. 27 to Nov. 9.

Photos courtesy of the CULTURAL CENTER AT PONTE VEDRA BEACH

SING OUT LOUD FESTIVAL ROCKS!

Four bands took the stage July 20 at Colonial Oak Park on St. George Street in St. Augustine for the Sing Out Loud Session IPA release party. The audience was able to sample the new brew by Intuition Ale Works formulated especially for the 2019 Sing Out Loud Festival. Intuition's director of sales, Daniel Courts, said the beer is made using Amarillo hops and has a melon, citrus and kiwi flavor profile.

"A session IPA is meant for people to enjoy several over a session," Courts said. "Most IPAs are 6% to 7% alcohol. The beer released today is 5.1%. It's fun and easy to drink for everyone."

The custom brew will be available at all Sing Out Loud shows with proceeds benefitting JASMYN, a nonprofit youth services organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people ages 13 to 23 in Jacksonville.

The release party also put a spotlight on the Sing Out Loud Festival, which kicks off Sept. 6 at Colonial Oak Park. With a roster of 334 national, regional and local performers, the fourth annual Sing Out Loud Festival set a new record for number of acts playing at 11 venues through Sunday, Sept. 29. The four bands that played the kick-off party will also perform during the festival — The Wobbly Toms, Sugarbeats, The Wild Shiners and Bedsweater.

The festival features 334 performers ranging in genres from indie rock, Americana, blues, hip-hop and electronica to spoken word, bluegrass, punk rock, jazz and comedy. Every performance is free and open to the public with exception of the Saturday, Sept. 21 Kacey Musgraves Benefit Concert.

For more information, visit www.singoutloudfestival.com.



Photo by CHRISTINE RODENBAUGH

The Wobbly Toms closed out the July 20 performances at the Sing Out Loud Session IPA release party to an enthusiastic crowd July 20 at Colonial Oak Park on St. George Street.

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Wine & Dine

ON THE FIRST COAST

Pages 22-31



Summertime vines produce perfect warm weather pairings

by ALLY BURKETT

Summer is quickly coming to a close, Labor Day is fast approaching, but that certainly doesn't mean our social life slows down. I often get asked which varietals are the best to serve when entertaining in the summer heat, and surprisingly, there are a few reds that make the cut. I like to surprise my guests with other varietals besides typical hot weather picks of Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay, although I always have those on standby.

Here are my top picks that I love to sip on in our gorgeous North Florida evenings, when the breeze picks up and you're making memories with friends, family and loved ones.

Riesling: When the grapes are from a cool maritime climate like Santa Barbara, California, the touch of sweetness and balanced acidity in Riesling pairs perfectly with BBQ pulled pork, grilled peppers, pineapple or BBQ chicken. Rieslings from a cooler climate like Alsace, France offer higher acidity and more peach or apple flavors — think biting into a crisp peach. (Trimbach, Alsace, France — \$17.99; Fess Parker Riesling, Santa Barbara, California — \$14.99)

Zinfandel: For steaks on the “barbie,” a red Zinfandel from California offers a bit of black pepper on the finish and enough tannin (from its oak aging) to stand up to any cut of steak. A Syrah from France offers deep red fruit notes with a gorgeous hint of smokiness which pairs perfectly with a smoky BBQ sauce. (Frank Family Zinfandel, Napa, California — \$40)



Ally Burkett

*Fess Parker Winery
& Vineyard*

Italian Reds: Think Montepulciano, Barbera, Nebiolo — any light-bodied Italian red offers bright red fruit notes with a hint of leather or spice. And with a slight chill it's perfect on a late summer evening. (Villa Sparina Barbera, Monferrato, Italy — \$20 at Coastal Wine Market)

Gruener Veltliner: This lesser-known Austrian varietal is gaining popularity for its crispness, racy acidity and subtle fruit forward palate. This is a medium-bodied white that tastes like a cross between a Pinot Grigio and a Sauvignon Blanc and pairs so well with scallops, lobster or crab dishes. (Rudi Pichler, Wachau, Austria — \$30 at Coastal Wine Market)

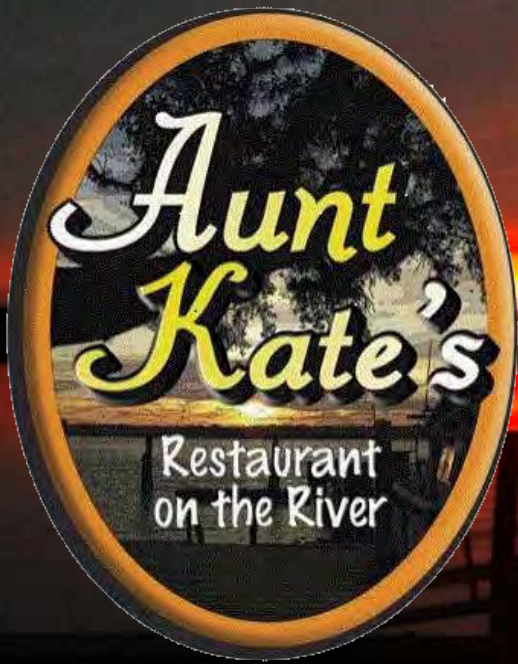
ALLY'S TIPS FOR SUMMERTIME ENTERTAINMENT

Each bottle holds about four or five glasses of wine, so budget one to two glasses per person (depending on the crowd).

Don't be afraid to chill reds to “cellar” temperature, which can be achieved by putting them in the fridge for up to 15 minutes before serving. This lets the wines display structure and acidity that may be lost when the wines are room temperature.

Match acidity in foods to the acidity in wine, and think sweetness to counteract spicy cuisine. You never want wine to overpower the palate when enjoying with food.

Ally Burkett is Southeast regional manager with Fess Parker Winery & Vineyard. She acts as a liaison between distributors and the winery itself in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Burkett appreciates how each bottle of wine tells a story, and endeavors to share those stories with others.



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Photos courtesy of
CHAD MUNSEY AND
MICHAEL SCHMIDT

The Best

restaurant in
Florida is a
BBQ joint in
Jacksonville

by DANIELA TOPOREK



Photo by DANIELA TOPOREK

Driving north along Kings Avenue in Jacksonville, Florida, hungry locals and foodies take twists and turns among rundown buildings as they search for the best restaurant in Florida. The landmark they seek is Chris Dyer's trippy and vibrant mural of the funky "interdimensional entity" (as he calls it). They know their destination is close because they can probably smell it, and it smells dang good. It's locally owned, fast-casual restaurant and beer garden — The Bearded Pig.

Named best restaurant in the state by Reviews.org, The Bearded Pig is, according to co-owner Chad Munsey, "an ode to southern barbecue."

"It's a Texas-influenced, Carolina-influenced, casual BBQ restaurant that serves top-quality food in a kid-friendly, casual environment," he said, overflowing with imagery. "It's also a beer garden, we could go on and on. We've got a lot of descriptors for us."

The BBQ joint was founded by Munsey and old friend, Michael Schmidt, who grew up cooking BBQ and watching his father in the food industry.

"I always made BBQ with my dad and my friends," Schmidt said. "The OG sauce we have here, I've been making it since I was a kid. It's a family recipe."

Schmidt also created the other sauces to represent the different BBQ-influenced areas in the country.

"The 'OG sauce,' it's a Western Carolina 'dip' which is a tangy ketchup and vinegar-based sauce," he explained, breaking down the saucy selection. "The 'Drizz' is our take on South Carolina Mustard sauce. Our version is a little sweeter. The 'Sweet Spot' is our nod to Kansas City sauce. It is thicker and sweeter with molasses and honey along with brown sugar. The 'Pepper Vinegar' is an Eastern Carolina vinegar style sauce. And the 'XXX' is our hot BBQ sauce. It's our ode to Texas in that it has lots of pepper flavors, chili powder, ghost pepper, cayenne and habanero."

Popular entrees include brisket, ribs and the mighty King Sandwich made with pulled pork, brisket, sausage, jalapeño poppers, cheese sauce and coleslaw on a brioche bun. It's named after Kings Avenue.

For a hearty snack while enjoying a brew or two from the beer garden, "Jax's



ABOVE: Owners, Michael Schmidt (left) and Chad Munsey relax in the Bearded Pig's outdoor area, with green grass and cool shade.

Photo by DANIELA TOPOREK

LEFT: The Bearded Pig is located on Kings Avenue near the San Marco area in Jacksonville.

Photo courtesy of CHAD MUNSEY AND MICHAEL SCHMIDT

Original" Bearded Poutine is a mountain of fries topped with burnt ends, pulled pork and pimento cheese curds, smothered in cheese sauce. Drizzle some XXX sauce for some heat.

The business partners hope to add a second location.

"The biggest thing is finding the right location," Schmidt said. "We have to look at where we can replicate this. Where can we get the same feel? We found areas we like, but it's just finding the right space."

Lynn LaBoone, a previous resident of Jacksonville, thought The Bearded Pig was the right location to cater her wedding in November 2017.

"It was the first BBQ people suggested when I mentioned I wanted BBQ for my wedding," she said. "Not only did they have good food, but they also had a wide selection of local beers. It was the perfect intersection of my food interests."

"Thank you to everybody for supporting us," Munsey said. "I mean that's the biggest thing. Thank you to the staff. Thank you for the nice comments, the people that just love what we do. We're fortunate to be from here and do something that is broadening the scope of culinary in this town."

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Robert & Margaret Hill





Sawgrass Events' Anna Washington, Carol Maurer and Waive Banyas from Sawgrass Events serve dishes at last year's Caring Chefs.



The Jacksonville Golf & Country Club booth serves guests during last year's event.



The Gary Starling Group performs during the 2018 Caring Chefs event.



Michelle and Joe Mecca enjoy last year's event.

Photos by
SUSAN GRIFFIN

Children's Home Society of Florida to host 36th annual *Caring Chefs* Event

by AMBER LAKE

Supporting a great cause can sometimes be as easy as sampling some of Jacksonville's best culinary creations. That is, if you're attending the annual Children's Home Society of Florida's Caring Chefs event.

Now in its 36th year, Caring Chefs will take place Sunday, Oct. 20, from 7:30 to 9 p.m at the Avenues Mall.

The event will be throughout the mall, with different chefs from around Jacksonville volunteering their time to serve up a diverse menu of everything the city has to offer.

"There are so many great and unique restaurants that are all over the city and I know that sometimes depending on where you're located you don't necessarily get out to certain areas and try certain restaurants," said Samantha D'Agostino, special events manager of Children's Home Society of Florida. "I would really love this event because you get a chance to experience some places that maybe you always wanted to try but have never had the opportunity."

In addition to trying new foods, guests can enjoy wine, craft beer and live entertainment.

The Caring Chefs event draws over 2,000 guests from around the region.

"This event is definitely deep rooted in our city's history," D'Agostino said. "It's growing and it's getting bigger than ever."

This year, unlike past years, Caring Chefs will also host a VIP Pre-Party for an "exclusive look at the event." The Pre-Party will include early admission and also a designated VIP area with food, beverages and live entertainment.

At the heart of the Caring Chefs, however, is the Children's Home Society of Florida, which receives about 90% of sponsorship dollars from the event. The nonprofit serves more than 10,000 children and families in Northeast Florida, which includes services like counseling, adoption, fostering and child welfare programs.

"CHS was founded in 1902, we are celebrating 115 years of being a leader in serving kids and families," D'Agostino said. "It's events like these that really help us to continue to help support our local families and the programs we offer them."



Vernon's Restaurant staff, Chef Joe Natoli; Chef Tanya "Mama T" White; Caneale Hoshaw, restaurant manager; and Chef Eduard Maldonado prepare the venue for Mama T's cuisine and 70s disco brunch on June 30.



Mama T's Afro Cake was made at Vernon's Restaurant, and so was the eight-tiered stand, created by Chef Thomas Allen, that held the cake.



Chef Mama T fills a plate and finally enjoys her own brunch on her birthday and one-year anniversary of the concept.

'mama T'

celebrates first year of brunch service, birthday with 70s theme

by DANIELA TOPOREK

In July 2018, Vernon's Restaurant in Ponte Vedra, Florida, launched a unique weekly brunch series with a different menu and theme each Sunday. Flash forward one year, and Vernon's is mentioned in countless publications, recommended by popular foodies and named one of the United States' best buffets by the Food Network.

Brunch creator, Chef Tanya "Mama T" White, celebrated her birthday and the one-year brunch anniversary decked out in 1970s attire to match the "Funky Brunch" theme.

"It was such a blast," Mama T said after the brunch. "I had a really good time. Even now, people are still coming up to me and talking about it." Mama T's "Funky Brunch" was named after her 1970s disco-inspired theme, with 70s disco music, eclectic Tupperware and a nostalgic "goulash" station.

"Some people didn't really get the goulash concept, but others did and really enjoyed it," Mama T said.



Brunch guests Callie and Henry Butler pose in front of the disco backdrop, fitting for the 1970s-style Funky Brunch. Photos by DANIELA TOPOREK



Southern staples like Chef Mama T's buttermilk fried chicken were served.



Psychedelic-decorated brownies were served at the dessert area.

Guests chose goulash ingredients as Vernon's cooks prepared it before their very eyes, similar to Mama T's memory of when her mom would use leftovers in the fridge to make a new pasta or stew dish; it was never the same twice because it always depended on what was in the fridge.

A Tennessee native, Chef Mama T is a Southern-style cuisine connoisseur and her dishes prove it. Buttermilk fried chicken was served, along with cornbread, scalloped potatoes, biscuits and gravy, green bean casserole with French onions and cornbread.

For dessert, bring out the classic Jell-O mold!

"I remember my grandma used to use them all the time and put fruit cocktail in it," Chef said. "We did our modern-day twist of making it panna cotta, but you still see the molds and get the feel of it. You say, 'Ohh, I don't know what that is, but it's cool and I want to eat it.'"

Another attention-getter at Vernon's is the elaborate children's area decorated and to match the theme of the brunch. The 1970s "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" played in the background as kids colored, ate finger foods served in mini 1970s Thunderbird cars and analyzed the questionable object on the floor, better known to adults as a Sit-and-Spin.

"The adults got more excited than the kids," Mama laughed. "The kids didn't even know what a Sit-and-Spin was. We had to teach them. I had to put an adult on it. They were like, 'Oh, it's a self merry-go-round.' Once they got the concept, they were all over it."

A birthday brunch wouldn't be complete without birthday cake, and the Vernon's family did not let Chef Mama T down. An

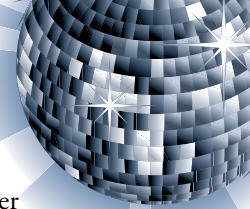
eight-tiered stand created by Marriott's own Chef Thomas Allen held dozens of "Afro cupcakes" as they cascaded down from the main cake that had a photo of Chef Mama T's face and a giant, shiny tiara to channel her inner (and outer) disco diva.

"I told him (Chef Thomas) I wanted my hair to flow down like Rapunzel," she said. "He made that stand just for me. I didn't see the cake until it came out, so it was awesome. I thought it was a fun play."

It's because of the kindness and ingenuity of her team that has Chef Mama T over the moon about her brunch and Marriott family. From Chef Thomas and his cake stand, to the Marriott recreation team that helps create the children's area every week, Mama said she's been "blessed by the best from the very beginning."

Executive Chef Joe Natoli has been a key figure from the start of the series and even mentioned getting goosebumps on the opening Sunday of the brunch. His optimism, determination and faith in not just Mama T, but his whole staff, is what keeps the creative juices flowing in the kitchen. "I can go see him and say something wild like, 'Chef Joe, I want to be a mountain climber that serves burgers on top of a camelback.' He'll be like, 'Really? Nobody's ever done that. Sounds good, let's look into it,'" Mama joked sweetly as she reminisced about how far she's come since last July.

"He'll push you and make you go further than your own expectations. He challenged me with this brunch and that's what this brunch has done to me."





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INSET: From the Virgin Islands to Las Vegas, Chef John Botkin has ventured the culinary world for more than 35 years.



Harvest & Reel hosted its seasonal menu tasting and influencer dinner on June 28.

Photos by DANIELA TOPOREK



ABOVE: The Mayport Shrimp and Grits was served with andouille sausage and smoked tomato sauce.

BELOW: One of Harvest & Reel's chefs, Cole Lowman prepares the open kitchen for the Influencer dinner.



HARVEST & REEL

adds modern twists to well-loved classics

by DANIELA TOPOREK

One of the newest restaurants in St. Augustine Beach, Harvest & Reel at Embassy Suites, hosted a seasonal menu tasting for foodies and influencers on June 27, highlighting its latest menu items and cocktails.

Located in a warm corner within the hotel, Harvest & Reel aims to bring fresh farm- and shore-to-table dishes for both tourists and locals alike. Its modern, open kitchen and friendly staff ensures an elevated culinary experience with a behind-the-scenes look into the dishes served.

"It's nice to have an open kitchen," Executive Chef John Botkin said. "We do get quite a few people who come up and kids want to see what we're doing. It's nice to interact with them. You don't necessarily want to hear everything, but at least you can see it. It becomes a part of the restaurant."

Seasonal cocktails from the hotel's Rhum Bar, were served to guests during a brief hotel tour. A "Cucumber Southside" cocktail with lemon, mint and cucumber was a refreshing ode to the Cuban Mojito, served with lime vodka instead of rum.

In honor of Negroni week (June 24-30), Rhum Bar also featured a Mezcal Negroni, mixed with one's choice of mezcal, Campari, sweet vermouth and orange bitters, "with a twist," according to the description. The Mezcal Negroni was also in honor of one Botkin's inspirations, Anthony Bourdain, who loved negronis and would have celebrated his birthday June 25, now known as Bourdain Day.

For the tasting, Botkin chose seasonal dishes that showcased the new menu and highlighted local farms where the ingredients were sourced. His favorites include the watermelon and tomato salad with burrata, basil and white balsamic vinaigrette, and shrimp ceviche with watermelon and locally sourced Mayport shrimp.

Harvest & Reel's shrimp and grits, with a little smoked tomato sauce, is a "perfectly executed" dish and addition, according to Chef Botkin. Foodies seemed to agree as it was one of the most popular

items chosen from the dinner.

"I think the shrimp and grits, being from the south, is a staple," Botkin said. "The Anson Mills grits out of South Carolina, great local shrimp and little bit of andouille sausage really tied that dish together."

Other mouthwatering options were the farro risotto with veggies and mushrooms or the duroc pork chop with coffee and molasses grind and sea salt. An array of sides, like grilled asparagus, potato puree and a goat cheese spinach dip were served to the table family-style.

Chef Botkin takes pride in his French-style cuisine, explaining that techniques include initial searing, followed by a final bake. Oh, and lots of butter.

"I want to keep things simple and let the ingredients speak for themselves," he explained. "So, not to heavy on sauces. Things should complement, not overpower."

One of his favorite meals to prepare is a Caribbean lobster with butter elevated by unexpected spices he learned from a good friend in Anegada, one of the British Virgin Islands.

"All he did was cook lobsters for people every night," he said. "His name was Lowell. He showed me some techniques and his secrets to make the perfect lobster. Lowell used margarine. I'd use butter, but then with cinnamon and nutmeg. It gives it a very subtle, strange flavor."

As the dinner came to an end, H&R staff served the final course of the evening, a dessert platter with assorted chocolates and macarons, each as original in design, color and flavor as the next.

Chef Botkin's goal is to inspire young cooks and future chefs.

"We got some great talent working here and it's phenomenal to watch them grow," he said. "There's going to be a lot of change, but we want the community to come out and try it. We're just going to have some fun."

18th annual delicious destinations to benefit families in need

The 18th annual Delicious Destinations is a celebration of inspired food and notable wines that benefits Ascension St. Vincent's community outreach programs, which provide free medical care for children and adults in need throughout the area. Tickets are available for varied events to be held at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club Sept. 6 and 7.

"We help thousands of our area's most vulnerable children and families through our community outreach programs each year, including through our Mobile Health Outreach Ministry, the region's only fleet of doctors-offices-on-wheels," said Virginia Hall, president of the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation. "For nearly 20 years now, the wonderful patrons and chefs of Delicious Destinations have helped us raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in support of our Mission to provide care to everyone in our community, with special attention to those who need it most."

The two-day celebration features executive chefs from some of the



Photo by SUSAN GRIFFIN

most prestigious restaurants and resorts throughout the nation. The first event, a demonstration-style luncheon complete with wine pairings, will take place at 11:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 6.

The VIP Preview Reception will be at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 7. Guests will enjoy culinary masterpieces prepared by Ponte Vedra Inn & Club Executive Chef Hermann Muller.

The main event is at 7 p.m. Saturday at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. Chefs from some of the nation's premier resorts including The Greenbrier, Montage at Palmetto Bluff, and The Lodge & Retreat at Sea Island Golf Club will showcase their culinary talents. Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits will provide wines from select domestic and international vineyards. The event also features live and silent auctions with items including spa and restaurant gift certificates, catered dinners and weekend getaways.

To learn more about Delicious Destinations or to purchase tickets, visit www.deliciousdestinationsjax.com.

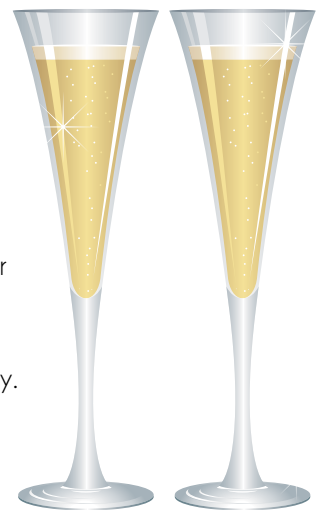
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Kids' cupcake contest results in 'Sweet' victory

by DANIELA TOPOREK

On July 27, little bakers tied on their little aprons and competed in the Women's Food Alliance children's cupcake baking competition at JAX Cooking Studio in Jacksonville, Florida.

Contestants brought in eight homemade cupcakes and displayed them at JAX Cooking Studio, where three pastry chefs from the Women's Food Alliance judged their batches.

"Each contestant will be judged on the appearance of the cupcake, originality of the recipe, the way they displayed them and the taste," said competition host and WFA member, Nancy Vandegrift. "We'll rank each of those categories from one to five. Then, we'll tally each of the contestants' scores for the grand prize winner."

Judges, Chefs Nancy Guarnieri from St. Francis Inn in St. Augustine, Verousce McKibbin from Koek Cake and Nancy Slatsky from JAX Cooking Studio, walked around the room and carefully observed the displays of each contestant.

Twelve-year-old, Yisrael Washington's almond pound cupcakes could have fooled anyone into thinking they walked into an art studio by mistake. Her simple, yet effective display of using an artist's paint palette and brush for her cupcakes showed talent in both the culinary and visual arts — not to mention the clever use of food dye as paint for her pastries and chef's hat added a "messy," yet original touch.

Leah Jordan also created a culinary illu-



ABOVE: It was a family affair at the competition as siblings, cousins and contestants Serenity Brown (from left), Yisrael Washington, Symphony Brown and Amani Washington pose with their cupcakes after the contest. Symphony Brown won the contest, "wowing" the judges with her baked triple chocolate cupcakes (top left).

LEFT: Second runner-up, Elizabeth Vincent, impressed with her Lemon Cake cupcakes (top right).
Photos by DANIELA TOPOREK

sion with her ice cream sundae cupcakes. The 10-year-old displayed her cupcakes in elaborate ice cream cups, topped with hardened chocolate to represent chocolate syrup, sprinkles and a cherry on top. She even added mini spoons to each cupcake, completing her sundae showcase.

After 15 individual tastings and careful deliberation, the winners were announced.

Second runner up went to Elizabeth Vincent and her triple lemonade cupcakes.

"Elizabeth Vincent's Triple Lemonade Cupcake was truly delicious and they loved the vintage presentation," said WFA founder and original competition host, Leigh Cort. Cort was unable to attend due to a last-minute emergency, but later spoke with the judges, who filled her in on the deliberations. The judges also loved how Vincent, a young

baker, used vintage china for her delicate and old-school presentation.

First runner up was awarded to Bailey Dunn and her s'mores cupcakes. "Her cupcakes won because of taste, technically complex preparation and great presentation on the wooden board with the s'mores components," Cort explained.

The winner of the grand prize, a two-night stay for four at the St. Francis Inn in St. Augustine, brunch at Casa Marina and a Kilwin's Ice Cream social for 50 guests went to 12-year-old Symphony Brown and her Triple Chocolate Cupcakes, who won "hands down, for taste," according to Cort.

"The three judges raved about Brown's cupcake, the best they all have ever tasted," Cort said. "Saying that from three professional pastry chefs is saying something!"

YMCA salutes military families with back-to-school bash



The First Coast YMCA offered haircuts at the July 27 Back-To-School Bash in St. Augustine.



Students could participate in crafts during the YMCA Back-To-School Bash in St. Augustine.

The First Coast YMCA on July 27 hosted its third annual Back-To-School Bash event to give back to active duty, guard and reserve military members and their families with a focus on fun, health and the well-being of families in attendance. The free military appreciation event offered a back-to-school backpack giveaway, swimming, group exercise demonstrations and additional family fun activities.

Participating locations included the Winston Family YMCA in Riverside, the Barco-Newton Family YMCA in Fleming Island, the Brooks Family YMCA on the Southside, the McArthur Family YMCA in Fernandina Beach and the St. Augustine YMCA.

“The First Coast YMCA recognizes the courage and sacrifice of those who selflessly serve our country,” said YMCA of Florida’s First Coast President and CEO Eric K. Mann. “The Y is proud to be a support system for our robust military community on the First Coast and as the first Armed Services YMCA affiliate in Florida, we are committed to providing vital programs and resources for military members and their families.”

The Back-To-School Bash was originally started by the First Coast YMCA in partnership with Building Healthy Military Communities, a Department of Defense initiative to better understand the unique challenges faced by geographically dispersed service members and their families. The experience is designed to help families come together, stay together, adjust and thrive.

Jacksonville is home to the third largest military population in the nation, with more than 40,000 active duty personnel, 6,000 active reserves and 170,000 veterans. YMCA of Florida’s First Coast’s affiliation with the Armed Services YMCA was established to cater to the needs of Jacksonville’s military members.

To learn more about opportunities for the Armed Services and Veterans at the First Coast YMCA, visit www.fcmca.org/join-the-y/armed_forces_veterans.

Students and parents discover how to best prepare for college finances during free workshop from First Florida Credit Union

More than two dozen teens and parents recently gathered to gear up for the transition to college at Taking the Next Step: College-Prep Workshop, hosted by First Florida Credit Union.

The free workshop was held at the credit union’s St. Johns branch on July 27. Financial experts partnered with a local AVID and dual-enrollment instructor to cover topics such as navigating college applications and managing finances from a distance to help students stay financially successful while away at school.

The event attracted high school sophomores, juniors, seniors and their parents, all eager to gain insight on how to best prepare for the transition to college.

Theresa Le, a junior at Bartram Trail High School, was one of the teens who attended the workshop.

“We learned a lot about college scholarship opportunities and how to reduce student loans after college or not have them at all,” Le said.

Ashleigh Robinson, a community relations specialist with the credit union, said her organization plans to host the event again in the future.

“Our team was thrilled to see such a positive response from our



Local AVID and dual-enrollment instructor Michelle Wolrich shares scholarship insight with students at First Florida Credit Union’s St. Johns branch.
Photo courtesy of FIRST FLORIDA CREDIT UNION

community at this event,” Robinson said. “We are happy to have played a role in preparing our local students for this monumental transition, and we wish them all the best as they head to school.”

For more information on First Florida Credit Union’s upcoming community events, visit www.firstflorida.org.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty collected backpacks and school supplies at its office locations, including Atlantic Beach (below) through Aug. 2.



Photo courtesy of FLORIDA NETWORK REALTY

1,177 Northeast Florida students begin school with filled backpacks

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty collected 1,177 backpacks filled with school supplies for Northeast Florida children during its 20th annual Backpack Challenge.

The backpacks and school supplies were donated to students throughout Northeast Florida in partnership with Dreams Come True, Operation New Hope, The USO, Department of Juvenile Justice, Boys and Girls Club, Charles E. Bennett Elementary, Orange Park Junior High and Gamble Rogers Middle School.



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Fall Bridal

PREVIEW

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Tying The Knot *in style*

by AMBER LAKE

JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE CENTER

Perfect for two book worms in love, the Jacksonville Public Library Downtown is as elegant as it is iconic. At 300,000 square feet, the Main Library is the largest public library in the state and the most impressive of all the branches in Jacksonville. The Conference Center, which is available for rent, offers indoor and outdoor settings and can accommodate up to 300 guests. The courtyard section of the venue boasts great views of the city and romantic lighting amid rooftop landscaping. Indoors, marble flooring and stunning artwork give the location the sophisticated feel the library is known for.

Price range: \$2,280-\$6,000

Located at 303 North Laura Street in Jacksonville



Photos courtesy of JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY





Photos courtesy of BEACHES MUSEUM

THE BEACHES MUSEUM

For many, getting married in a little chapel feels not only nostalgic but a fulfillment of a picturesque fantasy fueled by dozens of romantic movie endings. Before the credits roll, book a syrupy-sweet wedding at the Beaches Museum in Jacksonville Beach. A true vintage gem, the chapel has local history dating back to 1887, serving as one of the first churches in the area.

Also known as St. Paul's by the Sea, the venue ensures the dream is complete by ringing the antique white bell at the top of the tower after the ceremony.

Price: \$1,200 for five hours

Located at 381 Beach Blvd. in Jacksonville Beach



Photos courtesy of SARAHDIPITY

THE ASSEMBLY ROOM VENUE AT ART 'N MOTION

Located within the heart of St. Augustine, the Art 'n Motion industrial chic warehouse will add a unique twist to traditional settings. Complete with modern amenities, the early 1900s building boasts clean lines with exposed brick and ceilings, as well as handcrafted woodwork. In addition, the space hosts a classic car gallery and dealership within the venue, which is sure to impress guests who are welcome to explore the open showroom.

Price upon request

Located at 283 San Marco Ave., Suite B in St. Augustine.



Photos courtesy of OYSTER BAY

OYSTER BAY YACHT CLUB

Simple, elegant and with a stunning view, the Oyster Bay Yacht Club will make any wedding reception memorable with plenty of regional ambiance. Set along the Intracoastal Waterway, the yacht club encompasses Florida's laidback aesthetic coupled with an upscale design. Both the open, flowing architecture and coastal location make the venue perfect for anyone seeking a true Floridian feel. Don't forget to serve an oyster appetizer or Mayport shrimp, which always tastes better by the water's edge.

Price: \$3,500

Located at 96732 Bay View Drive in Fernandina Beach.



Photos courtesy of LA VENTURE GROVE

LA VENTURE GROVE

The smell of citrus and antique pine, cypress and hickory wood linger at this historic agricultural gem. Once a profitable orange grove established in 1880, La Venture Grove looks like something one would dream after falling asleep reading Faulkner on a hot night. Hauntingly beautiful, the land still bears fruit along the groves following the St. Johns River, making for scenic views and a picturesque setting for a reception. The recently rehabilitated home is decorated to bring out its antique charm or guests can enjoy the outdoor pavilion nestled among the palms.

Price range: \$4,000-\$6,000 per night

Located at 2375 Moremen Road in Jacksonville.

SUGAR POINTE ESTATE

For anyone looking for a country romance fit for the Lifetime Movie network, Sugar Pointe Estate is sure to provide the atmosphere for a true fairy tale ending. The location features sprawling 48 acres, which includes a spring-fed lake, boathouse, a luxurious country River House and a 1960s farmhouse equipped for hosting receptions. The old-growth trees, crystal clear lake and remote location make Sugar Pointe Estate the perfect place to cozy up to an outdoor fire and fall in love all over again.

Price range: \$1,500-\$5,500

Located at 88000 Sugar Pointe Lane in Yulee.



Photos courtesy of SUGAR POINTE ESTATE



Mobile VW
photo booth
brings

Wedding Memories to life

by DANIELA TOPOREK



Like the search for the perfect engagement ring or wedding dress, Ryan Ropero's search for the perfect Volkswagen took patience, hard work and financial planning. After countless "blind dates" with rusted Volkswagens and dozens of disappointments, he found her, the one. His dream 1972 Volkswagen bus was coincidentally located in Los Alamos, New Mexico, about two hours away from his hometown, Toas. It was fate. And with that fate, came his dream business — Vanagram.

Vanagram is a mobile photo booth within Ropero's VW. He installed a DSLR camera with a 20-inch screen and customizable backdrop for every occasion.

"I mainly do weddings," Ropero said, although he's open to all types of events. "Normally, the bride will want to customize it (the VW) with her floral arrangements. I'll get with the florist and collaborate."

Ropero also customizes the photo strips for each event to include the bride and groom's name or the name of the event along the bottom.



ABOVE: A bride dances with a loved one with the Vanagram bus in the background, ready to snap some memories.

LEFT: Vanagram owners, Ryan and JamieLee Ropero, pose behind their beloved bus, ready to snap photos at any event. Photos courtesy of VANAGRAM and DAYBREAK PHOTO



Ropero explained that his passion for the VW bus was what fueled the idea for his business.

“They’re super cool,” he said. “Something about them is just iconic. It became an obsession. There are a bunch of these, ‘van-lifers,’ that I follow and the freedom really appealed to me, having your home on your back and travelling around for a few months, seeing the world. Of course, it’s kind of difficult with a wife and two kids.”

His wife, JamieLee Ropero, has been on board since Ryan created a one-, three- and five-year business plan. When he found the van, Ryan Ropero sent his mechanic to Los Alamos. “Had I known it was in that great condition, I would have driven it back myself,” his mechanic said.

Ropero restored the interior, seats and flooring, with little work done on the engine. “Everything else is original,” he said, with excitement.

Ropero hopes to add multiple vans to the business and maybe automobiles, too. In anticipation of the varied fleet, he will rebrand Vanagram to Photo Mobile Company later this year.

“My goal is to have a few VW buses,” he explained. I want to do a 1950s-60s trailer and other projects too. So, changing the name to Photo Mobile Co. opens up what I’m able to do. My dream is also to open up a branch in Gainesville, maybe Orlando. That’s 15 years or so down the road, but you gotta start somewhere.”

For more information or to book Vanagram for an event, visit www.Vanagram.Co or check out Vanagram’s Instagram at @VanagramCo.



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Fall

by AMBER LAKE

FASHION

LOCAL BOUTIQUES DOLE OUT LATEST LOOKS FOR FALL #INSPO

The summer silhouette is giving way to fall flair and it's (finally) time to harvest some new looks for the season. These days, North Florida is teeming with fun and fashionable boutiques that host some of the region's most unique items. If you're looking to add panache to the season's typical muted earth tones and itchy sweaters, these boutiques offer a diverse array of style suitable for even the most discerning shopper. For those revamping the wardrobe for the new equinox, check out these chic local digs for a fresh feel without the fast fashion.



INGUZ

Located at 388 9th Ave. North
in Jacksonville Beach

- Button up sleeveless top – \$48
- Margate pleated trouser – \$98
- Woven slides – \$145
- Bungalow purse bag – \$48
- Cat eye sunnies – \$25
- Vacation scarf – \$12
- Maison Louis Marie perfume oil – \$57

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Source: Real Value of
Joining a Local Chamber of
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Shapiro Group, 2012.



A'PROPOS BOUTIQUE

Located at 333 Village Main St.
#630 in Ponte Vedra Beach

- Parker smith jeans – \$169
- Scala Tank – \$49
- Shoes – \$169
- Johnny Kimono – \$320
- Ayalabar necklace – \$379



JOHN CRAIG CLOTHIER

Located at 280 Village Main St. #950
in Ponte Vedra Beach

- Peter Millar long sleeve knit – \$129
- Peter Millar quarter button sweater – \$295
- Peter Millar five pocket pants – \$149
- Kleinberg belt – \$150
- Peter Millar loafers – \$195



BOBBYK BOUTIQUE

Located at 1711 Main St. North
in Jacksonville

- Floral top – \$32.90
- Shorts – \$32.90
- Necklace – \$19.90
- Celebrity prayer candle – \$14.00
- Hat – \$22.90
- Earrings – \$24.90
- Bracelet – \$6.90
- Sunglasses – \$12.90
- Bag – \$19.90



FIG & WILLOW

Located at 241 Atlantic Blvd.
#105 in Neptune Beach

- Art & Soul sweater – \$90
- Clara Baby shorts – \$60
- Messer fedora – \$64
- Prague slip-on sandal – \$54

Joseph Ribkoff

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Sun sets on Night at the Zoo

Only the sun was missing during the July 26 Night at the Zoo with a Night of Witchcraft and Wizardry theme. Visitors to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens could see the usual lions, jaguars and rhinos plus pose for pictures with Hagrid and other Harry Potter characters.

The gates opened at 6:30 p.m. and the animals were on display until 8:30 p.m. Signs requested everyone to be quiet as they approached the baby zebra exhibit. Three rhinoceros seemed to appreciate the evening crowd — the youngest walked in shallow water and slung mud with its horn. The lions were active at dusk when the temperature dropped a few degrees. To enjoy the zoo after hours, look for Night at the Zoo events during summer 2020.



The lights come on during summer's Night at the Zoo events.

Photos by CHRISTINE RODENBAUGH

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Brittany and Quinton Scott take a selfie with "Hagrid" during the July 26 Night of Witchcraft and Wizardry at the zoo.



The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens presented a Night of Witchcraft and Wizardry on July 26.

Like most lions, the pair at The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens are more active at dusk.



Janet E. Johnson, P.A.

Criminal Defense Attorney



Janet Johnson is committed to aggressively defending people accused in all criminal matters in state and federal court. In practice since 1994, she is a member of the Florida Bar, The Federal Bar, Colorado Bar, as well as the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She has been on the faculty of FACDL "Blood, Breath & Tears" annual DUI seminar. Ms. Johnson has been awarded the AV preeminent rating™ from Martindale-Hubble® and was named a fellow to the prestigious Litigation Counsel of America™, as well as one of the ten best criminal defense attorneys nationally for client satisfaction by the American Institute of Criminal Law Attorneys. She also appears as a legal commentator on CNN and HLN.

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Ashley Rose Conway crafts Strawberry Rose Punch during cocktail classes at the Lightner After Hours: Rose Colored Glasses as observers, reflected in the mirror, listen intently. Photos by CHRISTINE RODENBAUGH

Lightner After Hours presents *Rosé* Colored Glasses

Residents and visitors alike enjoyed cocktails, light appetizers and the elegant surroundings of the historic Lightner Museum in St. Augustine on July 25. Several rooms of the museum were open for guests to mingle and enjoy the exhibits. Special guest Ashley Rose Conway of Craft and Cocktails presented a cocktail demonstration, tasting and book signing of "Celebrate Rosé," an all rosé cocktail and party book. She crafted

Strawberry Rosé Punch at cocktail classes throughout the evening. Talented local musician Ramona provided early evening entertainment.

The Lightner After Hours events are free and open to the public. Tickets were required for the cocktail classes. Guests may enter through the Granada Street entrance across from the Corazon Cinema. For information about Lightner Museum events, visit lightnermuseum.org/events.



Anai Tipton, Lisa Lewis and Mary Anne Senese are part of a meet-up group. Lewis drove from Nocatee to meet her St. Augustine friends.



Palm Coast residents Pat and Pamela Kreque said they attended "for the rose, of course!"

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United Way

by CHRISTINE RODENBAUGH

OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY DRIVES IMPACT, ACCELERATES ADVOCACY

The United Way of St. Johns County invited volunteers, donors, partner agencies and community leaders to Art n' Motion July 18 to learn how the nonprofit is driving impact, bridging boundaries and accelerating advocacy. Melissa Nelson, president and CEO, shared results from the 2018-2019 year as well as plans for 2019-2020.

The United Way-SJC's Facebook page states, "We measure success not by dollars raised, but by lives improved and changed." Still, funds raised last year were key in driving impact in the community. A partnership with a firm that negotiates prescription discounts saved St. Johns County residents \$328,177. Community Impact Grants of nearly \$150,000 were awarded to educational programs. And more than 20 volunteers donated 913 hours of free tax preparation services yielding nearly \$1.2 million of impact in the community.

The Empty Stocking Fund raised \$105,000 to provide holiday gifts and meals to 538 families. Through a partnership with the U.S. Postal Service, 122,000 pounds of food was collected and distributed to pantries throughout St. Johns County.

Looking ahead, Jay Owen announced his Design Extensions team will work for 20 hours on Sept. 27 to focus on campaign marketing and messaging perspectives that will help the United Way accomplish its goals. It will be a live broadcast like an old-school telethon with a different business featured and prize giveaways every hour. The goal is to generate \$20,000 for the United Way that day. Leading up to the event, enter to win a sunset sail for two on the Schooner Freedom in St. Augustine at www.2020UW.com.

Owen, United Way-SJC campaign chair, said details about the Oct. 11 Women's United Luncheon and the Jan. 24 Giver's Gala would be released soon.

For more information about the United Way of St. Johns County, visit www.unitedway-sjc.org.



Jay Owen, United Way-SJC campaign chair, and Melissa Nelson, president and CEO, reported the past year's accomplishments and communicated the vision for 2019-2020.



Outgoing board chair, Bobby Crum, spoke about some of the year's highlights.



ABOVE: Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes and St. Johns County Commissioner James Johns attended the year-end gathering of United Way-SJC at Art n' Motion on July 18.



LEFT: Joyce Mahr, Nicole Pece, Lauren Carpenter and Kelly Franklin, all with the Betty Griffin Center, show their spirit in the photo booth at the event.

Photos by CHRISTINE RODENBAUGH

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