



# FLEET BEAT

VOL. 34 No. 1

THE FLEET LANDING RESIDENTS' NEWSPAPER

Jan./Feb. 2024

## Executive Director's Quarterly Briefing

By Enith Vardaman

Johnson Hall was at near capacity on January 31 for the first "Coffee and Conversation With Josh" of 2024.

### Financial Results

Executive Director Josh Ashby began by displaying a chart of the budget, 2023 average, and December 31, 2023, occupancy rates for independent living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing. All levels of care have been performing well. Ashby pointed out that a lot of hard work went into maintaining such high, stable occupancy. The number of independent living, assisted living, and memory care units that needed to be reoccupied totaled 25, 60, and 15 respectively, and the number for skilled nursing rooms was 187. The number of transitions across campus,



i.e., someone moving out and someone else moving in, was over 580.

In reporting preliminary revenue, expenses, and operating income figures for 2023, Ashby noted factors skewing the figures. Investment income (over \$2 million above budget) and charitable gifts (over \$1.3 million above budget), which are considered non-operating revenue, accounted for 86 percent of the nearly \$4 million of revenue over budget. Without those two categories, revenue would be about half a million dollars over budget. Three non-recurring items, a health insurance refund (\$189,000), a successful property tax appeal (\$110,000), and the Employee Retention Tax Credit (\$289,000), made the expense figure (about \$500,000 above budget) look lower than it actually was. Without these items, the property insurance costs of \$741,000 over budget would result in an expense figure of more than \$1 million above budget. When all the factors that skewed budget results are taken into consideration, preliminary figures would indicate operating income of about \$540,000 below budget instead of the seemingly impressive figure of more than \$3.4 million above budget.

Ashby noted two ways lenders monitor the financial health of Fleet Landing. The required debt service coverage ratio is 1.20 times principal and interest payments, and Fleet Landing performs at 2.40 times, double that figure. Days cash on hand is a liquidity measure that indicates the ability to pay expenses without generating additional revenue. The requirement

is 180 days, while that number for Fleet Landing is 391 days. Both measures indicate a strong financial performance for Fleet Landing.

Turning to the property insurance issue, Ashby reminded residents of the initial plan for a surcharge of \$332 per unit and then the reduction of the surcharge to \$187 per unit when less expensive property insurance was found, effective December 1. Property insurance will be re-priced again this spring—the last chance before the start of hurricane season—to see whether less expensive coverage can be found. This is not a simple task because Fleet Landing's property insurance portfolio includes some 17 companies from around the world. The current Florida legislative session is being monitored, but no action on the issue of property insurance is anticipated. There is some expectation of a return of more capacity to the market, which would at least allow maintaining the current cost of insurance.

### The Coleman Center Renovation

Ashby's update on the components of the Coleman Center renovation included photos showing their status. The concierge desk, the executive administration area, and the Dinda Library are complete and open. A celebration of the library's opening is scheduled for March 15, Bob Dinda's 100th birthday. The pool bathroom and shower, Breakers, and the Atlantic are open, but work is still required. The Food and Beverage offices; an adjacent hallway; the front entrance, lobby, and conference room; the Atrium and staircase, and LakeView are not yet open, but work is in progress. Once LakeView is open, the Atlantic will close for eight weeks, principally for installation of a portable buffet. Ashby reported that some of the work on the renovation will require the Coleman Center to be fully closed for five to seven days in April. He provided a timeline of the expected month of completion for the components, with the entire interior project estimated to be complete in summer 2024.

Ashby also described planning for renovation of the Coleman Center exterior service area/loading dock. The goal is to screen the service yard area, which includes dumpsters, generators, and more, from front-of-house traffic, such as residents going to the pool. This project is expected to be complete in December 2024.

### Nocatee Update

Ashby's update on Nocatee began with a review of the history of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide. This communication tool, launched in April 2023, allows residents to submit questions via email to Executive Assistant Jennifer Arsenault (jarsenault@fleetlanding.com).

*(continued on page 14)*

### January Residents' Council Meeting

By Howard Burdick

Residents' Council President Eileen Theis convened the January 16 meeting in Johnson Hall. She reported that after a lengthy period of unreliable delivery of Fleet Landing's national newspaper subscriptions, the Residents' Council was facilitating a January 18 meeting of residents interested in finding a solution.

Walter Kraslawsky, who with his wife, Kathy, organized this year's Fleet Landing participation in the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign, reported on its success. The 123 resident volunteers collected \$16,066; making them the champion collectors in the Jacksonville area—again!

Management Review. Chief Operating Officer Brian Weiss reported on the completion or status of a lengthy list of projects throughout the campus.

#### Council Reports.

Vice President Bob Peterson announced that Eileen Theis and Nancy Russell would head the Nominating Committee for the April Residents' Council elections, and he reviewed the schedule for nominating and electing new members. He encouraged all those interested and eligible to apply.

Safety and Security. Peterson said that the Safety and Security Department worked tirelessly to keep us secure, but he also emphasized the importance of taking personal responsibility for one's safety.

Treasurer. Charles Winton reported on the highly successful Residents' Gift Fund drive, which raised \$854,000. He also reviewed options for planned giving at Fleet Landing.

Human Resources and Marketing. Ernie Bio recognized the Campus Leader for December as Lily Hurtado, Hospital and Rehab Admissions Liaison, and for January, as Michelle Parker, Assistant Director of Nursing. The November Staff Member of the Month was Pedro Fernandez of Housekeeping, and the Staff Member of the Year was Patty Harris, Dining Room Supervisor in LakeView. (See article on page 5.) Recently hired employees numbered 34. With 484 employees, Fleet Landing is 94 percent staffed. Lobster Tales submissions were 188 in November, and 140 in December. There were 25 resident contract closings in 2023.

Wellness/Transportation/Clubs. Theis, reporting for Nancy Russell, reviewed upcoming events. She also noted impressive fitness activity statistics.

Dining. Theis reported for Lynette Beitz that the four new members of the Dining Committee were Nancy Sander, Robert Armacost, Janet Schember, and Anne Gordon. Carol Sheil, Fran Sheridan, Anna Bio, and Robert Ezell will serve for a second year, and Beitz is the Residents' Council representative.

Healthcare. Ann Bell showed photos of the new scrubs that are color-coded to indicate the specialty of healthcare staff.

Facilities. Ken Hollinga reviewed the facilities organ-

izational structure and provided an updated list of zone representatives. He described maintenance reporting procedures and detailed recent and scheduled inspections for the first quarter of 2024.

Resident Suggestions. Bob Peterson reported for Judy Poppell. The 11 suggestions were too detailed to report here, but they may be reviewed in the council minutes available in the Dinda Library and posted on Fleet Link and around campus.

*Editor's note:* FLEET BEAT seeks to avoid repetition of information found elsewhere in this issue.

### December Board of Directors Meeting

By Enith Vardaman

*The Board of Directors December 6 meeting was held in closed session, with Chair Helen Atter presiding. The information below was supplied to FLEET BEAT by Executive Director Josh Ashby.*

The Board of Directors established a new meeting schedule that will include a spring and fall social to provide opportunities for resident and board interaction.

Two new directors were nominated by the Governance Committee and elected by the board. (Look for a biography of these new board members in a future issue of FLEET BEAT.)

The board reviewed financial statements through October and discussed the change in property insurance that was effective on December 1.

Ashby provided the status of key performance indicators, including financial performance, resident satisfaction, staff engagement, and mission advancement.

An update on the Nocatee project was deferred until the January 24 board meeting.

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**Chet Davis (Roving Reporter)**

**All the news that fits...**

*Contributions to FLEET BEAT are welcome. Please place copy or any comments you may have in box 1107 at the Coleman Center. Neither letters to the editor nor anonymous submissions are published but we are, of course, mindful of your comments. Issues of FLEET BEAT can be found at [www.fleetlanding.com](http://www.fleetlanding.com). Sign into the resident portal and click on "Menu" and then "Publications." Issues can also be found under "Publications" on Fleet Link. A complete run of back issues can be found in the Dinda Library.*

## January Board of Directors Meeting

By Enith Vardaman

The Board of Directors January 24 meeting was held in closed session, with Chair Helen Atter presiding. The information below was supplied to FLEET BEAT by Executive Director Josh Ashby.

The Board of Directors elected its new officers: Ari Jolly assumed the role of Chair, and Joe Mitrick became Vice Chair. Bill Struck is returning as Treasurer, and Ashby is remaining as Secretary. The board also ratified committee assignments for the directors for the next two years.

The board reviewed the preliminary end-of-year financial results.

After completing the design/development process, the Nocatee project business plan was updated with new construction costs forecasts and new assumptions regarding interest rates. Those results indicate that a second campus is viable in Nocatee. The Strategic and Finance committees forwarded to the board a motion to approve the updated business plan and to authorize the start of a public marketing plan. The motion passed unanimously. Ashby provided preliminary ideas on how to manage the operation of two communities in the future.

## Unwavering: A True Story

By Chet Davis



LtoR: Judy Silverstein Gray, Dick and Alice Stratton, Pat Kluever, Taylor Baldwin Kiland

On December 5, a large number of residents gathered in Johnson Hall to hear authors Taylor Baldwin Kiland and Judy Silverstein Gray describe their eight-year journey gathering the stories that culminated in publication of *Unwavering: The Wives Who Fought To Ensure That No Man Is Left Behind*. The event was sponsored by the Historic Mayport Chapter of the Military Officers of America Association. Chapter President Pat Kluever introduced the speakers.

The idea for the book originated with a call from Fleet Landing resident and returned POW Dick Stratton. He

told the authors that many books had been written about the POWs, but none about the wives who were instrumental in getting POW recognition and the subsequent establishment of the Defense POW/MIA Accountancy Agency.

The book tells the story of how women in the 1960's defied the norms of the era and galvanized a president to be concerned about the fate of their husbands and all POWs. Kiland and Gray contacted various women who had been activists and distilled their recollections into a captivating story.

The authors thanked Dick's wife, Alice, for all of her work for the POWs and also her support for families while serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Personnel and Families and afterwards.

Alice and Dick, their son, Patrick, and daughter-in-law, Dawn, attended the event.

After the talk, the authors were available for questions and for book signing.

## Celebrating a Milestone

By Carolyn Stoner

Photos by Isobel Spink and Carolyn Stoner



Bea Waltermann celebrated her 100th birthday on

January 23 in the Annex with her Tuesday canasta group. She observed her actual birthday, January 27, with her family.

Resident Dede Leclaire celebrated Bea's milestone by creating the clever birthday card pictured at left.

Bea arrived at Fleet Landing in 2005 from Blowing Rock, NC, via New York. She has been active in card games.



Bea is an inspiration and example to all who know her.

Happy Birthday, Bea.

### Staff Holiday Party

By Enith Vardaman; photos by Ann Bell

Windward Commons was the place to be on the afternoon of November 30 if you wanted to see an exceptional number of smiling faces. The occasion: the annual Staff Holiday Party, a joint effort of Fleet Landing management and the Residents' Council. The smiles began as staff chose from the enticing array of food prepared by Dining Services, continued through awards and a raffle, and culminated in the distribution of checks from the Residents' Gift Fund. Human Resources Senior Director Michele Holley, Executive Director Josh Ashby, Chief Operating Officer Brian Weiss, Residents' Council President Eileen Theis, and Residents' Council members all played a role in the festivities.

The naming of the Staff Member of the Year is always a highlight of this event. After each Staff Member of the Month was recognized, Patty Harris, LakeView Dining Room Supervisor, was named Staff Member of the Year. (See article on page 5.)

Staff who had reached service milestones at intervals from 1 to 25 years were recognized. Tim O'Connell, a cook in LakeView, was the 25-year honoree.

The Legacy Club, established in 2022, is a monthly celebration honoring the Staff Member of the Month, the nominees for that month, and those who have achieved the service milestones mentioned above. Over \$60,000 in Legacy Club service bonuses was awarded this year.

Debra Dobbins of North Point nursing won the always popular Ugly Sweater Contest. Andrew Sims of Safety and Security and his wife, Emma, of North Point nursing cruised to victory in the Best Dressed Contest. Austin Luce, Culinary Services Dishwasher, won the Best Dancer Contest hands down. This was the first year that a dance floor was part of the celebration.

Five lucky staff members had their names drawn in the raffle. The prizes were a \$200 Amazon gift card, Apple AirPods, Bose headphones, a Ninja All-in-One Cooker, and a 55-inch TV.

Each of the announcements noted above received an enthusiastic response from staff. This happy event concluded with staff picking up their Residents' Gift Fund checks.



*Tables, decor, and food ready for the party*



*Winners of the Ugly Sweater, Best Dressed, and Best Dancer contests*



*Smiles while choosing from the tempting array of food. (continued on next page)*

### Staff Holiday Party (continued from preceding page)



Left: A very happy raffle winner.  
Right: Perhaps even the Grinch was smiling behind that mask.



On December 22, Wellness Services Director Sue Dukes, her son, Carter (9 years old), and daughter, Audrey (7 years old), led this year's Jingle Bell Walk that included entertainment for walkers and observers alike. Beautifully amplified Christmas songs (thanks to great technology from the Dukes family) kept the bell-adorned walkers singing as they shared the Christmas spirit around campus. Driver Marie-Claire Allen, Fleet Landing's Roller Derby Queen, added some fun with her skating acrobatics alongside the walkers.

The route expanded this year as Dukes led the group around the loop, then continued the fun and music through the Derfer Pavilion, Leeward Manor, North Point, and finally Windward Commons, where hot cocoa with marshmallows and peppermint sticks awaited the merry band.



### Patty Harris, Staff Member of the Year

By Chet Davis

The naming of the Staff Member of the Year is a highlight of the annual Staff Holiday Party. LakeView Dining Room Supervisor Patty Harris, a Fleet Landing employee of almost 20 years, was named the honoree at this year's party, which was held on November 30.



A native of Warren, OH, Harris has resided in the Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach area since she was two. At Fleet Landing, Harris has been a server, soda shop attendant (only long-time residents remember that venue), bartender, breakfast server, dining room assistant, and now dining room supervisor. One might say she has been a jack-of-all-trades in Dining Services.

Harris now lives on the other side of the Intracoastal Waterway. She has four sons. One is entering the Air Force, one has a full-time job while going to college, one is a senior at Sandalwood High School, and her youngest is in the fourth grade at Neptune Beach Elementary.

Harris enjoys—and is successful at—building relationships with both staff and residents. She considers Fleet Landing to be a good place for her to be.

Please congratulate Patty Harris when you see her.



More smiles as the Residents' Gift Fund checks were distributed.

### Oh, What Fun! By Nancy Lundgren



## Library Notes

By Enith Vardaman

Question: How do you set up a library in a new location? Answer: It takes a lot of teamwork. That sums up how the new Dinda Library in the Coleman Center came to be up and running.

On Friday, January 5, three energetic movers from Beaches Moving & Storage packed up an estimated 175 boxes of books in the Annex, the temporary location of the library during the Coleman Center renovation. All the boxes were carefully labeled by classification and numbered in the many instances when the classification filled more than a single box. The movers then brought all those boxes to the Coleman Center. Because the Annex could not accommodate all the books in the library's collection, 50 or so boxes had been packed and placed in storage at Fleet Landing. Those boxes were also brought to the Coleman Center by the movers.

Fleet Landing staff were a major part of the team effort. Executive Assistant Jennifer Arsenault has been an invaluable source of help going all the way back to planning for dismantling of the previous library. Once the books were returned to the Coleman Center, members of the maintenance staff willingly and cheerfully assisted, adjusting shelves in the new library and moving heavy boxes of books into the proper places for unpacking. Pedro Fernandez, Housekeeping porter in the Coleman Center, was equally helpful by making sure bookshelves were dusted as necessary and the Library Office was tidied up and ready for occupancy.

Resident Randy McDonald provided special help. In the former library, blocks of wood were placed behind the paperbacks and the audio-visual materials to prevent them from being pushed too far back on the shelves. Only a few were the correct size for the shelf widths in the new library. McDonald measured shelves and then, in an effort requiring two trips, took the blocks to the Woodworkers' shop to cut them to the proper size before returning them to the library.

During the period when the library was in its temporary location, residents approached me, as head of the Library Committee, about helping with the move into the new library. As a result, I never had to solicit help, because, when the time for the move came, I already had a list of some 45 volunteers for all the tasks related to the move.

The unpacking of well over 200 boxes of books and placing them on the shelves began in earnest on January 9, and the last book was placed on a shelf on January 15. I had received many quick responses to my emails inquiring about dates and times that volunteers would be available. The enthusiastic support for this effort was so strong that I had an excess of volunteers.

Thanks are due each and every member of the team that helped complete what was indeed a challenging project.

## Setting Up the Library: Pictorial History

Photos by Jennifer Arsenault, Bob Peterson, Enith Vardaman, and Connie Wheat



*Jennifer Arsenault (l) and Enith Vardaman after the shelves in the Annex had been emptied*



*All the boxes of books waiting to be unpacked*



*LtoR: Maintenance staff Keith Hawk, Stephen Mulzet, Lucas Wallace  
(continued on next page)*

**Setting Up the Library: Pictorial History**  
*(continued from preceding page)*



*Maintenance staff Ricky Baker and Chuck Taylor and Pedro Fernandez (Housekeeping)*



*Pat Gillis, Roma Stephens, Karen Habel*



*Randy McDonald, Gayle Bue, Ann Linn*



*Ellie Smith, Victoria Fahy, Dave Rigg*



*Eileen Theis, Barbara Galloway, Beverly Norman*



*Sherry Lipp, Carole Carstater, Cindy Tomlin*



*Joan Craddock, Eric Haeseler, Mary Ellen Reed*



*Rae Donnelly, Victoria Freeman, Ann Bell*  
*(continued on next page)*

### Setting Up the Library: Pictorial History *(continued from preceding page)*



*Nancy Russell, Elena Rigg, Georgia Goodling*



*Dorothy Cabanillas, Fran Sheridan, Helen Hause*



*Enith Vardaman and Jennifer Arsenault just after the last book was unpacked and put on a shelf*

### Christmas Tree Lighting

By Enith Vardaman

Photos by Ann Bell and Janet Silvester

The annual Christmas Tree Lighting took place at the Main Street Plaza on the pleasant evening of December 1. There were refreshments, of course, and the Bella Voce Cabaret was on hand to add songs of the season to the festive atmosphere. Santa, aka resident Pat Kluever, was seen greeting attendees. Also present was Santa's elf, Lin Smith. Chief Operating Officer Brian

Weiss and Residents' Council President Eileen Theis made brief remarks, noting the success of the Residents' Gift Fund and the appreciation of staff for the checks distributed from the fund at the Staff Holiday Party the previous day. Theis also took note of a recent "gift" to residents: The planned property insurance surcharge had been cut from \$332 to \$187 a month. Everyone then joined her in the countdown to the highlight of the evening, the lighting of the tree.



*LtoR: Brian Weiss, Lin Smith, Eileen Theis, Pat Kluever*



*Bella Voce Cabaret*



*The refreshment table was popular.*



*Waiting for the main event, which did not disappoint.*

## Hanukkah 2023 Menorah Lighting

By Nancy Lundgren

Photos by Jennifer Arsenault, Ann Bell, and Janet Silvester



Hanukkah 2023 began at sunset on December 7, when Joe Oestreich (“Joe O”) welcomed 71 Fleet Landing residents and staff to the third annual Menorah Lighting on the Main Street Plaza. Oestreich read from the prayerbook he received at his bar mitzvah in New York in October 1942.

Hanukkah is the Jewish eight-day “festival of lights,” celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers, and fried foods. Hanukkah, meaning “dedication,” celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

In the second century BCE, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who tried to force the Israelites to accept Greek culture and beliefs, instead of their own mitzvah observance and belief in God. Against all odds, a small band of faithful, but poorly armed Jews led by Judah Maccabee, defeated the Seleucids, drove them from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple, and rededicated it to the service of God.

When they tried to light the Temple’s Menorah, they found only a single flask of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Seleucids. Miraculously, they lit the menorah, and the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity. To commemorate these miracles, they instituted the festival of Hanukkah.

Oestreich sang the traditional blessings in Hebrew and then recited them in English before lighting a candle each evening. The first night included three blessings: “Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who makes us holy with your commandments, commanding us to light the Hanukkah lights. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in those ancient days at this season. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.”

In the Jewish tradition, each person attending the Menorah lighting is performing a mitzvah (good deed) that is recorded in the Book of Life. There were many good deeds performed during the eight days of Hanukkah here at Fleet Landing, but most especially by Oestreich. Thank you, Joe, for introducing and continuing this tradition.

## Another Hanukkah Celebration



*For several years, Harriet Berson has provided this celebration of Hanukkah on the third floor of the 4000 Building.*

### Operation “Decorate and Donate”

By Carolyn Stoner

Photos by Kathy DeSiena and Carolyn Stoner



*Julie Rochelle (l) and Kay Craft with the decorated trees*



*Decorators were all smiles.*



*Delivering the trees*

Operation “Decorate and Donate” kicked off the holiday season on December 1 in Johnson Hall. Fun, live music, dancing, and refreshments made for a very festive event as participants decorated miniature Christ-

mas trees. The social interaction with neighbors and families was a highlight of the incredible creative expressions of the season.

Resident Kay Craft was the driving force behind this event. She was inspired after a visit last year to a North Point friend who did not have a Christmas tree. Craft enlisted resident Julie Rochelle to be her cochair and the two worked with management to make it a reality.

A total of 160 residents participated in Operation “Decorate and Donate,” beginning with contributions of \$20 to purchase the miniature trees and decorations. The final result was a sea of 128 beautifully decorated Christmas trees. The combination of colors and creativity was like looking at Santa’s workshop on Christmas Eve.

The trees were distributed by healthcare staff to the residents in Derfer, Leeward Manor, North Point, and The Nancy House.

Thanks to Craft and Rochelle for all the hard work that it takes to make an event like this successful. This sounds like an annual event in the making.

### First Wine Tasting of 2024

By Carol Smith; photo by Bob Armacost



The Fleet Landing Wine Committee kicked off the new year with an upscale wine tasting on January 25 in Johnson Hall. Pacific Southern Wine Company offered six tasting options throughout the evening. Of the three white wines presented, a real favorite was the 2020 Roussanne. While very few attendees were familiar with this wine, everyone appreciated the clean, crisp flavors of nectarine, melon, and lemon zest, which paired nicely with the charcuterie board and hot appetizers at each table.

The red wine offerings introduced a unique blend that delighted the audience. The Arborist from Paso Robles, CA, is a blend of seven grapes and everyone commented on the dark ruby color as it was poured. The Arborist is so named for the practice of the Vina Robles winery of planting a tree for each bottle produced.

The Wine Committee looks forward to offering tastings throughout the year from a variety of wine producing regions. In addition, the annual Wine Constellation dinners are scheduled for May and October.

### Okefenokee Visit

By Victoria Freeman

Photos by Ann Bell and Janet Silvester



Having boarded Fleet Landing’s 38-passenger coach driven by Transportation Services Manager Brandon Levy, 30 Fleet Landers were off for a December 5 visit to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Okefenokee Swamp encompassed in it.

Once there, the visitors boarded two boats and set out to see alligators basking in the sun, dinner plate size turtles, birds, sun dogs, and carnivorous plants. They heard the history of the refuge and learned that it is now on the List of Wetlands of International Importance. It is the birthplace of two rivers, the St. Marys and the Suwannee.

After the boat trip, the group enjoyed a luncheon of hamburgers, Ms. Clara’s potato salad, beans, and peach cobbler topped with vanilla ice cream.

To improve digestion, two walks followed. One was to the 40-foot observation tower. The other was to the Chesser Island Homestead at the edge of the swamp. Dating from the mid-1800’s, it offers a glimpse of the rather harsh way of life of a pioneer family at that time.

Everyone then boarded the bus to return to Fleet Landing. As Carmenza Stephenson said, “This was a truly amazing trip!” Everyone agreed, and a round of applause went up for Wellness Services Manager Mary Faria.



### FleetLanders Concert

By Chet Davis



The Johnson Hall audience at the January 26 FleetLanders concert was introduced to two new members of the group: Jim Katsikas (drums) and Guy Van Syckle (guitar and vocals). The concert featured well-known tunes from the ’20s to the ’70s. It was a pleasure to hear so many old favorites. Vocal solo performances by Van Syckle, Julia Pet-Armacost, Bob Armacost, Ivy Suter, and guest Bob Chrisman were well received. Clarinetist Bunky Johnson and pianist Karen Sturtevant made special contributions to blues numbers. The audience responded enthusiastically to the numerous opportunities to join in by singing choruses or complete songs.

There will be more concerts by Fleet Landing’s talented musicians in February: Fleet Notes on February 14 and Fleet Classics on February 22.

## Camp Blanding Museum Guided Tour

By Dita Domonkos

Photos by Dita Domonkos and Mary Faria



*Flag created by Americans in a Japanese POW camp*



*Diorama of German POW camp at Camp Blanding*

In 1940, Florida bought 30,000 acres to build training facilities for the National Guard. When the land was federalized in preparation for WWII, the Army took the land and enlisted the help of a civilian construction company, Starrett Brothers and Eken Inc., contractors of the Empire State Building. Their mission? Build the

infrastructure and buildings necessary to accommodate 40,000 men in 90 days.

Thus began our January 10 tour of Camp Blanding Museum led by Greg Parson, Curator. The camp was instrumental in training troops during WWII, and thus was instrumental in the Allied victory. It was named for Major General A. H. Blanding, a colonel in the Florida National Guard, Brigadier General in WWI, and recipient of the Army Distinguished Service Medal.

To accomplish their monumental mission, Starrett Brothers recruited 22,000 workers from across the Southeast to work three shifts a day, seven days a week, paying triple the standard wage. Construction was so streamlined that a single-story building could be built within 45 minutes.

After pulling a siding off the main train line for supplies, wood was unloaded and carpenters immediately built wall sections, either plain, or with a window, or with a door. Sequentially, one crew leveled the ground, another set pilings, yet another put on the deck, followed by a crew which set up the constructed wall sections, followed by another which put in trusses. Additional construction made the camp the fourth largest city in Florida during WWII, with 10,000 structures able to accommodate 60,000 troops.

Many German prisoners of war were sent to the United States to remove them from combat zones. In addition to training American soldiers, Camp Blanding accommodated 1,000 German prisoners of war. They did kitchen and mess duty, ground maintenance, and tent and shoe repair, and were paid, as per the Geneva Convention, 10 cents an hour.

During the war the government took charge of manufacturing. Looking at models of trains used in the war, Parson explained that since rail was the way troops and equipment moved around the country, passenger car production was halted. Instead, box cars with windows became troop transport. The cars had a 3-tier bunk system for 30 soldiers.

In 1936, the army adopted the M1 rifle, a semi-automatic weapon that was a game changer. It was easy to load, fire, and reload rapidly, thus capable of serious fire power quickly. It outshone the semi-automatic rifles used by the Germans and Russians, as the M1 had few parts, was easily maintained in the field, and was reliable and accurate.

Before wrapping up our two-hour tour, we looked at a large American flag with a remarkable backstory. Three American POWs crafted it secretly at night in a Japanese POW camp using medical supplies. The red stripes were parachute material dyed with iodine, and the stars were made from cast plaster. When liberated, the POWs proudly flew the flag over the camp.

After learning about this facility and many aspects of WWII, our enlightening outing ended with a box lunch on the grounds, which housed vehicles used in WWII.

### Holiday Sing-along

By Chet Davis; photos by Enith Vardaman



December 11 found Johnson Hall filled with nearly 100 voices joyously singing both Christmas carols and secular Christmas music.

The event, which was sponsored by The NoteAbles under the direction of Ron and Sue Myers, also featured Karen Sturtevant at the piano. It was a delightful evening of song and fellowship. Each musical selection was accompanied by a bit of its history, making the session a tutorial as well. The selection of music perfectly fit the occasion.

One surprise: After everyone sang “Silent Night,” the carol was sung only by the men, and then only by the women—a suggestion from the audience. Both renditions were beautiful.

The highlight of the evening was modified “Twelve Days of Christmas” lyrics, which had been written by Sue. The song was greeted with enthusiasm, laughter, and praise. Herewith is the final verse with the new lyrics:

#### 12 Days of Christmas at Fleet Landing

On the twelfth day of Christmas Fleet Landing gave to me:

- Twelve Windward concerts,
- Eleven servers serving,
- Ten tours to Mayport,
- Nine LakeView dinners,
- Eight tap dance lessons,
- Seven sailboats sailing,
- Six bowlers bowling,
- Five date palm trees!

Four hooting owls, three wood storks,

Two mourning doves... and an osprey in a warm nest!

Most residents are familiar with The NoteAbles singing at Council/MOAA-supported events such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and the Fourth of July. The

NoteAbles also meet every month just for the pleasure of singing. The event, noted on the monthly calendar, is open to all residents. The whole audience joins in the singing, and no auditions are required.

### Oh, What a Beautiful Morning

By Nancy Lundgren; photos by Janet Silvester

Sixteen residents enjoyed the first Birdwatching Club field trip of 2024, gathering at Hanna Park on the bright, sunny day of January 27. With our experts-in-residence Mike Marchetti, Ken Hollinga, and Paul Mocko leading the way, we managed to identify 45+ bird varieties, some of whom posed perfectly while we focused our binoculars and cameras.

Saturday standouts included the yellow-crowned night heron, a green heron, a pileated woodpecker, a shrike, a phoebe, a yellow-bellied sapsucker, gallinules, and red-wing blackbirds.

Marveling at these birds in their natural habitat is a treat worth repeating. Watch for the announcement of the next outing on the comment board in the Birdwatching Club section of Resident Groups on Fleet Link.



*Pileated woodpecker (l) and green heron*



*Phoebe and shrike*



*Anhinga and common gallinule*

## Executive Director's Quarterly Briefing

(continued from page 1)

The questions are answered at each "Coffee and Conversation With Josh." The first two editions of the FAQ can be found on Fleet Link under the "Nocatee" tab of "Fleet Landing Presentations." A printout can be requested from the concierge. There have been no further editions because no questions have been submitted since July.

Ashby then reviewed Nocatee chronology:

- In 2015, the 25th anniversary of Fleet Landing, the Board of Directors adopted a strategic growth plan for Fleet Landing.

- A newly formed corporation, Ponte Vedra Pine Company, LLC, purchased parcels of land in Nocatee, a master-planned community, in 2019 (35 acres for \$9.5 million) and in 2022 (2 acres for \$2 million).

- In 2022, an architect and general contractor were engaged to develop a master plan for development of a new campus in Nocatee.

- During 2023, those plans were advanced to the design development phase in order to obtain reliable cost information to confirm the financial viability of this potential second campus location. Viability was confirmed in April 2023.

- The most recent development occurred in January 2024, when the board authorized the start of public marketing for a new community in Nocatee.

Ashby then announced the next steps:

- Residents would receive on that very day a letter announcing the latest step.

- Atlantic Club members would receive a letter via email the following day announcing the latest step.

- A priority program, which will allow people to secure a place in line to learn more information, will start this spring. Fleet Landing residents will have first priority; Atlantic Club members, second priority; and the general public, third priority.

- Deposits will be accepted later this summer.

- Construction could start as soon as the end of 2025, with the first residents taking occupancy in early 2027.

New questions are anticipated and can be submitted as described above. The questions and answers will be compiled into quarterly editions and published in the Nocatee FAQ on Fleet Link and reviewed at each "Coffee and Conversation With Josh." Ashby noted that residents can find a compilation of every slide related to Nocatee on Fleet Link. Go to the "Nocatee" tab under "Fleet Landing Presentations."

### Miscellaneous

**Campus signage project.** Ashby displayed photos of what the new campus-wide signage (Mayport Road entry, vehicular way finding, regulatory signage, building and parking space/lot identification, and more) will look like. Installation of this signage is anticipated for spring/fall 2024.

**Dining update.** Stating that dining was the highest priority moving forward, Ashby reported on a variety of matters. Residents' comments in the August survey indicated improvements in dining, but there was still room

for improvement. The completion of LakeView will be the most consequential step in improving campus dining, allowing a return to normal capacity for dining, and for increased staffing levels. A reset of Currents Marketplace to operate in a manner more consistent with the original design intent is expected early this year. Once all dining venues are operating at normal capacity, the use of reservations will be reevaluated. Healthcare dining operations and independent living dining operations are now led by separate executive chefs who report to the Food and Beverage Director. A new executive chef position has been added to oversee Currents, Meridian, and 30 North. A memo was to be distributed the week of February 5 announcing the changes mentioned above as well as initiatives surrounding healthy meal options based on resident feedback. Dee Waiters, Executive Chef - Health Services; Michael Litzel, Executive Chef - Main Street; and Jason McLaughlin, Restaurant Manager - Main Street were introduced.

### Lakeside apartment buildings interior refresh.

This project, affecting the 2000 and 3000 buildings, is underway, with residents having chosen their favorite design scheme and preferred chairs. Studio 121 is incorporating resident feedback into the design package. Once the design package is approved, procurement of furniture, fixtures, and equipment will begin and a labor plan finalized. The design phase for the 1000 and 4000 buildings is expected to begin this summer.

**Spinnaker Society Special Engagement.** A special joint Spinnaker Society/World Affairs Council event will take place on March 3 in Johnson Hall. Mathew Rojansky, President and CEO of the US Russia Foundation, will be the speaker. Anyone wishing to become a member of the Spinnaker Society can contact Charitable Gift Planning Director Kathy DeSiena.

**Homestead Exemption forms and Resident Directory 2024.** The deadlines for submitting this information will have passed by the time you are reading this.

**8000 building roof tile sealant project.** The problem of discoloration of roof tiles will be corrected at the tile manufacturer's expense in the coming weeks.



*The photo of the Ashby children never disappoints. Here (l to r), Connor, Cosette, and Vivian are practicing their roller coaster faces at Disney World.*

## Resident Christmas Party

By Victoria Freeman; photo by Janet Silvester

Executive Director Josh Ashby described the Resident Christmas Party as spectacular. And spectacular it was. In just eight hours, staff from the Wellness and Transportation and Dining Services departments converted Windward Commons into a genuine pleasure palace complete with elegant white drapes, festive decor, three types of live music—piano, harp, and violin—and almost 40 exotic food items.



The numbers tell the story. 520 residents turned in RSVPs for the December 8 party. There were 50 cases of champagne. Transportation ran three buses simultaneously beginning at 4:45 pm. As one guest commented, “It was like being in Switzerland watching the trains run on time.” Lines moved swiftly, and there was table seating for every guest.

When asked about the apparent smoothness of such a complex operation, Executive Chef Chris Gotschall said, “It’s total cooperation. There are lots of new faces blending in with the seasoned staff. The objective is to make the food delicious as well as dazzling.”

They succeeded: Individuals could choose from a variety of delights, including oysters on the half shell, shrimp cocktail, mini lobster rolls, smoked salmon toast, ricotta toast, tomato tartar, artisanal cheese selection, marinated beet and burrata salad, roasted fennel and black garlic hummus, bronzino crudo, and Scottish salmon tartar. Carved prime rib was next, followed by Chef Kelly’s sage sausage dip. Moving along the table, the hot selections were tequila lime shrimp, house-made seafood croquettes, lamb chops, beef tips, wild mushrooms au gratin, baked Brie en crouete, and seasonal vegetables.

Desserts were definitely dazzling: snowman Nutella chocolate cupcakes, gingerbread mini Bundt cakes, Christmas Yule logs, not hot cocoa verrine, blood orange gingersnap cheesecake, Christmas cookies. All were made in-house.

Food and Beverage Director Perry Brown said, “Seeing the smiling faces makes it all worthwhile.” Chief Operating Officer Brian Weiss commented, “It is so wonderful to see the interaction. Everyone is enjoying the food and the friendship.” Joe Mitrick, a member of the Board of Directors, commented, “What a great start to the holidays.”

For some, it was their first Christmas party, while others had attended many. All were impressed. Calls of “Happy Holidays” filled the air as guests left the party. And, in the spirit of the holidays, servers got to dine and carry out the remaining elegant cuisine after the party ended.

## Resident Christmas Party in Pictures

Photos by Ann Bell and Janet Silvester



*Many of the people who made the party a success*



*Tempting desserts  
(continued on next page)*

### Resident Christmas Party in Pictures

(continued from preceding page)



*Lots of smiles*

### Heisman Trophy Ceremony

Text and photo by David Miron



*LtoR: Bo Nix, David Miron, Jayden Daniels*

The photo above is a screenshot from the televised Heisman Trophy Ceremony held on December 9 in New York City. The occasion of resident David Miron's attendance was an invitation from his niece, Linnea Miron, and her husband, Ricky Williams, who won the

Heisman Trophy in 1998 as a running back at the University of Texas. Bo Nix, quarterback at the University of Oregon, was one of four Heisman Trophy finalists. Jayden Daniels, quarterback at Louisiana State University, was the winner of the 2023 Heisman Trophy.

### Noel and Maria Return to Fleet Landing

By Enith Vardaman



Noel Freidline and Maria Howell are rapidly joining the ranks of Fleet Landing favorites. The "Noel & Maria: Home for the Holidays" show, performed before a large Johnson Hall audience on December 13, was their third appearance here. Freidline, who was at a keyboard, provided running commentary (including the wry comment that his first name is everywhere during the Christmas season). Howell has had an extensive career in TV and movies, including the 1985 version of *The Color Purple*. Both of them provided vocals. They were joined on stage by a saxophonist, a drummer, and a bassist, whose solos at various points in the concert received appreciative applause. All these musicians seemed to be enjoying themselves, and the audience certainly did.

### Holiday Home Tour

Photos by Ann Bell and Janet Silvester

For this year's Holiday Home Tour, which took place on December 11, Mary Ellen Granuzzo, Lory Doolittle, Leilani Roberts, Judy Barton, Susie Canon, Mary Alice Westrick, and Kathy Carter graciously opened their homes for viewing of their Christmas decorations. In addition, residents of the 8000 Building decorated the building's lobbies and the trees on the side of the building under the direction of Kay Craft. At the close of the tour, refreshments were available in the Windward Commons lobby.

Space constraints permit showing only a small selection of scenes from this holiday tradition.



(continued on next page)

### Holiday Home Tour (continued from preceding page)



### The Beatles Come to Florida

By Chet Davis

Local historian Scott Grant provided an interesting and entertaining review of the Beatles' two trips to Florida. Both occurred in 1964, one to Miami Beach and one to Jacksonville. The trip to Miami Beach was their second appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, the first having happened the week before in New York City. The second Florida appearance came in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Dora, when the Beatles performed in the then-Gator Bowl (current site of EverBank Stadium).



The effects of Hurricane Dora impacted the Beatles' tour, forcing them to land in Key West, where they spent the night and held an impromptu concert before appearing in Jacksonville. The Jacksonville concert was controversial as the Beatles refused to play for a segregated audience. They also refused segregated hotel accommodations. The opening acts were to be performed by black musicians who weren't allowed to have rooms in the hotel. Several current Fleet Landing residents attended the Gator Bowl concert and reported that between the poor sound system and the screaming of thousands of young women, it was almost impossible to hear the Beatles, who performed 12 songs in 35 minutes.

This January 30 Johnson Hall presentation included photos of all Florida appearances and focused on interactions with fans. It was an interesting presentation, revealing both in-depth research and knowledge.

### Chess Club News

By Richard Wong

The Chess Club meets every Tuesday at 1 pm in the Windward Commons lobby.



*White to play and win. Can you find how White can mate?*

### Christmas Tea

By Carol Smith

Photos by Ann Bell and Dita Domonkos

It was feeling a lot like Christmas as residents gathered in Johnson Hall on December 19 for the annual Christmas Tea. Although the sun was shining brightly, the wind brought temperatures that required warm coats over beautiful holiday attire.

Tea was served by ladies from the Marketing, Wellness, and Administration departments. A favorite this year was the Peppermint Decaf tea. Everyone enjoyed visiting as they savored the finger sandwiches of salmon, chicken salad, and cucumber. Sweet treats of decorated cookies, cream puffs, and scones with jam and clotted cream were nibbled as tea cups were regularly refilled.

Beautiful Christmas cacti were centerpieces for the festivities, and one person at each table was lucky enough to take one home.



### Tattoos in Japanese Art

By Bo Smith

Photos by Ann Bell and Bo Smith



A group from Fleet Landing visited the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens on January 11 to see a special exhibit from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts entitled “Tattoos in Japanese Prints.”

It’s hard to imagine a more esoteric subject than 19th century Japanese tattoos. I had breezed through this show a few weeks before the Fleet Landing tour, glanced at the artworks, wondered why such a strange exhibit was chosen, and left knowing nothing about it.

Our tour changed my mind. The docent, resident Lory Doolittle, reminded us that appreciation of art depends on what you bring to it, and if you take a little effort with an art-work, there can be rich returns. Doolittle asked us to stop and consider the basic aesthetics of what we were seeing: the color, form, and composition. Then she provided the history of the works, insights, and compelling stories. For example, Japanese prints were very popular in Europe in the 19th century, and were an important influence in Impressionist art—the beginning of modern art. Doolittle always lets the group live into the works, and a little effort provided a lot of appreciation. At first, we were looking at a wood block print of some huge guy with wild eyes and a full body tattoo, but having paused, we begin to appreciate the artisanship, and then wonderful stories emerge. Yes, it is an esoteric subject, but this was a fascinating tour.

Jacksonville has two art museums and many galleries, and Fleet Landing offers periodic trips to them. Besides the opportunity to see fine art in a beautiful setting, knowledgeable docents are available on these trips, and I always learn something new. When offered, these tours fill up fast.



## Welcome Aboard

### 8207 Ann Esse (May '23)



Ann was born in Nebraska, grew up in Minnesota, and graduated from Luther College in northeastern Iowa with a degree in elementary education. Because she travelled back and forth frequently between Chicago and Jerusalem, Israel, she often changed which elementary schools she taught at in the Chicago, IL, area. She originally travelled to Jerusalem when her husband, Doug, was a Ph.D. student in archaeology at the University of

Chicago and worked on a dig close to that city. They continued to go there on archaeological digs as well as to digs in Tunisia and Cyprus, when he was a professor of archaeology at the University of Chicago.

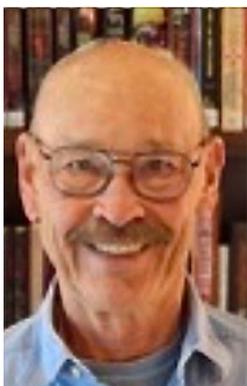
Ann and Doug had read an article about homesteading in Maine when he was in graduate school. They bought part of an island off Nova Scotia, Canada, where they built a log cabin without power tools—chopping and notching trees with axes and using abandoned materials for the floor, roof, and windows.

Doug passed away in 1992. Ann and her sister share a summer cottage on Lake Okoboji in Iowa, and she will spend some time there and in Chicago with her son and his family each summer. Her daughter lives in the Jacksonville area. Ann has four grandchildren.

Ann has a full calendar of activities at Fleet Landing, including pickleball, ping-pong and bridge, and she intends to volunteer at a nearby elementary school and for the Fleet Landing library.

—Kristin Perry

### 4208 Pug Rundio (May '23)



Pug's apartment offers a spectacular panorama of Lake Constellation, with all windows in every room facing the lake. Having stopped at Fleet Landing on his way to Key West in 2019, he decided to go on the waiting list. He spends his winters here, and he likes the sociability of the apartments. He summers in Traverse City, MI, where he has a log cabin on nearby Long Lake.

Born in New Jersey, Pug studied secondary education biological sciences at Pennsylvania State University. He planned on being a science teacher, but joined the US Navy, attended flight school in Pensacola, FL, and became a pilot. He met his wife, Jo, on a tour of duty in Hawaii. The couple had twin boys. He joined the US Coast Guard until retiring in 1988 and then became a pilot for American Airlines until 2003.

Pug and Jo loved Traverse City when stationed there with the Coast Guard, and they kept a house and retired there. They spent winters in St. George Island, FL, until Jo passed away in 2017. Then Pug travelled south to Florida every winter in a camping van, stopping at many points along the way, and he returned to renting a condo at St. George Island.

One criterion for his move to Fleet Landing was the acceptance of dogs. With his new rescue dog, Spirit, his primary pastime is walking—they walk in Hanna Park, on the trails at Ft. Caroline, and take the ferry to walk on Big Talbot and Little Talbot Islands. Of course, they walk to Atlantic Beach and enjoy meeting kindred souls. Reading is also Pug's main interest, and he intends to be a consistent user of the Fleet Landing gym.

—Kristin Perry

## Pearl Harbor Day Observance

By Chet Davis

The Historic Mayport Chapter of the Military Officers of America Association December 7 Remembrance Day in Johnson Hall featured retired Navy Captain Jim Ransom, the son of residents Gale and the late Jay Ransom. Noting that of his several December 7 observances at Fleet Landing, this was the first one on the actual date, Ransom suggested a moment of silence.



Ransom said that although the attack was a priority of the Japanese, it was the third on a list that included access to the raw materials of Southeast Asia and the continuing war with China.

Ransom addressed the overall situation, but focused on the heroes of the day, both commissioned officers and enlisted personnel. A total of five Medals of Honor were granted and one Navy Cross. Actions cited included getting the USS *Nevada* underway and grounding it to keep the channel open, getting the USS *Vestal* unmoored from the USS *Arizona*, and keeping the power up on the USS *Utah*. Examples of individuals exhibiting bravery included Seaman James Ward, who lost his life while keeping a hatch open so his crew mates could escape before USS *Oklahoma* capsized; and Seaman Doris Miller, a mess cook, who took over an anti-aircraft battery for which he was not trained.

Ransom then postulated that Admiral Chester Nimitz, who was not present in Hawaii, is also a hero of that day because he then took command of the Pacific Fleet and successfully pushed the Japanese back to their home islands. He was a hero because of his quiet and assured manner that effectively led the US to victory.

Six ships have been named after the heroes of Pearl Harbor, the latest being the aircraft carrier, under construction, that will be named for Doris Miller.

### Resident Club Fair

By Victoria Freeman

For two hours on the morning of January 25, Johnson Hall buzzed with the excitement of the Resident Club Fair. This always popular event showcases Fleet Landing’s resident-sponsored activities that reflect an impressive variety of interests. A total of 36 clubs had tables with interesting displays. Club representatives were on hand to provide explanations and sign up new members. Staff were also present to offer useful information, including opportunities for volunteering.

Of course, it would not be a Fleet Landing social event without food. Light refreshments included coffee, muffins, and pastry.

Below is a small sample of the many interests that residents can pursue.



*Yacht Club: Sailboats and radio-controlled boats*



*Mindfulness Matters*



*Florida Life Care Residents Association*



*Birdwatching*



*Bible Club*



*Left: Art Club. Right: Social bridge.*



*FleetHearts*



*Canasta*

### 500 Days of the James Webb Space Telescope

By Maureen Miller; photos by Craig Miller



Eddie Whisler



Part of "The Animation Academy" exhibit

The crisp, 33-degree morning of January 17 found 31 Fleet residents traveling into the far colder outer edges of our universe to learn more about the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST).

Upon arrival at Jacksonville's Museum of Science and History (MOSH), we were greeted with hot coffee, a friendly staff, and a bit of time before "lift off" to explore the museum's fascinating hands-on exhibits. Many of us lingered at the current traveling exhibit, "The Animation Academy," which showcases a glimpse into the magic behind some of the most treasured animated films and characters. Childhood rediscovered, we eagerly pushed buttons, took crazy photos, listened to recordings, and generally had fun.

Once seated in the Bryan-Gooding Planetarium, one of the largest single-lens planetariums in the US, Director Eddie Whisler whizzed us through the Jacksonville night sky and beyond. Hovering over the JWST's parking spot, a million miles away from earth at Lagrange point 2, Whisler began to recount the fascinating story of this unique telescope.

Using digital photos and videos, he took us through its birth, launch, and cocoon-to-butterfly-like unfurling

in space. Initially designed in 1996, the JWST was finally launched in 2021. With its 18 hexagonal mirrors, it has a collecting area six times larger than the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) and can detect objects up to 100 times fainter. Its high-resolution and high-sensitivity instruments allow it to view objects too old, distant, or faint for the HST. Presented with side-by-side images from the two telescopes, we were clearly able to see the amazing value of this new technology.

Following a brief intermission complete with coffee and snacks, Whisler answered a number of questions. But all too soon it was time for us space travelers to return home—to a balmy 41 degrees.

### Fleet Landing Safety and Security Meeting and Awards Ceremony

Text and photos by Ann Bell



LtoR: Romus Dixon, Brian Weiss, Eddie Howard



Troy Reeg (l) and Andrew Sims.

This year, the annual breakfast meeting of Fleet Landing's Safety and Security Department and the Atlantic Beach Police Department (ABPD) was held on December 20 in 30 North.

Officer Romus Dixon welcomed the attendees. Chief Operating Officer Brian Weiss was the guest speaker for the event. Safety & Security Manager Eddie Howard recognized guests, who, besides members of the ABPD, included several Fleet Landing residents and staff.

The awards are the highlight of the event. Officer Troy Reeg won the Perfect Attendance Award. Officer Andrew Sims was honored with the William Bell Award as 2023 Officer of the Year. He had also provided the blessing for the breakfast. The William Bell Award is named for the late William (Larry) Bell, who had served as Residents' Council Safety and Security representative during his term on the council.

### New Year's Eve

By Carol Smith; photos by Dita Domonkos and Mary Faria

Clever masks and costumes were admired at the New Year's Eve Masquerade Ball as residents prepared to bid farewell to 2023. The music of Crescendo Amelia enticed many onto the dance floor as others savored the delicious hors d'oeuvres on the buffet table. As they toasted the coming new year with complimentary champagne, everyone enjoyed chilled shrimp, a generous charcuterie board, and tempting

desserts. The dance floor remained crowded throughout the evening—even as the band left the stage and began packing up. That's when Exercise Physiologist Alisa Blanchard took over as DJ and led everyone in a wide variety of line dances. Although it wasn't midnight yet, partiers decided they were ready to ring in the new year in their own homes, so Johnson Hall was deserted and quiet as midnight approached.



## Astralis Chamber Ensemble: "Enchanted Noel"

By Isobel Spink

Photos by Ann Bell and Janet Silvester



Flutist Angela Massey and harpist Rachel O'Brien, members of the Astralis Chamber Ensemble, began their December 4 "Enchanted Noel" concert with "Fantasia on Greensleeves" by Ralph Vaughn Williams. "Greensleeves" was originally an English folk song, but because the carol "What Child Is This?" was set to the tune of "Greensleeves," it has become associated with Christmas. More seasonal music followed. Massey exhibited enormous breath control in Kurt Bestor's arrangement of "The First Noel." Daniel Dorff's "Nocturne on 'Cantique de Noël,'" a flute solo, had difficult riffs and reminded one of two birds flying in and out. "Cantique de Noël" is the original title of "O Holy Night." O'Brien performed the lovely "Dream Season," written by Yolanda Kondonassis as a harp solo for the Christmas season.

Suite en duo pour flûte et harpe, was composed by Jean Cras, who was noted for a combination of different types of music. Massey explained that this piece, which was mesmerizing, would take us through wonder and excitement, to dreaming, and finally to hope for the world.

The finale, Sonata for Flute and Harp by Nino Rota, was also enchanting. Rota was an Italian composer whose 150 film score credits include *The Godfather*. The movements changed from melodic to slower and calmer, then sprightly and cheerful.

I was fascinated with O'Brien's playing. Because I was sitting next to resident Maureen Miller, who is also a harpist, I learned much about that instrument. Harps are all handmade, and O'Brien's harp could be worth \$30,000-\$50,000. A harpist never uses the little finger while playing. There are seven pedals on a harp, one for each key (A-G). The harp is controlled by both the pedals and pegs at the back, and the C notes are

red strings, while the F notes are black.

The Johnson Hall audience loved the combination of these two beautiful instruments, and many chatted with the extraordinarily talented musicians after the concert.

## Remembrance Ceremony

By Enith Vardaman



LtoR: Julia Pratt, Howard McMinn, Patty Chicoine



*The Fleet Classics*

Residents gathered in Johnson Hall on January 4 for Fleet Landing's annual Remembrance Ceremony. This tradition honors those who have died within the past year.

The program began with music provided by the *Fleet Classics*, made up of Bob Armacost (12-string guitar), Ivy Suter (violin), Julia Pet-Armacost (flute), Bunky Johnson (clarinet), Charles Winton (French horn), and Karen Sturtevant (piano). The group played pieces by Pachelbel, Saint-Saëns, Satie, and Beethoven.

After welcoming the attendees, Health Services Senior Director Julia Pratt introduced Fleet Landing's chaplain, Pastor Howard McMinn.

McMinn noted the difficulty of dealing with death emotionally and spiritually. He encouraged everyone to temper the sadness of loss with the memory of the happiness and joy loved ones brought as well as the impact they had on our lives.

The honoring of Fleet Landing residents who died in the past year followed McMinn's remarks. As Pratt read each name, Resident Support Coordinator Patty Chicoine tolled Fleet Landing's ceremonial bell.

The *Fleet Classics* closed the program with Mendelssohn's "Wings of Song."

### 24 Skidoo Revue Deferred

This event occurred too close to our publishing deadline to include in this issue. Look for an article in the next issue of *FLEET BEAT*.

## December WELLInspired Learning Series

By Victoria Freeman



*LtoR: Patty Chicoine, Doug Schilling, Francie Paspalaris*

On December 6, Fleet landing residents, joined by Resident Support Coordinator Patty Chicoine, heard a powerful presentation by Community Hospice and Palliative Care representative Doug Schilling, who leads two grief groups at Fleet Landing. He brought updated information about grief cycles and personal experience. He was accompanied by Francie Paspalaris, Community Hospice Relations Representative.

Schilling noted that the holidays are a hard time for many individuals who have experienced loss. The smell of turkey or the sound of carols can trigger a grief response. The response is not restricted to the death of a loved one, but can be the loss of friends who moved away, the loss of physical abilities, or poignant memories of connections with past holidays.

Schilling reviewed the grief stages that were introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and said they were really the stages of dying, not of grief. As a result of this misapplication, many individuals think grief is a defined series, and they are not progressing through the grief stages appropriately. He made the point that everyone processes grief differently. While sadness is the typical reaction, grief can run the gamut of emotions.

Schilling also made several other salient points. Brains don't work as well during periods of grief. Headaches, stomachaches, and impaired driving ability occur. Spiritual responses gravitate toward the poles—closer or farther away. People who have a spiritual side seem to have a better time. Individuals tend to die the way they have lived. Because self-care is exceptionally important during times of loss, he reviewed some basic self-care techniques: movement, laughing and smiling, mindfulness, prayer, relaxation, and visualization could prove helpful. He also said building rituals of connectedness are crucial and varied. Some individuals find visiting a grave or placing an empty chair at the dining table helpful. Letting others know you need help is important, but also letting them know you do not need their problem-solving input is also crucial, as is creating a symbol of the new normal.

Finally, Schilling suggested a book by Dr. Ira Byrock entitled *The Four Things That Matter Most: A Book About Living*.

### In Memoriam

Millie Batka 1928-2023	Pat Clarke 1937-2024
Dottie Collins 1931-2024	Miriam Hudson 1920-2023
Monica Coté 1948-2023	Andrea Davis 1936-2024
Nelson Gough 1936-2024	Noreen Grandbouche 1946-2024
Randy Jones 1938-2024	Irene Kelly 1933-2023
Norm Mattmuller 1931-2023	Kurt Medina 1938-2023
Jay Ransom 1934-2024	Larry Rose 1946-2024
Tom Schifanella 1927-2024	Evelyn Williams 1930-2024

### Maia Cruz Palileo at the Cummer

Text and photos by Bo Smith



A group from Fleet Landing visited the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens on December 6 to see “Days Later, Down River,” an exhibit of paintings by Maia Cruz Palileo. Palileo’s work examined themes of migration, colonialism, and assimilation in the Philippines drawn from stories from her immigrant family; her examination of relics; Philippine folklore, symbolism, diaries, and photographs; and her creative ideas of culture and history. Her work combines representation and expressionism, and its large size and vibrance draw the viewer into her world of imagination and memory.

Resident Lory Doolittle, our docent, gave us time to pause and absorb the paintings before discussing the artist, her process, and her sources. The bright colors and imagined tropical vegetation stop the viewer at first, but after spending time with each piece, much more comes to light. She asked resident John Hen, who was born and raised in the Philippines, to add perspective. His insights gave the paintings a sense of place, a sense of the reality behind the symbols. That’s an art-speaking way of saying he helped us deepen our interpretations.

## Wii Bowling



*Lucky Strikers*



*Fleet Knockouts*

Exercise Physiologist Alisa Blanchard reports that Fleet Landing's Wii bowling teams made quite an impression when competing nationwide in the National Wii Bowling League's most recent season because four of the twelve Fleet Landing teams made it to the finals. The four teams were the Lucky Strikers (Jim LeBlanc, Captain, Sandy Taylor [not pictured above], Walter Kraslawsky, Karen LeBlanc, Nancy Stein), the Fleet Knockouts (Sandi Smith, Captain [not pictured above], Bettina Bennewitz, Esther Haywood, Sandy Bousquet, Nancy Sander, Janet Silvester), the Pin Busters (Jim Joyner, Captain, Suzanne Joyner, Ana Bio, Ernie Bio, John Neyhart), and the Fleet Landing Strikers (Harriet Berson, Captain, Marcia Wasserman, Leilani Roberts, Eunice Rogerson, David Habell, Karen Habell).

## Soul Food Festival

By Pete Wait

Following a lovely invocation by Meg Capurro, 17 residents of the 5300 Mailbox Driveway Group enjoyed a Soul Food Festival at the Annex on the evening of January 17. The Soul Food Festival was so named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, whose holiday was the preceding Monday, and because it represented the finest of Southern cuisine, i.e., collard greens, pulled pork, ribs, well-cooked green beans, baked beans, corn, slaw (two kinds), cornbread (three kinds), four jars of barbecue sauce, banana pudding, a variety of soft drinks, beer, and wine. And, best of all—good, solid fellowship with neighbors. We outdid ourselves, I'm happy to report!

Our group has been meeting weekly and dining quarterly since early COVID-19 days.

And thanks to Wellness Services Director Sue Dukas for the reservation.

## Our Pine Castle Experience Tour

By Nancy Lundgren



On January 4, resident Lory Doolittle sponsored a field trip to the 10-acre campus of Jacksonville's Pine Castle, one of her favorite charities. Pine Castle's mission is "to empower adults with intellectual and developmental differences through opportunities to learn, work, and connect." Lori Ann Whittington, CEO, and Wendy Mayle, Director of Development, described recent awards and growing national recognition of Pine Castle's curriculum. The tour of the campus highlighted for the 11 Fleet Landing visitors many of the opportunities available to the Pine Castle community.

Pine Castle volunteer programs have been part of their success story. To learn more about volunteering, go to [pinecastle.org](http://pinecastle.org).

## The River City Rhythm Kings

By Isobel Spink



Dr. Marc Dickman, a founder of the Jazz Studies Program at the University of North Florida, is known to Fleet Landing residents from his visits here with student jazz ensembles. On January 19, he brought his professional band, the River City Rhythm Kings, to Johnson Hall to start our year off with toe-tapping jazz. Some of the musicians were big-band players in their earlier days, and Charlie Almeida, the saxophone/clarinet player, at age 95, was still swinging.

The six members of the band played drums, saxophone, clarinet, banjo, trombone, cornet, an "abbreviated" bass, and even a euphonium, keeping the audience

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### The River City Rhythm Kings

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applauding over and over, especially after the numerous solo parts.

Leading off with “Way Down Yonder in New Orleans,” the band followed with “Bye Bye Blackbird,” and “Basin Street Blues.” Dickman introduced the musicians and advised, “The more you drink, the better we sound.” We didn’t need to drink any more, as they sounded brilliant from their first notes.

The banjo player, Ken Calhoun, who was also the singer, provided delightful new COVID-19 lyrics to “Baby Won’t You Please Come Home.” Towards the end of “Sweet Georgia Brown,” we were treated to a “tenor duel” between the sax and trombone, with no clear victor. The audience loved Dickman’s jazz euphonium pieces. He has a Ph.D. in this instrument, which is rarely heard, but was hugely enjoyed.

The Rhythm Kings ended with “What a Wonderful World,” rounding out a truly wonderful afternoon of head-bobbing, toe-tapping, and clapping.

### WELLInspired Learning Series 2024 Kickoff

By Victoria Freeman



Sue Dukes (l) and Brittany Keenom

The WELLInspired Learning Series has been revamped for 2024. The talks will now take place only once monthly instead of twice monthly. They are scheduled for the third Wednesday of the month at 2 pm in Johnson Hall. The January 17 session was held in the North Point Multi-Purpose Room because Johnson Hall was not available. The presentation by Sue Dukes, Wellness Services Director, and Brittany Keenom, Education and Program Manager in the Health Services Administration, had the catchy title, “Ditch Your Resolution, Find Your WELLInspired Solution.” The pair defined the six dimensions of wellness and then described personal measures residents can take as well as what is offered at Fleet Landing in support of each dimension. The six dimensions, also referred to as pillars, are intellectual, physical, spiritual, vocational, emotional, and social. There were multiple options under the pillars, but space constraints allow citing only one personal and one

Fleet Landing option under each one, with the personal option cited first.

**Intellectual.** Reading and World Affairs Council presentations.

**Physical.** Walking the dog and group exercise.

**Spiritual.** Gratitude journal and labyrinth walks.

**Vocational.** Volunteering and gardening.

**Emotional.** Meditation and chair yoga classes.

**Social.** Dining at communal tables and attending happy hours.

Go to “WELLInspired Learning Series” under “Fleet Landing Presentations” on Fleet Link to see the full range of options.

### December Flag Raisings

December saw two flag raising ceremonies at the Flag Plaza: The 387th birthday of The Army National Guard, the oldest component of the US Military, was celebrated on December 13, while the 4th birthday of the US Space Force, the newest component, was celebrated on December 20.



## January MOAA Meeting

By Chet Davis



The January 23 meeting of the Historic Mayport Chapter of the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA) began with a special presentation. Chapter President Pat Kluever asked Accounting Assistant II MaryAnn Devenny to come forward. He then read a citation highlighting her service to the Fleet Landing community, which includes processing over 800 invoices monthly, plus the addition of charges to 400 monthly bills for Florida Life Care Residents Association (FLiCRA) dues in September. The Johnson Hall audience of some 90 residents and chapter members responded with enthusiastic applause.

The guest speaker was Colonel George Downs, Commander of the 125th Fighter Wing of the Florida Air National Guard based at Jacksonville International Airport. He gave an overview of the organization and locations around the state of the various units that comprise the 125th Wing. These subordinate units provide emergency response to natural disasters and support for military units overseas, while focusing on their primary mission of maintaining combat proficiency.

The Fighter Wing, which currently flies the F-15 Eagle, is awaiting the arrival of the F-35 in 2025. A large-scale construction project to support the new aircraft is underway, as is a training program for the pilots and maintainers.

Downs highlighted the workdays—in five-year increments beginning in 1992—devoted to supporting local Florida and neighboring states' requirements, plus those of the national government in overseas operations. That figure reached nearly 3 million in the 2016-2021 period.

## Chips & Putts

By Isobel Spink

### December Tournament

Seven teams blew into a windy Jax Beach Golf Club on December 14 for our monthly tournament, but it was great fun as always.

Team 7, captained by Julie Rochelle, with Jim Wayrynen, Bunky Johnson, and Ray Dymond (Atlantic Club) came in first with a 68 and 4 birdies. In second place was team 3, with Dick Beltson Captain, Sally Pitard, Dave Smith, and Bob Springer, with a 71 and 3 birdies. Rick Rochelle's team of Harry Sweeney, Mike Foster (Atlantic Club), and Syd Jenkins placed third, with a 72 and 2 birdies. Foster's drive hit the 17th green!

Three teams, with captains Bob Peterson, Bob Neal and Price Schwenck, all scored a 73, and Ray Rigney's

team came in with a 75. Rigney's team member, Sharon Jenkins, won the ladies' long drive, and Maura Kelly, on Peterson's team, took the prize for ladies' closest to the pin.

Bob Hunter had the closest to the pin for the men, and the men's long drive was sadly disqualified as the player hit from the red tees, following a rule that is no longer being used. Dymond was awarded the birdie trophy by his captain, and Julie Rochelle took home the sandbagger trophy. The 20-mph winds played havoc with drives, chips, and putts.

The captains all had glowing remarks about their teammates, and Neal did another terrific job of organizing this group. The FLAG (Fleet Landing Association of Golfers) event will be at Blue Sky Golf Club in January. Only two tournaments will be at Jax Beach in 2024, because of a large number of events there.

As the decision has been made not to have a golf simulator here at Fleet Landing, we hope to have several groups go to a simulator on Beach Boulevard for some fun. Please respond to either Rick Rochelle (seaislandrick@gmail.com) or Isobel Spink (ispink@outlook.com) with your interest in a visit to a simulator. Just email a "yes" or "no," but all players please respond!

## January Tournament

A hearty group of 24 showed up for the chilly January 11 tournament at Blue Sky Golf Club. There was also a good group for our prize meeting, but sadly one team was penalized for an incorrect score. After a playoff of three teams, each with a 71, these were the final results: In first place, with 4 birdies, was Team 4 captained by Bob Hunter, with Syd Jenkins, Dick Beltson, and Ray Rigney. Second place went to Team 6, made up of Bobbie Fost, Captain, Jim Wayrynen, Bob Neal, and Robert Ezell, with three birdies. Team 5, with Bob Springer, Captain, Bob Brymer (Atlantic Club), Mike Marchetti, and Maura Kelly, took third place with two birdies.

Team 3, captained by Sharyn Jenkins, with Dave Smith, Harry Sweeney, and Stephen Dick, won the Birdie trophy, which was awarded to Dick, who provided great putting. The Ladies' Long Drive went to Isobel Spink, and the Men's award to Hunter. Kelly took Ladies' Closest to the Pin award, and Smith captured the Men's trophy.

Team comments: Julie Rochelle suggested an award for Closest to the Tee for one of her team whose drive on the long-drive hole barely made it off the tee box. Sharyn Jenkins praised Smith for his long drives and Dick for his putting. Springer thanked Kelly for being his team's cheerleader. Hunter described Syd Jenkins's "must use" drive, which miraculously hit a tree and bounced to the fairway, allowing the team to par the hole with the help of his 35-foot putt.

Next month's tournament will be at Windy Harbor with a 9 am shotgun start, and the March date is still undecided because of The Players Championship.