



# FLEET BEAT

VOL. 35 No. 1

THE FLEET LANDING RESIDENTS' NEWSPAPER

Jan./Feb. 2025

## Executive Director's Quarterly Briefing

By Enith Vardaman

It was a full house in Johnson Hall on January 31 for the first "Coffee and Conversation with Josh" of 2025.

### Financial Results

Executive Director Josh Ashby began by displaying a chart of budget, 2024 average, and December 31, 2024, occupancy rates for independent living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing settings. Independent living continued its long-term full occupancy rate, memory care was recovering from lower occupancy during the building refresh, and skilled nursing was above the desired occupancy level because of an uptick in flu cases. Admissions across the campus for the year totaled 338, an increase of about



50 over the previous year. Assisted living stands out for its 75 admissions.

Ashby reported the preliminary, unaudited revenue, expenses, and income as of December 31, 2024. Revenue was over \$2.5 million above budget, and expenses were slightly below budget, resulting in operating income of over \$2.6 million above budget. Investment income and charitable gifts, which are non-operating income, accounted for about 95 percent of that figure.

Ashby concluded his discussion of Fleet Landing's finances by reporting that the lender-required debt service coverage ratio was well above requirement (2.93 versus 1.20), as was days cash on hand (391 versus 180).

### Master Planning for the Future

Ashby displayed a series of slides illustrating how Fleet Landing's 12 land purchases through 2022 had doubled its 1988 original acreage. He explained that although some of the buildings are as much as 35 years old, none are physically obsolete, but some are increasingly susceptible to market obsolescence. Fleet Landing's master planning exercise will develop a roadmap for its next 35 years based on the current constraints of local zoning and land use restrictions, while assessing the market risk facing each distinct product type on the campus.

Ashby outlined the goals of master planning:

- The purpose is to strategically design and redevelop the community so that it remains appealing, functional, and relevant to evolving consumer prefer-

ences and needs over a long period of time.

- By anticipating future trends, incorporating modern amenities, and fostering a vibrant, adaptable environment, master planning minimizes consumer market obsolescence risk by ensuring the community continues to attract residents and stays competitive in the market.

- Successful master planning will enable Fleet Landing to maintain current full occupancies while identifying opportunities to expand the number of units available to meet market demand.

- Fleet Landing is uniquely situated in that it is approaching this exercise during a period of prosperity and from a position of strength.

Ashby then described the campus master planning steps:

1. Fleet Landing has assembled a project team consisting of architects, land planners, and civil engineers to develop the plan.

2. The first step is to identify land use restrictions, such as height limitations, that will limit potential redevelopment projects.

3. Determine an order of priority for future projects, with consideration given to logistics and phasing for the entire duration of the plan.

4. Develop a more detailed 10-year plan for the campus to consider the Derfer Pavilion and Leeward Manor as well as independent living expansion opportunities.

5. Sharing the first phase of a draft plan is anticipated before the end of the year.

### 2025 Capital Projects

The following projects are scheduled for 2025:

- New finishes, furnishes, and elevators for the 2000 and 3000 buildings

- The beginning of a three-year project to replace the original tile roofs of the homes

- Completion of the Coleman Center loading dock and the 3000 Building drainage project

- Creation of a bicycle parking pavilion at the 3000 Building. This will free up space for more vehicle parking.

- Revitalization of the Derfer Pavilion, including new finishes and furniture in the common areas

- Replacement of all campus signage

- Dozens of smaller projects

### Miscellaneous

1. **Nocatee update.** Ashby reported the status of the first two sales and marketing phases of the project. The priority phase required an expression of interest through

*(continued on page 20)*

### January Residents' Council Meeting

By Howard Burdick

Residents' Council President Bob Peterson convened the January 20 council meeting in Johnson Hall. He described the Help Your Neighbor program managed by the Woodworkers Club. It provides assistance to residents with furniture repairs and special projects. He introduced resident Walter Kraslawsky, who reported on the results of Fleet Landing's participation in the 2024 Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign. The 113 resident volunteers collected \$14,441.

Management Perspective. Chief Operating Officer Brian Weiss thanked residents for their participation in the successful Residents' Gift Fund. He also noted the 20th anniversary of Executive Director Josh Ashby's service to Fleet Landing. He then reviewed the status of several projects underway or pending, including new gate callboxes and a new staff golf cart parking structure. Numerous problems were found with the first mockups of the new campus signage.

Council Reports.

Vice-President. Carol Smith reviewed events resulting in the establishment of the Residents' Council in 1991, and she encouraged residents to consider running for the four open seats on the council. Nominating Committee cochairs Ernie Bio and Ann Bell then described the events preceding the April elections.

Treasurer. Lynette Beitz reported continuing positive financial results. The Residents' Gift Fund exceeded its goal, distributing \$937,057 in checks to 448 employees! She also described planned giving opportunities through the Endowment Fund (scholarships and benevolent care for residents in need) and the Naval Continuing Care Foundation (supports a variety of projects of benefit to the community).

Human Resources and Marketing. Bio introduced the December Campus Leader Shatara Riley, Health Services Dining Room Manager; November Staff Member of the Month Shayla Mcintyre, Home Health Coordinator; Leader of the Quarter Laura Dean of Therapy [now Health Services Liaison]; and Staff Member of the Year Mary Riggins of Culinary Services. With 512 employees as of January 1, 2025, staffing is at 95 percent, and the 2024 turnover rate was below the industry standard. Lobster Tales numbered 147 in December, and "Catch of the Month" (staff caught making a difference) went to Tiffanie Wallace of Activities and Belkeys Bernabe of Nursing. Bio listed the scholarships available to staff, and he suggested residents encourage applications from staff they believe may qualify. The Atlantic Club has 608 members.

Wellness and Transportation. Ken Hollinga reviewed event highlights for the remainder of January and the first half of February. There is a new Fitness Challenge for 2025, which will run for ten months. Fresh Market and Walmart Neighborhood Market have been added to the Commissary grocery shopping

trips on a rotating basis.

Health Services and Safety & Security. Judy Solano described the differences between the 2025 WELLInspired Learning Series (monthly on a specific topic) and WELLInspired Discovery (twice yearly in a discussion format). The new Safety & Security Manager is Bill Stafford. (See article on page 4.) She cited statistics on security checks in 2024, and she called attention to the parking regulations found on page 23 of the *Resident Handbook*.

Dining and Housekeeping. Bell reported that the new Dining Committee members were Mary Durkin, Bobbie Fost, Karen Keegan, and Bill Spicer. They join continuing members Bob Armacost, Anne Gordon, Nancy Sander, and Janet Schember.

Facilities. Stephen Dick reviewed the schedule and scope of independent living inspections as well as the facility management staff and building and zone representatives involved.

Communications/Suggestions. Secretary Julia Pet-Armacost reviewed 11 suggestions and responses. They are 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.*

### Swing Low Variety Show Coverage 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*.

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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.*

### Mary Riggins, Staff Member of the Year

By Chet Davis

Mary Riggins was named Staff Member of the Year at the December 5 Staff Holiday Party. (See article on page 7.)



Riggins has been at Fleet Landing since 1992 and has served in many positions. Starting as a dishwasher, she subsequently served in The Anchor (the food truck) and the Derfer Pavilion. She took on childcare responsibilities during the pandemic. Riggins is currently in charge of the North Point Bistro, the staff cafeteria, where she sets the weekly menu.

Riggins is a lifelong resident of the Jacksonville area, currently residing in Atlantic Beach. Her extended family is also local.

Riggins relishes the connections she has made with both residents and staff, appreciating all that she has learned from them. Her final interview comment was that she “just wants to work.”

### 2025 Remembrance Ceremony

By Chet Davis



LtoR: Julia Pratt, Howard McMinn, Patty Chicoine



The Fleet Classics

Fleet Landing residents gathered in Johnson Hall on January 2 for the Remembrance Ceremony for all those who had died in 2024. The ceremony commenced with four numbers played by the Fleet Classics, who volunteered their time and talent, adding inspiring music to the occasion. After welcoming remarks by Health Services Senior Director Julia Pratt, Fleet Landing’s chaplain, Pastor Howard McMinn, delivered a prayer and reflection that focused

on relationships and how they continue and fortify everyone even after passing. The honoring of Fleet Landing residents who died in the past year followed. As Pratt read each name, Resident Support Coordinator Patty Chicoine tolled Fleet Landing’s ceremonial bell. The ceremony concluded with a final selection played by the Fleet Classics.

### Messiah

By Chet Davis



It took nearly ten years to achieve, but this year, the stars aligned: The University of North Florida (UNF) Chorale and the Lawson Ensemble performed excerpts from Handel’s *Messiah*, Parts 1 and 2, at Fleet Landing. As with so many of the outstanding classical musical events on our campus, this one was sponsored by residents Cynthia and Walter Graham.

An almost full house in Johnson Hall enjoyed the excellent rendition of the *Messiah* on December 10. The Chorale, conducted by Dr. Cara Tasher, UNF Director of Choral Studies and Choral Conducting, and the Ensemble collaborated for an exceptional performance. The Chorale, composed of twenty-three students, and the three-member Lawson Ensemble, augmented by two guest musicians, kept the audience enthralled from start to finish. The vocal quality of the Chorale was inspiring, and the Ensemble’s accompaniment was flawless. The long, standing ovation at the end reflected appreciation for a marvelous performance. It was a perfect way for all to get into the Christmas spirit.

### Bill Stafford, Safety and Security Manager

By Chet Davis

Bill Stafford is a Florida native, having been born in St. Petersburg and raised in Dunedin. He and his wife live across the Intracoastal. They have been in the area since 1983, taking up permanent residence in 1995. Their daughter is a neonatal intensive care unit nurse in the Orlando area, where they also have a grandson.



Stafford retired from the Navy as a senior chief petty officer. During his naval service, he had close association with safety issues at sea and ashore. He also received numerous commendations for his leadership and innovation. He has served as a Navy project manager and on design panels for new combatant platforms, and he contributed to enhanced capabilities of Navy ships. Stafford served aboard a variety of ships and at shore stations.

When asked what drew him to Fleet Landing, he noted his friendship with Transportation Services Manager Brandon Levy. After being involved in local businesses, Stafford decided he needed a change and was drawn to the not-for-profit world. He has enjoyed his ability to assist our residents as a member of the interior maintenance crew, and he feels that he can continue this service as head of Safety and Security.

Please take a moment and welcome Bill Stafford to his new position.

### January WELLInspired Learning Series

By Victoria Freeman



LtoR: Ashley Cordero, Deborah Gordon, Patty Chicoine

The first topic of the 2025 WELLInspired Learning Series was “Navigating Health Services.” The speakers were Assisted Living and Nursing Home Administrator Ashley Cordero, Home Health Administrator and Director of Rehabilitation Dr. Deborah Gordon, and Resident Support Coordinator Patty Chicoine.

Attendees at the January 15 Johnson Hall presentation learned of the responsibilities of members of the Health Services leadership teams.

Fleet Landing Health Services include skilled nur-

sing (short-term rehabilitation and long-term care), assisted living, memory care, home health, and the Baptist Primary Care Clinic.

Senior Living Counselor Jill Pennington is available for an informative pre-need tour of Health Services.

The importance of the red folders for storage of emergency medical information was stressed. Contents should be reviewed at least once a year to keep critical information current.

Fleet Landing Health Services have received accolades: *U.S. News and World Report* recognized the Derfer Pavilion as one of the BEST Nursing Homes for Short-Term Rehabilitation for 2024 and 2025. Fleet Landing assisted living was recognized as one of the 2024 Best of the Bold City for Assisted and Senior Living.

Slides from this presentation can be found on Fleet Link. Look under “Fleet Landing Presentations” and then “WELLInspired Learning Series.”

The next presentation in this monthly series will take place on February 19. Dr. Ruple Galani, cardiologist with Baptist Health, will speak on “Matters of the Heart.”

### 'Tis the Season!

By Chet Davis; photos by Janet Silvester



The last program before Christmas, a concert and sing-along organized by Julia Pet-Armacost and called “’Tis the Season,” took place in Johnson Hall on December 23. Pet-Armacost directed the Serendipity Singers, Fleet Harmony, and the Fleet Landing Follies Band in traditional Christmas carols and secular songs of the season. The audience was encouraged to sing along nine times, which they did with enthusiasm.

Many thanks are due all the performers for this enjoyable program.

## Hanukkah Dinner

By Judy Poppell; photos by Enith Vardaman



The candles were blazing brightly, and spirits were high on December 30 when Jewish residents, with their neighbors and friends, celebrated at the annual Hanukkah dinner. This year's dinner was held in the recently repurposed Atlantic, and guests enjoyed a delicious dinner prepared by Chef Chris Gotschall and his staff. Holiday favorites, including Hanukkah's traditional latkes, were enjoyed by all.



Resident Judy Poppell lit the candles on the Hanukkah menorah and shared the origins of the holiday and its meaning with those present. Also known



as The Festival of Lights, Hanukkah represents joy and freedom. The Maccabees, a small group of Jews, revolted against the harsh treatment of Jews by the Assyrian ruler Antiochus and defeated the powerful army of his Seleucid Empire. When cleansing the holy temple to rededicate it, the Jews discovered that there was only oil for the temple's eternal light for one day. Before a messenger could



return with a new supply of consecrated oil, the oil once believed sufficient for one day, continued to burn for eight days. Thus, in observance of this miracle, the Hanukkah holiday is celebrated for eight days.



Traditional Hanukkah foods include those that are fried in oil, including latkes (a type of potato pancake) and jellied doughnuts. Children are given gifts each night of Hanukkah, and the game of dreidl (a spinning top) is also played. The menorah is lit with an additional candle each night of the eight days.

The Hanukkah dinner, as well as the Passover seder in the spring, is open to all Fleet Landing residents. Jewish residents enjoy the opportunity to share their holidays with non-Jews who want to know more about the holidays. Now that the Atlantic is available for such events, there is greater capacity to allow more residents to attend.

### Glowing Gardens

By Maureen Miller

Photos by Maureen Miller and Ann Bell



Shortly before sunset on December 15, our expert driver, Marie-Claire Allen, made sure no one was left behind as 31 residents boarded the big bus—by foot and lift—to view Jacksonville Arboretum’s Glowing Gardens holiday light show.

Upon disembarkation, our tickets were scanned, and we entered a nighttime wonderland. Within a few yards, some of our party were drawn to Mojo BBQ’s wine bar. Others’ eyes continued to be captured by giant illuminated hummingbirds and snowflakes, amid stately trees wrapped and dripping in lights, plus imitation Christmas trees on either side of the path.

Near a cozily lit gazebo by the lake, a giant tunnel of lights seized every phone-tographer’s attention. Within seconds, most were jostling for the best angle to capture smiles and antics of friends and loved ones.

At the tunnel’s exit, we were greeted by a swarm of giant, radiant dragonflies projected on the pavement and providing earth light to the now fading daylight.

Meandering back up the hill, we found Santa hold-

ing court in a pine-decked shelter, while Mojo staff served up flavorful pulled-pork sandwiches, hot dogs, and other refreshments from their tent. As elders ate, sipped, and chatted, children chased giant bubbles and swung on glowing orbs.

Reaching a wooden bridge, we crossed over a incredible white and blue stream simulation. The well-lit path beside it took us to the valley below, festooned with a spiraling pond and tall imitation Christmas tree. Making our way back up, a rising Cold Moon lit several of our colleagues dancing to night calls and Christmas music.

Even though it was a partial illumination because of previous rainy days, it was a lovely experience, enhanced by the next-day arrival of an apologetic email from Arboretum staff along with the offer to return another night—on them.

Let’s do this again next year, Mary.

### Town Hall: Atlantic Beach Mayor Curtis Ford

By Chet Davis



*LtoR: Dick Beltson, Candace Kelly, Curtis Ford, Pat Kluever*

The monthly meeting of the Historic Mayport Chapter of the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA) was held on January 28 in Johnson Hall. Chapter President Pat Kluever presided over the meeting. The featured speaker was Atlantic Beach Mayor Curtis Ford, who provided an interesting update on city activities and future programs. City Commissioner Candace Kelly was also present.

Ford started his discussion with a “mind journey” around Atlantic Beach, highlighting the renovated lifeguard station, a renamed park, upgrades to Dutton and Tide View piers, and the upgraded water treatment plant. He addressed several upcoming projects, including Mayport Road improvements and a peanut-shaped roundabout to replace the five-way stop near City Hall.

During the question and answer period, Ford spoke about plans to address the homeless issue, regulation of e-bikes and scooters, and upgrades to stormwater treatment and mitigation.

Ford also suggested that various city commissions would benefit from the expertise of Fleet Landing residents. If interested, check out opportunities at [coab.us/boards](http://coab.us/boards).

### Staff Holiday Party

By Enith Vardaman



*Lots of smiles*



*Check distribution*

The Staff Holiday Party, held this year on December 5 in Johnson Hall, is always a happy occasion. A joint effort of Fleet Landing management and the Residents' Council, the event began with an 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 Bob Peterson, 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, Mary Riggins, a 32-year employee in Culinary Services, was named Staff Member of the Year. (See article on page 3.)

Staff who had reached service milestones ranging from 1 to 25 years were recognized, as were Legacy Club members. 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 any of the service milestones mentioned above. Over \$100,000 in Legacy Club service bonuses was awarded this year.

Four lucky staff members had their names drawn in the raffle. The prizes were a jewelry box designed by James Hall and the remodeling team, a "Night Under the Stars" (the theme of the party) gift set, a Sony PlayStation 4, and a 50-inch TV.

Each of the announcements noted above received an enthusiastic response from staff. This happy event concluded with staff picking up checks from the Residents' Gift Fund, which reached over \$937,000 this year!

### Happy Hour Owl

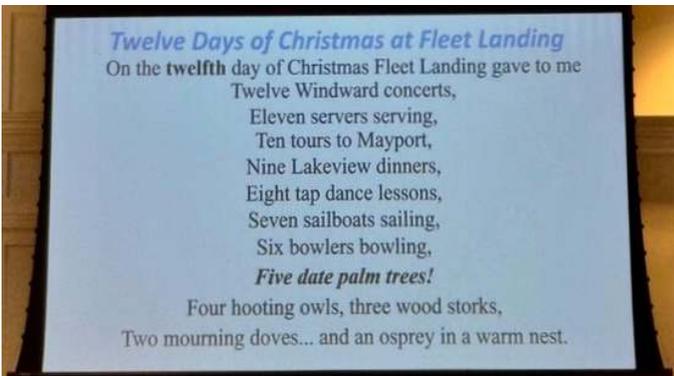
Photo by Joe Ruthenberg



*This barred owl visited the Rigel Court Happy Hour on January 29. After getting bored, it flew to this tree.*

## Holiday Sing-along

By Chet Davis



The “Sing-along With the NoteAbles” drew a large number of residents to Johnson Hall on December 9. Sue and Ron Myers, the directors of the NoteAbles, took turns conducting the singing of Christmas songs and carols, while Karen Sturtevant on piano and Julia Pet-Armacost on flute provided instrumental accompaniment. The introduction of each song included a brief history and the names of well-known musicians who had sung it. The words to the songs were projected onto the two screens.

A highlight of the program was “The Twelve Days of Christmas” with lyrics adapted to Fleet Landing by

Sue and Ron. The program concluded with “Silent Night,” sung first by the men, then by the ladies, and then by everyone.

The evening was a fitting and enjoyable celebration of the season.

The NoteAbles sing at the Memorial Day, Fourth of July, POW/MIA Day, and Veterans Day programs. They also hold informal, themed sing-alongs, listed in Calendar Central and open to all residents—no auditions necessary.

## A Beautiful Baroque Banquet

By Nancy Lundgren



Cynthia and Walter Graham sponsored the January 27 San Marco Chamber Music Society (SMCMS) concert in celebration of the ensemble’s 16th performance at Fleet Landing. They debuted here in 2013, starting a beautiful tradition of chamber music in our community.

The musicians for this concert were Les Roettges, flute; Eric Olson and Daniel Rios, oboes; Aurica Duca, Chris Chappell, Clinton Dewing, and Megan McClendon Rios, violins; Ellen Olson, viola; Ben Fryxell, cello; Jason Lindsay, bass; and Peter DeWitt, harpsichord.

The Johnson Hall program featured baroque classical music, which is recognizable by its dramatic changes in tempo and volume. For this performance SMCMS included a custom-crafted harpsichord to lend authenticity to the 18th century music. Performing in various combinations, the 11 musicians played pieces by Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Albinoni, and Stölzel.

SMCMS was formed in 2008 by Eric and Ellen Olson, long-standing members of the Jacksonville Symphony.

### Resident Christmas Party

By Victoria Freeman; photos by Ann Bell, Ed Hollender, Janet Silvester, and Jackie Smith

For many residents, the 2024 Resident Christmas Party, held on December 13, began when Brandon Levy, Transportation Services Manager, donned his white gloves and directed his fleet of three buses to begin their campus pickup. For others, the amazing gathering began when they passed through Coleman Center doors and were offered flutes of champagne by elegantly attired staff.

As Wellness Services Director Sue Dukas said, “The evening was a showcase night for Food and Beverage.” Executive Chef Chris Gotschall revealed that all independent living Dining Services chefs participated in the preparations for the party, and many served the delicacies from the four distinct areas: cold selections, action station, hot selections, and desserts.

Residents wandered by with plates full of oysters, prime rib, lamb chops, stuffed mushrooms, seasonal vegetables, and much more. Gingerbread men, petite cheesecakes, and tiny Yule logs were favored desserts.

Executive Director Josh Ashby reflected, “Returning to the Coleman Center for our annual Christmas extravaganza is not only a cherished tradition, but also a celebration of its remarkable transformation—a testament to the spirit and vision that have breathed new life into these revitalized walls.”

After the party for residents ended at 7 pm, an after party for the staff took place, assuring that they were honored, and that none of the spectacular food went to waste. So much of the elegant event was possible because of the staff, aka the elves. Maintenance Manager (Exterior) Jay Jernigan’s Event Execution Team produced the excellent table seating arrangement for the 512 residents. The wait staff anticipated any needs diners might have for drinks and empty plate removal.

A resident’s guest was overheard saying, “I have crossed the oceans on several luxury liners, but I have never seen anything to equal this event.”



*Fashion statements:*

*Left: Board of Directors member Howard Wanamaker (l) and resident Craig Miller wore green jackets in keeping with a color of the season.*

*Right: Residents’ Council President Bob Peterson complemented his red bow tie, pocket square, and cummerbund with red sneakers.*



*Some of the people who worked so hard to make the party a success*

*One of the many scenes of residents enjoying the party (continued on next page)*

## Resident Christmas Party

(continued from preceding page)



*More residents enjoying the party*

## Barefoot Movement Concert

By Carol Smith



As Fleet Landing residents huddled in their warm coats and hats on a cold January 23, they were treated to a lively concert by four performers on the Johnson Hall stage with no shoes on their feet. Appropriately named The Barefoot Movement, the ensemble performed several numbers from their recent album *Let It Out*. Cofounders and married couple Noah Wall and Tommy Norris wrote the songs that are included in the album.

In addition to their busy tour schedule, Norris writes music for video games, while Wall narrates British romance audio books. They are also parents of an 8-month-old daughter, who accompanied them on this trip. Besides the ensemble's vocal numbers, the audience enjoyed instrumental performances by Wall on her fiddle and Norris on the mandolin. The original pieces of "Get Behind Me" and "Sarah Jane" were favorites of the audience. But the concluding number, "Crazy Train," brought everyone in Johnson Hall to their feet.

## Hanna Park Is for the Birds

By Nancy Lundgren

Photos by Nancy and Richard Lundgren



*Left, front to back: Mike Marchetti, Ken Hollinga, Paul Mocko.*

*Right: Black and white warbler.*

Fleet Landing's birdwatchers enjoyed another beautiful morning at Hanna Park on Saturday, December 14. Expert birders-in-residence Ken Hollinga, Mike Marchetti, and Paul Mocko led the expedition, guiding us toward each bird location in the trees or on the lakes. Bird count for the morning was 31 different birds with one "rare" sighting of a blue-headed vireo.

Someone once said "Birding is something we do for enjoyment ... so if you enjoy it, you're a good birder. If you enjoy it a lot, you're a great birder." Each outing with the Birdwatching Club enriches our understanding of the birds living in our region and also provides opportunities for easy hikes in beautiful settings with other Fleet Landing residents.

Mark your calendars for the next two birdwatching events at Hanna Park: Saturday, January 18, and Saturday, April 19. No experience needed.

### Holiday Home Tour

Photos by Carolyn Stoner

The annual Holiday Home Tour, held on December 16 this year, is a popular tradition at Fleet Landing. Eight residents graciously opened their homes for this event. Below is a small sample of the impressive array of seasonal decor.



*Anne Gordon*



*Judy Barton*



*Wendy Bunch*



*Cynthia Fulton*



*Nancy Stein*



*Judy Blocker*  
*(continued on next page)*

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



*Donna Mobley*



*Maureen Hermann*



*Hermann also decorated the lobby of her floor in the 3000 Building.*

**Return Engagement**

By Chet Davis

Photos by Ed Hollender and Janet Silvester



The always popular Crescendo Amelia returned to Johnson Hall on December 17 with its “Christmas Extravaganza,” delighting one and all. The ensemble included eleven musicians, five singers, and six dancers. One pair of dancers was particularly impressive, performing a very acrobatic ballet to the accompaniment of a solo violin rendition of “O Come, O Come Emanuel.” Many of the Christmas tunes were performed in jazzy or other new arrangements. Although those pieces were different, they were still recognizable and appreciated by the audience. Another highlight: The Grinch appeared and was chased from the scene by Santa who roamed the auditorium.

This performance was another great way to enjoy the holiday season.

**In Memoriam**

**John Butler**  
1945-2024

**Jim Kammert**  
1937-2024

**Suzi Miller**  
1942-2024

**Joseph Sayers**  
1937-2025

**Bob Gall**  
1936-2024

**Nick Malie**  
1940-2025

**Bob Mills**  
1933-2025

**Wendy Shawler**  
1928-2025

**Dick Stratton**  
1931-2025

**“Spirit in the Land” at the Cummer Museum**

By Bo Smith



Left: “Bad Lemon.” Right: “Mayapple and Senna.”



“Companion Species”

A group of our residents went to the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens on December 12 for lunch, and to view a temporary exhibition entitled “Spirit in the Land” (The show closed on February 9, 2025). Fleet Landing’s own Lory Doolittle was our guide.

I found the exhibit’s description vague: “Spirit in

the Land’ is a contemporary art exhibition that examines today’s urgent ecological concerns from a cultural perspective, demonstrating how intricately our identities and natural environments are intertwined.” A broad description of an art show generally means the curator wants the viewers to do some work—to feel their way through. The show speaks to everyone differently, but here’s my take: My first time through, it seemed to be a collection of contemporary



Lory Doolittle

American pieces with an unfocused man and nature theme. I suspect our docent, Doolittle, thought that would be our reaction. But it did establish a mood, and

our job was to define the mood and put the works in context. Doolittle set the stage with a general introduction and walked us through the entire four-room show, stopping to comment briefly on a few pieces in each room. And then she set us free to explore.

Each work was interesting on its own, but what was it all about? Humans and nature? More or less. Destruction of our life support systems? That’s in many of the works. Innocence, or loss of innocence? Originality in display? Our wastefulness of resources? Life and death? Nature’s beauty? It’s all there, and it weaves together if you work at it. I suspect we each came away with our own impressions.

Three pieces defined the show for me. Marie Watt’s “Companion Species” is constructed of bits of discarded wool blankets, each stitched with words significant to the artist’s life as an indigenous person encountering nature. The second is “Mayapple and Senna” from a series of works on wood by Alexa Kleinbard. The piece depicts traditional medicinal plants of the southeastern United States. They rhythmically join folklore, botany, the ecosystem, and even some spiritual whimsy (look for a face in the roots). The third, Kathleen Ryan’s “Bad Lemon,” was my favorite. This finely-crafted, jewel-like ellipsoid is made of a variety of gemstones, glass, and steel. Imagine a beachball-sized Fabergé egg. But the beauty of the work is misleading. One end appears alive and vibrant, and the other end is clearly dead. The graduation between dead and vibrant is presented in stages of rot—the jewels become warts or cysts. A bald spot reveals that the object is a huge lemon. So what is the message? A natural cycle of life and death? Decomposition of a fruitful earth? Unification of beauty and ugliness? Destruction or waste or recycling? Like the rest of the exhibit, you carry away what you bring to it. It is what you make of it.

**Osprey of a Different Feather**

That is the title *FLEET BEAT* photographer Ann Bell gave her photo of a great blue heron surveying the lake from the osprey nest.



## Jacksonville University Marine Science Research Institute

Text and photos by Dita Domonkos



Our visit to the Jacksonville University (JU) Marine Science Research Institute on January 24 was delightful, thanks to our guide's engaging enthusiasm. By the end of the tour, many of us were seriously considering marine science as a dream career, if only we could start over!

Bryan Franks, Ph.D., the Institute's Executive Director, introduced us to its mission: educating Northeast Florida students; facilitating research in the St. Johns River, coastal, and offshore areas; and fostering community outreach. Founded by Dr. Quinton White, the Institute boasts a state-of-the-art Gold LEED-certified building that's as functional and flexible as it is eco-friendly.

The building sits right on the river, and its design reflects the hands-on nature of marine science. The ground floor is open and brimming with activity: tanks for experiments, research gear (often stinky), and boats, including a 46-foot pontoon used for classes and fieldwork.

Marine Science is one of the most popular programs for JU undergraduates, and the Institute also offers three master's degree programs, including a convenient online option. Its faculty specializes in an impressive range of research fields: coral reefs, marine biology, geochemistry, dolphin and manatee conservation, the

ocean's carbon cycle, shellfish diseases, bird studies, and fish microbiology.

Franks, a shark specialist, shared fascinating insights from his work with Oearch, a shark-tracking organization. He painted a vivid picture of researchers acting like a Formula 1 pit crew when a large shark is brought aboard their platform. Each scientist dives into action, gathering samples with precision and speed to minimize the shark's time out of the water. Currently, 25 ongoing projects focus on great white sharks, a testament to how much we still must discover about these predators.

We learned that 97 percent of marine life consists of invertebrates, like sponges, corals, mollusks, and arthropods. Franks shared an amusing tale about an octopus, a clever mollusk, who made nightly escapes from its tank just to turn off the lights. Horseshoe crabs, fascinating arthropods, play a vital role in medicine due to a compound in their blood that can test pharmaceutical sterility.

Franks explained the key differences between cartilaginous fish (such as skates, rays, and sawfish) and bony fish. Cartilaginous fish have lightweight, flexible skeletons made of cartilage. Sharks, a prime example, continuously grow and replace their teeth throughout their lives. In contrast, bony fish have skeletons made of bone, though they share common features like gills and fins.

We wrapped up the tour with a hands-on activity: peering through microscopes at plankton freshly collected from the dock by graduate students. It was a fascinating, up-close look at the tiny, teeming world that supports life in our waters, a perfect way to cap off our visit to this remarkable institute.

## League of Women Voters News

By Frances Jones

Jeanne Dillard, chief operating officer for Episcopal Children's Services, spoke to the January meeting of the League Of Women Voters at Fleet Landing. Dillard is responsible for planning and directing all aspects of the Head Start program in 12 counties in Northeast and Central Florida. She spoke about the past, present, and future of Head Start, a program that provides intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services to enrolled children, pregnant women, and families.

At our meeting, it was announced that the League of Women's Voters at Fleet Landing will host a reading of two one-act plays by resident Toby Armour. The performers will be Fleet Landing residents. Susan B. Anthony is the first play's main character. It is titled *Aunt Susan*. Carrie Chapman Cox, who tirelessly campaigned for ratification of the 19th Amendment, is the second play's main character. It is titled *Her Tennessee Waltz*. The reading is scheduled for March 15, at 4 pm, in the Chapel of the Beaches Museum.

## Deck the Chairs

By Mary Durkin



*Fleet Landing'*



*Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida*



*Holladay Aviation*

Sixteen residents boarded a Fleet Landing bus on December 16 and headed for the “Deck the Chairs” exhibit at Seawalk Pavilion and Latham Plaza Park in Jacksonville Beach. “Deck the Chairs,” a holiday mainstay since 2013, has the purpose of promoting children’s arts and art education. Chair sponsorships underwrite holiday park lighting, student exhibits, and 30+ hours of children’s stage programming. Middle and high school arts programs vie for ten spots in the annual event and are given \$500 each for expenses.

Leaving the Windward Commons porte cochère, we all looked forward to seeing the annual Fleet Landing exhibit at the competition. After being dropped off at the entrance, we saw it right away, as its location was front and center on a main walkway. Santa was sitting on a lifeguard chair (all exhibitors are given a standard-issue red lifeguard chair and must include it in their entry), holding a load of holiday wrapped presents, carried in a red Model T with lighted spinning wheels. It had to be one of the taller exhibits. Just as we were admiring our chair, it started to drizzle. Everyone hurriedly walked around to see the other exhibits, but the rain got heavier, putting a damper on our visit. However, our photographer Ann Bell was a real trouper and kept shooting more exhibits, despite getting drenched. The group opted to call an early finish, if only to save Bell from being waterlogged.

Our Fleet Landing exhibit was very impressive. Thanks to Transportation for the entry designed and built by Buzz Hassler, assisted by James Loveland, Judy Barton, other Woodworkers, and resident artist Craig Miller. Other impressive entries included Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida and Holladay Aviation, among the total of 50 chairs. All the entries were being enjoyed and photographed by families partaking in the holiday spirit and atmosphere, despite the Grinch-like weather.

## Celebrating Christmas at Antares Court

Photo by Vickie Rose



*The Christmas gathering at Antares Court included Santa.*

### Celebrating Hanukkah on Christmas Day 2024

By Nancy Lundgren

Photos by Richard Lundgren and Janet Silvester



Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is celebrated annually by Jews around the world, but this year's start date was a rare one: December 25, coinciding with Christmas. In just over a century, this alignment has happened only five times: in 2024, 2005, 1959, 1921 and 1910, according to *The Jerusalem Post*.

Joe "O" Oestreich once again led the Hanukkah celebration, noting the double date and thanking the 30-plus residents who braved the cold wind to participate in the fourth annual Festival of Lights on our campus. This year, he gave us a brief history of Judaism, beginning 3,500 years ago, continuing through the diaspora of Jews around the world, and ending with current times and practices.



Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem following the Maccabees' unlikely victory over the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century BCE. Central to the celebration is the miracle of the oil: a single day's supply that burned for eight days, symbolizing resilience and divine intervention. One candle on a menorah is lit each night for eight nights to remember this miracle.

On the first night, three blessings are recited: "1) Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Hanukkah light. 2) Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days. 3) Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and

enabled us to reach this occasion."

Giving to charity and performing social works are also part of the celebration for many, reflecting the belief that the Jewish people are called by God to help make the world better for all.

### National Guard Birthday Flag Raising

Photos by Dita Domonkos

The 388th birthday of the National Guard was observed with the traditional flag raising ceremony at the Flag Plaza on a cool and breezy December 13.



### Christmas Tea

By Carol Smith

Photos by Ann Bell and Janet Silvester

The annual Christmas Tea in Johnson Hall on December 20 was festive as always. Finger sandwiches of pimiento cheese on raisin bread, salmon, and cucumber as well as sweet treats awaited the guests at their tables. Fleet Landing staff members kept tea cups filled with a variety of teas including Earl Grey, Peppermint, and Constant Comment. Wellness Services Director Sue Dukes introduced Sue Tice, who entertained throughout the event on violin and harp.



### Sunrise, Sunset

Morning and evening views in the skies above Lake Constellation can be striking.



*Sunrise, January 10, 2025 (photo by Ann Bell)*



*Sunset, December 29, 2024 (photo by Enith Vardaman)*

### Golden Oldies Dance Club

By Vickie Rose and Eunice Rogerson

Photo by Vickie Rose

The resident-led Golden Oldies Dance Club meets the first Saturday of the month in the Windward Commons lobby at 7 pm. We dance to music from the '50s, '60s, and '70s, and we also do line dances and group circle dances. Mark your calendars for a "rocking" good time.



## Bravissimo Bella Voce Cabaret

By Nancy Lundgren



LtoR: Michael Dell, Jim Godell, Pablo Pomales-Ojeda



Erin Barnes (l) and Regina Torres

January 3 was an afternoon of celebrations: the 40th anniversary of Fleet Landing (counting from the creation of the Naval Continuing Care Retirement Foundation, Inc.), the tenth anniversary of the Johnson Hall dedication coming up in June, and the birthday of Cynthia Graham (sponsor, with her husband, Walter, of the concert). The Bella Voce Cabaret customized their program to include special music for each of the anniversaries, including a medley called “Navy Salute,” Broadway tunes often heard in Johnson Hall, and “Isn’t It Heavenly” for Graham.

Baritone Jim Goodell, founder and producer/director of the group, was joined by tenor Pablo Pomales-Ojeda, soprano Erin Barnes, mezzo-soprano Regina Torres, and Michael Dell on the piano. They have been together since 2002 when they worked as Singing Servers at Bravo Ristorante in the Adams Mark Hotel in Jacksonville.

They opened with “It’s a Grand Night (sometimes sung as “Place” in tribute to Johnson Hall) for Singing,” setting the mood for the afternoon. In true cabaret style, the singers performed a wide variety of music: comic opera, show tunes, Verdi and Mozart arias, and traditional Neapolitan songs. They wished all a Happy

New Year with two songs of hope: “We Can be Kind” by David Friedman and “The Prayer” by David Foster.

What a wonderful concert to start the new year.

## Fleet Classics Concert

By Carole Watson



A spellbound Johnson Hall audience of approximately 70 residents enjoyed an afternoon of classical music on January 9, courtesy of the Fleet Classics. The ensemble, made up of Julia Pet-Armacost (flute and piccolo), Bunky Johnson (clarinet), Charles Winton (French horn and trumpet), De An Winton (alto saxophone), Eunice Rogerson (soprano and tenor saxophone), Karen Sturtevant (piano), and Bob Armacost (12-string guitar), provided an hour of musical themes that had many of us saying to ourselves, “I know that tune. It’s, oh, what’s its name...”

Fortunately, Pet-Armacost thoughtfully introduced each selection with a brief biography of the composer, many of whom were child prodigies. The melodies ranged from the familiar Pachelbel’s Canon in D, often used as the prelude to weddings, to Verdi’s “Grand March” from his opera, *Aida*.

Interspersed between those were three pieces by Mozart, who, it is reported, used both hands when composing! The selections included the Andante Theme from his Piano Concerto No. 21, which, years later, provided the melody for Neil Diamond’s, “Song Sung Blue.”

Rossini’s “William Tell Overture,” provided an opportunity for the brass section to star, while Russian composer, Mussorgsky’s “A Night on Bald Mountain,” used by Walt Disney in *Fantasia*, allowed the saxophones and flute player an opportunity to display their virtuosity.

The concert concluded with “Pomp and Circumstance,” by Elgar, who, surprisingly, composed his music without having had training in composition.

Sadly, the ensemble has lost its violinist, so the call is out for a replacement. If you played the violin in your youth, please consider joining this accomplished group of musicians. If not, do come and enjoy an afternoon of fine music with the Fleet Classics!

### Fleet Hearts Concludes Successful Year

By Judy Poppell

The meeting of Fleet Hearts on January 2 celebrated a successful year of service to Fleet Landing and the community. With new projects underway, including a fashion show in April, the club is poised to continue its good works well into 2025.

December was a big month for Fleet Hearts. The highlight of the month's activities was the decorated tree project for residents in the healthcare facilities. Julie Rochelle and Kay Craft headed up this wonderful project. A record number of volunteer residents participated. Besides creating the beautiful trees, the volunteers enjoyed a delightful morning using their time and talent in this worthwhile activity. Music and refreshments added to the morning's festivities.

Judy Poppell and Nancy Carter are co-chairing the Spring Fashion Show that will be held in Johnson Hall on Thursday, April 3. Peggy Johnson of Petunia Patch will be the coordinator for the show. The show will be both fun and a fundraiser for Fleet Hearts that will enable us to continue our good works. We need volunteers for models, reservations, publicity, table decorations, and set up. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Poppell or Carter.

Fleet Hearts gathered at Lory Doolittle's on January 16 to make Valentine cards for our healthcare residents. The Health Services team distributes the completed cards at Derfer, Leeward Manor, North Point, and The Nancy House on the holiday. Fleet Hearts members enjoy using their creativity to make the cards, and the cards are a spot of cheer to the healthcare residents. The cards have become a regular holiday activity for the Fleet Hearts group.

One of the latest initiatives of Fleet Hearts has been the addition of regular pickups by the Salvation Army, accepting all kinds of discards by our residents and staff. Vacated apartments and homes with excess furnishings are targets for this service. Even the discards of furniture that are being retired in preparation for new furnishings in the apartment buildings, will be on the list for a Salvation Army pickup. If you have items that you wish to donate to the Salvation Army, contact Julie Rochelle who can provide more information and arrange for the pickup.

Fleet Landing residents contributed the greatest number of coats and sweaters for the annual Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Sweater Drive sponsored by WJCT. Gently used sweaters, jackets, and blankets are donated to several nonprofits who supply those in need with these cold weather articles.

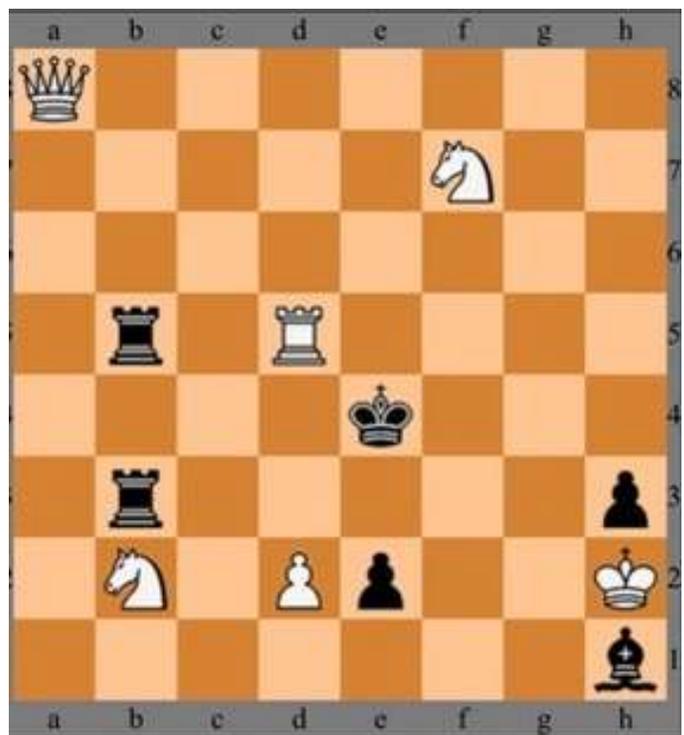
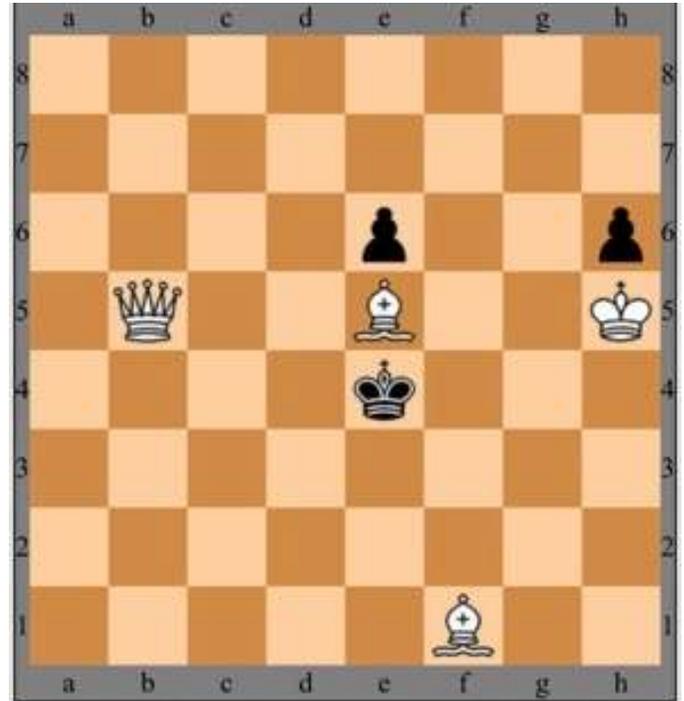
Fleet Hearts participated in the annual Club Fair and had a record number of signees who are interested in joining the group. The mission of Fleet Hearts is to provide opportunities for Fleet Landing residents to engage in service to both Fleet Landing residents and the greater community. The club meets monthly on the

first Thursday at 12 noon in The Retreat. All are welcome!

### Chess Club News

By Richard Wong

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



White to move and mates in two.

Hint: what are White's threats? Where can the Black King move? Can I mate Black if I can move one of the White pieces anywhere on the board to deliver checkmate?

## Executive Director's Quarterly Briefing

(continued from page 1)

payment of the modest fee of \$100. That phase, which began in March 2024 with a goal of 300-450 priority members, has 735 members. The conversion phase, i.e., moving from the priority list to making a reservation deposit, began in September 2024. This phase had the requirement of securing deposits for 70 percent of the planned units (150 of 213). The goal was to receive ten deposits per month and thus reach the required number in fifteen months. A series of charts showed that the goal was exceeded in each of the five months between September 2024 and January 2025. With 152 deposits by the end of January, the required number had been reached ten months ahead of schedule. Ashby said Fleet Landing's lending partners have viewed this as "unprecedented." Discussing what was coming next, he said construction drawings were to be completed in the first week of February. Those drawings will be submitted to the City of Jacksonville for permitting, which is expected to take several months. At the same time, Fleet Landing's construction manager will competitively bid the drawings, and a Gross Maximum Price construction contract will be delivered. The business plan will be updated with the actual costs of the construction. When a building permit is approved (expected this spring), the project can proceed to financing, which is likely to occur this summer. A timeline for the start of construction is still being developed. Information about staffing plans for both locations to ensure a high-quality experience for residents at each site will be shared in July.

**2. 2025 Fleet Landing Endowment Fund Golf Classic.** This year's tournament is scheduled for May 5. Ashby encouraged golfers to sign up promptly (online registration opens on February 25) because all spots are guaranteed to fill up.

**3. Semiannual Resident Satisfaction Survey.** Health Services residents and their families will receive this semiannual survey on March 3, and the survey will close on March 17. For independent living residents, the survey will arrive on March 18, and the closing date is March 31. Ashby explained how the survey feedback is used. It is reviewed by senior leaders, and it impacts management initiatives and resource allocation decisions. Departmental performance results are incorporated into leaders' performance evaluations. Results are reported to staff monthly and to the Board of Directors semiannually. He also described how the Net Promoter Score is derived from the survey question, "How likely would you be to recommend this facility to your family and friends?" Responses are given on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses of 0 to 6 are detractors, while responses of 9 to 10 are promoters. The Net Promoter Score is the result of subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. Scores of 7 to 8 are not part of the calcula-

tion of the score. A score of 9 to 10 does not mean that everything is perfect, but rather that the person responding would recommend the facility.

**4. Lake Constellation Restoration Project.** This project was recommended by a resident, who will also fund it. There will be BioHaven® floating islands of plants in Lake Constellation. They will enhance the lake ecology and water quality. By offering natural biofiltration, they address such issues as algae blooms. Besides the ecological benefits, the islands foster a healthier, more beautiful environment for residents and wildlife. Ashby displayed a map of where the islands would be placed in the lake. The project began with data collection in January. It will continue with a project design report in February, island production and supply procurement in the spring, and the island launch and aeration hookup in spring or early summer. After this, maintenance, maturation, and monitoring will be ongoing.

**5. Fleet Landing Network Intrusion Update.** Ashby reminded residents of the October 5 town hall meeting to discuss this intrusion. The third-party organization investigating the intrusion expects to complete work in February. Affected residents will be notified by US Mail.

**6. Fleet Landing Home Health Update.** Ashby announced that Laura Dean would be promoted to Health Services Liaison on February 3. She came to Fleet Landing as a physical therapy assistant in 2021 and was promoted to Clinic Coordinator in 2023.

**7. Upcoming Events.** Ashby noted two upcoming "mark your calendar" events: "35 Years of Adventure: Paddle into Spring" will take place on March 14 on the Coleman Center deck. It will feature the dedication of the paddle dock, the Blessing of the Fleet, water demonstrations, a special happy hour, and live music. The annual "Dancing in the Streets Block Party" is scheduled for April 26.



*The traditional photos of the Ashby children did not disappoint. The theme this time: skateboarding in the Ashby family. Mom Stefani, a ER doctor, prepared Cosette, while dad Josh took a more relaxed approach with her twin brother, Connor. Vivian's expression makes it clear that she was not happy at being told she was too young to skateboard.*

## Art Club Exhibit News

By Patricia Payne



Left: Craig Miller's "Faux Window—Tuscan Vineyards."  
Right: Dan Barry's "Chuck."



Glenn Perry's "Summer Evening on the Capon River"

Residents were happy to see that the Art Club is again displaying artwork in the Coleman Center mezzanine. The display team scrambled to put on a show in time for the holidays, so they invited artists who create large, colorful pieces to show one piece each. Thanks to the remodeling staff for managing to install the display system in time, in spite of their very busy schedule!

A lot of thought went into deciding how to accommodate as many artists as possible for each exhibit, while allowing each piece to be noticed and appreciated. To achieve that goal, we will limit the number of pieces per artist and provide at least 10-inch horizontal spacing between pieces in both Windward Commons and the Coleman Center.

Exhibits will be refreshed in the first week of February, June, and October each year. Unlike the Windward Commons space, which is never exposed to natural light, the Coleman space is bathed in strong sunlight for much of the day. Acrylic and oil paintings will not be damaged but prints, watercolors, and pastels are vulnerable to fading. We will ask artists to specify whether they want their piece to hang in the Coleman Center.

For each refresh, all artwork submitted for display will be collected at Windward Commons. The display

team will select pieces for the Coleman Center from all those that are requested to be there by the artist. All remaining pieces will be displayed in Windward Commons. We expect that each artist who wants to display his or her work in the Coleman Center will have at least one piece there during the year.

Any resident may submit any artwork that can be hung using our equipment. In addition to framed paintings, drawings, and photographs, we can display tapestries, ceramics, and wood carvings as long as they are prepared for the system that is installed for the purpose. We can repeat displaying artwork only if it has not been shown for at least a year. For detailed information, contact either Patricia Payne or Robert Armacost.

*Editor's note:* Lynn Blakemore's "Afternoon in Venice" and Richard Lundgren's "Point Loam Light" are not pictured because reflection off the glass covering the paintings prevented clear photographs.

## Space Force Birthday Flag Raising

Photos by Isobel Spink

It is too soon for any veterans of the Space Force to be Fleet Landing residents. However, in keeping with our community's tradition of observing the birthday of each branch of the military, the fifth birthday of our nation's newest military service was commemorated on December 20 with the traditional flag raising ceremony at the Flag Plaza.



### New Year's Eve Parties

By Carol Smith

Photos by Dita Domonkos, Ann Bell, and Mary Faria

Fleet Landing residents bade a lively farewell to 2024 at the New Year's Eve disco party in Johnson Hall on December 31. Music by Crescendo Amelia enticed many onto the dance floor. Clad in an array of '70s disco attire, dancers demonstrated their best dance moves. Champagne was served along with a variety of sweet treats created by Chef Belle Camacho. While some revelers called it a night when the music ended in Johnson Hall, others headed to Breakers where they danced to the tunes played by DJ Neal Becton.

#### Johnson Hall



#### Breakers



### World Affairs Council: The New Cold Wars

By Bo and Ellie Smith

David Sanger spoke to the World Affairs Council (WAC) at the University of North Florida (UNF) on December 4, and his presentation was simulcast to Johnson Hall. Sanger is a three-time Pulitzer Prize winner, chief Washington correspondent for *The New York Times*, and a best-selling author of four books. His most recent book is *New Cold Wars: China's Rise, Russia's Invasion, and America's Struggle to Defend the West*.

Sanger explained that the concept of a formal world order came together after WWII. It envisioned a world governed by liberal democracies and the rule of law. It was generally embraced by the world's democracies and the winners of WWII. The USSR was an outlier, and China and totalitarian governments were not players. The Cold War ensued—essentially a

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## World Affairs Council: The New Cold Wars

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contest of military might between the USSR and the US, but without global warfare. The first Cold War ended when the USSR collapsed in 1991, and it seemed that the ideals of liberal democracy and the rule of law would prevail. It was difficult to imagine a serious challenge to US and Western European dominance.

Deep cracks in the world order appeared when Russia, under Vladimir Putin, began his drive to restore much of the geographic Russia of Peter the Great. Eventually wanting all of Ukraine, he took Crimea in 2014 and faced no military response. China, a minor economic power before 2000, built an economy that may eventually surpass that of the US. It seeks the military might to defend its goals, but sees economic dominance as the path to true world power. In a period of only 15 years, America's previously unchallenged position as the world's leader has changed. Sanger feels that we are wary, less sure, and looking inward. He is disturbed by the concept of "America First," which he considers isolationist at a time when US engagement with the world is essential.

In Sanger's estimation we are currently in various Cold Wars. We face powerful economic, military, and technological adversaries. The old Cold War was about military power. There was essentially no economic competition from the Soviet Union. Two adversaries in the new Cold Wars (China and Russia) are economically, technologically, and militarily strong. They are joined by North Korea, which insists on respect despite its denial of the rules set up after WWII, and Iran, which seeks to erode US influence in the Middle East. Sanger believes a world of liberal democracy and the rule of law can prevail, but only if the US and other like-minded nations continue to stand together. That remains to be seen.

## Jingle Bell Walkabout

By Nancy Lundgren; photo by Sue Dukes



*The walkers show off their bracelets.*

A small, but enthusiastic, group of merrymakers gathered at the Flag Plaza on December 18 for the annual Jingle Bell Walk around campus. Manager of

Fitness Services Margaret Carr and Wellness Services Director Sue Dukes, who provided our music, led us around the Fleet Landing Boulevard loop and through Derfer, Leeward, North Point, and Windward Commons, bringing Christmas tunes and greetings to all residents along the way. What a beautiful holiday tradition!

## The Earth's Climate: Energy Balance

By Enith Vardaman

This was the title of resident Hugh Christian's presentation in Johnson Hall on January 7. Residents who attended his February 8, 2024, lecture on lightning (see *FLEET BEAT*, March 2024, page 7) were not surprised at how much technical detail was included. Because



discussion of those details is far beyond the scope of this publication, perhaps the most useful for our readers is a summary of his opinions on whether the earth is warming. He thinks that it probably is, but much more slowly than predicted. Carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere are increasing,

and this can lead to warming, but he does not see carbon dioxide as the only cause of warming. He maintains that warming is not bad because mankind has thrived during warm periods. He does not believe that there is a tipping point with catastrophic consequences, seeing instead that climate stability over many millennia has led to a current life-sustaining climate.

## Paddleboarding on Lake Constellation

Photo by Ann Bell



### Mallets and Wickets

By John Rogerson  
Photos by Eunice and John Rogerson



*Undeterred by cold weather, Croquet Club members bundled up to participate in the January mixer.*



*The January club meeting was held indoors, where it was much warmer.*

Greetings from Fleet Landing’s Polar Croquet Club. Just wanted folks to see what a dedicated membership we have! The photos above of this hearty group show a few of those in attendance at our monthly croquet mixer, where we have a chance to socialize and play with others in the club. The mixer starts off with techniques to improve our games as well as rule clarification when needed.

Our club has approximately 65 members, half of whom are quite active. The January 14 Resident Club Fair resulted in 15 more residents expressing an interest in croquet. Meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month, with plans in the works for dinner meetings in the Coleman Center. The croquet mixers are on the second

Saturday of the month. We’re a friendly and fun group. Come join us. You’ll be glad you did!!

### Blackhawk Bluff Treat

The annual holiday light display in the Blackhawk Bluff neighborhood is always among Jacksonville’s best. Getting photos from a moving vehicle is not easy, especially when it is dark, but that did not deter *FLEET BEAT* photographer Dita Domonkos. Below are samples of her success in taking pictures as a busload of Fleet Landing residents made its way through the neighborhood on December 9.



### Library Notes

By Enith Vardaman

The Library Committee thanks its recent donors: Rae and Frank Donnelly, Karen Hassler, Don Husmann, Carla Philcox, Nancy Russell, and Betsy Teske (staff).

Residents Joan and Bob Hall have donated a copy of *The Restless Wave*, the latest novel by Admiral James Stavridis, their son-in-law. It can be found on the Fleet Landing Authors shelf.

The Library Committee welcomes Ellie Smith as its newest member. Her previous library experience includes serving in the year-round bookstore at the University Park Branch of the Jacksonville Public Library.

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## Library Notes

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The recent book sale was a success thanks to the efforts of many people. Executive Assistant Jennifer Arsenault helped with numerous details, including arranging for the tables to be set up, making signage, and gathering boxes for packing up the leftovers. Driver Kempton Jackson and Wellness Services Manager Mary Faria set up the tables with attractive blue tablecloths, and Jackson did the dismantling when the sale ended. Library Committee members Enith Vardaman, Pattie Loveland, Pat Gillis, and Smith handled various tasks, including collecting money from the boxes, setting up the sale, and packing up the leftovers afterward. Committee members could not handle all those tasks by themselves, and they are grateful for the help of resident volunteers Rae Donnelly, Victoria and Ed Fahy, Georgia Goodling, Mary Ellen Reed, and Chris Stanley. Books that were not sold were donated to the Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM). The Library Committee is grateful to everyone who patronized the sale. Proceeds of book sales (about \$350 in this case) are used for the purchase of supplies and large print books.

## Christmas Tree Lighting

By Carol Smith



Left: Bob Peterson. Right: The tree alight.

Approaching Main Street Dining on the evening of December 3, one could hear the joyful holiday music of area musician Steve Chapman as he set the mood for the lighting of Fleet Landing's Christmas tree. As people gathered and enjoyed steaming hot chocolate and cookies, they couldn't help but join in the singing and even a little dancing. It all helped to keep everyone warm on a chilly night. When Santa Claus and Major

Elf (aka Pat Kluever and Lin Smith) appeared, folks knew that the tree would soon brighten up the darkness. Residents' Council President Bob Peterson led the countdown, and as the lights came on, everyone began singing "Joy to the World." The tree is a spectacular symbol of the holiday spirit that Fleet Landing residents share each year.

## Beach Walk

Photos by Mary Faria and Sandy Bousquet

On January 17, our beach walkers followed their brisk walk with a stop at Poe's Tavern.



## Fleet Landing in the News

By Enith Vardaman

An article in the December 12 edition of *The Beaches Leader* reported an honor for Fleet Landing's Derfer Pavilion: It has been named a Best Nursing Home for 2025 by *U.S. News & World Report*, achieving the "High Performing" rating for short-term rehab—the highest possible rating. Health Services Senior Director Julia Pratt was quoted in the article, as was resident Donna Forsyth, who praised the care she received in Derfer.

## Kazoo Band Holiday Performances

By Isobel Spink



On December 5, about 30 kazoo aficionados, dressed in full holiday regalia, played for the residents of Derfer, Leeward Manor and The Nancy House. The group was welcomed heartily, applauded enthusiastically, and had all the residents smiling and singing along to our holiday tunes. It made us so happy to be able to bring some Christmas cheer to our Fleet Landing healthcare facilities.



On December 23, we gathered to serenade North Point residents. Nancy Sander was once again our energetic Santa, bringing smiles and

laughter to all. The holiday dress of the kazoo-ers was festive and only added to the fun.

## Strikes & Spares ... Oh My!

By Jim LeBlanc

Wii Bowling has become a very popular Wellness activity at Fleet Landing, with 78 residents bowling on 17 teams. Our teams participated in the fall season of the National Seniors Wii Bowling League, competing against other retirement communities across the country over an 8-week period. Teams were placed in one of seven divisions based on their ability level. After 7 weeks of league bowling, the top teams advanced to the playoffs. The playoffs are a "one and done" format: You win, and you bowl on; you lose, and your season is ended. It was another successful season for our Fleet Landing teams, with four teams qualifying for the finals in three divisions.

Congratulations to our Fleet Landing National Champions:

- Super Master 3 Division: **Rolling Pins:** Jim Joyner (captain), Helen Hause, Richard Lundgren, Terry Voynik, CeCe Lichtenstein, Suzanne Joyner

Congratulations also to the two runner-up teams:

- Super Elite Division: **WeBowlers:** Sandy Taylor, (captain), Karen LeBlanc, Jim LeBlanc, Kathy Vanderbeck, Dede LeClaire

- Super Master 3 Division: **Bowling Shambles:** Carol Bowser (captain), Carl Tungli-Giese, Geri Bramble, Tom Bramble, Bobbie Foster

If anyone would like to be part of this Wellness activity, you can contact Fitness Manager Margaret Carr or resident Janice Flock. We can always make more teams, and we need substitutes.

## Nordic Walking

Photos by Vickie Rose

Nordic walkers, led by Chris Lester, an instructor in the Wellness Department, meet Monday mornings either at 8 am at Windward Commons or at 8:15 am at the Selva gate. Lester has several extra Nordic walking poles, so residents are welcome even if they don't have their own poles.



*On the group's December 9 walk, they encountered a red-shouldered hawk along the way and saw this elaborate holiday display in Atlantic Beach's Oceanwalk neighborhood.*

## Duplicate Bridge

By CeCe Lichtenstein

By now you will probably have visited the January 14 Club Fair, and we hope you stopped by the bridge table. We did have a few folks inquiring, but more would have been better. There were quite a few who were interested in "social" bridge. In other words, they were more interested in conversation than "serious" bridge. Please understand that the duplicate bridge we play here at Fleet Landing is friendly and not "cutthroat." However, as long as you are using your brain and playing a game that makes you use some gray matter, that is what is important.

For those who would like to learn to play bridge, watch for the notice for beginner bridge that will be taught by John Reeve. He is quite experienced at teaching and, in the past, has taught for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), at the University of North Florida.

If you are only interested in a social game, Carolyn Galphin runs a game on Thursdays in the Windward Commons classroom at 1 pm. Richard and Susan Titus run a duplicate game that isn't sanctioned on Wednesdays at 1 pm in the Windward Commons classroom.

A sanctioned duplicate game allows American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) members to accrue master points. You do *not* have to be an ACBL member to play in the sanctioned games, but they are somewhat more competitive while still being friendly. There is a sanctioned duplicate game every Monday at 12:30 pm in the Windward Commons classroom and another on the first Saturday of the month, also in the Windward classroom.

## Not All Who Wander Are Lost ...

By Nancy Lundgren

Some are just looking for cool birds! The first birdwatching expedition of 2025 took place on January 18 in Hanna Park, where our guides-in-residence, Ken Hollinga, Paul Mocko, and Mike Marchetti, coached us as we checked trees, lakes, bushes, and trails for our feathered friends. We observed more than 34 species of birds as we wandered through the park. Notable sightings included black-and-white warblers, wood ducks, yellow-rumped warblers, and one immature bald eagle. Happily, we spotted large groups of robins flying high overhead as we hiked the trails, perhaps signaling that spring is on the way.

Please join the Fleet Landing Birdwatchers for the spring field trip on Saturday, April 19.

## World Affairs Council: Finding Our Global Roots

By Bo and Ellie Smith; photo by Terry Silvester



Resident Janet Silvester with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

It was a dark and stormy night. A large group of our residents braved the weather to watch a World Affairs Council (WAC) simulcast from the University of North Florida (UNF) on January 21 in Johnson Hall. The presenter was Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Like most of the WAC speakers, Gates has a lengthy list of accomplishments. He holds degrees from Yale and Cambridge and is a professor at Harvard. He is a distinguished scholar, author, and documentary film producer, and he is a significant intellectual voice on Black American history and culture. He is probably best known as host of *Finding Your Roots* on PBS.

The evening was a diversion from the politics and crises of the day. Gates provided a gentle but serious perspective on the concept that we are a product of our ancestry—the life situations that formed our forebears. What do we see when we meet Gates, this Black man from rural West Virginia? A man nicknamed “Skip.” A descendant from slaves. A distinguished scholar with a Black grandfather so white that he was called “Casper.” A Black family in an almost all white town whose matriarch earned the title “estimable.” His interest in his own origins came after watching the TV series *Roots*, leading him to explore “who am I?” and ultimately to *Finding Your Roots*. There he traces, through DNA and

the research talents of a historian, the lineage of notable people and discusses it with them. He punctuated his talk with brief excerpts from that series. Two of my favorites were the revelation experienced by Bernie Sanders and Larry David that they were “DNA cousins,” and the deep emotional effect on Mandy Patinkin when he found out that his father’s first cousins lost their lives in the gas chamber in Treblinka. Gates’s message: The past tells us who we are; we are partially formed by those who came before us.

The next WAC presentation would be “From Disruption to Opportunity: Embracing the AI Revolution” by Ethan Mollick. Residents could attend the February 11 talk at UNF or by simulcast in Johnson Hall.

## 1000 Building Holiday Celebrations

Photos by Fran Sheridan

On December 8, residents of the 1000 Building gathered in the second-floor lobby of the building to decorate a Christmas tree and create festive chains to adorn the windows of the lobby. Music for the occasion was provided by Victoria and Robert Freeman, Dan Barry, and Pete Sheridan. Residents concluded their celebration of the holiday season with a New Year’s Day brunch.

### Christmas Tree Decorating Party



### New Year’s Day Brunch



### Annual Resident Club Fair

By Carolyn Stoner; photos by Carolyn Stoner, Ed Hollender, and Janet Silvester

On January 14, Johnson Hall was bustling with residents “clubbing” among the many Fleet Landing activities and organizations available within our community. Two new opportunities, Scrabble and Paddleboarding, were introduced, joining the existing dance, game, hobby, intellectual, service, spiritual/mindfulness, and sporting groups—some 37 in all. During the two-hour event, club representatives at color-

ful and unique table displays invited attendees to try something new and creative or learn about volunteer opportunities.

Thanks are due staff, especially Wellness Services Manager Mary Faria, for the organizational effort that goes into holding this annual event. And, of course, the fair goers enjoyed the tasty refreshments and coffee provided by Fleet Landing Dining Services.



*Paddleboarding and Scrabble\**



*Fleet Landing Inter-Denominational Chapel and FLiCRA*



*Canasta and Fleet Landing Investment Club*



*Pickleball and NoteAbles*



*FLEET BEAT, plus AppleJax, and iPad Users and Ping Pong*



*Fleet Hearts and League of Women Voters*



*Tennis and Wine Club*