



FLEET BEAT

VOL. 36 No. 2

THE FLEET LANDING RESIDENTS' NEWSPAPER

March 2026

Love Walked in Variety Show

By Carole Watson

Photos by Ed Hollender and Janet Silvester



Left: Julie Rochelle and Randy Gilliam.

Right: Beryl Hubbard.



Pete Sheridan

Centenarian plus one, resident Randy Gilliam, together with his longtime collaborator Mike Burns, a local area resident, filled Johnson Hall with love on February 4. Their contributions to the Love Walked in Variety Show and the outstanding performances by Fleet Landing residents and several more entertainers from outside our community proved you're never too old to make life more enjoyable for someone.

Beryl Hubbard served as MC and a vocalist. Comedy routines, tap dancing, and more musical numbers rounded out the program. The performers paid tribute to Gilliam and found their way into the hearts of the audience. Pete Sheridan on piano and Burns on guitar provided accompaniment, and Bob Armacost and Dan Barry ably handled sound and lighting. Julie Rochelle was a skilled cast manager. The audience helped close out the program, joining the cast in singing "You're a Grand Old Flag" to the accompaniment of The Famous Kazoo Band.

The consensus was that this year's entertainment was the best yet, and all look forward to a return of this long-running Gilliam and Burns collaboration next year!

(continued on page 11)

Iron Chef Cooking Competition

By Carol Smith; photos by Patricia Payne



The chefs hard at work: Dustin Wigglesworth (l) and Greg Edmonds

The inaugural event of the Iron Chef: Fleet Landing cooking competition took place in Johnson Hall on February 5. Residents gathered to watch Mainstreet Executive Chef Dustin Wigglesworth and Lake View Sous Chef Greg Edmonds prepare their unique dishes using the "secret ingredient"—Froot Loops.

The audience was captivated by the two chefs, who tackled the task of preparing their dishes in one hour. Judges for the event were Executive Chef Chris Gotschall, Dining Committee member Susan Dobson, and Executive Director Matt Thompson. They were given four criteria by which to judge the creations. In a vote of 139 to 138, Chef Dustin was chosen by the panel. In the meantime, members of the audience sampled both dishes and cast their votes for Chef Greg, who won 53 to 25.

Food & Beverage Senior Director Elvis Burrows and Main Street Restaurant Manager Jason McLaughlin emceed the event and entertained the crowd as Chef Dustin and Chef Greg labored over their "kitchens." Most of the dining staff was in attendance, assisting wherever needed. They were especially helpful in passing out the bite-sized samples to everyone in Johnson Hall. Nobody wanted to vote until they had indeed tasted both dishes.

Judging by the vote totals, folks thoroughly enjoyed Chef Greg's Froot Loop-encrusted lamb chop with a pomegranate and red wine au jus, served over whipped potatoes with roasted broccolini and finished with farro. That is not to say that Chef Dustin's Froot Loop furikake-crusted prime beef tenderloin with lobster-stuffed Froot Loop ravioli, accompanied by carnival cauliflower couscous and roasted tomato, sweet corn, and English pea purees, went unappreciated by the tasters.

The question on everyone's mind as they left Johnson Hall was, "When is the next competition?"

(continued on page 14)

February Residents' Council Meeting

By Howard Burdick

Residents' Council President Julia Pet-Armacost convened the February 17 council meeting in Johnson Hall. She provided an extensive review of the breadth and depth of resident-led activities (some 3,000 a year) that support their well-being.

Resident Walter Kraslawsky reviewed our continuing superb performance in support of the annual Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign, noting \$27,071 collected by 128 resident volunteers this year; and \$96,561 over the past five years.

Management Review. Executive Director Matt Thompson reviewed current and near-term projects, including Derfer Pavilion refurbishment, roofing, plant operations changes, a new phone system, and building upgrades. The recent cold snap did an estimated \$100,000 damage, mainly to water lines and foliage. He announced the promotion of Jay Jernigan to the position of Director of Campus Operations and the recent hiring of Wendy Tamarit as Director of Wellness.

Council Reports.

Vice President. Carol Smith described Fleet Landing's lost and found policy. She provided the schedule for the upcoming Residents' Council elections: April 22 at 10 am: Meet the Candidates in Johnson Hall; April 9 to 23: absentee voting; April 24: ballots delivered to independent living social mailboxes; and April 29: voting ends at noon.

Treasurer. Lynette Beitz noted continuing positive financial results in all categories, and she provided detailed income and expense amounts by categories. She also spoke about Fleet Landing's not-for-profit status: The \$4-5 million made annually is used for mission-driven activities benefiting all residents rather than for providing profit for owners. Full financial reports may be reviewed in the Dinda Library.

Marketing and Human Resources. Skip McAlexander reviewed the considerable success of our marketing team in 2025. We remain at essentially full occupancy with a total of 851 residents. Staffing is 95 percent. We welcomed 19 new hires in January. The February Team Member of the Month is Shannon Spellman, a dishwasher, and the Catch of the Month for special performance is Sasha Churchill, Exterior Maintenance Assistant Manager.

Wellness and Transportation. Ken Hollinga cited an extensive list of activities planned up through the date of the next Residents' Council meeting on March 17. He also noted that residents will again participate in the Hubbard House "Stand Up and Stride To End Domestic Violence" event taking place this year on March 28. (For more information go to Calendar Central.)

Health Services, Safety and Security. Judy Solano, in observance of American Heart Month, cited ways to a healthy heart. She discussed the services provided by

Independent Living Resident Support Coordinator, Patty Chicoine, She reminded residents of campus traffic safety rules: Observe the 15 mph speed limit; obey traffic pattern signage; yield to pedestrians at crosswalks; and enter drop-off and parking circles in counterclockwise manner. The (904) 246-7144 phone number for guest and visitor requests is no longer available, but there are other options: Call or email the Welcome Center (1137 or security@fleetlanding.com) or use the Butterfly phone application. The permanent guest authorization list can be updated at Coleman Center Concierge Desk or on Fleet Link. (Go to "Fleet Landing Forms" and then "Administration and Concierge.")

Dining Services and Housekeeping. Dave Russell reviewed recent Dining Services events: the Iron Chef competition (see article on page 1) and the first Atlantic Room pop-up dinner. He listed procedures for Atlantic Room use. A gelato machine has been added for Atlantic Room events.

Facilities. Stephen Dick reviewed recent and upcoming zone inspections as well as the agenda of the January 27 Facilities Quarterly Meeting.

Communications. Secretary Shann Purinton reviewed eight suggestions and management responses. They are too detailed to note here, but the complete text of the suggestions and responses can be found on Fleet Link. Go to "Residents' Council" and then "Residents' Council Presentations."

Editor's note: The minutes with full council reports can be found in the Dinda Library, on bulletin boards throughout the campus, and on Fleet Link under "Residents' Council."

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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 fleetlanding.com. Sign into the resident portal and click on "Menu" and then "Publications." Issues can also be found under "Publications" on Fleet Link.

Another Op'nin', Another Show

By Nancy Lundgren



LtoR: Sue Myers, Joanie Fowinkle, Joy Miller



LtoR: David Driver, Carole Watson, Buffy Wells



LtoR: Mary Steinke, Julie McLaughlin, De An Winton

The Readers Theater ensemble, directed by Sue Myers, returned to Johnson Hall on January 25 and January 26 with two delightful one-act plays: *Cornbread and Beans* by Earl Reimer, and *Alchemy* by Dori Appel.

Narrator Joanie Fowinkle set the mood as she described the characters and setting for the first play, *Cornbread and Beans*. Watching two seniors, David Driver as a set-in-his ways widower, and Buffy Wells as a free-spirited divorcee, awkwardly navigate modern dating was a hoot. Carole Watson played the waitress who kept trying to help the mismatched couple by reminding them to “have fun, fun, fun.”

Joy Miller skillfully introduced the second play, *Alchemy*, showcasing the incomparable Mary Steinke as an 80-some-year-old successful poet, and Julie McLaughlin, as her 67-year-old daughter, a popular newspaper columnist who shares creative ideas on how

to “make something out of everything.” De An Winton as the interviewer for a national poetry journal is unwittingly drawn into the ongoing mother-daughter conversation where each presents exaggerated and often humorous litanies of past conflicts and vulnerabilities. The alchemy of their relationship evolves into a transformational moment for both at the end.

Please mark your calendars for May 10 and 11, when the Readers Theater returns with a Broadway Tony-winning comedy.

Reflections by a Marine Scientist

By Enith Vardaman

Dr. A. Quinton White Jr., whose long career at Jacksonville University began in 1976, proved to be an engaging speaker. At the time of his retirement in 2024, he was Executive Director, Marine Science Research Institute (MSRI), and Professor Emeritus of Biology and Marine Science. His February 16 talk in Johnson Hall was titled “50 years of Milestones in Marine Science & The St. Johns River.”



With a touch of nostalgia, White noted how far research tools and computing power have come since such things as the IBM punch cards in use early in his career.

White reflected on the importance of the establishment of the MSRI in 2010 and its collaborative efforts with organizations such as Florida Fish and Wildlife and OCEARCH (a shark-tracking organization).

Speaking of the St. Johns River, he said that a river flowing north is not unique, and he cited the interesting fact that in times of drought, the St. Johns could actually flow south because a part of the river is below sea level.

Since retirement, White has gotten involved in the movement to restore the Ocklawaha River, the largest tributary going into the St. Johns. A dam built in 1968 was part of a plan—ultimately abandoned because of environmental concerns—to create the Cross Florida Barge Canal. He said that over its lifetime, the dam has caused a 42 percent drop in water flow into the St. Johns. A bill to breach the dam has been introduced in the 2026 Florida legislative session. Breaching the dam would allow a significant amount of freshwater to flow into the St. Johns to offset some of the salt water intrusion caused by the deepening of Jacksonville’s harbor. At this writing, the bill had passed through the relevant committees.

White concluded his talk by noting his amazement at the ease of access to information today versus when he began his career some 50 years ago. While acknowledging that artificial intelligence is not always accurate, he is enthusiastic about its current capability and about what the next 50 years might bring.

Art Exhibits

By Enith Vardaman

Fleet Landing artists have two venues for displaying their works: the first-floor exhibit space in Windward Commons and the wall outside Lake View. There is even seating at the latter if residents wish to linger longer to enjoy the artwork. The new exhibits, hung in January in both places, feature 24 artists, some of whom are exhibiting more than one work.

Our very active Art Club is now presenting a new exhibit every three months instead of the previous four-month interval. A new exhibit will go on display during the first week in April.

FLEET BEAT photographer Ed Hollender once again met the challenge of photographing all of the works (a total of 40 this time) and their accompanying labels. Below is a photo of one work by each artist.

Windward Commons



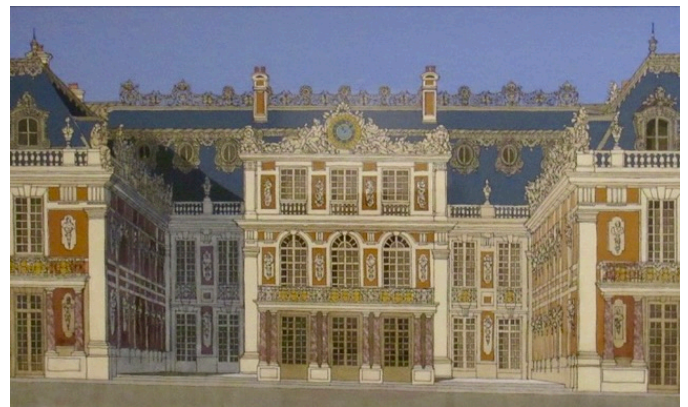
Left: Richard Lundgren's "Always Wary."
Right: Phillis Harrell's "I See It."



Left: John Hen's "Pandas Gazing."
Right: Imogene Coleman's "Antiquity."



Left: Giles R. Norrington Sr.'s "DogPatch' Cao Bang, Vietnam."
Right: Barbara Milon's "Broken Egg."



Lynn Blakemore's "Just a Little House in the Country"



Left: Kristin Perry's "Glenn in the Garden."
Right: Tom Dames's "Fleet Suns."



Left: Ann Brodt's "St. Francis."
Right: Judy Blocker's "Matador."
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Left: Robert Wells's "Fernandina Centre Street."
Right: Frances Jones's "Peaches."

Art Exhibits

(continued from preceding page)



Left: Craig Miller's "Howell Park Morning Fog."
Right: Susan Hubbard's "Tricolored Heron: Breeding Plumage." (photography).



Left: Leilani Roberts's "Pacific Sunrise."
Right: Julia Pet-Armacost's "Sunrise at the Beach."

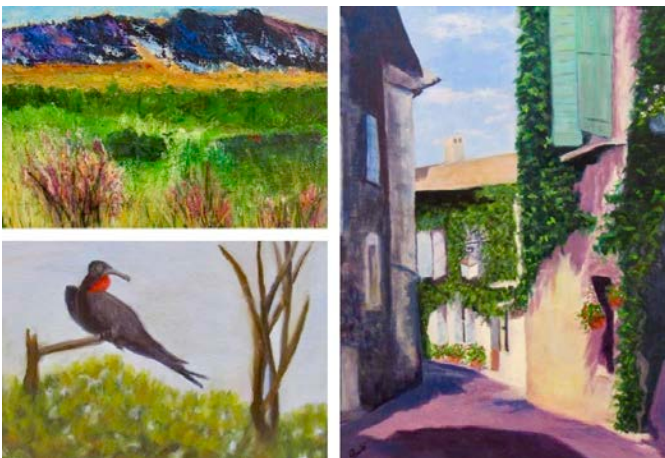


Left: Patricia Payne's "Blossom in the Sun."
Right: Betty Thompson's "Ecosystem."



Left: Glenn Perry's "Afternoon Sail."
Right: Bo Smith's "Waving in the Breeze."

Lake View



Top left: Carol Bowser's "Landscape."
Bottom left: Jackie Stack's "Perching Frigatebird." (photography).
Right: Gayle Banks's "A Street in Tuscany."

Salvation Army Visit

By Chet Davis



Sleeping quarters for the homeless



Refurbished children's play area

A group of Fleet Landing residents visited the Salvation Army's Towers Memorial Building in downtown Jacksonville on February 19. The building is named in memory of Charles Daughtry Towers Jr., a Jacksonville lawyer whose many civic activities included extensive volunteer efforts on behalf of the Salvation Army. It houses the Army's social services, which provide emergency assistance with food or temporary housing. Additionally, the Army is subcontracted to the City of Jacksonville to provide services for the homeless.

The center provides three meals a day for its residents, who may be single individuals, families, or those escaping a difficult situation, such as battered women. The social services provided include drug and alcohol rehabilitation and

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Salvation Army Visit

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case management.

The visit started at the food pantry, which is in the process of being upgraded to provide a supermarket “feel.” The group then received a lecture on the services provided, and the connections to other social service and government agencies. A tour of the building followed, including homeless berthing spaces, family rooms, and a newly refurbished play area for children.

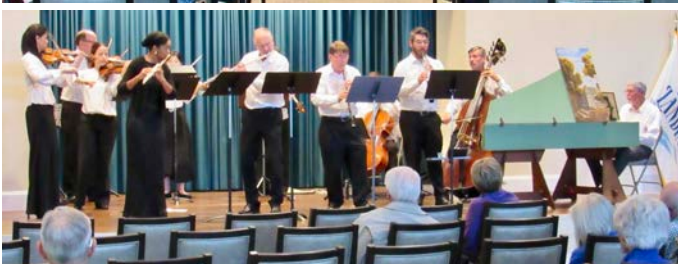
The Salvation Army relies heavily on volunteers in all facets of its work. The funding that Fleet Landing provides through its participation in the annual Red Kettle Campaign goes to the Tower Center for use in social service programs. The items donated during the monthly pickup are sent to another facility, located on Beach Boulevard. That facility focuses on rehabilitation and generates income from the sale of donated items. Perhaps a visit to that site could be arranged.

San Marco Chamber Music Society Goes for Baroque

By Carol Smith



Ellen Olson (l) and Sophie Jean



The San Marco Chamber Music Society (SMCMS) presented another outstanding performance on February 18 in Johnson Hall. Founders of the Society, Eric and Ellen Olson, joined by additional accomplished musicians, presented five concertos by composers from

the Baroque period. Ellen introduced the pieces performed by this impressive ensemble made up of flutes, piccolo, oboes, violins, viola, cello, bass, and harpsichord.

The program opened with a piece for flute, oboe, and strings by a lesser known composer, Johann Friedrich Fasch. A work by Tomaso Albinoni followed. Sophia Jean’s performance of the beautiful Piccolo Concerto in C major by Antonio Vivaldi was a highlight of the program, and it brought the audience to its feet in appreciation. A second Vivaldi concerto featured two oboes. The grand finale brought the entire ensemble on stage for Georg Philipp Telemann’s lively Concerto for 2 flutes and 2 oboes.

Thanks to Cynthia and Walter Graham for underwriting the Chamber Music Concerts series. The San Marco Chamber Music Society, always a welcome addition to Fleet Landing’s musical programming, is scheduled to return to Fleet Landing in May, with the date and time still to be determined.

If you want to be sure not to miss any of these concerts, send your name and email address to walter7graham@gmail.com.

St. Johns River Nature Cruise

By Mary Durkin

Photos by Mary Durkin and Ann Bell



River scene

It was a beautiful sunny day on February 10 when 30 Fleet Landers boarded the bus for Blue Spring State Park, where we would take the St. Johns River Cruise to see the winter home of manatees. The park reported that over 900 manatees had made their way to the spring’s warm 72-degree water, seeking refuge from the cold, and thereby attracting many visitors to this winter phenomenon.

Our first goal was to board a boat for a two-hour tour of the river and oxbows, where we saw numerous birds and reptiles soaking up the sun and enjoying the abundance of food. Our guide, Sarene Sullivan, gave an

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St. Johns River Nature Cruise

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ongoing and often humorous description of all the species in view. Some of the most frequently spotted birds were herons, ibises, limpkins, egrets, gallinules, anhingas, and bitterns, but there were many others. The Blue Spring website listed 34 species of birds cited on the day of our visit. Along the way, there were also alligators and turtles sunning on logs, sometimes on the same log. Resting in the floating vegetation nearby were several baby alligators, huddling together under the watchful eye of nearby mother.

After the boat tour, we were free to view the numerous manatees via a boardwalk that ran along the top of the spring. Hundreds of manatees of all sizes were lingering on the sunny side of the spring, noshing on seagrass, roots, and leaves. We enjoyed a picnic lunch with sandwiches supplied by Fleet Landing Dining Services before boarding the bus for our restful return home.



Alligator and turtles coexisting



Manatees



LtoR: Great blue heron, little blue heron, white ibis



Nice day for a picnic



Left: Purple gallinule. Right: American bittern.

Left: Wood stork and great egret. Right: Limpkin.



A Sensational Crime

By Victoria Freeman

Author and historian Tim Gilmore had a large Johnson Hall audience for his February 9 presentation, "Murder and Architecture in Atlantic Beach." Gilmore, who deep dives into the darker side of Jacksonville in his books and blogs, wove the kidnapping of well-known developer Bobby Jacobs into a tale of unanswered questions, and architectural elegance.



Jacobs's beachfront home, designed by noted architect Taylor Hardwick, was the first scene of the March 1974 kidnapping, which ended

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A Sensational Crime

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across town at an apartment Jacobs owned. There the kidnapper killed a security guard and himself. He had shot Jacobs, who lived in a weakened condition for some two years after the attack.

Many in the Johnson Hall audience knew Jacobs and remembered the event. They were interested in why the man who introduced Jacobs to the attacker was not arrested and tried for his connection to the murder. Gilmore explained the complexity of the case.

A Tuesday Afternoon Delight

By Nancy Lundgren



The Jacksonville Symphony Woodwind Ensemble concert on February 24 brought first-class entertainment for Fleet Landing residents. The ensemble was made up of Les Roettges on flute, Eric Olson on oboe, Giovanni Bertoni on clarinet, Jordan Brokken on bassoon, and Kate Caliendo on French horn.

The concert began with classical pieces: Mozart's Adagio & Allegro set a rich, contemplative mood. Beethoven's Quintet Op. 71 with its intricate harmonies and melodic richness, gave testament to Beethoven's genius.

Adding a touch of nostalgia, "Für Elise" teased all former piano students with recital memories of this beloved classic. Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin," a composition with vivid imagery and complex textures, highlighted the ensemble's technical prowess.

Gershwin's Three Preludes, infused with jazz influences, brought an American flavor to the concert. That set up the transition to some perennial favorites like "Fly Me to the Moon" and "New York, New York," and then to theme music from film scores—*Pink Panther*, *Harry Potter*, and *Star Wars*.

The ensemble also paid homage to ragtime music with "Easy Winners Rag" by Scott Joplin and the anonymous "Tiger Rag."

This delightful concert exemplified the Jacksonville Symphony's commitment to bring the joy of music to our community through their regular concert season, small ensemble performances, and by providing access to music education to children in four county school districts. The orchestra not only enriches the cultural landscape, but also nurtures the next generation of musicians.

January WELLInspired Learning Series

By Victoria Freeman



Ashley Cordero (l) and Jill Pennington

When should an independent living resident investigate future options for care? The January 29 "Navigating Health Services" presentation spoke to that question. The featured speakers were Jill Pennington, Senior Living Counselor Assisted Living and Memory Care, and Ashley Cordero, Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living Administrator. Both agreed that there is no particular "right time," but they cited signs that an inquiry might be useful: everyday tasks feeling stressful or tiring, concerns about balance or safety, lack of energy for activities, or wanting peace of mind for themselves or family.

Talking with the Health Services team is *not* making a commitment to begin the moving process, but it is a good first step. Besides Cordero and Pennington, Patty Chicoine, Resident Support Coordinator, is a source of information. Each of them encourages individuals to ask questions, even "just curious" ones.

Fleet Landing offers a continuum of care in an integrated approach to meeting individual resident needs. Leeward Manor and North Point offer residents personalized support in an assisted living environment that promotes independence. Derfer Pavilion provides 24/7 skilled nursing care. The Nancy House provides safety and support for individuals who have memory-related needs. Dr. Mark Messinese and Meredith Broner, APRN, are available in the Baptist Primary Care Clinic in Leeward Manor. Fleet Landing also offers Medicare home health, Medicare private duty, and outpatient therapy services.

The presentation covered several myths about moving to a higher level of care. Loss of independence by moving to assisted living is the primary one. The fact is that most residents gain *more* freedom by letting go of daily burdens. Another myth is that people move only after a medical emergency, but planning ahead actually results in the best transitions. Waiting longer does not give individuals more control. Rather, planning early keeps an individual in charge of this important decision. Moving into a higher level of care isn't about "needing help." It is about having options and choosing an option that works best before a crisis forces the individual to act too quickly.

An Armful of Love Songs

By Carole Watson

Photos by Ed Hollender and Patricia Clarkson



Dan Barry and Mary Steinke



Barry and Walt Trevaskis



LtoR: Barry, Steinke, Mike Shannon, Kathy Long, Trevaskis

Dan, Dan, the Banjo Man, aka, Dan Barry, proved to be a master of the ukulele as well, when he and friends presented “An Armful of Love Songs,” on the afternoon of February 12, in honor of Valentine’s Day.

Barry played and sang a variety of songs he composed, many of them humorous, such as his “Unemployed Lover Boy,” or “Compliments of Charlie Stratton.” Mary Steinke joined him in a duet of “Bicycle Built for Two,” while inviting the audience to join in with the familiar, “Daisy, Daisy...” refrain.

Barry’s “We Do a Uey,” was prefaced by his refer-

encing TV painter Bob Ross’s sentiment of “We never make mistakes; we just have happy accidents.” Walt Trevaskis joined Barry to sing “You’ve Got a Friend in Me,” Randy Newman’s theme song from the film *Toy Story*. The two sang another original song, “It’s Easy to Draw a Heart,” as Steinke busied herself behind a large easel, which, when turned around, revealed a large white heart outline on a red canvas. To the delight of the Johnson Hall audience, the painting was then presented to a newly engaged couple, residents Kathy Long and Mike Shannon.

The show closed with Barry, Steinke, and Trevaskis joining together to sing the philosophical “Keep It Little,” or in other words, “Don’t sweat the small stuff!”

January MOAA Meeting

By Chet Davis



LtoR: Bob Neal, Scott Wagner, Bob Peterson, Pat Kluever

Pat Kluever, President of the Historic Mayport Chapter of the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA), presided over the January 27 meeting in Johnson Hall. Commander Scott Wagner, Executive Officer of Unmanned Patrol Squadron VUP-19, was the featured speaker. Wagner addressed the MQ-4C Triton drone’s characteristics, capabilities, and operational concepts. The briefing also addressed mission planning, mission phases, data dissemination, and the ability to remain on station for extended periods.

The MQ-4C has a wingspan of over 130 feet (larger than a commercial 737 or a military P-8), a 300-knot speed at up to a 54,000-foot altitude, and a mission duration of up to 18 hours.

Charts depicted various deployment areas and the worldwide infrastructure that supports the aircraft and its deployment. VUP-19 aircraft, based at Naval Station Mayport, are controlled, once airborne, by pilots based at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. Mayport provides all the required equipment and maintenance for these drones.

Wagner ably answered numerous questions from the audience.

Views of Lake Constellation

FLEET BEAT photographers captured quite different scenes on Lake Constellation.



Sunrise



Foggy morning (photos by Ann Bell)



An evening view. The fountains were turned off, making the lake still and especially reflective. (photo by Chris Stanley)

February WELLInspired Learning Series

By Victoria Freeman



Ashley Cordero (l) and Bernadeth Palompo



Gabe Valla and Natalie Hollis

In observance of American Heart Month, cardiovascular wellness was the focus of the February 18 *WELLInspired* Learning Series presentation. Ashley Cordero, Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living Administrator, and Bernadeth Palompo, Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living Director of Nursing, hosted the event. The featured guest speakers were Gabe Valla, CEO of PremierCardia, and Natalie Hollis, an acute critical care nurse practitioner with that organization. PremierCardia provides cardiovascular care to post-acute facilities.

The pair cited heart disease as the leading cause of death for both men and women in the US. They discussed modifiable risk factors, including the following:

Diet: Recommendations include eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins as well as limiting sodium and processed foods.

Physical activity: 150 minutes of moderate activity per week is recommended. Benefits include lowering blood pressure, reducing cholesterol, and reducing diabetes risk. Regular blood pressure monitoring and cholesterol screening were encouraged.

Nicotine avoidance: There is no safe level of tobacco use.

Sleep: Seven to nine hours is recommended.

Stress: Chronic stress impacts heart health.

In the question and answer period, Dr. Nick November, Director of Rehabilitation with Solara Care Solutions, responded to a question about cardiac rehab on our campus. With a physician's referral, Fleet Landing offers Phase 2 (post hospitalization) cardiac rehab.

Love Walked in Variety Show

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Left: The Famous Kazoo Band makes an entrance.
Right: Sandi Smith and Mike Burns.



Left: Mike Burns and his sister-in-law Ferris Mason.
Right: Burns with Dicki and Ed Fahy.



Gilliam surrounded by Carol Smith & Co. Tap Dancers



Left Local area residents Linda and David Shilby.
Right: Jokester Bill Spicer.



Gilliam with (LtoR) Joyce Ezell, Julie McLaughlin, and Lee Spancake.



Left: Bob Chrisman. Right: Gilliam and Sandra Roth.

Mayport Lighthouse Project

By Chet Davis



In his January 28 Johnson Hall talk, Dan Hogan, President of the Mayport Lighthouse Association, addressed the effort currently underway to move the St. Johns River Lighthouse from Naval Station Mayport to the Mayport Village riverfront.



There are two lighthouses on Naval Station Mayport property. The one in question, which was in operation from 1859 to 1929, is near the fence that separates the base from Mayport Village. Because it is on the base, it is not accessible to the public.

As the naval station expanded, and the ground was leveled, the base of the lighthouse ended up some nine feet below ground.

A team with the appropriate expertise has conducted a study of the feasibility of relocating and restoring the lighthouse. Team members Expert House Movers and ICC Commonwealth were involved in the (continued on next page)

Mayport Lighthouse Project

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move of the much larger Cape Hatteras Lighthouse on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

The major issue remaining is funding for the project, which is estimated to cost between \$4.5 and \$5.5. million.

Better Luck Next Year, Jags

Photos by Ann Bell



Celebrating Valentine's Day and Mardi Gras

Photos by Ann Bell



The Next BookTalk

By Sue Myers

The next reading for BookTalk will be *The Secret Life of Sunflowers* by Marta Molnar. The novel interweaves the story of a contemporary woman with the true story of Johanna van Gogh, the sister-in-law of Vincent van Gogh. Johanna was responsible for introducing Vincent's legacy to the world. Described as gripping and inspirational, it will touch something in your soul. Read the book, and join us in a discussion and activity on Tuesday, May 19, at 10 am in the Windward Commons second floor classroom.

The Joshua Bowlus Quartet

By Isobel Spink



A sizable audience in Johnson Hall on February 6 welcomed the Joshua Bowlus group back and also welcomed for the first time Linda Cole, long-time singer with the quartet. Bowlus performed wonders on the piano, as did Juan Rolland on the sax, Dennis Marks on bass, and Stefan Klein on the drums. Klein used a brush for a great deal of his drumming. Each was a talented musician, excelling both together and individually.

The quartet's jazz was mellow, smooth, and soothing, giving us solos with each instrument several times. When Cole came on stage, the concert took a different turn. With soft jazz in the background, Cole, elegant in black sequins, told us how she's been singing for over 70 years. She was one of seven children, all of whom had perfect pitch and whose parents were singers. Her father was a cousin of Nat King Cole, and she toured for a time with Natalie Cole. She shared her

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The Joshua Bowlus Quartet

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father's life rule with us: "Always be a good citizen and a good neighbor." Much of her reminiscing could be described as "talking music" rather than "singing music," but she also sang "My Sweet, Embraceable You," and "A Brand-New Man."

We enjoyed hearing this great jazz quartet and this introduction to Linda Cole.

FleetLanders Concert

By Guy Bond



Gary Reichow and Julia Pet-Armacost

If you happened to walk past Johnson Hall on February 25, you might have thought Valentine's Day had made a comeback.

The FleetLanders kicked off their first 2026 performance with a theme everyone understands—love—and they didn't hold back. From the opening chords, the room settled into that sweet spot where music meets memory.

The group rolled out one romantic favorite after another: "Can't Help Falling in Love With You," "Islands in the Stream," "I Will Always Love You," and "Unchained Melody." You could see couples squeezing hands and friends nudging each other as familiar lyrics floated through the hall. Words to the songs were posted on the overhead screen and when "In My Life" and "Sea of Love" began, more than a few in the audience joined in.

The band's chemistry was on full display. Karen Sturtevant's piano set the tone, while Jim Katsikas kept things lively on drums. De An Winton's alto sax added warmth and flair, and Julia Pet-Armacost shifted effortlessly between flute, guitar, and vocals. Bob Armacost and Guy Van Syckle brought easy charm

on acoustic guitars and vocals, with Guy Bond adding a dimension that only an electric bass guitar can provide.

One of the evening's standout moments came when guest vocalist Gary Reichow joined Pet-Armacost for a duet of "My Eyes Adored You." The crowd responded with a thunderous ovation, their applause echoing through the hall long after the final note.

By the final number, it was clear: this wasn't just a concert. It was a shared trip down memory lane, wrapped in melody and a little bit of nostalgia.

And the music at Fleet Landing isn't slowing down anytime soon. Mark your calendars for Fleet Classics on March 23, Van Syckle's concert on March 26, and Fleet's Got Talent on April 11. If February 25 was any indication, you'll want a seat near the front.

FLiCRA News

By Carol Smith

The Annual Meeting of Fleet Landing's chapter of the Florida Life Care Residents Association (FLiCRA) will be held in Johnson Hall on March 19 at 3 pm. Board members will present a summary of FLiCRA activity from this past year, and new board members will be elected to fill three vacancies. The nominating committee has prepared a slate for consideration by the membership. Nominees Ann Bell, Ronae Bitter, and Harry Sweeney will be introduced at the meeting. All members of our FLiCRA chapter are encouraged to attend to vote on new board members. Also, non-members, including those in the Atlantic Club, will be warmly welcomed and invited to learn more about the important work that is done by FLiCRA on behalf of continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) throughout Florida. A wine reception at the conclusion of the meeting will offer an opportunity to mingle and enjoy FLiCRA fellowship.

They're Back!

By Nancy Lundgren



The ospreys have returned. They are perched atop their beloved gazebo at Lake Constellation, ready to kick off another nesting season! Don't miss the action—check the Live Osprey Webcam on fleetlanding.com to watch these majestic birds as they settle in for the birth of one or perhaps two chicks.

Iron Chef Cooking Competition

(continued from page 1)



Emcees Elvis Burrows (l) and Jason McLaughlin



The judges (LtoR): Chris Gotschall, Susan Dobson, Matt Thompson



Left: Froot Loop-encrusted lamb chop.

Right: Froot Loop furikake-crust prime beef tenderloin.

Chip and Putts

By Bob Neal

Under bright blue skies and winter-brown fairways on February 12, sixteen golfers from Fleet Landing teed it up at Hidden Hills. A tightly contested day was shaped by elevation changes, guarded water hazards, and greens that rolled slow and stubborn. The course demanded precision from the start. Drives climbed rising fairways, approaches had to avoid shimmering trouble, and putts often wandered off the intended line.

Through it all, one team rose above the rest. Bob Hunter led the winning foursome alongside Diane Eger, Rick Rochelle, and Price Schwenck. With five birdies on the card, they combined steady course management and confident iron play to post a four-under-par 68. Their

teamwork and composure delivered a clear victory. Rochelle's standout performance also earned him the Birdie Trophy, while Schwenck embraced the day's lighter side by taking home the Sandbagger Award. Two teams tied at one-under 71, forcing a scorecard tiebreaker. Ray Rigney's squad—joined by John Egan (Atlantic Club), John Rietveld, and Tom Gonwa—claimed second, thanks to a strong 34 on the front nine. Paul Mocko's team, featuring Marcia Plumley (Atlantic Club), Jim Wayrynen, and Rick Hammer (Atlantic Club), settled into third after a 35 on the outward side. Alan Halperin's team opened with an early birdie, but finished one over par at 73.

Long-drive honors went to Plumley and Rochelle, while Hammer captured closest-to-the-pin among the men. From first to last, just five strokes separated the field—proving once again that at Hidden Hills, every swing counts.

A Concert of Piano Trios

By Carol Smith



Members of the Beaux Arts Chamber Ensemble entertained Fleet Landing residents on February 3 in Johnson Hall. Pianist Catherine Lan, founder of the group, was enthusiastically welcomed by many who remembered her past appearances. Joining her were Erika Venable on the violin and cellist Aaron Merritt, who was making his second appearance here. Venable is the assistant concertmaster of the Miami City Ballet Orchestra. Also from Miami, Merritt is Adjunct Professor of Cello at Miami's New World School of the Arts. Lan is a highly acclaimed performer and travels throughout the world delighting audiences with her amazing talent.

The ensemble performed works by two female composers from Europe. The Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 34, was written by Louise Farrenc who was a piano professor at the Paris Conservatory for over 30 years. Hailing from Croatia, Dora Pejačević composed Piano Trio, Op. 29, which was performed flawlessly.

Residents will look forward to future performances by members of the Ensemble.

Florida Chamber Music Project

By Guy Bond



The Florida Chamber Music Project brought the rich sound of chamber music to Johnson Hall on February 21, offering residents a very special treat.

The ensemble is the creation of violist Susan Pardue, a member of the Jacksonville Symphony, who envisioned a way for professional musicians to come together more often in the collaborative spirit of chamber performance. The Fleet Landing performance was given in preparation for a formal public appearance.

Pardue was joined by cellist Brian Magnus and violinists Piotr Szewczyk and Igor Khukhua (all from the Jacksonville Symphony), forming a quartet whose chemistry was evident from the opening notes.

The program began with a quartet by Joseph Haydn, fondly known as the “Bird Quartet.” True to its nickname, the piece seemed to flutter and sing, with light, playful passages that evoked the sounds of nature. The mood then shifted to contemporary brilliance with “An Exaltation of Larks” by acclaimed American composer Jennifer Higdon. The work sparkled with energy and optimism, highlighting the ensemble’s precision and expressive range.

The audience was treated to a personal touch with “Spring Tales,” composed by Szewczyk himself. The piece captured the feeling of renewal and gentle awakening that accompanies the changing season and the feeling you get when cruising through town in a convertible with the top down. The concert concluded on a deeply moving note with Higdon’s arrangement of “Amazing Grace,” whose familiar melody resonated with quiet power and emotional depth.

Beyond performance, the Florida Chamber Music Project is guided by a broader purpose. Board President Judy Kouri noted that the organization is committed not only to creating opportunities for outstanding professional musicians, but also to enriching the community. Through outreach efforts, including work with the North Florida School of Special Education and other educational institutions, the Project introduces new audiences to the beauty and accessibility of chamber music.

For those in attendance, the Johnson Hall performance was a reminder that winter will ease into a bright spring.

February MOAA Meeting

By Chet Davis



LtoR: Bob Neal, Tom Atkins, Bruce Osborne, Lin Smith, Bob Peterson, Curtis Ford, Pat Kluever, Candace Kelly (Atlantic Beach City Commissioner)

The February 24 meeting of the Historic Mayport chapter of the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA) meeting featured a briefing by Curtis Ford, Mayor of Atlantic Beach.

Ford began by pointing out that the “old” Atlantic Beach (the city is observing the centennial of its incorporation this year) had very different concerns than the modern one. Today’s issues are quality of life, resiliency, and environmental stewardship/tree canopy. Although he is a property rights advocate, Ford acknowledged that there were community rights as well. A tree canopy survey will be conducted this year to identify heritage trees, with potential for stricter tree protection ordinances beyond current mitigation fees. A specific recent issue has been pickleball courts and the associated noise, but now the issue is the reckless behavior of e-bike users. Although e-bike legislation was passed last year, more stringent rules are required. An associated issue is enforcement. Ford also noted Atlantic Beach centennial programs, including the July ribbon-cutting for the Marsh Oaks Community Center.

Ford reported that work on the Mayport Road “road diet” (narrowing the road from six lanes to four) would commence in April. Mayport Road will be incorporated into the East Coast Greenway through the addition of multi-use paths and bike lanes. Antiquated technology at City Hall is being upgraded and will include a capability for Atlantic Beach residents to express their views on pending legislation and other issues electronically. Other issues addressed included infrastructure improvements to alleviate flooding at Aquatic Gardens, dredging of lagoons, the design of the “Peanut” intersection to replace the five-way stop, and the success of Boys and Girls clubs.

There was a lively question and answer session. Of particular interest was the property tax reform under consideration by the Florida legislature and the impact of implementation. Ford noted that this is still far from a settled issue.

Ford said that he was planning to run for reelection this year.

Chess Club News

By Richard Wong



White mates in two moves

"Nothing is as difficult to see as the obvious." Be patient when finding the solution.

Chess tip: Develop your minor pieces early and castle.

David Brooks at the World Affairs Council

By Bo Smith

David Brooks spoke to the World Affairs Council (WAC) at the University of North Florida (UNF) and was simulcast to a nearly full house in Johnson Hall on

February 13. His topic was "Society in Focus." He is the author of several books, an opinion columnist for *The New York Times*, a frequent guest on the *PBS News Hour*, and a senior fellow at Yale's School of Global Affairs. Brooks is a self-described moderate Republican.

The WAC introductory material states "Brooks seeks to share and encourage intellectual curiosity and emotional wisdom, emphasizing the value of community and the importance of nourishing both the inner self and the social self in our journeys to live fulfilling lives." I found that to be a summary of his presentation. He wove personal stories and stories of grit and determination in fellow Americans, materialism that benefits the community, personal fulfillment, restoration of the American dream, and the gift of love into what felt like a mixture of sermon, pep talk, and contemplation of spiritual renewal. It was the reflection of a person in love with his life and his country—a presentation unlike any I had heard from WAC speakers.

I believe that many in the audience fear that America is in a period of decline, and that it may not get better in our lifetime. I had hoped to hear Brooks define a path to recovery, and he did that in part. He believes that every 60 years or so, we have undergone a period of "moral convulsion," a loss of faith in the future, and a desire to burn it all down. Throughout our history, these periods have led to deep reflection, and the spirit of America arises: a desire for a moral materialism shines through, and we recover. The formula for recovery is a combination of an intense personal desire to achieve one's dream—he calls it the "gleam,"—and the moral determination to serve the community. Brooks believes our country is objectively sound but spiritually in pain, and spiritual problems are addressed by passionately following one's dream, expecting love and reflecting love back to the community.

We at Fleet Landing are a sponsor of the WAC of Jacksonville, and this allows us to attend their Distinguished Voices Lecture Series in person at UNF or by simulcast in Johnson Hall.

Salt in the Renaissance

By Bo Smith



Left: Scott Brown.

Right: Benvenuto Cellini's salt cellar, *Saliera*. Scott Brown, Professor of Art History and Interim Dean (continued on next page)

Salt in the Renaissance

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of the Hicks Honors College at the University of North Florida, spoke to a large audience at Johnson Hall on January 30. His topic was, broadly, salt and its place in art and society, with an emphasis on the Renaissance. Brown can present an arcane subject from the distant past to an audience of people entirely unattached to the topic and completely capture them. Who would imagine anyone could care about a lecture on salt and salt cellars (the 16th century equivalent of saltshakers)? He made a room full of curious people care.

Brown’s talk centered around the remarkable artisanship of the salt cellars that graced the tables of the very rich, and he reflected on their place in history, art, and social status. He featured Benvenuto Cellini’s gold salt cellar, *Saliera*, including this apocryphal story: It was first made for a nobleman who rejected it because he feared that should he own such a magnificent item, the king might feel he had stepped beyond his station. Cellini then sold it to King Francis I of France. Throughout his talk he mentioned salt’s place in culture, from its biblical references “...salt of the earth” and the pillar of salt in Genesis to its use in preservation and symbolic purification. I learned that a bit of salt is added to Holy Water. Salt was not generally rare, but it was used in huge amounts in manufacturing and food preservation, and it was always in demand and often central to international commerce, taxation, and currency. Examples were a salt tax as a precursor of the French Revolution, and the fact that Roman soldiers were paid in salt and hence the word “salary.” Brown spun such stories throughout his presentation and we were intrigued.

I have heard Brown speak about a variety of art subjects from Romanesque church facades to the knots on a medieval monk’s belt and he always captures the listeners. He frequently speaks at Fleet Landing, and regardless of how uninterested you think you might be about the subject, I suggest you give him a try. You too could be interested in salt cellars.

Fleet Hearts News

Fleet Hearts members have been at work on projects for residents of our community and for the community outside our gates.



On January 29, members gathered in Lory Doolittle’s apartment for a Valentine Making Fun Afternoon. They made 100 Valentine cards to be distributed on Valentine’s Day to neighbors and friends in assisted living. Memories of doilies and white paste made them laugh and urged them on to create little cards letting others know they were thinking of them.



Jackie Smith delivering donations to Mission House

Mission House requested warm clothing for the homeless at the Beaches, and members responded by filling the back of resident Jackie Smith’s car with donations. Mission House, Jacksonville Beach’s only day center offering full-service support for individuals facing homelessness, was truly grateful.

Editor’s note: The information for this article was provided by Jackie Smith.

Bears, Manatees, and Pythons in Florida

By Nancy Lundgren

Bo Smith, Fleet Landing’s own biologist/ecologist, returned to Johnson Hall on February 13 with a fascinating presentation about three wild species that have become permanent Florida residents. He spoke about the biology, costs, and politics associated with each species.



Contrary to popular belief, Smith told us, Florida is not all concrete. Only 15 percent of our state is developed. Eighty-five percent is wetlands, forests, and agricultural and coastal areas that have become home to bears, manatees, and pythons.

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Bears, Manatees, and Pythons in Florida

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Black bears: There are about 4,500 black bears in Florida. They average about 350 pounds, live in forests, are mostly vegetarian, and give birth to one or two cubs in the winter. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission uses a standard technique called Tag and Recapture to estimate the bear population, but with a different twist: DNA tagging from randomly collected hair samples. In 2025, Florida reestablished a black bear hunting season that pleased hunters and enraged others. Fifty-two bears were killed during the hunting season.

Manatees: Manatees average about ten feet long, weigh 1,000 pounds, and have poor eyesight. Their thick hide is covered sparsely with bristles that “sense” their surroundings. They are vegetarians, consuming about 60 pounds of sea grasses a day. They require water temperatures above 68 degrees to survive and, in the winter, they tend to congregate in the warm waters of South Florida, natural springs throughout the state, or outflow waters from power plants. The Save the Manatee Club is a powerful conservation and lobbying organization that has been very effective in protecting manatees.

Pythons: The Burmese python is a very popular pet snake, but in time, can grow to nearly 20 feet long. Many people release their pet pythons into the wild after the snake reaches 5-8 feet long. They are very sensitive to cold temperatures and in most of the US, the released pythons die in winter. Pythons have thrived, however, in the Everglades, where the population has grown to about 200,000. They have eaten most of the small mammals.

Even though they are not a threat to humans, the growing population is a huge problem, given that their habitat is in an inaccessible area the size of Connecticut. Professional hunters, bounties, and trapping have been employed, but have only removed a fraction of the pythons. High-tech solutions involving biological control or genetic manipulation are possible, but decades away. Nature will eventually provide a balance between pythons and their prey, but Smith said that for the foreseeable future, pythons are permanent Florida residents.

Feathered Visitors



Janet Silvester was at Covin Crossing when she snapped this photo of a gathering of wood ducks.



Kathy Kraslawsky took these photos of an osprey and a great blue heron (left and center) from her patio on Capella Court.

Chet Davis spotted a bald eagle outside the 4000 Building.

Duo Paloma

By Carol Smith



Longineu Parsons playing the bass recorder (l) and the soprano and alto recorder

Dr. Longineu Parsons II returned to Fleet Landing along with his wife, Dr. Joanna Sobkowska, for a delightful concert in Johnson Hall on February 27. While their previous appearance in May 2025 included percussion and bass, this time, calling themselves Duo Paloma, they delighted the audience with a classical music repertoire and their commentary on the works.

In addition to the duets by the couple on piano and trumpet, there were solo numbers by each interspersed throughout the program. Sobkowska delighted the audi-
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Duo Paloma

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ence with her powerful performance of Chopin’s Etude Op. 10, No. 12 in C minor, known as the “Revolutionary Etude.”

Putting aside his trumpet, Parsons demonstrated his talent on the bass recorder, playing an original composition. He then introduced the soprano and alto recorders and played a duet with them all by himself.

The audience especially enjoyed the duo’s performance of Bizet’s “Carmen Suite No. 2: Habanera” with variations.

The concert concluded with Parsons singing the Louis Armstrong classic “What a Wonderful World.”



Fleet’s Got Karaoke

By Enith Vardaman



Bob Armacost and Julia Pet-Armacost

The second—but not the last—Fleet’s Got Karaoke took place on February 28 in Johnson Hall under the direction of Bob Armacost and Julia Pet-Armacost. Attendees were presented with a playlist of 15 songs, ranging from “When You’re Smilin” and “I Believe” to “Bad Bad Leroy Brown” and “What Shall We Do With a Drunken Sailor.” If anyone wished to be a leader of a particular song, they could put their name on a slip of paper in the appropriate “bucket.” There were multiple energetic leaders for most songs, some volunteered for more than one song, and the final song, “Sweet Caroline,” brought six volunteers to the stage.

Neil Sedaka’s signature song, “Breaking Up Is Hard To Do,” was added to the program, a tribute to the singer, who died on February 27.

When the audience was asked whether they would like another Fleet’s Got Karaoke, the answer was enthusiastically in the affirmative.



Brrrr!

Our area has experienced some bouts of exceptionally cold weather this winter, creating sights rarely seen here.



The freeze damaged our greenery. It remains to be seen how much will come back. (photos by Ann Bell)

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Brrrr!

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*Left: Ice made the dock slippery. (photo by Ann Bell)
 Right: This frozen fountain says it all. (photo by Ann Butler)*

Farmer's Market

Photos by Dita Domonkos

Johnson Hall was a showcase for an enticing display of food and wares at the February 20 Farmer's Market.



Readers Theater Returns With a Tony Award-Winning Play

By Sue Myers



Readers Theater will present the outrageously funny play, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, in May. The play is about three aging siblings, meeting up in the family home. Come prepared for some surprises and a little bit of chaos. The play will be performed in Johnson Hall on Sunday, May 10, at 3 pm and on Monday evening, May 11, at 7 pm.