



FLEET BEAT

VOL. 36 No. 4

THE FLEET LANDING RESIDENTS' NEWSPAPER

May 2026

Coffee and Conversation: Community Insights

By Enith Vardaman



Josh Ashby (l) and Matt Thompson

The second “Coffee and Conversation: Community Insights” of 2026, held in Johnson Hall on April 28, featured two speakers: Josh Ashby, CEO of Fleet Landing Atlantic Beach, and Matt Thompson, Executive Director Fleet Landing Atlantic Beach.

Financial Results

Ashby led off with the occupancy figures for independent living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing as of March 31, 2026. Independent living, assisted living, and memory care continue to be at full occupancy. These figures obscure the level of activity required to maintain full occupancy, given the many move-ins, move-outs, and transitions to a different level of care. Unlike the other categories, the goal for skilled nursing is lower occupancy than budgeted in order to minimize staffing expense, and that goal is being met.

Ashby then turned to financial results as of March 31, 2026. Revenue was \$500,000 over budget (from higher occupancy and investment income) and expenses were \$800,000 under budget (largely from depreciation of the Coleman Center). He noted that the best financial performance usually occurred in the first quarter, then diminished in the course of the year in keeping with the timing of expenses.

Two measurements of the financial condition of a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) were significantly above lender requirements: The March 31, 2026, results showed the debt service coverage ratio (the ability to pay our mortgage) at 2.24 versus the required 1.20, and days cash on hand (the ability to fund cash needs if collecting new revenue stopped) was 460 versus the required 180. A downward trend in the debt service coverage ratio reflected high occupancy, and hence fewer entrance fees collected. The number of available units

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Kazoos and Sunshine: Olympic Games Opening Ceremony

By Nancy Lundgren; photos by Janet Silvester



Carol Smith leads the Kazoo Band.



Randy McDonald holds the torch as the parade is about to begin.

Fleet Landing sparkled under an April 17 sun as 60 residents and staff gathered at the Flag Plaza to celebrate the 2026 Fleet Landing Olympics Opening Ceremony. Fitness Manager Margaret Carr kicked things off with a warm welcome and thanks to all participants. Then the Kazoo Band—because no campus event is official without them—set the tone with spirited takes on “Olympic Fanfare” and “God Bless America.”

Official flag bearer Ernie Bio led the parade that followed like a pro, swinging the Olympic flag with baton-worthy flair, as Torchbearer Randy McDonald

(continued on page 20)

April Residents' Council Meeting

By Howard Burdick

Residents' Council President Julia Pet-Armacost, convened the April 21 council meeting in Johnson Hall. She reviewed the dress code for public areas and dining venues. Our appearance should reflect the reputation and status of Fleet Landing. This applies to guests as well. Because of a recent fire in an apartment, Pet-Armacost reminded residents to review the fire procedures and responsibilities in the *Resident Handbook* or in a handout available from the concierge.

Management Review. Executive Director Matt Thompson provided a variety of updates. (See "Coffee and Conversation: Community Insights" beginning on page 1.) He reported that Nocatee construction was ahead of schedule. An earlier notice of an increase in alcohol prices has been put in abeyance.

Council Reports.

Vice-President. Carol Smith reviewed council candidates and election procedures.

Treasurer. Lynette Beitz reported continuing positive financials in all categories. Her responses to inquiries included that Endowment Fund and Spinnaker Society assets would not be shared with Nocatee, nor would employees of Polaris and Solara currently qualify for the Residents' Gift Fund.

Marketing and Human Resources. Skip McAlexander noted a recent Zoom meeting for the 715 Atlantic Club members. They have also been invited to the April 25 Dancing in the Streets Block Party. There are currently 695 independent living residents, and 155 residents in the healthcare facilities. We are staffed at 95 percent, with 426 employees and a low turnover of one percent. Lobster Tales numbered 109. In March, there were 18 new hires. Stephen Mulzet, who was recently promoted to Maintenance Supervisor, was the March Staff Member of the Month. The Catch of the Month was Ja'vion Watson, a Lake View server.

Wellness and Transportation. Ken Hollinga noted resident participation in the March Hubbard House fundraising walk. (See *FLEET BEAT*, April 2026, page 11.) He cited the many events on tap before the next council meeting. Leah Smith has been hired as a new full-time bus driver.

Health Services, Safety and Security. Judy Solano said that April was Parkinson's Awareness Month. She reviewed symptoms, causes, and treatments, including some fitness programs conducted on campus.

Dining Services and Housekeeping. Dave Russell reported that Housekeeping Manager John Stoker had been promoted to the position of Manager Housekeeping and Safety and Security. Mary Hughes has been promoted to Assistant Manager Safety and Security. He reviewed recent Iron Chef (see page 22) and "Behind the

Recipe" (see page 7) events. A limited omelet offering will be added to the Currents breakfast menu. Pop-up dinners in The Atlantic have been popular.

Facilities. Stephen Dick reviewed the new preventive maintenance program called "Zone Blitz," which includes inspections of units for such issues as cracks, stains, or water damage in walls and ceilings. This allows timely corrective action and prevents more serious problems in the future. He also named the dedicated residents who serve as building and home representatives as well as the remaining schedule of inspections through June.

Communications. Secretary Shann Purinton described the ways of submitting suggestions. She reviewed seven suggestions. They are too detailed to report 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."

In closing, Pet-Armacost said that she, Hollinga, Solano, and Dick have completed their terms on the council. She thanked staff and residents for their support.

The next council meeting will be on May 19.

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

FLEET BEAT News

By Enith Vardaman

With this issue, we welcome Eileen Avitable to the *FLEET BEAT* staff. You can find her first article on page 14.

FLEET BEAT STAFF

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Editor.....	Enith Vardaman
Copy Editor	Fran Patterson
Copy Editor.....	Mary Ellen Reed
Copy Editor.....	Geri Bramble
Copy Editor.....	Tom Bramble
Photographer.....	Ed Hollender
Photographer.....	Ann Bell
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Guy Bond	Eileen Avitable

Chet Davis (Roving Reporter)

All the news that fits...

Issues of *FLEET BEAT* can be found at 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.

Breabach Concert
By Isobel Spink



Wellness Services Manager Mary Faria’s April 8 introduction of this amazing Scottish band hit the nail on the head: “Breabach is ranked amongst Scotland’s most skilled and imaginative contemporary folk acts. The band unites deep roots in Highland and Island Gaelic tradition alongside progressive musical influences and has cultivated a unique sound.” Breabach started 20 years ago and has achieved such fame that they were to appear at the Grand Ole Opry on April 10.

The five musicians included a lone female. Megan Henderson, a lovely blonde wearing bright yellow flowing pants, was a great fiddler with a wonderful voice. The two bagpipers, with billowing cheeks and tapping feet, added their haunting melodies to this unique concert of Gaelic music. The great variety of instruments played, besides guitar and bass, included a bouzouki, originally from Greece and similar to a mandolin.

I learned that what I thought were flutes or piccolos were called “low whistles.” They were other instruments played by the bagpipers. The three long pipes on the bagpipes are called “drones,” with the longest pipe having the lowest pitch.

The music was mostly happy and boisterous, and the harmonies melded with excellence. Many of the songs were sung in Gaelic. The announcement of one, which translates as “We Were Poor, but We Were Miserable,” drew laughter from the audience. The bass

player’s original song, which is on their most recent album, was slower, more mournful, and very harmonic. As has been said, Breabach truly “pushed the boundaries of Scottish music.”

Henderson also performed a fabulous and intricate Scottish step dance. She was later joined for another incredible tapping jig with a low whistle player.

Johnson Hall was packed with admirers, and I feel sorry for those who missed this wonderful performance.

We Have a New Residents’ Council

By Enith Vardaman



LtoR: Carol Smith, Jackie Smith, Shann Purinton



Lynette Beitz, Jim Dobson, Skip McAlexander



Randy McDonald, Joy Miller, Dave Russell

Results of the Residents’ Council election were announced on April 29. Having received the largest number of votes, Randy McDonald will serve a three-year term. Jim Dobson, Joy Miller, and Jackie Smith will serve two-year terms.

Council responsibilities are as follows: Carol Smith, president; Jackie Smith, vice president; Shann Purinton, secretary; Lynette Beitz, treasurer; McDonald, Wellness / Transportation; Dobson, Facilities; Miller, Health Services; Dave Russell, Dining / Housekeeping / Security; Skip McAlexander, Human Resources / Marketing.

Jekyll Island Dolphin Boat Tour

By Mary Durkin

Photos by Mary Durkin and Mary Faria



On April 6, our lovely spring weather threatened to take a nasty turn as 20 Fleet Landers boarded the bus for the long trip to Jekyll Island to see dolphins. Upon arrival on the island, we went straight to the boat dock to board the *Liberty*, as a rainstorm was predicted to arrive in early afternoon, and we had an hours-long tour scheduled. On board, Captain Pablo gave a history of Jekyll Island as we motored past the “snowbird” fleet of pleasure boats—those that are seasonal residents only. The island was popularized by some of America’s

richest—J.P. Morgan, William Rockefeller, and Joseph Pulitzer—who in 1888 built the Jekyll Island Social Club and private mansions which are still on the island’s historic tours.

It wasn’t long before we started to see groups of the dorsal fins of the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin. Captain Pablo explained how they have “echolocation”—they produce a clicking sound that hits a fish or rock, then bounces back as echoes to help navigate and find food. Small pods appeared on both sides of the boat. They were hard to photograph because they did not breach, but skimmed by quickly in small groups. As the boat slowed and followed many different pods around St. Simon’s Sound, Captain Pablo answered questions and amused us with local facts and his own history of 27 years in law enforcement before retiring to his current employment. Pablo said that we saw three large pods of dolphins on this outing and he was glad we were able to see so many.

As the *Liberty* turned to motor back to the dock, the weather worsened and with the wind blowing in our faces, we all huddled against the cold and spray. We stopped in a park for a quick lunch of Fleet sandwiches before the rains came and a return home. Despite the unfortunate weather, this reporter has been on many dolphin tours, and this was the most dolphins seen on any of them, by far.

Byron Pennington, Campus Operations Manager

By Chet Davis; photo by Rachel Leslie

As Byron Pennington was growing up, he traveled to the bases where his father, a Marine Corps colonel, was stationed. Before moving to the Jacksonville area in 2016, he lived in Northern Virginia, where he was a special education teacher. A business graduate of the University of Virginia, Pennington changed his career path. He entered the hospitality industry at Marriott, where he oversaw vocational training, career development, and employee retention. A subsequent career change placed him in a campus



operations role, prior to his coming to Fleet Landing to become our Campus Operations Manager.

Pennington; his wife, a special education teacher; and two sons live in St. Augustine. He has found staff and residents to be very welcoming and supportive. He finds the atmosphere at Fleet Landing to be great and looks forward to providing residents with the best possible service.

If you see Pennington around campus, welcome him.

Scholarships Awards Ceremony

By Dale Clifford; photos by Natalie Luttrell



Scholarship recipients able to be present for the ceremony



LtoR: Kathy DeSiena, Mary Donohue, Dale Clifford



LtoR: Michele Holley, Starr Boyd, Matt thompson



LtoR: Michele Holley, Karleigh Watkins, Matt Thompson

On April 1, Executive Director Matt Thompson, Vice President Human Resources Michele Holley, and then Charitable Gift Planning Director Kathy DeSiena, joined Dale Clifford, Endowment Fund Scholarship Committee Chair, and committee member Mary Dohohue in awarding scholarships to 53 deserving staff members. Donations to the fund are supporting educational plans that range from accounting and business, through the health professions, to engineering and psychology. It's a wonderful way to benefit the futures of those who help us so much in the present.

Donohue has assumed the role of Endowment Fund Scholarship Committee Chair, as Clifford completed her service on the committee.

In addition to the regular scholarships, capped at \$3,000 for the year, two Fleet Landing employees will be splitting the Preble Scholarship of \$20,000 to help them toward a college or university degree: Starr Boyd, Senior Living Counselor - Independent Living, and Karleigh Watkins, Fine Dining Server in Mainstreet.

Celebrating World Laughter Day With Kathleen Halperin

Text and photo by Nancy Lundgren



On a sunny April 14, Fleet Landing resident Kathleen Halperin, Certified Laughologist, gathered 23 folks at the Labyrinth to enjoy what hopefully will become an annual celebration of World Laughter Day. She guided the group through a series of hilarious exercises proving that laughing isn't just fun—it's tiny medicine with immediate perks and lasting benefits.

Deep belly laughs boost oxygen, get your heart and lungs working, and release feel-good endorphins. They also trigger, then calm the stress response, lowering heart rate and blood pressure, and helping muscles relax.

Over time, laughter supports immunity by releasing helpful neuropeptides, and reduces pain by triggering natural painkillers. It also improves your coping and social skills.

Bottom line: giggle regularly. It's free, enjoyable, and good for mind and body. Thank you, Kathleen, for reminding us that "Laughter is the best medicine."

Fleet Hearts News

By Carol Smith



Fleet Hearts helping with the annual READ USA Book Fair at Anchor Academy.



Fleet Hearts at Mission House

Fleet Hearts volunteers remained actively engaged throughout April, continuing their service both on campus and in the surrounding community. The month began with the group's regular Salvation Army donation pick-up on April 6.

On April 14, eight dedicated volunteers traveled to Anchor Academy to assist READ USA with its annual Book Fair and to help young readers discover new books.

A new monthly volunteer opportunity began on April 24 at Mission House in Jacksonville Beach. Four eager Fleet Hearts prepared 80 bag lunches for distribution over the weekend. This will be a monthly activity scheduled for the last Friday of each month.

During the April 2 monthly meeting, Bonnie Laubach, Director of Development for Beaches Habitat for Humanity, presented three opportunities for group volunteer work at the Doolittle Family Foundation/Fleet

Landing home. Several members stepped forward to participate, with Jim Dobson coordinating the volunteer teams. In addition, Katherine Harlan and Shann Purinton volunteered to lead efforts to help furnish the home in preparation for the homeowner's upcoming move.

Fleet Hearts continues to seek meaningful ways to support Fleet Landing residents and staff. Members welcomed a suggestion from Mary Donohue, chair of the Fleet Landing Endowment Fund Scholarship Committee, to explore ways the organization might assist the scholarship program. Donohue noted that 53 staff members recently received scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,000. Additional support from Fleet Hearts could help expand the program beyond the \$138,000 that was raised this year.

Reminder: upcoming Salvation Army pickups are June 1 and July 6.

Shakespeare Returns to Fleet Landing

By Nancy Lundgren



"What think you of falling in love?" This was the opening of Shakespeare's light-hearted comedy *As You Like It* in the April 7 University of North Florida (UNF) Shakespeare Ensemble's buoyant, minimalist adaptation. Directed, produced, and edited by Professor Will Pewitt (Assistant Director, Hicks Honors College), the piece showcased a cast of students from disciplines across the university.

This 90-minute Johnson Hall performance moved at a lively clip: choices were economical, physical comedy crisp, and the pacing kept the audience consistently engaged. The company of 12 actors created vivid, distinct characters and moments of comic timing were balanced by genuine tenderness in the play's romantic pairings. Jaques's "All the World's a Stage" speech offered a quiet counterpoint to the surrounding merriment.

Three crew members provided American Sign Language interpretation. The tech crew members worked visibly and seamlessly to maintain momentum, a testament to the production's collaborative discipline.

The result was an enjoyable, deftly staged evening of theater that affirmed the enduring power of Shakespeare's funny and warm comedy. Bravo to the UNF Shakespeare Ensemble!

Behind the Recipe

By Enith Vardaman



Chatting with the audience before the demonstration began



View from in front of the tables



View from behind the tables as seen on the screens



Left: Examples of plating of the dish.

Right: A sample-sized serving of the dish.

The second presentation in the “Behind the Recipe” series, held on April 9 in Johnson Hall, featured Executive Chef Chris Gotschall. He chose an ambitious dish: seared scallops with pork belly, sweet corn polenta, grapefruit buerre blanc, and citrus gremolata. Some ingredients, which could not be ready in the one-hour time slot for the event, were prepared in advance. That still left plenty to demonstrate as Gotschall followed his dictum of preparing the ingredients in an order that achieved a timely finish of the dish.

The audience could view the activity from the front of the tables set up for the demonstration. Thanks to a camera projecting images on the screens, they also had a view from behind the tables. (The camera did need a periodic prompt to remain operating.)

Gotschall kept up a running commentary describing what he was doing. He also offered opinions on such matters as his preferred oil, his choice of knives and their maintenance, and the importance of selecting the proper plate for any given dish. He answered questions from the audience as well.

For those brave enough to try to make the dish, there was a handout with recipes for all the ingredients.

Any hunger pangs the demonstration elicited were satiated: Dining Services staff had prepared sample-sized servings of the dish. The finished product met Gotschall’s criteria for varied textures and tastes: creamy, crispy, sweet, salty, tart, and bright colors.

Duo Arpeggione

By Chet Davis



Duo Arpeggione returned to Johnson Hall on April 3. Dr. Catherine Lan (piano) and Dr. Claudio Jaffe (cello) began with Bach’s Sonata for Viola da Gamba in G minor (date uncertain, but likely late 1730’s or early 1740’s), and Beethoven’s Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 3 (1807-1808).

Jaffe showed his sense of humor in his comments throughout the concert, but particularly in those before the duo performed American composer Arthur Foote’s Romanza Op. 33 (1893). Stumbling over the name of Foote’s alma mater (Harvard), he said that, as a Yale graduate, he had a hard time with that word. He did note that Foote was the first American composer to study exclusively in the United States, and that his 1875 Harvard master’s degree in music was the first ever granted by an American university.

Lan and Jaffe concluded their program with the lovely, lively, and challenging *Tarantella* (1880) by Prague-born composer David Popper.

Duo Arpeggione, as always, presented a varied and interesting program. Another return visit would be welcome.

Fleet Landing Passover Seder

By Judy Poppell; photos by Ellen Berson



Left: Judy Poppell.

Right: Nancy Stein with the Seder plate of symbolic foods.



Left: Isadora (l) and Anya Silvester.

Right: Some of the guests at the Seder.

Fleet Landing is a fitting place to observe Passover, and The Atlantic was the perfect backdrop for this cherished community tradition on April 3. Passover is a week-long holiday, and its story is told through meaningful rituals and traditional foods—especially matzah, the crisp, unleavened bread, along with other symbolic dishes that are part of the celebration.

Passover—also called Pesach, and one of the most celebrated holidays in the Jewish world—commemorates the biblical Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. During the Seder, we retell the Exodus story each year, including the role of Moses in leading the Israelites from slavery to freedom. It's also wonderfully participatory: Everyone reads along and joins in singing traditional holiday songs. And at its heart, it is a reminder to care for those less fortunate, welcoming all who are hungry, including the stranger, to share in the Seder meal.

There was a special touch to this year's Seder: A total of ten members of the family of residents Janet and Terry Silvester were present. Their granddaughters, Isadora and Anya Silvester, read the Four Questions—traditionally asked by a child—about how this night was different from all other nights. Isadora read the questions in Hebrew, and Anya read them in English. A lovely exception to the rare presence of children at a Fleet Landing Seder.

Many thanks to our chefs for preparing a sumptuous Passover dinner featuring all the traditional holiday foods—and to our terrific servers for making sure everyone was served expeditiously and efficiently. With a venue that allows us to include all who wish to attend, the evening truly met its purpose. A great time was had by all.

Editor's note: Ellen Berson is the daughter of resident Harriet Berson.

Mandarin Art Festival

By Guy Bond

Photos by Guy Bond and and Kathy Vanderbeck



A busload of Fleet Landing residents made the short trip to the Mandarin Art Festival on April 4, joining thousands of visitors at one of Jacksonville's most enduring spring traditions.

Held annually in the Mandarin area of Jacksonville, the festival has drawn artists and art lovers together since its founding in 1968. Aside from a pandemic-related pause in 2020, the Easter weekend event has built a reputation for both quality and charm, blending fine art with a relaxed, neighborhood feel.

This year's festival featured more than 100 juried artists offering works ranging from painting and sculpture to photography and handcrafted jewelry. Beyond the exhibits, attendees browsed the popular Green Market, sampled fare from the busy food court while enjoying live entertainment, and took in a children's art show that highlighted young local talent.

Keys That Sparkled: Joshua Ross Enchants Fleet Landing

By Nancy Lundgren



Joshua Ross, a fast-rising artist in the classical music world, lit up Johnson Hall on April 13 with an hour of vivid, expertly shaped piano music.

The audience was treated to a program of works by well-known and less well-known composers: Mozart’s sunny C-major Sonata, Chopin’s mazurkas, Debussy’s dreamy “Clair de Lune” and “La cathédrale engloutie,” and Falla’s fiery “La vida breve,” together with Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona’s playful “Mazurka glissando” that drew delighted smiles, German composer Albert Ellmenreich’s characterful “Musikalische Genrebilder,” and Spanish composer Enrique Granados’s charming and lyrical “Canción de Mayo” and “Berceuse.”

Special thanks to Walter and Cynthia Graham, whose more than a decade-long support of musical performances brought Ross to Fleet Landing and made this memorable concert possible.

April MOAA Meeting

By Chet Davis



Craig Malloy (l) and Bob Peterson

In the absence of Pat Kluever, President of the Historic Mayport Chapter of the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA), Vice President Bob Peterson presided over the April 28 meeting. The guest

speaker, Captain Craig Malloy NC/USN, director of Naval Hospital Jacksonville and commander of Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Jacksonville, provided an interesting briefing on his various responsibilities.

Naval Hospital Jacksonville serves the fourth-largest Navy population in the nation and provides care through the hospital and five branch clinics: Naval Station Mayport; Naval Air Station Jacksonville; Kings Bay, GA; Albany, GA; and Key West, FL.

Malloy’s philosophy is to set the standard, be the standard, and lead the standard. These principles guide his leadership and provide the basis for enhancing service through all facilities.

Malloy said that since 2024, his staff has been reduced from 2,200 to 1,785. Shortages exist across the system, yet he must meet deployment support needs, such as those arising from the current events in the Middle East. Limited resources and staffing require patient prioritization: warfighters first, then families, then retirees.

Malloy cited his successful efforts to provide healthcare in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Malloy’s informative talk was followed by a lively question and answer session.

FLEET BEAT Abroad

Jackie and Dave Smith have made a practice of taking *FLEET BEAT* along when traveling abroad. It was last seen with them when they traveled to Iceland. (See *FLEET BEAT*, Sept./Oct. 2025, page 26). This time it accompanied them to the Galápagos.



Kayaking and Hiking at Hanna Park

Photos by Glenn Perry and Chris Stanley

On April 2, a guide from the Timucuan Parks Foundation led a group of Fleet Landing residents on a kayak tour and hike through woods to the beach at Hanna Park. Roseate spoonbills and great egrets were welcome sights, with alligators being interesting, but carefully viewed from a distance.



Fleet Landing Croquet Club

By Mike Foster



LtoR: Bob Peterson, Ernie Bio, Eunice Rogerson, Shann Purinton

Under a beautiful blue sky at the LaHatte Croquet Court, the stage was set for what many anticipated, a very competitive croquet doubles match between Shann Purinton and Eunice Rogerson versus Bob Peterson and Ernie Bio. To this author, visions of the “Battle of the Sexes” of September 20, 1973, came to mind: A brash Bobby Riggs said he could beat any female challenger. As millions watched on TV, Billy Jean King, in an exciting straight three-set contest, beat Riggs soundly, setting the stage for the advancement of women’s sports for all time. Today’s match went back and forth, with the ladies tying the score at 5-5 after taking two wickets in a row. With the ladies in position to take the championship close at hand, the men rose to the challenge and prevailed, winning the last two wickets and the match 7-5. Congratulations to all for a great match and a fun memory, and congratulations to everyone who participated in this year’s Olympic-Doubles championship.

This year’s doubles championship was fun and successful because of the great participation by all those who played and came out to watch the players. The winners were Gold, Bob Peterson and Ernie Bio; Silver, Eunice Rogerson and Shann Purinton; Bronze, Anna Bio and Janice Flock and Bill Spicer and Terry Voynik.

The Fleet Landing Croquet Club wants to give special thanks to Miles Nogelo and John Neyhart for putting the tournament together, for without them, we would not have been as successful.

As a reminder to all members and anyone interested in playing croquet, we have practices Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 am, Saturday at 9:45 am, and Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 7 pm.

The next mixer will take place on May 9, 10 am to noon, the next meeting will be on May 12 at 4 pm, and National Croquet Day will be at 4 pm on June 5.

Fleet's Got Talent: Music, Memories, and Some New Faces

By Guy Bond



Bob Armacost and Julia Pet-Armacost

The April 11 installment of Fleet's Got Talent, as usual, attracted a packed house in Johnson Hall, where residents and staff once again showcased an impressive range of talents. While music took center stage, the evening also featured a touch of storytelling and plenty of personality.

The show opened with Sandi Smith's spirited rendition of Carly Simon's "You're So Vain," followed by John Rietveld performing Roy Orbison's "Crying." Both were backed by the ever-improving "Come As You Are" Band, whose lineup included Richard and Yim Wong, Tom and Linda Holloman, Guy and Reva Bond, John Rietveld and Estelle "Sparkle" Davis, Robert and Victoria Freeman, Rich Gottlick, and Terry Sullivan.

John Rogerson delivered a soulful performance of "She Touched Me," made famous by Robert Goulet. He was followed by Ernie Bio, Paul Mocko, Bob Peterson, and Rietveld, who teamed up as the Atlantic Beach Boys—managed by Sue Myers—for a lively take on Little Eva's "The Loco-Motion."

Carolyn Johnson then paid tribute to Judy Garland with a heartfelt rendition of "You Made Me Love You," reminding the audience of that timeless style. Bob Ellis, accompanied by Price Schwenck on guitar, offered a mellow version of Toby Keith's "Don't Let the Old Man In," while Julie McLaughlin, with Pete Sheridan on piano, delivered a beautiful interpretation of Tony Bennett's "The Shadow of Your Smile."

Adding humor to the evening, newlyweds Pam and Joe Ruthenberg shared a lighthearted account of their early days of marriage. Rietveld returned to the stage to showcase both his vocal range and dance moves with "That's All That Matters" and "Little Darlin," tunes recorded by Mickey Gilley and The Diamonds, respectively.

Chris Dahlgren, dressed as Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*, charmed the audience with another Judy Garland tribute, an a cappella performance of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Bob Huhta followed with a powerful bass rendition of Bobby Helms's "My Special Angel."

The program then shifted to a classical note, featuring De An Winton on piano and Julia Pet-Armacost on flute performing Claude Debussy's "Rêverie." Staff member

Rob Friedman brought a country flair with George Strait's "All My Exes Live in Texas," while staff member Marie-Claire Allen (drums and vocals)—joined by Guy Bond, Gottlick, staff member Rachel Leslie, Sullivan, and Richard Wong—closed out the evening with an energetic performance of Bob Seeger's "Old Time Rock and Roll."

Fleet's Got Talent continues to be a highlight of the community calendar, and this evening was no exception. The residents and staff who share their gifts make these events truly special. Particular thanks go to Bob Armacost and Julia Pet-Armacost, along with Sue Myer, for bringing it all together. Be sure to mark your calendar for June 13, when the next chapter of Fleet's Got Talent takes the stage.



Sandi Smith and the "Come As You Are" Band



Richard Wong, leader of the "Come As You Are" Band (l) and John Rogerson



The Atlantic Beach Boys (LtoR): Paul Mocko, John Rietveld, Ernie Bio, Bob Peterson



Carolyn Johnson and Bob Ellis (l) and Price Schwenck (continued on next page)

**Fleet's Got Talent:
Music, Memories, and Some New Faces**
(continued from preceding page)



Julia Pet-Armacost and De An Winton hit classical notes as Bob Armacost looks on.



LtoR: Rob Friedman, Marie-Claire Allen, Rachel Leslie



The finale: "Old Time Rock and Roll"



Julie McLaughlin and Pete Sheridan

TAPS Remembrance
By Chet Davis



Joe and Pam Ruthenberg and John Rietveld



Residents gathered at the Flag Plaza on the evening of April 5 to honor Fleet Landing resident-veterans who died in the first quarter of 2026.

Captain Tom Atkins, Chaplain, USN (Ret.) said that this was a sacred moment. He noted the devotion of the deceased to duty while serving in the military.

(continued on next page)



Chris Dahlgren and Bob Huhta

TAPS Remembrance

(continued from preceding page)

Those honored were Brigadier General Bill Crossley, USA (Ret.); Commander Doug Custis, USN (Ret.); Captain Larry Magner, USN (Ret.); Lieutenant Pat Patterson III, USN (Ret.); Sergeant Erwin Schaub, USA; Chief Petty Officer Kenneth Swartzendruber, USN (Ret.); Captain Bill Weimer, USN Chaplain Corps (Ret.); Colonel Andy Wyrick, USAF (Ret.). As each name was called, the bell tolled, and there was a moment of silence.

This ceremony is moving and represents a last farewell to friends and comrades in arms.

Wave of Harmony: 2026 World Tai Chi Day

Text and photo by Nancy Lundgren



Fleet Landing's Fan Tai Chi troupe

More than 20 Fleet Landing residents joined practitioners across the Jacksonville area on Saturday, April 25, to mark World Tai Chi Day. This is an international event observed in over 80 countries on the last Saturday in April at 10 am local time. The coordinated start is intended to create a rolling "wave" of harmony that travels around the globe as day breaks through successive time zones.

Foundation Academy hosted the free, day-long celebration organized locally by Tai Chi For Health and Wellness, founded by Sheri Nicholson and Deirdre Dwyer. The program featured 13 demonstrations showcasing a wide range of tai chi and qigong styles and practices. Fleet Landing's Fan Tai Chi troupe, performing in colorful butterfly costumes, once again drew enthusiastic applause for their graceful, synchronized routine. Kam Lee's Taiji Kungfu Academy delivered a dynamic Double Broadsword demonstration that highlighted power and precision, while Quincy Griffith's Chen Style New Frame 18 impressed with its rooted stances and flowing, spiraling movements.

After lunch, attendees chose between two afternoon workshops: the playful "Juggling Chi" session and the restorative "Yin & Yang in Balance" class. Both emphasized accessible techniques for stress reduction, balance, and whole-body coordination.

It was another beautiful celebration of World Tai Chi Day that enriched all who participated.

On the Trail

By Carole Watson



Classic musicianship met bluegrass in Johnson Hall as the modern acoustic band, On the Trail, played on April 17. The band is comprised of four members: Charlie Widmer, guitarist, songwriter, and Connecticut State Troubadour (official ambassador of music and the arts for the state); Austin Scelzo, violinist and founder of the Connecticut Bluegrass Music Association; Tom Polizzi, electric guitarist and mandolinist; and Matt Curley, upright bass player and a middle school band director. Accomplished vocalists as well, they soloed, and they sang together with impressive harmony.

The Connecticut-based foursome filled the hall with toe tapping, hand clapping bluegrass, as well as contemporary pop and stunning instrumentals. They sang, they strummed, they jammed, and captivated their audience with their high energy performance.

Colombia Cruise

Resident Bobbie Fost, who arranged a cruise on the Magdalena River in Colombia, was joined by Anita Taylor and Bernadette and David Miron on the trip. The photo below shows David with the entire police force of Palenque, Colombia.



Fins & Freedom Sailboat Tour

By Eileen Auitable; photos by Janet Silvester



Terran McGuinness in the foreground



Adventures sometimes have an unexpected way of ending after predictable beginnings. On April 29, thirty-one Fleet Landers boarded the big bus for the St. Augustine harbor. Wellness Manager Mary Faria provided bags of snacks and after arriving at the harbor marina, familiarized us with the facilities before leading us down the gangplank to our vessel. *Freedom* is a 76-foot steel gaff-rigged topsail schooner, owned by the Zaruba family and brought to St. Augustine in 2001 expressly for charter.

After seating our group, both fore and aft, Captain Jack introduced himself and his two-person crew, offered some basic boat nomenclature (bow, stern, starboard, port) and safety instructions, then motored off the dock for our noon sailing. The sails were hoisted into the slight breeze, and the captain held the boat in that position until the 12:30 pm opening of the Bridge of Lions. We motor-sailed through the raised supports into sunny Matanzas Bay. Soon the engine was turned off, and we were treated to the wonderful silence of moving under sail.

Quickly, dolphin fins appeared. Terran McGuinness, our Marineland guide, began a thoroughly informative presentation about everything dolphin. First, they are not porpoises. Most important, these are coastal bottlenose dolphins, adapted to the unique marine environment of the Matanzas River and its small saltwater tributaries. They do not migrate. Their social and food gathering behavior are very different from Georgia coastal dolphins or Gulf Coast dolphins and far removed from their bigger and darker offshore relatives. Food is found within a 20-foot depth, and the seawalls, docks, and piers offer attractive hunting grounds. In addition, the St. Augustine inlet provides a bountiful feast. Adult males, often observed swimming in pairs, are bachelor companions. A large pod of dolphins is usually composed of females and their young. Females often move to other maternal pods, but the bromance pair is for life. A healthy environment can often be measured by an analysis of toxins in a dolphin's fat deposits, and the Matanzas estuary receives high marks in this category. The Marineland research of these local residents is focused on understanding their behavior, communication, and assessing the effects of environmental stress. Everyday observation allows these researchers to identify individual animals by their dorsal fin. After the presentation, a dolphin skull and the bones of the pectoral fin were passed around. The skeletal flipper was startlingly similar to the bone structure of a human arm and hand. McGuinness offered her time and knowledge for a myriad of our group's questions.

We plied the waters of the bay's both shores, spying fins, an occasional breach, and a few instances of close encounters with dolphins sounding under the boat. The libations offered by the crew kept everyone hydrated and

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Fins & Freedom Sailboat Tour

(continued from preceding page)

pleasantly content. Too soon, it was time to slip under the 3 pm bridge opening. A surprising last-minute treat was the romantic antics close to shore of a few manatees as we were docking.

After a group picture and many hearty thanks to Captain Jack and crew, we straggled back to the bus, and by 3:45 pm, we were on our way back to Fleet Landing for a nearly on time arrival, or so we thought. Driving through the middle of town at the expected slow crawl, our experienced driver, Transportation Dispatcher Valerie Grant, chose the faster route on US 1 rather than return on A1A as we had come. To thousands of drivers' surprise, a closure on I-95 choked up all northbound lanes and side entrances of US Highway 1 Business. Exasperated, traveling at maybe one mile an hour, Grant turned back, hoping to find a way out of this mess. After a short excursion down a dead-end road, the chorus of navigators had her heading back to St. Augustine, and we arrived in town around 5:15 pm. It took us another hour to access and cross the Francis and Mary Usina Bridge to A1A, but then encountered no other issues, arriving at Windward Commons at 6:30 pm. The nearly 3-hour return altered some plans for the evening, but the wonderful residuals of this special day overshadowed the last hours—smooth sailing, tanned faces, enjoyable companions, and captivating dolphins.

2026 Putting Tournament

Text and photo by Isobel Spink



LtoR: Ed Williamson, Bob Hunter, Price Schwenck

We had 24 eager participants for our April 1 tournament. There were five finalists, each with 2 holes-in-one: Bob Hunter, Isobel Spink, Janice Flock, Price Schwenck, and a new resident, Ed Williamson. A playoff decided our winners: Bob Hunter (first place for the second time), Price Schwenck (second place), and Ed Williamson (third place).

The FleetLanders Concert

By Guy Bond



Johnson Hall turned back the clock and tuned the dial to a golden age of television on April 22, as *The FleetLanders* launched their second 2026 performance with a lively salute to classic TV themes.

The program played like a greatest-hits reel of early television, opening with childhood staples from *Houdy Doody* and *Popeye* before rolling into crowd-pleasers that spanned generations—*Green Acres*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, *Mister Ed*, *The Brady Bunch*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, and *The Addams Family*. Western themes rode into the spotlight with selections from *The Gene Autry Show*, *Rawhide*, and *The Roy Rogers Show*, while later classics like *The Carol Burnett Show*, *Cheers*, *Happy Days*, and *Laverne & Shirley* kept the momentum rolling.

The band's chemistry was unmistakable. Karen Sturtevant's piano anchored the sound, Jim Katsikas kept a crisp, driving beat on drums, and De An Winton's alto sax layered in warmth and sparkle. Julia Pet-Armacost moved seamlessly between flute, guitar, melodica, and vocals, while Bob Armacost and Guy Van Syckle delivered relaxed charm on acoustic guitars and with vocals. Guy Bond's electric bass guitar tied it all together.

Armacost's portrayal of Popeye was masterful. One of the afternoon's biggest moments came when Winton cut loose on "Yakety Sax," the unmistakable theme from *The Benny Hill Show*.

But the real magic? The audience. Voices rose from every corner of Johnson Hall as attendees joined in, turning the concert into a full-blown singalong. By the final number, the line between performers and crowd had all but disappeared.

If the goal was nostalgia, mission accomplished—but this was more than a look back. It was a reminder of how music, much like those old TV shows, recalled times when our families were together.

And there's more local talent on the horizon. Upcoming performances include Readers Theater on May 11 and 12, *The FleetLanders* on July 9, *Fleet Classics* on May 12, Ivy Suter and Friends on May 18, Fleet's Got Karaoke on May 23, Fleet's Got Talent on June 13, and a patriotic celebration featuring the Serendipity Singers and Fleet Harmony on June 29.

Coffee and Conversation: Community Insights

(continued from page 1)

will change in the future as part of a natural cycle.

The final part of the financial report drew cheers from the audience: The property insurance surcharge, which has been in effect, but gradually lowered since the beginning of 2024, will be eliminated entirely as of June 1, 2026. In further good news, Fleet Landing was able to procure \$100 million of increased coverage for only \$2,000.

Campus Master Planning

Ashby began by citing the fact that today's 125-acre campus was the result of 12 real estate transactions over the last 36 years. The majority of the buildings are nearly 36 years old. Physical obsolescence is not a problem for any of them, but changes to consumer preferences make some of them susceptible to market obsolescence. The goal of master planning for the next 10+ years is to make sure our community remains relevant, desirable, and competitive. Taking a proactive approach, Fleet Landing has assembled a project team made up of Gensler (architect), Greystone Communities (development consultant, to determine likely affordability and the means of achieving it), and GBA (civil engineer, to determine possibilities for use of the land, given such restriction as height limitations).

The next step in the master planning process was a confidential lifestyle survey, developed by Gensler, that was sent out immediately after "Coffee and Conversation" to gather information from current and future residents.

A preliminary version of the masterplan, anticipated to be ready for the July "Coffee and Conversation," will address three things: independent living expansion, the Derfer Pavilion, and Leeward Manor. The last two named are the closest to market obsolescence and likely to be the first to be addressed in the masterplan. The independent living expansion would allow Fleet Landing to serve more people, and it would also provide the necessary financial resources to support the masterplan.

The Legacy Trail

Full funding for this project is close enough to proceed with construction. Permitting is underway, and, pending approvals, construction could begin in late July or early August. Completion of the project is expected to take 12-15 months. Efforts will be made to keep disruptions to a minimum, and residents will be informed throughout the project. Anyone interested in providing financial support for the project may contact Ashby.

Riverside Update

Ashby said that Fleet Landing Riverside was a concept under evaluation. The location is the former site of the corporate headquarters of Haskell, the design-build firm (where Fleet Landing was designed), in Jacksonville's Brooklyn neighborhood. The site is under contract, with a purchasing decision due later this summer after verification that this is a viable community opportunity.

Solara Care Solutions Update

Ashby reported significant statistics about Solara Care Solutions from April 2025 through March 2026: About double the number of clients are starting services each month, the number of private-care hours provided had tripled, and there are now 71 Solara team members. Anyone interested in Solara's services can contact Lisa Leifheit (lleifheit@solarajax.com or 904.597.0712).

NRC Survey Results

Thompson began his presentation with a report on the March resident survey, one of the two conducted annually. The second will take place in August. The surveys allow management to see the impact of operational decisions on resident satisfaction, and they are strategically scheduled to help decision making at such times as budget season when plans for the future are being made.

Survey feedback, which is reviewed by the senior leadership team, is helpful in areas such as management initiatives and resource allocation decisions. Results of the survey are shared with the Board of Directors and staff.

The response rate of 58.6 percent (961 surveys distributed and 563 responses received) was slightly less than in the past, but was still well above the average rate for such surveys.

Thompson next discussed the net promoter score (NPS), which is derived from responses to the survey question, "How likely would you be to recommend this facility to your family and friends?" Scores in the -1 to -100 range are classified as "Needs Improvement." The three categories of scores in the positive range are "Good" (zero and above), "Excellent" (50 and above), and "World Class" (70 and above). Fleet Landing's NPS was 79.8. Broken down by level of living, Fleet Landing's scores were 78.3 for independent living, 88.7 for assisted living, and 71.9 for skilled nursing. By comparison, The Wine Group had a -15 NPS, Nike a 39 NPS, and Mercedes-Benz a 48 NPS.

Thompson displayed a chart of independent living scores on 12 survey questions. The chart compared Fleet Landing scores with benchmark scores of communities like ours. In almost all cases, Fleet Landing met or exceeded the benchmark, but these scores are an aid in showing where the leadership team needs to focus its attention. Examples: The CoreQ Overall rating of food was by far the lowest score (but still significantly above the benchmark), and dealing with concerns in a timely manner fell slightly below the benchmark.

Thompson said the hundreds of written comments—he read every one of them—were helpful as well. The senior leadership team also reviews them. Positive comments reinforce continued pursuance of practices. Examples included the availability of shredding services on campus and the very full activity calendar. The constructive comments are helpful too. The suggestion to post the daily specials online so that those with poor hearing would not have to call has already been implemented. Others

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Coffee and Conversation: Community Insights

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are more problematic, with some residents wanting more comfort food and fried food, and others complaining that there is too much fried food.

Campus Project Updates

The roofing project for the 100-130 manor homes is essentially complete ahead of schedule, with the vendor having done an excellent job. The roofing of the 1000 Building—done by a vendor superior to the vendor for the 2000 and 3000 buildings—and the Derfer Pavilion refresh are also ahead of schedule. Getting the city inspection has caused a slight holdup in completion of the bike pavilion. The contract for the new phone system has been signed, and the system should be operational in some 60 days. The Coleman Center dishwashing room leak repair is now proceeding well. Some residents have said that they liked having the food served on a single plate, a measure taken during the repair, and continuing that practice is under consideration. The campus ops facility project is progressing and the 5500 block roofing project has begun. Upgrading the elevators in the 1000 and 4000 buildings should begin before too long.

Miscellaneous

The recent small lithium ion battery fire in a personal device caused no injuries and was quickly taken care of. Thompson provided information about blankets specifically for lithium ion battery fires. Some residents have chosen to purchase them. Noting that such incidents are rare, he stressed that residents did not need to purchase a blanket. Lessons learned from this event have resulted in updated training, and this information will be shared during the scheduled independent living apartment annual fire drills.

Thompson said that the service animal and pet policy had not changed, and encouraged residents to review the relevant section of the *Resident Handbook*. Service animals are allowed throughout the community, but they must be housebroken and kept under control. Fleet Landing handles the verification of service animal status. Residents do not need to do so. Emotional support animals do not qualify as service animals.

There is a Wi-Fi problem in select areas of the campus. An outside firm has been contracted to verify what is suspected to be the source of the problem and to implement a solution.

The cyber event notification letter recently received by some residents did not reflect a new cyber incident. The third-party company handling the incident was notifying residents who were not among those who received that letter at an earlier date.

Thompson closed his presentation with thanks in several areas. This included the Residents' Council members for their service to the community and the participants in the Fleet Landing Olympics. He noted the gold medal winners in independent living and in the healthcare facilities, the contribution of the Kazoo Band

at the closing ceremony, and a resident (Ronae Bitter) doing the 8-minute, 8-second plank. Finally, he thanked everyone who came out for the Dancing in the Streets Block Party, and commented on the excellent band, food, and caricature artist as well as the parrots.

Family Photos



Josh Ashby snapped this picture of his children (LtoR) Vivian, Cosette, and Connor with his wife, Stefani.



Matt Thompson and his wife, Nancy, at the site where their new home will be built.

Editor's note: The slides for “Coffee and Conversation: Community Insights” can be found on Fleet Link. Go to “Fleet Landing Presentations” and then “Coffee and Conversation.”

Emerald Princess Casino Dinner Cruise

By Isobel Spink

On April 26, after an hour's drive, with an occasional brief downpour, we crossed into smoky Georgia, where we boarded our ship in Brunswick. Each passenger was given a drink ticket. The ship had three levels, each with a tall, steep staircase. The top deck was our dining room, and the other two decks held hundreds of slot machines with various games, two roulette tables, craps, poker, and blackjack tables and every other imaginable gambling facility.

The gambling couldn't begin until we were three miles out and into federal waters, but as soon as the
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Emerald Princess Casino Dinner Cruise

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announcement came, the tables filled up. Unfortunately, we were not advised beforehand to bring cash, and without it, you needed a debit card to use the ATM machine on board.

Our “dinner,” held from 12 pm to 2 pm, was a buffet with fried chicken, mashed potatoes, beans, salad, and strawberry shortcake. We could get nacho snacks at 5 pm.

The only seats not in front of slot machines or gambling tables were at the bar, but I must admit, they made a mean margarita.

Several of our Fleet Landing cruisers came home with substantial cash, others lost and won intermittently. Many of those on board came regularly every Saturday or Sunday and had their favorite spots. Smoking was allowed on all decks, but it wasn't a problem, as most hands were busy pushing buttons and piling up chips.

We arrived home later than expected, but we all had fun cruising and gambling.

Mill Creek Farm Retirement Home for Horses

Text and photos by Mary Durkin



*Left: Mary Durkin and an appreciative horse.
Right: Sandy Bousquet reading the biographies of horses in one of the corrals.*



*Left: Chris Stanley approaches two horses who are anticipating getting treats.
Right: Barbette Steele and another appreciative horse.*

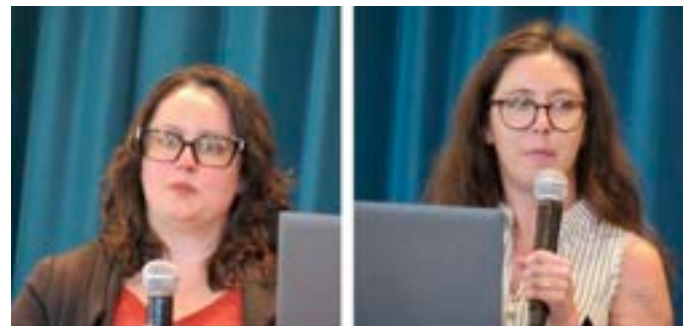
In 1983, Brits Peter and Mary Gregory bought 140 acres of a watermelon farm to set up a retirement home for abused, neglected, and starved horses. Since then, the farm has expanded to 335 acres and now houses over 130 horses. Our visit of 17 Fleet Landers on April 18, was a fraction of the 730 visitors they received that Saturday, the only day of the week they are open to the public. Mary Gregory herself was at the entrance to welcome us into the grounds with tips on how to proceed with a map, along with a bag of carrots and apples in hand, supplied to us by Wellness Services Manager Mary Faria.

The first stop was the apple corer, which cut apples into sections and removed the core and seeds not good for the horses. From there, we were all off on our own to wander the many trails through the grounds. At each corral, there were horses waiting for treats, with heads hanging over the railings. Corrals may have signs for “No Carrots” because the horses don't have teeth, or have a digestive problem. Corrals often have a directory, a biography of each horse in that corral. Many are hard to read stories about abuse or neglect that brought the horse to Mill Creek, where it would live a much better life. It took a few times to adjust to the horse taking the treat off your outstretched flat hand, but once used to the feel, one just wanted to feed them all. And that's what we tried to do, as we walked the beautiful grounds to as many of the 45 corrals as time allowed.

For lunch, we stopped at El Patio restaurant in nearby Alachua. Beside the great service and good food, this restaurant will be remembered for its bright booths, tables, and chairs, all painted with colorful Mexican scenes. After a day of exercise and a satisfying lunch, the ride home was very quiet as many took a nap and let bus driver Terri Holland take us on a smooth ride home.

April WELLInspired Learning Series

By Victoria Freeman



Janelle Kelley (l) and Isabella Hillerby

“Making Sense of Dizziness and Tinnitus” was the topic of the April 14 WELLInspired Learning Series talk in Johnson Hall. The speakers were Janelle Kelley and Isabella Hillerby from the Jacksonville Hearing and Balance Institute. Both hold a Doctor of Audiology degree.

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April WELLInspired Learning Series

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Kelley cited statistics about tinnitus: Approximately 16 million individuals seek medical attention for tinnitus, and for about 2 million of them, the condition significantly interferes with daily life.

Tinnitus is the perception of sound without an external source. It can sound like ringing, buzzing, crickets, or chirping, and it can be constant or intermittent. Some individuals experience it in one ear, while others perceive it in both. For some, tinnitus is only a minor annoyance; for others, it can lead to depression, sleep deprivation, and difficulty concentrating. Hearing loss is by far the most common cause of tinnitus.

Kelley discussed the brain’s amygdala and its role in linking stimuli to memory and emotional response. When tinnitus is perceived as a negative event, the amygdala becomes activated, reinforcing the brain’s response. Over time, habituation, the diminishing of the response, can develop.

To reduce the impact of a negative tinnitus response, professional care is recommended, beginning with comprehensive audiometric and health evaluations. Treatment options may include sound generators or hearing aid and tinnitus masker combination devices.

Hillerby began her discussion of dizziness with a statistic: About 40 percent of adults experience dizziness, which peaks between the ages of 53 and 64. Dizziness is a leading cause of physician visits, and more women than men are affected. Hillerby described in detail the extensive testing involved in diagnosis and treatment options.

Chess Club News

By Richard Wong



Two chess problems: White mates in two moves
 Chess tip: Knights post near the center, not on the side.

Chips and Putts

By Bob Neal

Windy Harbor lived up to its name for the April 9 Fleet Landing Golf Tournament. Five teams teed off in blustery conditions, with winds exceeding 20 mph forcing the round to be shortened to nine holes. The challenging weather sent shots sailing and made the already thick rough even more punishing for errant balls. Despite the conditions, one team thrived. Nancy Sander led Atlantic Club members, Marcia Plumley and Rick Hammer to an impressive victory. Anchored by Hammer, the team carded one eagle and one birdie to finish at three-under-par 33—clearly mastering conditions that troubled the rest of the field. Finishing second, the team captained by Bunky Johnson, alongside Price Schwenck, Bob Peterson, and Phil McCullough (Atlantic Club) delivered a steady performance. With one birdie and no bogeys, they posted a solid 35. Two teams tied for third at two-over-par 38. The team led by Bob Neal with Tom Dahlgren and Bob Hunter, matched the score of the team captained by Paul Donohue with Bob Springer and John Rietveld. Rounding out the field, the team of Elton Gogolin, Dave Smith, Jim Wayrynen, and Robert Ezell battled the elements to finish with a 41.

Individual honors for longest drive went to Sander and Hammer, while Johnson claimed closest to the pin on hole five. Notably, for the sixth consecutive month, no ladies hit the green on that hole—perhaps a streak to be broken next month at Jacksonville Beach Golf Course.

Kazoos and Sunshine: Olympic Games Opening Ceremony

(continued from page 1)

began the relay. Carr and the team kept the pace lively with Olympic-themed tunes piped from a cheerful boom box on wheels, drawing neighbors out to wave and cheer along the route around the neighborhood loop and down Main Street to North Point, past The Nancy House, Leeward, and Derfer, and back up to Windward Commons for much-needed refreshments.

The parade paused for kazoo interludes and passing of the torch. Besides McDonald, 11 residents took part as torchbearers: Linda Gottlick, Mary Durkin, Dan Barry, Leticia Juarez-Aguirre (accompanied by her granddaughter), Mike Purinton, JB Burns, Nancy Cueroni, Maraul Boulware, Regina Story, Lee Spancake, and Paula O'Bannon. The whole campus was represented, as some of the torchbearers were residents of the healthcare facilities. The cheers and applause for the bearers made each torch transfer special.

It was another signature event at Fleet Landing, where staff and residents make every day a victory lap.



Arrival at Windward Commons



Enjoying refreshments after the parade



Setting out



Leticia Juarez-Aguirre passes the torch to Mike Purinton.

It's Back!

Photo by Nancy Russell

This large crane was a familiar sight when the 2000 Building and 3000 Building were having their roofs replaced. It returned once the roof replacement of the 1000 Building got underway.



In Memoriam
Keith Kraegel
1948-2026

Dancing in the Streets Block Party

By Victoria Freeman

Photos by Dita Domonkos, Ed Hollender, and Janet Silvester.

On April 25, Fleet Landing folks took to the street for two and a half hours of dancing, listening to the Sidewalk 65 band and sampling delicious items from a variety of food trucks with cuisine from Argentina, Mexico, the Philippines, the Middle East, Italy, and Greece as well as seafood, burgers, barbecue, and gourmet ice pops. A caricature artist made a number of people happy with personal cartoons. Others walked on the wild side when they offered an arm or a shoulder to a parrot.



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Dancing in the Streets Block Party (continued from preceding page)



Iron Chef: Fleet Landing By Carol Smith



Chef Ty (l) and Chef Kirt



LtoR: Elvis Burrows, Louis Gonzalez, Dee Waiters



LtoR: Chris Gotschall, Dave Russell, Matt Thompson



Samples for attendees to try: Chef Ty's dish (l) and Chef Kirt's dish

The second Iron Chef: Fleet Landing cooking competition drew an enthusiastic crowd of more than 100 residents to Johnson Hall on April 2 for an afternoon of culinary creativity and friendly competition. Chef Ty Tricoglou from 30 North faced off against Chef Kirt Francis from Health Services, each challenged to create an original dish featuring the “secret ingredient”—coffee beans.

Serving as judges were Executive Chef Chris Gotschall, Residents’ Council Dining Liaison Dave Russell, and Executive Director Matt Thompson. They were asked to judge the dishes on four criteria: presentation, taste, use of the special ingredient, and creativity.

Chef Kirt impressed the panel with a ground coffee-crust beef tenderloin accompanied by roasted Brussels sprouts in balsamic reduction, and served over a puréed parsnip and black garlic base. Ultimately, however, Chef Ty won the vote of the judges, earning a winning score of 142 points. His coffee and Urfa-crust ahi tuna served atop cinnamon and orange flatbread proved to be both visually striking and exceptionally flavorful, winning votes from judges and audience members alike.

Senior Director of Food and Beverage Elvis Burrows energized the event as emcee, using live camera work to project the chefs’ preparation onto the big screens that allowed spectators an up-close view of the action. He was assisted by Catering and Special Events Manager Louis Gonzalez and Health Services Executive Chef Dee Waiters. Much of the Fleet Landing Dining Services staff participated as well, assembling and serving bite-sized samples so everyone in attendance could experience the competing dishes firsthand.

Audience members were quick to encourage Chef Ty to add his winning creation to the 30 North menu. The ahi tuna was complemented by artichoke yogurt, fermented tomato, coffee-braised trumpet mushrooms, and feta espuma, and finished with a drizzle of espresso syrup. Watch for a flurry of 30 North reservations, with residents hoping to see this unique dish as a featured nightly special in the near future.

Fleet Landing in the News

By Enith Vardaman

Submissions by residents Jackie Smith and Fran and Pete Sheridan appeared in the “Letters to the Editor” section of the April 26 edition of *The Florida Times-Union*.

New Resident Mix & Mingle

By Mary Durkin



LtoR: Matt Thompson, Wendy Tamarit, Louis Gonzalez



The last New Resident Mix & Mingle was held in the fall of 2025, so besides new residents, there were also several new Fleet Landing management team members involved for the first time on April 10. Executive Director Matt Thompson, Director of Wellness Wendy Tamarit, and Catering and Special Events Manager Louis Gonzalez welcomed new and old residents to the mixer, which included a table of appetizers and an open bar offering a variety of libations.

Of the eight new residents introduced on slides, only four were present, so everyone had an ample opportunity to meet and greet them. Leticia Juarez-Aguirre moved from the Washington, DC, area and was introduced to Fleet Landing by residents Maureen and Craig Miller. Sally and Ed Williamson moved from the Phoenix, AZ, area to be closer to family. Nancy Cunningham came to Fleet Landing from Savannah, GA, and Susan Lehr had a much shorter move being a local from Jacksonville.

Tamarit kept the mixer going when she organized the crowd into small groups to play The Letter Game, in which the teams had to come up with a unique word, each starting with the same letter, that applied to ten different categories. With our residents being so well-read and such seasoned travelers, it was fun as each group tried to outthink the others. The winning team members got a free drink ticket, always a much-desired prize.

Strikes & Spares

By Jim LeBlanc

Our 17 Fleet Landing Wii bowling teams are competing against 87 continuing care retirement community (CCRC) teams from 19 states in the National Senior League's Spring Tournament. Teams had just completed five weeks of conference play as this article was written. At the conclusion of conference play on May 1, conference winners will be named. Playoffs will begin on May 2, with national winners announced on June 5.

Notables from the first 5 weeks of competition.

300 Games: Jim LeBlanc, 2; Jim Joyner, 1; Karen LeBlanc, 1

299 "OOPS": Jim LeBlanc, 2

Top 5 Averages: Jim LeBlanc, 262; Jim Joyner, 250; Walter Kraslawsky, 242; Dede LeClaire, 238; Kathy Vanderbeck, 236

A number of Fleet Landing Wii bowlers have shown their skills at making challenging splits including the most difficult 7-10 split. Congratulations to the following bowlers.

Challenging Splits Made:

7-10: Karen Habell, Leilani Roberts; 6-7-10: Karen Habell, Gerry Nogelo; 4-7-10: Karen LeBlanc, Dick Sturtevant; 4-5-7-10: Nancy Stein, Nancy Van Kirk; 3-6-7: Alan Jameson; 4-10: Janet Silvester; 2-3-7-8: Bunky Johnson.

Olympic Games: Selected Scenes

Photos by Janet Silvester and Ann Bell

There were so many games that it was not possible to have a photographer at each one. Below is a selection of scenes from the competitions the photographers were able to attend.



Croquet Semi-final Match



Kayak Race: Men



Sloop Sailing



Bike Race



Pickleball: Women's Doubles (l) and Men's Doubles



Strength-Wall Sit



Ping-Pong Doubles



Cornhole

Olympic Games Closing Ceremony

By Enith Vardaman

Photos by Ed Hollender and Janet Silvester



The Closing Ceremony of the Olympic Games got off to a rousing start as the Kazoo Band, under the direction of Carol Smith, marched into Johnson Hall. The band contributed to the festive atmosphere throughout the April 24 event, playing the familiar opening measures of the “Olympic Fanfare and Theme” after the winners of each of the games was announced.

Following welcoming remarks by Director of Wellness Wendy Tamarit and Fitness Manager Margaret Carr, fitness instructors Naomi Charles and Brooke Drawdy announced the winners of the numerous competitions. They began with the winners from Leeward Manor, North Point, Derfer, and The Nancy House. The photos below show as many of the independent living residents as could be present for the awarding of medals. Unless otherwise noted, gold medal winners occupy the center spot, with silver medalists on the right, and bronze medalists on the left.



Kazoo Band



Wendy Tamarit (l) and Margaret Carr



Naomi Charles (l) and Brooke Drawdy



Pickleball Mixed Doubles: Carl Tungli-Giese and Mary Durkin, Sue Myers and Jim Stephenson, Nancy Stein and Richard Wong (too many to fit on the winners' stand)



Pickleball-Men's Doubles: Carl Tungli-Giese and Miles Nogelo, Mike Foster and Philip Mathew, Jim Stephenson and Richard Wong



Pickleball-Women's Doubles: Reva Bond (not pictured: Kathy Long), Nancy Stein and Marianne Jerpbak, Gail Sharp (not pictured: Ann Esse)



Strength-Plank: Bob Peterson and Linda Gottlick (tied), Ronae Bitter (record 8, 8 seconds), Susan Mathew (continued on next page)

Olympic Games Closing Ceremony

(continued from preceding page)



Left: Strength-Wall Sit: Susan Mathew, Ronae Bitter, Linda Gottlick.

Right: Endurance-Step-ups: Susan Mathew, Linda Gottlick, Bob Peterson (all first place).



Left: Endurance-Rowing-Women: Susan Mathew, Linda Gottlick.

Right: Endurance-Rowing-Men: Bob Peterson, Carl Tungli-Giese.



Left: Radio-Controlled Sailing: Jim Leipold (second place), John Stephens, Pete Pitard (third place).
Special recognition: Joanie Fowinkle, the only woman.

Right: Sloop Sailing: Dale Bitter and Dick Keith.
Randy McDonald and Rich Gottlick.



Left: Swimming-Speed Race: Jay Dowling, Tom Dahlgren, Joy Miller.

Right: Swimming-Endurance Race: Joy Miller, Jay Dowling, Catherine Dowling.



Ping-Pong-Doubles: Jim Pope and Sally James, Frances Jones and Don Husmann, Chris Leclair and Mary Pat Lynch.



Left: Ping-Pong-Women: Miriam Putterman, Sarah Lamont, Nancy Stein.

Right: Ping-Pong-Men: Bob Phinney, Carl Tungli-Giese, Jim Pope.



Left: Kayak-Women: Linda Gottlick, Deb Seward.

Right: Carl Tungli-Giese, Bob Peterson, Dale Bitter.



Croquet Doubles: Bill Spicer and Terry Voynik, Mary Steinke and Anna Bio (third place tie), Bob Peterson and Ernie Bio, Eunice Rogerson and Shann Purinton



Cornhole: Estelle Davis and John Rogerson, Eunice Rogerson (special recognition for all four of her bags in the hole) and Jack Stewart, Marj McMahon and Mike Foster



Putting Green: Bunky Johnson, Tom Dahlgren, Mike Purinton

(continued on next page)

Olympic Games Closing Ceremony

(continued from preceding page)



Left: Bike Race-5K: Richard Wong, Paul Dohohue, Jay Dowling.

Center: Bike Race-5K: Peggy Steck (special recognition, the only participant in the women's division—and well-known campus cyclist).

Right: Bike Race-10K: Dale Bitter, Dave Russell.

A Hanna Park Bird Bonanza

By Nancy Lundgren



Black-necked stilt (l) and swallow-tailed kite



Female wood duck (l) and male wood duck



Anhinga with catfish (l), black vultures (center), black-crowned night heron



Roseate spoonbills

Fleet Landing Birdwatchers enjoyed a spectacular morning at Hanna Park on April 18 with guides Frances Edwards and Mike Marchetti leading the way. Right at the start, we scored our “Bird of the Day”: the black-necked stilt, a long-legged shorebird with pinkish legs, striking black-and-white plumage, and a thin black bill.

The treetops were dazzling with more than 35 roseate spoonbills basking in the sun beside a cluster of snowy egrets in full plumage, creating a gorgeous pink-and-white collage. Red-winged blackbirds were abundant and easy to spot by their red shoulder patches, while some spotted sandpipers busily worked the lake edge for breakfast. Anhingas and cormorants treated the group to some comical antics as they caught and then juggled their catch-of-the-day.

In all, we recorded 31 species. Then the perfect finale came as several swallow-tailed kites soared overhead, putting on an aerial show as we wrapped up the outing. A beautiful morning of birds and bright feathers!

Janet Silvester, our photographer-in-residence, captured it all. To see her photos in color, go to *FLEET BEAT* under “Publications” on Fleet Link.

Library Notes

By Enith Vardaman

The Library Committee thanks its recent donors: Estate of Bill Crossley, Don Husmann, CeCe Lichtenstein, Ann Linn, Pete Pitard, Leilani Roberts, Jackie Smith, and Chris Stanley.

Resident John Hull has generously donated a copy of his recently published thriller, *Dust: WMD*. It can be found on the Fleet Landing Authors shelf.

Reminder: Please be respectful of others who use our beautiful library. If you take a book from a shelf just briefly, return it to the exact place you got it from. Books that have been borrowed are to be returned by placing them on the book truck located between the library office and the library. Library Committee members are finding incorrectly shelved books far too frequently. If you shelve a book in the wrong place, you are preventing another person from finding it. Place donations on the same book truck as the returns. Please do not clutter the library by leaving a box of books at a random location.

UNF Musical Talent

By Enith Vardaman



Bach violin soloists



Beethoven piano trio



Simon Shiao and Gary Smart

The reason that the University of North Florida's (UNF's) School of Music is highly regarded was evident when students and faculty performed in Johnson Hall on April 20. Dr. Simon Shiao, Associate Professor, Violin and Viola and UNF Orchestra Conductor was emcee for the concert.

First on the program were two solo violin performances of works by Bach. Shiao noted that the intricate nature of these works made them challenging, and that they required advanced technical skill. Each of the students gave an impressive performance.

A highlight of the program was an early Beethoven work, Piano Trio Op. 1. no. 3 in C minor for violin, cello, and piano. All three students demonstrated their mastery of the piece, with the pianist providing an especially outstanding performance.

The remaining works on the program were performed by Shiao and Dr. Gary Smart, Professor, Piano/Composition/Improvisation.

Shiao and Smart played two pieces with contrasting

emotional impact: John Williams's moving "Theme from *Schindler's List*" and Fritz Kreisler's lively "Liebesfreud" ("Love's Joy").

Smart concluded the concert with solos demonstrating his versatility at the keyboard. He was equally at home with a classical work (Chopin's Etude in Ab Major, Op. 25 no.1 "Aeolian") and a popular tune ("Pennies from Heaven").

This concert was a unique combination of performances by accomplished professional musicians and their students, who appear to have a bright future.

Spring Decor (including the Easter Bunny)

Photos by Ann Bell

