

# the register

FIRST ON THE FIRST COAST

## Home for the Holidays

**FEATURING  
HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS**



**SEASON OF GIVING**

**WINE & DINE ON THE FIRST COAST**

**AND MUCH MORE!**

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024



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The cover features dancers in the Jacksonville Symphony's First Coast Nutcracker.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY

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# ONE OF US

## Garrett Gooch

as told to ANTHONY RICHARDS photo courtesy of THE RITZ-CARLTON, AMELIA ISLAND

**G**arrett Gooch is executive chef at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island and he takes pride in his cooking being influenced by being a native Floridian and the travels and various cultures he has been on and seen in his life.

### Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

First and foremost, I'm "one of us," as a Florida native. My earliest and fondest memories are of cooking and barbecuing with my dad in Sarasota and being outside exploring or fishing.

Learning to fish or gather the freshest, best Florida ingredients, different flavors and influences were not hard to find. You could go to almost any fish shack and experience a great meal without a lot of pretenses.

Sharing that joy of discovery and sharing something delicious really inspired me on my journey, beginning with culinary school at Johnson and Wales in Miami.

After graduation, I went to California to The Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon Bay. I was lured back to Florida with a job as executive sous chef at The Ritz-Carlton, West Palm Beach and then at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island.

Garrett Gooch is the executive chef at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island.

I went west again, serving as executive chef of The Ritz-Carlton, Denver, and then I came home again to Florida, to The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island in 2015 as executive chef.

I also staged at Aioli, a beloved French-Mediterranean restaurant in Vienna, Austria. That experience, learning the European approach to life and seafood was very important to my work. They favor wild fish and focus on sustainability that adheres to the "less is more" approach to ingredients.

They use everything, tip to tail, nothing is wasted, even if it's to make a simple stock, bringing dimension to tomorrow's chowder.

It's a mindful approach to cooking that really brings me back home. There's a lot that's special about our state, and I try to communicate that with some of our activities at Amelia Island, like my *Hook, Line & Supper*, where I take guests out to some of my favorite fishing spots and the catch is included in special dinner at Salt.

### How long have you been in the executive chef role at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island?

Just over five years.

### What are your goals and objectives you strive for in this role?

First and foremost, it's to surprise and delight our guests and neighbors with our

distinctive Southern cuisine, leaving them satisfied with amazing food from all of our many restaurants.

We have a team of chefs that each have a distinctive style. Every month we feature one in our chefs in a cooking demonstration we call "Chefs Theater." I want them all to know they are stars.

We also have Chef Okan of Salt who already holds the AAA Five Diamond designation but who has also worked in several Michelin-starred restaurants. He's a star, but we'd like to help him achieve more recognition.

We just completed our wildly successful Amelia Island Cookout, a showcase of the northern Florida culinary scene which also brought to the island some of the world's top culinary talent.

It also featured vintners, producers, growers, mixologists, distillers, local chefs and up-and-coming culinary talent.

It's really created a buzz within the professional culinary scene and is bringing these gastro-pilgrims to Amelia Island as a destination. It's really inspiring and for 250 lucky guests, it was the experience of a lifetime.

Creating culinary events such as the Amelia Island Cookout that bring people in from all different areas to our beautiful island, that makes me very happy.

### What are the most rewarding parts about your job?

The most rewarding part

for me is to create a unique experience through our food. People dine in restaurants for nourishment but mark special occasions and special life experiences with special dinners, and special wines are shared with loved ones.

But just being in Florida, that's a special occasion for a lot of people who've traveled from great distances to be here. I want to share my passion for this locale and its flavors, putting creativity into each and every dish. Sharing it with our guests and inspiring new culinary talent in our kitchens, that's success to me.

I also love working on festive season menus for the resort. From Thanksgiving to Christmas, to the New Year's Black & White Gala, our holiday meal celebrations are something that generations enjoy, and it makes me pleased that they think enough of us to share in their milestones.

My love for festive menus actually resulted in an appearance on The Today Show where I demonstrated our Butternut Squash Soup.

### What are some of the aspects of the industry that are more challenging that you have to account for?

Our industry encountered a major shift during COVID. Restaurants face the confluence of two difficulties, labor shortages and inflation, from the price of equipment and ingredients to labor.

As an institution, The Ritz-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33 ■





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Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan cuts the ribbon for the renovated theater.

The original vertical blade sign is seen in this archival photo.

# NEWLY RENOVATED HISTORIC FLORIDA THEATRE REOPENS

Contributed photos

**T**he wait is over. The paint and plaster are dry. And the newly renovated historic Florida Theatre in downtown Jacksonville has reopened.

Mayor Donna Deegan and other dignitaries participated in a ribbon cutting on Oct. 27 inside the lobby/auditorium for the big reveal. The first production, “The Rocky Horror Picture Show,” opened the next evening.

The Florida Theatre had been closed since mid-July to renovate the 96-year-old facility. All the flaking and peeling decorative plaster in the auditorium was repaired; the lobbies and the auditorium were painted with fidelity to the 1927 color palette; the entire heating, ventilation and air conditioning system was replaced; and the building’s electrical vault was moved from the first to the third floor.

But probably the thing people will notice the most is that all the public restrooms have been updated.

Ironically, the Florida Theatre reopened around the 40th anniversary of the last major renovation that took place in 1983.

These projects build upon projects that have already been accomplished at the Florida Theatre, which include replacing the Theatre’s 1,865 seats; doubling the wheelchair-seating capacity; installing a new assistive listening system for people who are hearing-impaired; improving the aisle lighting and handrails, especially in the balcony; installing a new concert sound system and lighting system; and repurposing the second floor of the office building into the new Remedy Lounge, which was the first expansion of the venue’s public space in 95 years.

The City of Jacksonville matched private donations to help fund the work. Contributions came also from the

Centennial Campaign donors, Florida Theatre members and everyone in Northeast Florida who has ever bought a ticket to a show at the Florida Theatre and paid the \$4.50 restoration fee. The principal artisans worked feverishly to restore the building to its original grandeur.

“The Florida Theatre is one of downtown Jacksonville’s gems,” said Deegan. “With its 100th birthday approaching, this is an exciting time to restore the theater to its full splendor.”

Auld and White Constructors was the general contractor for this project. Sauer Mechanical did the HVAC work. EverGreene Architectural Arts did all the plaster/paint work and restored the tapestries. And Beacon Electric moved the electrical vault from the first to the third floor so it would no longer be a flood risk.

“Auld & White Constructors is honored to have been Florida Theatre’s Construction Partner for its renovations and next-generation mechanical system upgrades,” said Nate Marty, CEO of Auld & White Constructors.”

“There were several things that were unique about the Florida Theatre project,” said Jeff Greene, AIC-PA, executive chairman and founder of EverGreene Architectural Arts. “Like the mysterious connection to John Ebersson, one of America’s most prominent architects known for movie palace designs in the atmospheric theater style (the outdoor feel inside). The original four faux tapestries that hang in the Florida Theatre were painted. Since they are the same size and have the same imagery as the ones in the Tampa Theatre (which Ebersson did), we were able to replicate them. When we did our forensic research and put all the theater finishes under the microscope, we realized they were painted with the

same paint and style that Ebersson used. His signature, per se. It was fascinating to see what his influence did.”

Greene added, “A big part of what we do at EverGreene is connect back to history. We wanted to return the Florida Theatre to its original, authentic self. When the building was renovated in the 1970s, they moved away from that a bit. We wanted to return as accurately as possible to what it looked like in 1927. The challenge was the short time frame we had. The surprise or mystery was the Ebersson connection. But we did our research, added some interpretation, and found the harmony and balance we were striving for.”

“As a lifelong resident of Jacksonville with many wonderful memories surrounding the Florida Theatre, this project has been a challenging opportunity for Beacon as well as an honor to be part of,” said Shawn Heath, owner of Beacon Electrical Contractors.

“Over the last four years, by the end of this calendar year, we will have raised and spent \$15 million on building improvements to the historic Florida Theatre,” said Numa Saisselin, president of the Florida Theatre. “After this, there’s about \$8 million left of work to do to get the rest of the building where it needs to be, including expanding the entry lobby, a new artist hospitality space, dressing room improvements, marquee restorations and administrative office improvements.”

According to Saisselin, the cherry on top would be bringing back the original vertical blade sign back that used to adorn the theater.

All of these projects, under the banner of the Centennial Capital Improvement Plan, which started in 2019, aim to prepare the historic Florida Theatre for its 100th birthday in 2027.

Learn more at [floridatheatre.com](http://floridatheatre.com).



[ home for the holidays ]

# GO BACK IN TIME FOR FESTIVE FUN WITH DICKENS ON CENTRE

story by **ANTHONY RICHARDS**

photos courtesy of the **AMELIA ISLAND CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

The Amelia Island annual tradition known as Dickens on Centre is set to take place again Dec. 7 to 10.

For those four days, Fernandina Beach's historic downtown will take a trip back in time and transform into Victorian London during the era of world-renowned British author Charles Dickens.

The fun festivities are sure to have something for the entire family to enjoy, including Tiny Tim's kid zone, opportunities to visit St. Nicholas, and several other costumed characters and entertainment designed to fully immerse guests and take them back in time.

Festival hours will be from 5 to 7 p.m. on Dec. 7 and 5 to 9 p.m. on Dec. 8, while the weekend hours will vary with Dec. 9 being the longest day from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Dec. 10 consisting of 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Special events highlighting this year's event include the enchanted village, which will consist of eight Christmas-



The Christmas-themed snow globes are back as part of the Enchanted Village.

themed "snow globes," that parties up to six can rent out for one hour.

Each of the "snow globes" will be decorated with a unique theme inside that guests can soak up while enjoying a charcuterie grazing box created by Luxe Picnics by Les and a bottle of spring water.

This year, the snow globes will be

ready to endure and enjoy no matter the weather, thanks to a partnership with Snyder Air Conditioning, Plumbing and Electric.

Dickens After Dark, is a popular VIP event that will take place once again this year at the historic Lessne House on Centre Street, which provides the perfect backdrop to fit the theme, along with the fact that it is a costume party and those attending are asked to dress in their best and most creative Victorian era attire.

For the fourth year, an illuminated procession will be held on the opening night on Dec. 7.

Participants are encouraged to bring an illuminated lantern or anything that shines, glows or twinkles. Together the lights create quite the light show along the parade route, which starts with participants gathering on Front Street and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 ■

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The illuminated procession will light up the streets of historic downtown Fernandina Beach.

## DICKENS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

finishing up west on Centre Street.

Another event that is back by popular demand is the “Run Like the Dickens” family fun run, which is a one mile run along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean at Main Beach. The fun run will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Dec. 9.

Registration to take part

in any of the many aspects of this year’s Dickens on Centre has opened and can be found on the event’s website at [ameliaisland.com](http://ameliaisland.com) and scrolling down the page to click on the Dickens on Centre “join us” link.

A free trolley ride will be available for attendees to take from outside parking lots down Centre Street to downtown Fernandina Beach, as parking downtown can be difficult to find.

## HOT CHOCOLATE RECIPE WARMS HEARTS ON CHILLY NIGHTS

Here’s a great recipe from The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, just right for those chilly days around the holidays.

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island is the recipient of two prestigious AAA Five Diamond designations, the travel authority’s highest rating. In addition to the resort lodging award, Salt, the resort’s fine dining restaurant is also honored for world-class service and imaginative menus.

For more information, go to [facebook.com/ritzcarltonameliaisland](https://facebook.com/ritzcarltonameliaisland).

### Ritz-Carlton Homemade Hot Chocolate

#### INGREDIENTS

Whole Milk	1 Gallon
Dark Chocolate	8 ounces
Milk Chocolate	8 ounces
Cinnamon	To taste
Vanilla Extract	To taste

#### METHOD OF PREPARATION

Heat milk in sauce pot to boil.  
Place chocolate in a heat-safe bowl.  
Pour the boiling milk over the top of chocolate. Whisk until smooth.  
Add vanilla extract and cinnamon to your liking.  
Then place in a Thermos to keep warm, or drink immediately.



*NOTE: If you would like to create an adult beverage add Bailey’s, Godiva liqueur or any alcohol of your choosing.*



## The Trouble With Tradition

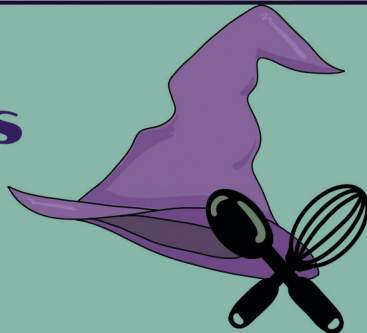
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by Caroline Smith  
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# JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY PERFORMANCES BRING THE HOLIDAYS TO LIFE

story by **SHAUN RYAN** photos courtesy of the **JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY**

**T**hree wondrous holiday performances, to be presented in December by the Jacksonville Symphony and its partners, are sure to send audiences' spirits soaring. In fact, these events should be placed on everyone's "not to be missed" list. Performances are at the Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St., Jacksonville.

## HOLIDAY POPS

First up is the annual Holiday Pops concert, arguably the symphony's most vibrant holiday tradition. This year, guest conductor Tim Hankewich, Broadway veteran vocalist Ryan Silverman, the Symphony Chorus and dancers from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts will join the Symphony in a show featuring some of the greatest holiday favorites.

"It's a really fun, lively event," said Symphony Marketing Manager Nichole Rivera. "It's great for kids to come, as well."



The Jacksonville Symphony performs its Holiday Pops concert.

One of the highlights is the indoor snowfall, a source of great delight for children.

The Holiday Pops performances are 7:30 p.m. Dec. 7, 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 8, 3 and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 9 and 3 p.m. Dec. 10. Santa will be available for photos with ticketholders prior to the 7:30 p.m. Dec. 8 and 3 p.m. Dec. 9 performances.

Ticket prices vary. They can be

purchased in advance at [jaxsymphony.org/symphony-holidays](http://jaxsymphony.org/symphony-holidays).

## THE FIRST COAST NUTCRACKER

Think you've seen The Nutcracker? Think again. The First Coast Nutcracker has been one of the Symphony's



Dancers perform during a previous Nutcracker with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra.

premier events for more than a half century, and it's the only one performed locally with a full, live symphony orchestra.

All the dancers are local, many from the Douglas Anderson School of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47 ■

## Walkers Ridge in Sawgrass Country Club



Step inside 52 South Nine Drive and experience a unique custom designed home that is perfect for entertaining family and friends. The cozy entrance to the foyer welcomes you to an open concept dining room, and light filled living room, and sunroom, that reveals one of Sawgrass Country Clubs waterfront views with a Northeastern exposure. This completely updated home with the master on the first floor is simply gorgeous! With 2294 square feet of design this 3-bedroom 2 1/2 bath coastal traditional is light, and spacious, with a unique floor plan that connects the new Chefs kitchen, and breakfast room, to the dining room, office and spacious 2 story living room, with a wood burning fireplace. Just minutes to the beach and golf course you can enjoy country club living that is simply the best! Offered for \$1,100,000.



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Mark Richt, Terrence Edwards, Earnest Graham and Joe Haden were the 2023 inductees into the Florida-Georgia Hall of Fame.



Each inductee received a plaque to commemorate their induction into the hall of fame.

# HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES REMINISCE ABOUT FLORIDA-GEORGIA RIVALRY

story and photos by ANTHONY RICHARDS

The 2023 Florida-Georgia Hall of Fame class included Joe Haden and Earnest Graham from the University of Florida and Mark Richt and Terrence Edwards representing the University of Georgia.

They each had their chance during the induction ceremony on Oct. 27 to stand up at the podium in front of a room full of Gators and Bulldogs fans at Everbank Stadium and talk about some of the memories they had from one of college football's greatest rivalries.

Each story was unique and brought a smile to their face and in some cases laughs from those on stage and the crowd looking on.

Former Georgia head coach Mark Richt opened his speech by telling the crowd how he was trying to figure out why he was even invited to be a part of the hall of fame because his record was 5-10

against the Gators.

"I really don't have a clue why I'm here, but I'm thankful, because you know when you're a coach that if you get any type of accolade, it's because of the team," Richt said. "The coaches, players, administration and fanbase, all share a role in any success that I've had."

Richt gave the "true" story behind the famous touchdown celebration during the 2007 contest, when the entire Bulldogs' team ran onto the field, resulting in several excessive celebration penalties, but instantly took its spot in Bulldog lore.

According to Richt, he felt like his team needed some life put into them following a close victory against Vanderbilt the week before the Florida game, in which they needed a last-second field goal to win.

"I knew in two weeks we had the

Gators, so I told the offensive players that I wanted them to celebrate hard enough after the first touchdown to get a penalty," Richt said. "But as we're going through practices everything was pretty much an individual celebration, so then I was talking to the team the night before the game, and I told them I wanted it to be a team celebration."

It turned out Richt and his players had different views of the kind of celebration he was asking for.

"When I said team celebration, I'm thinking the 11 guys on the field, but they were thinking that meant everybody, the team, but I didn't know that," Richt chuckled. "So, we get to the game and the ref throws his hands up to signal touchdown and I see the guys start to celebrate, which is what I expected, but

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40 ■



Attending the event is a tradition for fans of both teams.



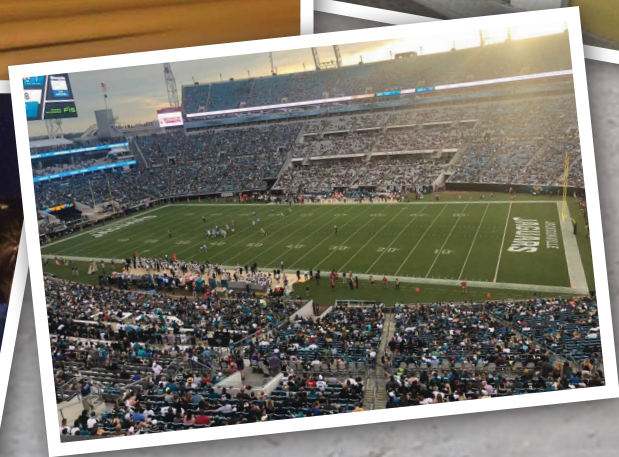
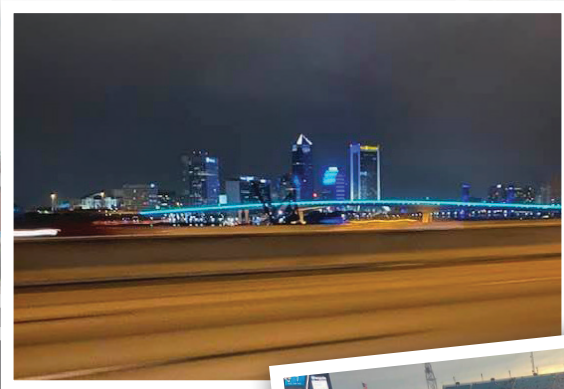
The induction ceremony was held at Everbank Stadium.



Terrence Edwards signs autographs for Georgia fans.



# FACES OF *The First Coast*



Faces Of The First Coast is an exclusive feature for First Coast Register readers to get to know prominent business leaders in Northeast Florida's coastal communities.

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Clareberryrealestate.com

Lucky me! I have been a Realtor in my home, Northeast Florida, for nearly 40 years. I grew up in Jacksonville and moved to the beach in my 20s. I studied architecture and interior design in college, feeding my love of homes and style. After graduation, I worked in media, where I learned the art of listening and asking questions, marketing and advertising.

In 1985, I transitioned from media to real estate, joining Watson Realty's Ponte Vedra office. It was meant to be! Serving customers by customizing promotions for their homes and researching housing options for buyers is exciting. The reward of finding a seller or a buyer the perfect home is what keeps me charged up about real estate. In 1990, I moved to the original Marsh Landing Realty, where I learned about lots and builders and the development process.

In 1993, I opened my own brokerage, Berry & Co. Real Estate. Our first listing was The Ponte Vedra Carlyle, 48 new condominiums on Ponte Vedra Boulevard. That was an exciting time – new residences in a premier location, with Lodge membership included for every purchaser!

Berry & Co. Real Estate continues to be a robust general brokerage. We have helped hundreds of buyers and sellers with their residential real estate needs. We take pride in our market knowledge – it is the foundation for the extra level of service we provide our customers.

My customers describe me as “one of our most trusted advisors”... “responsive, kind and honest”... “always felt we were in good hands”...”stands out from the rest regarding professionalism, true customer satisfaction and a real passion to do things the right way.” I help make buying and selling real estate efficient, enjoyable and rewarding by applying my knowledge and insights for the benefit of my customers.

While homebase for our office is Ponte Vedra Beach, we also are active in neighboring Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach and Nocatee as well as greater Jacksonville. Our real estate market is ever-changing and always intriguing. I'm grateful for the challenges and opportunities each new day brings.



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Photo by Maddie Adrian Photography

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With its recent expansion completed in March of 2023, PRIM SALON has been growing at lightning speed! Its newly renovated modern Mediterranean-inspired salon space now features multiple expert stylists, teeth whitening, brow micro-blading, makeup artists, and in-stock hand tied hair extensions.

PRIM puts a heavy focus on crafting an exceptional salon experience for each and every client, and prides themselves on providing a consistent quality of service, atmosphere, and beauty products that are cruelty free and environmentally conscious.

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# PRIM SALON





Photo by Maddie Adrian Photography



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In addition to the expansion of its salon space, PRIM SALON has given birth to a Boutique Bridal Styling Team that has delivered the same attention to detail and pursuit of beautification excellence to bridal parties across Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Colorado, Maine, and Vermont in 2023!

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**Jamie Seim** has over 12 years of investment experience as a Financial Advisor. He attended the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University Arkansas at Little Rock on golf scholarships, graduating cum laude. He later graduated with an MBA in Accounting & Finance from Jacksonville University. Over the years, Jamie has devoted much of his time to local organizations and charities.

**Stephen T. Foody** has 38 years of Capital Markets experience. He

holds a BA in Economics and History from Fordham University. He was chairman of the board of trustees for the Guardian Catholic School, and a founding member of Ponte Vedra High School PTO.

**Evonne T. Heykens**, Senior Registered Client Associate, has 40 years of financial services industry experience. She started within the financial industry in 1982, and most of her career has been in Jacksonville or Ponte Vedra.

**Melissa Scott**, Client Associate, has almost 20 years of financial services experience. Born and raised in Indiana, she joined the United States Air Force out of high school and spent 10 years living in many states around the country and some abroad.

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[ season of giving ]

# ANYONE CAN BE A HERO AND SAVE A LIFE

## CPR training plays major role in child's outcome

story by ANTHONY RICHARDS

photo courtesy of

WOLFSON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

**U**nderstanding what to do when encountered with someone suffering from a seizure is the first step in saving that person's life, and knowing these signs can make a hero out of anyone.

No one understands this more than 10-year-old St. Johns County resident Bryn Jenkins and her friend Mallory.

The two took part in a marine science camp in St. Augustine during the summer, but things quickly went from being fun times to a drastic situation when Bryn suffered a seizure while swimming in a pool during the camp's first day.

"I only remember a few seconds before I fainted in the water," Bryn said. "Everything started going black."

Fortunately, for Bryn the campers were taught how to perform CPR and recognize when someone was in distress.

The techniques learned earlier in the day were suddenly put to use by Mallory, who quickly noticed something was not right with Bryn and dove under to pull her body to the surface and helped her regain consciousness.

According to the American Red Cross, about 500,000 cardiac arrests occur each year, and CPR increases the likelihood of surviving cardiac arrest nearly doubles or triples the chances of survival when bystanders act, and the organization encourages everyone, not just health care workers and emergency responders, to take the CPR



Bryn, 10, with her therapy dog Jack.

course to learn it.

The quick reaction Mallory demonstrated is something that Bryn and her family are very grateful for.

After being notified of the incident, Bryn's mom, Nicole Jenkins, instructed first responders to transport her daughter to the Wolfson Children's Hospital Emergency Center at Baptist Medical Center South.

According to Nicole Jenkins, she knew the importance of children being treated by pediatric emergency physicians after spending years with Baptist Health as a content creator for the Wolfson Children's Hospital website.

The incident proved to be much more than just a seizure, as doctors found that Bryn had a rare heart rhythm disorder called long QT syndrome that was known to cause fast and chaotic heartbeats, which can lead to fainting and seizures.

That evening, Bryn was transported to Wolfson Children's Hospital by Kids Kare helicopter and admitted to the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU) in the Borowy Family Children's Critical Care Tower, where an EKG and genetic testing confirmed the diagnosis.

"Her heart rate was all over the place. Even with her sitting still, it would go down to 35 beats per minute and then up to 120," Nicole Jenkins said. "It's crazy to know her heart has probably been doing that her whole life without us knowing."

Wolfson Children's C. Herman and Mary Virginia Terry Heart Institute is the only program in Jacksonville that provides a full range of cardiac

services for adults and children like Bryn with congenital heart disorders. This includes outpatient evaluation of murmurs, detection of complex heart defects in fetal life and imaging and non-surgical procedures to diagnose and treat heart conditions.

"Pediatric electrophysiologists and interventional cardiologists associated with the Terry Heart Institute perform procedures on children with significant heart conditions and adults who need surgical correction of defects that they were born with," said Dr. Rajesh Shenoy, a fetal and pediatric cardiologist and medical director at Wolfson Children's Terry Heart Institute.

Bryn remained in the CVICU for observation for 10 days before undergoing a procedure to receive an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator, a life-saving device that acts as a pacemaker and a defibrillator to fix fast, abnormal heart rhythm.

Along with starting lifelong medication to help keep her heart rate stable, she had to wear an arm sling for several weeks after surgery to reduce movement around her incision.

While activities like sports and physical education classes are on hold, Bryn started her first year of middle school this fall and feels like herself again.

"I feel totally fine and back to normal," she said.

Bryn will continue yearly visits with the electrophysiology team at the Terry Heart Institute to monitor her progress and remains grateful for the care she continues to receive so close to home by the staff at Wolfson Children's.





Attendees at the recent Volunteer and Donor Appreciation Dinner for Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County listen to a speaker during the 30th anniversary celebration.



Site Supervisor Beth Ellis recognizes a group of volunteers who give of their time two to three times a week, rain or shine, in hot or cold temperatures.

# HABITAT MARKS 30 YEARS OF PROVIDING HOMES, HOPE

story and photos by  
**SHAUN RYAN**

**H**abitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County celebrated 30 years of providing homes and hope at its Volunteer and Donor Appreciation Dinner on Oct. 24 at The White Room in St. Augustine. The organization is driven by the belief that everyone deserves a decent place to live, and every year, its donors and volunteers help people realize that dream.

Executive Director Malinda Everson greeted the many in attendance and introduced St. Johns County Commissioners Roy Alaimo, Sarah Arnold and Henry Dean; Sheriff Robert Hardwick; City of St. Augustine Commissioner Cynthia Garris; and (then-interim) St. Johns County Administrator Joy Andrews.

Alaimo told the assembled donors and volunteers that they were an inspiration to the Board of County Commissioners. Alaimo, an advocate for



Inez McDonald, who has donated \$200,000 to the local Habitat organization, was presented a street sign with her name on it. The actual sign will accompany a street in the new Volusia Woods neighborhood.

affordable housing, serves as the board's liaison with the Housing Finance Authority.

"The Titanic was built by professionals, but the Ark was built by volunteers," he said. "You are keeping people's dreams of homeownership afloat."

Habitat's board treasurer

Craig Carroll said that, in the past year alone, more than 200 volunteers provided more than 3,500 hours of labor and donors contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars.

One of those donors, Inez McDonald, donated \$100,000 toward a new, 36-home neighborhood

being developed by the organization, Volusia Woods, which will be located in West Augustine.

Everson said McDonald has donated a total \$200,000 over the years in support of Habitat's work. McDonald was presented a street sign with her name on it in anticipation that one day the actual sign will be placed in the development.

Also recognized was St. Augustine Distillery and co-founders Michael Diaz and Philip McDaniel, for providing volunteers and sponsoring five homes.

Site Supervisor Beth Ellis recognized several volunteers.

Carroll reminded attendees that there was more work to do.

"We're all very well aware of the many challenges of affordable housing in our community," he said. "The need is great and growing. As we commemorate this milestone, let's remember our work is far from over."



[ season of giving ]

# A TOAST TO HELP ANIMALS IN NEED



The event is one of the largest fundraisers each year for the Jacksonville Humane Society.

photos courtesy of  
**JACKSONVILLE HUMANE SOCIETY**

**T**he Jacksonville Humane Society held its 25th Annual Toast to the Animals Gala at Everbank Stadium on Sept. 26. The event is one of Jacksonville's premier tasting showcases and the night raised \$250,000 in charitable proceeds to go toward the humane society's medical fund.



Lisé Everly, chair of the Jacksonville Humane Society's board of directors, spoke during the event.



Jaxson de Ville was happy to attend and help raise awareness for animals in need.



Attendees had games to play as part of the night's festivities.



The fundraiser was held at Everbank Stadium.



*Another opportunity for giving!*

Visit: [www.habitat.org/carsforhomes](http://www.habitat.org/carsforhomes) to find out how your **donation of a car** or other vehicle can help build homes in St. Johns County!

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# MASQUERADE BALL RAISES \$40K FOR HOMELESS YOUTH, FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

photo by GRANT MCMANUS

The Masquerade Ball, St. Francis House and Port in the Storm's twist on their annual gala, successfully raised thousands of dollars to benefit homeless youth, families, men and women in St. Johns County.

The magical evening was hosted by Tringali Barn on Friday the 13th of October. The event raised more than \$40,000 and more than 150 people attended. Tickets included signature cocktails, heavy hors d'oeuvres, axe throwing, a live band, special performances, hayrides and more.

Attendees, many of whom wore spectacular costumes and masks, were served a glass of bubbly from a champagne dress on the red carpet as they entered the barn. Once inside, guests enjoyed specialty cocktails, unlimited beer and wine served by The Perfect Pour and tasty treats, such as holiday sliders with turkey and



Rich O'Brien, Lauren Ringhaver and Fiesta Falls Miniature Golf guests

cranberry sauce, skewered chicken with bourbon barbecue sauce and stuffed mushroom caps by Late Risers.

The annual star auction gave attendees the opportunity to sponsor a homeless youth, family or individual. Led by former St. Augustine Mayor Tracy Upchurch, generous donors purchased "stars" totaling more than \$15,000.

According to organizers, everyone had a wonderful time and enjoyed this magical celebration. They are currently

planning their next event, the third annual Festival of Trees. Participants will decorate a tree or wreath that will be auctioned off at the Lightner Museum on Dec. 4-7. Go to [stfrancissshelter.org](http://stfrancissshelter.org) for more information.

Masquerade Ball was sponsored by Fiesta Falls Miniature Golf, UF Health, Localiq – The Record, Smith's Farm, Solar Stik, Ameris Bank, Endless Summer Realty – Robin Arnold, Harbour Island Tennis Centre, bestbet, Amara Med Spa, KC Enterprises, Bryan the Builder, RockIT Solutions, Obscure Rides, Enterprise Roofing, Old City Public Relations and Iron Order Motorcycle Club

St. Francis House and Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center provide the only comprehensive housing-crisis services and shelter in St. Johns County. Housing-focused programs provide support, referrals and assistance to facilitate the return to housing and self-sufficiency for individuals, families and youth.



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[ wine & dine ]

# WHISKEY, WINE AND WILDLIFE EQUALS FOUR DAYS OF COASTAL VIBE

photos by **SUSAN GRIFFIN**

**T**here were many events to enjoy during the four-day showcase that was Whiskey, Wine and Wildlife. There are photos below from the Vilano A1A Soiree, W3 Grand Tasting and Sunday Jazz Brunch.



Dennis Fedor and Bernadette Rivell.



Ellie Schultze, executive chef, Vilano Main Street Diner and Chez L'Amour with Michael Lugo, executive chef/owner, Viva Hospitality.



Kathleen Floryan and Trudy Toche.



Clare and Vance Berry at the Sunday Jazz Brunch.



Brandi and Kevin Patrich with Nicole and Marc Oehler.







Mel and Felicia Cox, with Kathleen Floryan.

# CARING CHEFS CONTINUES CULINARY TRADITION BY RAISING ROUGHLY \$84K

story and photos by ANTHONY RICHARDS

Nothing brings people together like food, especially when the food is among the best the area has to offer.

That was the goal when the first Caring Chefs charity event was held 39 years ago and that was the case once again this year.

This year's event was held at The Glass Factory in Jacksonville on Oct. 8 and raised roughly \$84,000 to benefit the Children's Home Society of Florida and its Northeast Florida programs.

The proceeds will help the programs with the various needs that arise, as the programs offer initiatives, such as, early childhood services, community partnership schools, the Buckner Place teen parenting program and counseling



Jennifer and Dave Logue.



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ■





The Band Be Easy performed at the 39th Annual Caring Chefs.



Children's Home Society of Florida's Regional Executive Director for Greater Northeast Florida, Ernest Hamilton.

## CARING CHEFS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

and mental health services.

According to Michelle Harp, development manager with Children's Home Society of Florida, it was the second year that the event was held at The Glass Factory after years at the Avenues Mall, and year two at the venue was much smoother and she

can see the event continuing to grow at the site in the years to come.

After the COVID-19 pandemic and the venue change, the event has been through a lot in recent years, but this year showed signs that the decades long tradition is getting back to where it was prior to the pandemic.

"This year we really tried to work hard to get it back in front of the people with our promotion of it," Harp

said. "We know people love it because it is an inexpensive way to enjoy some of the best quality food there is. There's a reason it is a tradition that people look forward to each year."

Some of the differences at this year's event included more seating available, as 20-plus extra tables were added for people to sit and enjoy their food

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ■

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Vernon's at Sawgrass Marriott



Mojo's BBQ

## CARING CHEFS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

throughout the evening.

“That was a big, because when you have food sometimes you just want to find a place to sit down and enjoy it, and not have to stand up all night long,” Harp said.

According to Harp, a mix of 23 restaurants, sommeliers and breweries were included in the lineup of food

and drink vendors. Each one of them was a local establishment.

“Having that local vibe is important to us and for people, because it’s places they know and can appreciate more,” Harp said.

Other changes that added to the vibe were simply a product of being more familiar with the venue and learning from the first time hosting an event there a year ago.

This included a better place for the live band and having more room for

attendees to move around and even show off their dance moves on an added dance floor.

Although this year’s event was a major success, Harp and many others are already anxiously awaiting next year’s event which will celebrate 40 years of Caring Chefs.

“With our 40th anniversary next year, we’re going to blow it out and we have some really cool stuff planned to celebrate.”

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# FOOD, OCEAN VIEWS HIGHLIGHT INAUGURAL AMELIA ISLAND COOKOUT

story and photos by ANTHONY RICHARDS

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island held its inaugural Amelia Island Cookout on Oct. 21 and it was a day full of beautiful weather and delectable food.



Although it was just the first year the event was being held, the Ritz-Carlton hoped it would be something that becomes a community tradition for years to come and its inaugural year left no doubt that there is an interest

surrounding it.

There was a bevy of food vendors lined up around the resort's oceanfront lawn and under a giant canopy that allowed for a nice breeze but also shielded guests from the sun and rain if needed.

However, the weather remained immaculate and the view of the Atlantic Ocean while eating some of the finest cuisine from around the country proved to be the perfect combination.

The food on hand including everything from Adana kebab, which was traditional ground lamb skewers with red onion and sumac prepared by Chef Okan Kizilbayir of the Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island's own restaurant Salt, to whole hog BBQ sliders topped with pork cracklings and Jesus Palomino candied jalapenos by pitmaster Tank Jackson of Holy City Hogs in South Carolina, and grilled octopus with sweet plantain croquettes and chorizo coconut crema cooked by Chef David Echeverry at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ■

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[ wine & dine ]

## COOKOUT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

David's Restaurant & Lounge in Fernandina Beach.

It was important for the event to showcase a local flare to go with some of the top chefs nationally, especially if it meant capturing the local vibe of Amelia Island with "local legends," as Joe Murphy, director of marketing with The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, calls them.

As are the various parts of the First Coast region, there are different personalities about these areas that make them unique, and it stems from the people that live in those areas.

Capturing the unique Amelia Island aura was something The Ritz-Carlton strived to do, and they did a masterful job of it.

Some of the other unique food samplings available were Choptank Schooner

crab dip with AIBC Lucile pale ale from Chef Cory Fey at Amelia Tavern and another who was inspired by the island theme was Island Spiced BBQ Chicken with corn, plantain, pumpkin and mango prepared by Chef Omar Collazo of The Omni.

There were also several mixologists that attended the event as well, such as Simon Crompton of Door No. 4, a cocktail bar in the Cayman Islands, who was mixing up Kudo Coolers for attendees.

There were many Ritz-Carlton's represented at the event, as mixologist J.P. Belonni with The Ritz-Carlton, Naples, chef Sean Blanchette of The Ritz-Carlton, Dallas, and chef Manuel Gutierrez of Wyld at The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch took part in the showcase.

"This is just such an amazing event," Blanchette said. "We don't have views like this (as he pointed to the ocean front) back in Dallas."



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## CELEBRATE HOLIDAY TRADITIONS OLD AND NEW AT THE RITZ-CARLTON, AMELIA ISLAND

The World's Largest Gingerbread Pirate Ship docks in the lobby on Wednesday, November 22. This culinary masterpiece is the perfect backdrop for a holiday family photo.

### NOVEMBER 22

#### The Annual Christmas Tree Lighting

Kick-off the holiday season at The Christmas Tree Lighting benefiting the Boys & Girls Club of Nassau County, St. Marys Riverkeeper, Micah's Place, Sea Turtle Foundation, Take Stock in Children and Council on Aging. Enjoy extraordinary entertainment, including internationally-acclaimed violinist Christiana Liberis, cookies, hot cider, spectacular fireworks and Santa's snowy arrival by Christmas train. | 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | \$20 donation for admission.

#### Santa's Magical Dinner

Following the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting, join Santa, Mrs. Claus, the Nutcracker and ballerinas from the Florida Ballet. It's a magical holiday wonderland dining experience with lavish culinary offerings, a children's buffet and delectable desserts. | 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.



### NOVEMBER 23

#### Thanksgiving Grand Feast

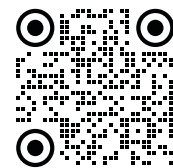
Of all the ingredients that make the season special, the most important are friends and family. Gather yours in the beautiful Ritz-Carlton Ballroom for the ultimate holiday culinary experience: Thanksgiving Grand Feast. Prepared and presented as only Ritz-Carlton chefs can and celebrating all the traditional holiday favorites and trimmings, you'll savor an endless array of decadent desserts and children will treasure the crafts and games. | 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.



### DECEMBER 31

#### Black and White New Year's Eve Gala

Make it a night to remember by welcoming the New Year at the 12th Annual Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island Black and White New Year's Eve Gala. Enjoy extravagant food buffets including a seafood and ice bar, sushi display, duck and prime rib, and an array of scrumptious desserts in the beautiful Ritz-Carlton ballroom. Dance the night away to live music enjoying the open bar, spectacular fireworks and a Champagne toast to commence the New Year.



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TABLE TALK

# Dining at the Plaza

## A JAZZY NEW HOT SPOT

story and photos by LEIGH CORT



Leigh Cort

**I**t's been many years since St. Augustine has opened its arms to a great new restaurant on the Plaza de la Constitución at the foot of the famous Bridge of Lions.

On Friday the 13th, a lucky day dawned for Melissa Schroeder and Troy Wollenbecker and their jazzy new hot spot Bourbon & Boards. It's a sparkling, snazzy and sumptuous collection of sensory excitement that has been perfectly designed and impatiently waiting to bring a distinctive experience to their guests.

Schroeder and daughters have been wildly successful with their Ancient City Brunch Bar that opened in 2021, another innovative, yet tiny, culinary phenomenon only steps from the new Bourbon & Boards. Schroeder and Wollenbecker are present to share their "love story" that focuses on "... loving their staff, appreciating the locals and showing off to their visitors."

Taking centerstage in the restaurant is the jazzy music. From the longest running jazz ensemble in St. Augustine to the international *joie de vivre* of classical guitars ... each night from Wednesday through Sunday the bandstand will surprise and thrill music lovers with high class sounds. Bourbon & Boards is one of the fiery new venues that musical celebrities are anxious to appear in.

The excitement and delicious experience only begins with the music — until you take a cocktail journey that features familiar flavors with new expressions. The bar faces a lighted wall of bourbons and each top-tier name liquor. The giant glassed-in wine cellar is another photo phenom. Let yourself be seduced by a "Paper



Ribeye Mac N Cheese — Baked cavatappi, smoked cheeses, red chili datil glaze, Spanish crème, charbroiled ribeye with bacon and peppers

Plane," which 007 would sip that's shaken, not stirred. Or "Amanda Midnight" that reminds you how much fun it is to stay out late. If you're a purist, the "Boulevardier" is a classic bourbon Negroni for the sophisticate.



Chef Joseph Randle

Executive Chef Joseph Randle has been blazing his culinary concepts that aren't just words on a menu. He has no "food rules" and creates unforgettably beautiful boards and dishes that come to the table that are "ooo-able"

— yes, you hear guests expressing their "ooo"! He's well-known in culinary circles, so don't hurry when making menu choices. You may order too many selections that won't disappoint.

Bourbon & Boards is proud of their elite staff, who are excited to bring



Yellowfin tuna tacos — Togarashi tuna, guajillo tortilla, red chili, avocado, pickled onion, roasted salsa, micro cilantro, goat cheese "The Frenchman" Barcuterie

colorfully appealing charcuterie boards, cocktails and tapas to your table. On opening weekend, they wore fresh flowers in their hair and floated through this "jazzy junction" enjoying the music and vibe as much as the guests.

The big surprise is coming soon. We're watching for Melissa and Troy's new Ancient City Cooking Experience only a few steps away — making 'Dining at the Plaza' the real deal!



[ wine & dine ]

# BASK IN THE SMASHING NEW PESCA

story and photos by **LEIGH CORT**



Leigh Cort

**O**ct. 17 was a perfect night in Vilano Beach for Pesca By Michael's opening at the pinnacle of St. Johns County's new Hyatt Place to introduce the newest "game changer" of dining

in Northeast Florida.

Stephanie and Michael Lugo have fashioned their dazzling new restaurant with the patina of a colorful and thrilling masterpiece of



Stephanie and Chef Michael Lugo

design, service, culinary surprises and comfort throughout. It's not easy to blend Elegant + Beachy + Islandy + Delicious + Scenic + Flawless View that spans from the Atlantic Ocean to the St. Augustine Lighthouse. But they have!

Pesca has been a long-awaited second act for Chef Lugo and the star-studded cast of his culinary team, passionate managers who genuinely



From Executive Pastry Chef Rebecca Reed

care about each guest's comfort while anticipating your next request. It's true hospitality that Lugo has been perfecting throughout his illustrious career. Pesca is a "destination" that you won't easily forget.

I can't wait to meet you at the rooftop bar sipping my fragrant "Vilano Vixen" cocktail!

For more information, go to [pescavilano.com](http://pescavilano.com).

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# RECORD-BREAKING \$338K RAISED AT CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN GALA

Contributed photos

**T**he Current/Sherman Group of Merrill Lynch Champions For Children Gala held on Oct. 19 at the Florida Blue Conference Center, marked a historic milestone, raising an unprecedented \$338,561 in a single night in support of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation.

This achievement underscores the unwavering commitment of the Jacksonville community to the foundation's mission of building champions in classrooms, on tennis courts and throughout communities. These funds

will play a pivotal role in sustaining and expanding the foundation's impactful programs.

"We are immensely grateful for the outpouring of support from our community at the Current/Sherman Group of Merrill Lynch Champions For Children Gala," said MaliVai Washington. "The record-breaking funds raised will enable us to expand our programs and impact even more young lives, empowering them to become champions both on and off the court."

Notable moments of the evening included the crowd favorite Heads or Tails



MaliVai Washington speaks with guests.

Event, which captivated attendees with its high stakes and light-hearted fun. Guests who purchased a rubber bracelet had the opportunity to play heads or tails with the last standing player winning a Swarovski tennis bracelet.

The gala featured many of the foundation's students, scholarship recipients and testimonials on the impact the foundation has made on young people. Lonnie Marts Jr., former NFL player and Jaguar, shared his experience in the NFL and encouraging words to the students as the guest speaker.

"Seeing our Jacksonville community come together

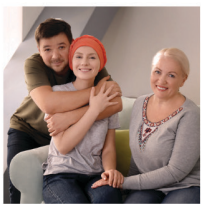
to 'Be The Hope' of our students' futures was incredible," said Terri Florio, the foundation's executive director. "These funds provide crucial support to keep our programs running and our students in a safe place where they can excel through academics, tennis and social and emotional skills."

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation is an afterschool and summer youth development program in Jacksonville's urban core that promotes academic achievement and positive life skills.

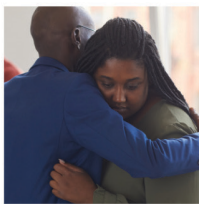
To learn more, go to [malwashington.com](http://malwashington.com).



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Frank Morealle, Bill Hendrich and Kam Neal



## GOOCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Carlton has always brought up chefs through the ranks with a lot of mentorships, but the precarious nature of the industry was exposed during the pandemic.

Working in a kitchen feels like family. We work long hours at something we're all very passionate about. There are good days and challenging days, and if you don't feel the love for your work and trust your colleagues, you don't last long in this business.

I think there's work to do in opening up opportunities for people to see how great a career this is and the opportunities that exist in hospitality in or beyond the kitchen. I'm also working with area high schools to encourage students to consider careers in culinary.

### Is there a certain approach you take when creating a dish to be offered? Does it allow your creativity to come into play?

Creating new dishes is the best part of the job! This is where all the fun and creativity comes into play, and it's the part all chefs love.

From concept, I focus on seasonality, taking into account what style dish I am looking for, which ingredients are local to the area and what ingredients contrast or complement, being careful to balance flavors in every dish.

A single ingredient should never overpower a dish. It's like a song; the drums don't drown out the guitar and the guitar solo doesn't take over the song.

I also ask myself, "What story do the ingredients tell?" Travel is also an essential part of inspiration, keeping things

fresh and creative. My travels inform my cooking.

### How would you describe the culinary culture of the First Coast area?

I love how the First Coast embraces all types of cuisines. It's genuine Southern hospitality meeting the country's best ingredients from land, sea and marsh. From Lowcountry to Caribbean to Filipino to the Eight Flags influence of Amelia Island, you can find flavors from every corner of the globe.

The First Coast's real treasure is its cuisine and of course our rich tradition with shrimp dishes.

### What do you enjoy most about living in the north Florida area?

There's no other place on earth that has everything that North Florida has. It's beautiful beaches, iconic sunrises over the water, deep blue Atlantic, incredible

history, talented people, rich marshlands, boating, fishing, outdoor dining, amazing culinary scene and its relaxed Southern hospitality, barrier island beauty. A Florida lifestyle that's relaxed but serious about its food.

I'm also inspired by the potential, as North Florida is a genuine culinary destination.

### What do you like to do in your free time?

Amelia Island has everything going on year-round, you never really have to leave the island.

I enjoy hanging out with my family and riding the miles of trails on our bikes, enjoying the beach, skate park and of course fishing.

Either surf fishing, exploring back waters or on my paddle board. Of course, if I'm not in the kitchens of the resort, I'm always cooking with my family.

*Gift big with*



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*Million Dollar Quartet*

**JAN. 11 - FEB. 18**

*Oklahoma*

**FEB. 22 - MARCH 31**

*Escape to Margaritaville*

**APRIL 4 - MAY 12**

*Boeing Boeing*

**MAY 23 - JUNE 16**

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

**JUNE 20 - AUGUST 11**

*Gypsy*

**AUGUST 22 - SEPT. 29**

*The Wedding Singer*

**OCT. 3 - NOV. 10**

*A Christmas Story*

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# VILANO HOLIDAY VILLAGE SET FOR DEC. 2 TO JAN. 2

## 'Elf on the Shelf' author, Carol Aebersold, will read from the book on Dec. 9

Contributed photos

The St. Augustine holiday glow just got brighter. Vilano Beach will come alive and share in a one-of-a-kind Christmas vibe with its visitors. While more than 3 million lights sparkle during Nights of Lights in downtown St. Augustine, the Vilano Holiday Village will shine with an 18-foot-tall Christmas tree serving as the center of festive celebrations.

Get your glow on every Saturday in December with holiday happenings, including a tree lighting, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, meet-the-authors event, holiday shopping with local artisans, dining at the all-new Pesca at Hyatt Place and other restaurants, Cirque Adventure's high-flying Elf Circus Show, live music, hot chocolate and specialty coffee drinks, hotel packages and other festive fun along Vilano Road in Vilano Beach, Florida.

Stay updated at [vilanobeachfl.com/vilanoholidayvillage](http://vilanobeachfl.com/vilanoholidayvillage).

The biggest news of all? "Elf on the Shelf" author Carol Aebersold will make an appearance and read her book on Saturday, Dec. 9. Times of events will be announced soon.

See the Vilano Holiday Village schedule below:

**Saturday, Dec. 2:** Tree Lighting Celebration at the Vilano Beach Pier Roundabout. View the 18-foot-tall tree and watch it "come alive" with thousands of bright lights! The festive kickoff of the Vilano Holiday Village will include appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus and live music. Admission is free.

**Saturday, Dec. 9:** Author Book Fair Extravaganza — Vilano Road will be lined with a variety of authors for meet-and-greets. "Elf on the Shelf" featured author Carol Aebersold will



read to the group and be available for a book signing. All are welcome to bring to their own copies of the "Elf on the Shelf" book or purchase them at Metalartz Gallery.

Book proceeds will go to a local children's charity. Admission is free.

Aebersold is the co-founder of the Lumistella Company and a best-selling author. First thrust into the spotlight when her debut title, "The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition," skyrocketed to fame as a self-published book, her creation has become a beloved holiday tradition the world over. Touted by Hollywood elites like Mark Wahlberg, Drew Barrymore and the entire Kardashian clan for her creation, she's been a featured guest



The author of "The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition" will be featured at Vilano Holiday Village.

on "The Today Show," "Rachel Ray" and "The Talk," as well as on Fox News and CNN.

The event will include appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus and "ELF" movie night, sponsored by Seaside Church. Guests are encouraged to wear their favorite pajamas and bring chairs for the free screening!

**Saturday, Dec. 16:** Vilano Holiday Village Christmas Market — The perfect time to get unique and local holiday gifts in just one place. Meet local artisans who will offer the perfect gifts for that special someone.

Appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus and live music by Jeremy Weinglass. Weinglass began his music studies with classical piano lessons at the age of 6 and has amassed more than 30 years of experience as a professional musician and composer with an expansive repertoire of classical, standards, musicals, rock and pop. Admission is free.

**Saturday, Dec. 23:** Cirque Adventure's high-flying Elf Circus is coming to town. This aerial and acrobatic show is performed to favorite holiday tunes. There will be aerialists flying high in the air, acrobats flipping and tumbling everywhere. There will be elves juggling, jumping rope — and of course there will be at least one elf up to some funny mischief! There will be three 30-minute performances. St. Johns County Fire and Rescue Department will showcase emergency vehicles at the event, with the opportunity to get up close and learn more about the local emergency responder. Admission is free.

This year's holiday celebration is being brought to you by Vilano Beach Main Street, the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council and the St. Johns Cultural Council. Stay updated at [vilanobeachfl.com](http://vilanobeachfl.com) and on social media. Follow @ <https://www.facebook.com/VilanoBeachMainStreet> and on Instagram @vilanobeachmainst



# ALHAMBRA TO KICK OFF 2024 SEASON WITH 'MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET'

## New and classic shows highlight the 'Season of Imagination'

**I**magination will once again take center stage when the iconic Alhambra Theatre & Dining opens its 2024 season on Jan. 11-Feb. 18 by dancing in the aisles to "Million Dollar Quartet."

Next up is a classic big musical that has not run at the Alhambra in at least 15 years. "Oklahoma!" will run Feb. 22-March 31.

"Escape to Margaritaville," an homage to Jimmy Buffett takes the stage April 4-May 12. From May 23 to June 16, "Boeing! Boeing!," a wonderful farce that led to the hit 1965 film that starred Tony Curtis, will take the stage.

The Alhambra's traditional big summer show will be a reprisal of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," June 20-Aug. 11.



In the fall, guests will enjoy "Gypsy, a Musical Fable" from Aug. 22 to Sept. 29, and "Wedding Singer" returns Oct. 3-Nov. 12.

The Alhambra wraps up the season with an all-new version of "Christmas Story, The Musical," from Nov. 21 to Dec. 24.

Interspersed with the Alhambra's traditional theatrical fare will be its Alhambra After Dark Music Series featuring some of the world's best tribute bands.

After a record year in 2023 in which the Alhambra Theatre & Dining welcomed more than 135,000 guests, Craig Smith and Theatre Partners

LLC have a little challenge on their hands: selecting a follow up schedule to continue the momentum. Smith, managing partner of the Alhambra Theatre, is comfortable that they've done just that by choosing an eclectic menu of shows ranging from the classic, "Oklahoma!" to the new in "Boeing! Boeing!"

With current Season Partners able to renew their seats since mid-October, ticket sales have been brisk, indicating strong reception by its most ardent fans of the new schedule. Season Partnerships are now available to the public starting with a six-show package for \$349. Single-show tickets are also now on sale starting at \$58.

The Alhambra Theatre & Dining is located at 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville. Alhambra tickets include a three-course meal that changes for each show, a Broadway-style performance and complimentary parking.

Tickets can be purchased online at [alhambrajax.com](http://alhambrajax.com) or by calling 904-641-1212.

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# FIRST COAST DESIGN SHOW TO FEATURE CHILDREN'S FASHION SHOW

## Cummer exhibit to highlight women's sporting attire of the past

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital has announced a new partnership with the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens in support of The First Coast Design Show and its signature grand finale event, the Children's Fashion Show.

In collaboration with the Cummer Museum, the Children's Fashion Show honors the inspiration of fashion and self-expression with the theme, "Dress to Inspire with the Cummer Museum."

The event at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, will feature more than 30 models who are current or former Wolfson Children's Hospital patients. Dillard's, a longtime sponsor, will provide the clothing to light up the runway. A family reception will take place immediately following the Children's Fashion Show. Tickets are available at [FirstCoastDesignShow.com](http://FirstCoastDesignShow.com).

"The Women's Board is so appreciative of our longtime partnership with the Cummer Museum and thrilled to see it expand to include the Children's Fashion Show, which honors the very reason the Women's

Board exists – the children," said Kendra McCrary, president of The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital. "Proceeds from the First Coast Design Show and the 'Dressed to Inspire with the Cummer Museum' Children's Fashion Show support the Women's Board's mission to raise awareness and funding for Wolfson Children's Hospital and ensure the advancement of life-saving medical care for all children."

Along with supporting the Children's Fashion Show, the Cummer Museum is stepping into the world of fashion with "Sporting Fashion: Outdoor Girls 1800 to 1960," opening Saturday, March 2, through Sunday, May 19.

The first exhibition to explore the evolution of women's sporting attire in Western fashion, "Sporting Fashion" will look at the extraordinary impact of new technologies and evolving social mores on women's clothing for sport over a 160-year period.

This exhibition is organized by the American Federation of Arts and FIDM Museum at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, Los Angeles. It includes

65 fully accessorized ensembles comprised of more than 480 historic objects selected from the exceptional collections of the FIDM Museum.

For more information about "Sporting Fashion: Outdoor Girls from 1800 to 1960," go to [cummuseum.org/visit/art/exhibition/sporting-fashion](http://cummuseum.org/visit/art/exhibition/sporting-fashion).

The First Coast Design Show, The Art of Gathering, runs Dec. 1-3 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center. The show features antiques, art and garden dealers from around the region, inspiring vignettes from talented interior designers and immersive events.

The First Coast Design Show supports the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital and its 2023 commitment to raise \$1.5 million for two new Kids Kare Mobile Intensive Care Units (ICUs).

For more information, including sponsorship and ticket information, go to [firstcoastdesignshow.com](http://firstcoastdesignshow.com), call 904-202-2886, or email [womensboard@bmcjax.com](mailto:womensboard@bmcjax.com).


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[ home for the holidays ]

# SAINT AUGUSTINE BALLET TO PRESENT 15TH ANNUAL NUTCRACKER

Contributed photo

**T**he Sugar Plum Fairy, Clara, the Mouse King and all the favorite Nutcracker characters will return to the St. Augustine stage this holiday season.

Saint Augustine Ballet will present its 15th annual Nutcracker to the community. The timeless classic will feature professional ballet dancers and dance students from St. Augustine and surrounding areas. This holiday favorite will be staged Dec. 15-17, with four performances in Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., downtown St. Augustine.

“I am thrilled to bring the Nutcracker once again to the community during St. Augustine’s popular Nights of Lights event,” said Luis Abella, executive director and founder of Saint Augustine Ballet. “For the 15th anniversary, we have added more professional ballet

dancers and arts performers to the show, with some special surprises for the audience!”

A cast of more than 55 local dance students, professional guest artists and community “celebrities” will perform. Ballet students Emma Maroney, Adelaide Pacetti and Adele Woodward will share the role of Clara.

Mayara Pineiro from the Philadelphia Ballet will dance the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy; Brian Guerrero from Sarasota Cuban Ballet School will perform as Snow Cavalier and Soldier; and Jeremy Mikaelson as Drosselmeyer, an award-winning magician from Russian Ballet Orlando. Marite Fuentes, formerly with the Cuban National Ballet, and Jolynne Waldner, a former Saint Augustine Ballet student who recently trained with Sarasota Ballet’s Trainee Program, will also be featured.

Show times are 7 p.m. Friday, Dec.



Mayara Pineiro of the Philadelphia Ballet

## IF YOU GO

The Saint Augustine Nutcracker Ballet  
**WHEN:** 7 p.m. Dec. 15; 1:30 and 7 p.m. Dec. 16; 2 p.m. Dec. 17

**WHERE:** Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine.

**TICKETS:** \$35, \$45 and \$50 per seat

**RESERVATIONS:** [saintaugustineballet.org](http://saintaugustineballet.org)

15; 1:30 and 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 16; and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17. Tickets and more details are available at [saintaugustineballet.org](http://saintaugustineballet.org)

Saint Augustine Ballet offers performance opportunities to dancers from St. Augustine, St. Johns County and the surrounding area. Scholarships are provided for students who need support. The Saint Augustine Ballet is a nonprofit performing arts organization founded in 2010.



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Chez L'Amour is located at 45 San Marco Ave. in uptown St. Augustine.



Pictured from left, Beverage Director Nick Hausman, Co-Owner Alberto "AJ" Cebollero, Co-Owner Jeanetta Cebollero, Chef Ellie Schultz and GM Heather Vasseur.

# BITES, BUBBLES AND JAZZ REIGN AT NEW UPTOWN ST. AUGUSTINE EATERY

photos courtesy of  
**CHEZ L'AMOUR**

Uptown St. Augustine, the city's creative and thoughtful small business district, has always been the place to go for something fun, funky and a little off

the beaten path. Now, it's also the place to get the best bites, bubbles and jazz.

Chez L'Amour is a new, elevated dining concept, offering a social experience through tapas-style small plates, plant-based upscale cuisine, decadent

desserts and a full bar, complemented by intimate jazz and piano music performed by world-class musicians. Located at 45 San Marco Ave., Chez L'Amour is literally the house that love built.

"This beautiful space showcases everything we're passionate about," said Alberto "AJ" Cebollero, who owns Chez L'Amour with wife Jeanetta. "The architecture of this city is amazing. We were able to take an old house from the late 1800s and, with a lot of love, turn it into a sophisticated and welcoming dining space. We really wanted to evoke the atmosphere of an old jazzy supper club, but with modern-day sensibilities."

The food at Chez L'Amour is global and evocative, with dishes that carry meaning for the owners, chef and staff.

Executive Chef Ellie Schultz takes inspiration from far and near. Her worldwide travels are

evident in dishes like General Tso's Chicken Biscuits, Thai-Style Mussels and Broccoli Fritto.

Pumpkin Beignets and Root Vegetable Hash harken to the restaurant's Southern roots. Love takes its culinary form in the Spanish Magnolia Cake, inspired by the Cebolleros' wedding cake.

Live music is an integral part of Chez L'Amour's charm, with a stunning Yamaha C1 Grand Piano taking center stage. They will welcome world-class jazz musicians and pianists, including greats like Joshua Bowlus and Linda Cole (niece of Nat King Cole).

"Something we take great pride in is our team," said Jeanetta Cebollero. "We took time to find people who are as passionate about this industry as we are — we've spent our lives spreading our love of art and culture! It was really important that we give them the space to be their best selves. AJ and I are all about empowering our staff to be creative and have an active voice at the table. This collaborative approach really takes it to the next level!"

Chez L'Amour opened its doors Nov. 1. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 4 to 11 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. A happy hour is offered Wednesday through Friday from 4 to 6 p.m.

Reservations may be made at [bitesbubblesandjazz.com](http://bitesbubblesandjazz.com).

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Chef Ellie Schultz



# WOMEN'S GIVING ALLIANCE CELEBRATES IMPACT OF STRATEGIC COLLECTIVE GIVING

Contributed photos

On Oct. 18, The Women's Giving Alliance (WGA), an initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, hosted its annual meeting at which more than 220 members gathered at UNF's University Center.

The meeting coincided with a 39% growth in membership to 470 women. This tremendous growth means more funding for women and girls in Northeast Florida.

"WGA is not only about pooling our dollars to have a strategic influence on our community, it's also about pooling our ideas, relationships and other resources from our diverse members to magnify our impact," said Sheila Collier, president of WGA. "Our membership continues to grow every year — and we are nearly 500 strong now — because women who want to



Sheila Collier, president of WGA, addresses attendees at the annual meeting.

make a difference in our community recognize and embrace the power of strategic, collective giving."

During the meeting, WGA announced a new grant cycle focused on serving the fundamental needs of women and girls in Northeast Florida.

In December, local nonprofit organizations serving women and

girls will be able to apply for one-year grants for up to \$50,000 to meet the basic needs, such as food, shelter, childcare, health and safety, of women in girls living in the six-county area of Northeast Florida.

Since 2002, WGA has awarded more than \$8.9 million through 180 grants to more than 70 organizations in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties.

During the meeting, WGA hosted several guest speakers who addressed the importance and impact of strategic giving.

Isaiah Oliver, the president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, spoke about the importance of supporting women and girls as the father of three daughters.

"Strategic philanthropy is all about

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41 ■

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## RIVALRY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

then all of a sudden I felt this ‘woosh’ and it was the rest of the guys running by me to run out onto the field.”

The emotional moment of the ceremony was when Richt, who has Parkinson’s disease, finished his speech and as he walked away from the podium was given a standing ovation by everyone in attendance, both Georgia and Florida fans alike.

Joe Haden played in that game as a defensive back for the Gators and remembers that play well and how crazy the moment was.

“I was out on the field when they scored that touchdown, and it seemed like 3,000 Georgia players ran onto the field,” Haden chuckled. “That was the one time on a football field when I was actually scared because I didn’t know what was going on, and it is definitely a memory I will never forget.”

Terrence Edwards was a wide receiver at Georgia from 1999 to 2002 and spoke about how he and his older brother Robert Edwards, who was a running back for the Bulldogs and joined the hall of fame in 2001, have had a competitive relationship their entire lives.



Earnest Graham shares in the moment with his family following the ceremony.

“We had this healthy competition growing up and everything that he did, I tried to do better,” Edwards said. “Well now he can’t say that he’s the only one in the Georgia-Florida Hall of Fame.”

For Earnest Graham, he mentioned how important it has been for he and his wife to strive to maintain a strong family unit and he was honored that his daughter, who is a junior at the University of Florida was in the crowd to

witness the moment, and his son will be attending the university next year.

He mentioned how he was proud to be considered among the best in the rivalry’s history.

“That’s the mark of this game,” Graham said. “Great players have to stand up and shine and be part of some of the biggest moments in SEC football. There’s a story like that every year.”

**21st Annual Gingerbread Extravaganza**

**To-Do List**

- 1 Get your creativity on! Enter the gingerbread display contest! Must submit display by Dec. 1st.
- 2 Invite others to enter the contest!
- 3 Gingie says, Sponsor a holiday tree!
- 4 Buy tickets!
- 5 Play the scavenger hunt!

Meet Santa on Kids Day! Dec. 10!

Buy a gingerbread cookie!

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Old St. Andrews Church  
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Visit [jaxhistory.org](http://jaxhistory.org) for details! Dates/times vary.

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## GIVING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

how we leverage our time, treasure, talent, testimony and ties to make our community a better place," said Oliver, president of The Community Foundation. "I congratulate the Women's Giving Alliance for using all of these forms of capital to grow support for women and girls in our region."

Ellen Wiss, past WGA president and current president and co-founder of READ USA, and David Garfunkel, president of LIFT JAX, led a discussion about how strategic philanthropy can manifest in unique ways to maximize community impact. Specifically, the duo addressed the origins of LIFT JAX, which began with WGA members seeking to target specific community needs.

"This organization stands as a remarkable example

of an all-sector collective impact effort," said Collier. "By conducting the necessary research and deeply evaluating what it revealed, LIFT JAX was able to identify specific needs in our community and initiate a movement of support. To see the impact this organization and others are having over time is a testament to the power of strategic, collective giving."

WGA leadership also outlined several initiatives aimed at growing and supporting its membership and a new strategic focus that will launch in 2025.

WGA grants are generated from members' yearly contributions (\$1,500 a year or \$750 for the first year if they are 40 and under), a portion of WGA's endowment fund and individual gifts.

Women interested in joining the Women's Giving Alliance and maximizing the impact of their philanthropy can go to [wganeff.org/membership](http://wganeff.org/membership).



Isaiah Oliver, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida; Sheila Collier, president of WGA; Ellen Wiss, president and co-founder of READ USA; and David Garfunkel, president of LIFT JAX.



More than 220 gathered at UNF's University Center for The Women's Giving Alliance annual meeting.



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# Holiday Happenings

Here's a look at some of the events being held this holiday season on the First Coast. Many events are free to attend; for those that are not, fees for admission or registration are noted.

## ST. JOHNS COUNTY

### 29TH ANNUAL NIGHTS OF LIGHTS

**When:** Nightly through Jan. 31  
**Where:** Downtown St. Augustine  
More than 3 million lights brighten the historic district in a display National Geographic magazine called one of the 10 best places in the world to see holiday lights.

### CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM

**When:** 6-10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, Nov. 24-Dec. 16  
**Where:** Sykes Family Farm, 5995 Brough Road, Elkton  
**Admission:** \$16 ages 3 and up, \$15 age 65 and up and military with ID. Free for children 2 and younger.

Enjoy this 3/4-mile Christmas light show on a hayride while sipping hot apple cider, hot chocolate or coffee. There will be bounce pads, swings, tube slides, a barnyard ball zone and more available. Mr. and Mrs. Claus will visit. Cozy up around the campfire and watch Christmas movies on the big screen while roasting marshmallows or decorate your own Christmas ornament! S'mores kits and ornaments sold separately. For more information or to buy tickets, go to [sycofarms.com/christmas-on-the-farm](http://sycofarms.com/christmas-on-the-farm).

### CANDLELIGHT TOURS AT THE VILLA ZORAYDA MUSEUM

**When:** 5:30 and 7 p.m. Nov. 25 and Dec. 2, 8, 16, 18, 22, 27 and 30  
**Where:** Villa Zorayda Museum, 83 King St., St. Augustine  
**Admission:** \$24.99 adults, \$12.99 children 6-12. Not recommended for children younger than 6  
The villa is decorated for the holidays with a spectacular Christmas tree and more than 100 candles throughout the museum. For more information, go to [\[lazorayda.com/candlelighttours\]\(http://lazorayda.com/candlelighttours\).](http://vil-</a></p>
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### LIGHT UP THE BEACH

**When:** Nightly through Jan. 1  
**Where:** A1A Beach Boulevard and the St. Johns County Ocean Pier Park, St. Augustine Beach  
**Admission:** Free  
Enjoy the colorful light displays.

### A CHORAL CHRISTMAS

**When:** 7-9 p.m. Dec. 1  
**Where:** Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach  
**Admission:** \$20-\$40  
A Choral Christmas presented by UNF Choirs kicks off the season with their acclaimed ensembles the Chamber Singers, Osprey Treble and Coro Profundo. Instrumentalists provide accompaniment and soloists offer renditions of timeless standards. A grand finale featuring The Hallelujah Chorus encourages audience members to raise their voices in rousing song. For tickets, go to [pvconcerthall.com/events](http://pvconcerthall.com/events).

### CHRISTMAS PARADE

**When:** 9 a.m. Dec. 2  
**Where:** Downtown St. Augustine  
**Admission:** Free  
Experience St. Augustine's annual Christmas Parade with floats, marching bands, cars, horses and the arrival of Santa.

### PALM VALLEY BOAT PARADE

**When:** 6-7:30 p.m. Dec. 2  
**Where:** South Roscoe Boulevard, Ponte Vedra Beach  
**Admission:** Free  
Celebrate the holiday season with the lighted boat parade. The parade route is seven miles of the Intracoastal and starts one mile south of the Palm Valley Bridge and travels north.  
For information, call 904-814-0988 or go to [palmvalleyboatparade.com](http://palmvalleyboatparade.com)

### SURF ILLUMINATION

**When:** 4-7 p.m. Dec. 2  
**Where:** St. Johns County Ocean Pier Park  
**Admission:** Free  
Features a ceremonial lighting of the holiday tree, a visit from

Santa, music, arts and crafts and children's activities.

### VILANO HOLIDAY VILLAGE

**When:** Dec. 2-Jan. 2  
**Where:** 101 Vilano Road, St. Augustine  
An 18-foot Christmas tree shines as the centerpiece of festive joy at Vilano Holiday Village. Enjoy music, local authors, delectable food and a Christmas Artisan Market for unique gifts. Santa and Mrs. Claus will make special appearances.

### SANDY CLAUS MARATHON, HALF-MARATHON AND 10K

**When:** 6:30 a.m. to noon Dec. 3  
**Where:** Nocatee Field Station, 245 Nocatee Center Parkway, Ponte Vedra  
**Registration:** \$15-\$70  
Runners will wind along the Greenways Trails and through some of the neighborhoods in Nocatee. Go to [runsignup.com/Race/FL/PonteVedra/SandyClauseHalf-Marathon](http://runsignup.com/Race/FL/PonteVedra/SandyClauseHalf-Marathon)

### ONE ACCORD CHRISTMAS CONCERT

**When:** 6-8 p.m. Dec. 3  
**Where:** Gazebo, Plaza de la Constitucion, 170 Cathedral Place, St. Augustine  
**Admission:** Free  
Bring a chair or blanket, hear some great music, make new friends, relax and enjoy.

### PETER WHITE CHRISTMAS 20TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

**When:** 8 p.m. Dec. 6  
**Where:** Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach  
**Admission:** \$69-\$121.50  
A magical night of Christmas classics and smooth jazz hits, featuring Mindi Abair and Vincent Ingala. For tickets, go to [pvconcerthall.com/events](http://pvconcerthall.com/events).

### LUMINARY NIGHT

**When:** 6-9 p.m. Dec. 6  
**Where:** St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum, 100 Red Cox Drive, St. Augustine  
**Admission:** Free  
Visit with Santa, enjoy yuletide

refreshments and see the lighthouse's spectacular holiday decorations and lighting displays.

### "THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER"

**When:** 7-9 p.m. Dec. 7 and 8  
**Where:** APEX Theatre Studio, 425 West Town Place, Unit 112, St. Augustine  
**Admission:** \$25  
"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" is an adaptation of Barbara Robinson's timeless holiday tale, depicting a couple's challenges in organizing a church Christmas pageant. Their dilemma lies in casting the Herdman kids, who are arguably the most creatively mischievous children ever encountered. Go to [apextheatrejax.com](http://apextheatrejax.com).

### LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINATIONS

**When:** Select nights through Jan. 13.  
**Where:** St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum, 100 Red Cox Drive, St. Augustine  
**Admission:** \$24.95 adults, \$22.95 children.  
See 21 different themed Christmas Trees on select nights at St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum. This year's event takes place November 22, 2023 through January 13, 2024.  
For information or tickets, go to [store.staugustine-lighthouse.org/SelectEvent.aspx?eventid=1000137](http://store.staugustine-lighthouse.org/SelectEvent.aspx?eventid=1000137)

### "THE TROUBLE WITH TRADITIONS — A HOLIDAY DETOUR"

**When:** 7:30 p.m. nightly (2:30 p.m. Sundays), Dec. 7-17  
**Where:** Limelight Theatre, 11 Old Mission Ave.  
**Admission:** \$20  
The Novak family has had a decades-long Christmas tradition of dinner on Christmas Eve. When Richard Novak finds out his family plans to skip it this year for a theater play, he becomes desperate to keep their tradition alive. For information, call 904-825-1164 or go to [limelight-theatre.org](http://limelight-theatre.org).

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**HOLIDAY REGATTA OF LIGHTS**

**When:** 6-7:30 p.m. Dec. 9  
**Where:** Matanzas Bay between the Bridge of Lions and Castillo de San Marcos  
**Admission:** Free

This annual holiday tradition features boats decorated with brilliant lighted displays.

**HASTINGS HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS PARADE**

**When:** 10 a.m. Dec. 9  
**Where:** Main Street in Hastings  
**Admission:** Free

Continue the holiday celebration after the parade at the Hastings Main Street Market until 3 p.m. at the newly restored old Ford Building, 301 N. Main St., Hastings.

**CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT IN VILANO**

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Dec. 9  
**Where:** 80 Vilano Road, behind Publix.  
**Admission:** Free

Wear your favorite pajamas, grab your chairs and/or blankets and don't forget the kids! Head over to Vilano Main Street Square for a free outdoor viewing of the "ELF" Christmas movie.

**KIDZ ENTREPRENEURS HOLIDAY MARKET**

**When:** Noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 10  
**Where:** The Tringali Barn, 7310 U.S. 1, St. Augustine.  
**Admission:** Free to attend

More than 40 young vendors (ages 4-17) will offer seasonal gifts. There will be a visit by Santa, food trucks, a DJ and more. Parents can register kid vendors by emailing weeventinc@gmail.com (limited spaces available). The Saucy Pig & Sonny's BBQ will be there, with proceeds from The Saucy Pig supporting a local charity, and Sonny's BBQ providing lunch to kid vendors.

**THE GARDEN CLUB OF ST. AUGUSTINE HOLIDAY TOUR OF HOMES**

**When:** Noon to 5 p.m. Dec. 10  
**Where:** River House, 179 Marine St., St. Augustine

**Admission:** Get tickets at gardenclubofstaugustine.org.

Experience the exquisite Tea and Boutique at the River House. Then join the captivating tour, featuring six houses beautifully decorated by the Garden Club of St. Augustine. Marvel at live floral arrangements and greenery designed to enhance each home's charm. Don't miss the raffle with cash prizes or the Boutique's festive wreaths, ornaments, gift baskets and gourmet treats.

**ST. AUGUSTINE WINTER SPECTACULAR**

**When:** 7 p.m. Dec. 9 and 2 p.m. Dec. 10

**Where:** Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine

**Admission:** Go to [staugustinewinterspectacular.com/tickets](http://staugustinewinterspectacular.com/tickets).

This family-friendly, entertaining holiday production follows a young girl's journey home for the holidays. Expect high-kick dancers, ballerinas, acrobats, actors and more amidst dazzling costuming and props.

**CHRISTMAS JOY PRESENTED BY ST. AUGUSTINE COMMUNITY CHORUS**

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Dec. 9 and 2 p.m. Dec. 10  
**Where:** Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine, 38 Cathedral Place, St. Augustine

**Admission:** \$30 adult, \$15 youth, \$10 military. Free to children age 10 and younger.

This celebration of community and music is centered around a theme of "Toward a more perfect peace." This is the chorus' 75th season. For information and tickets, go to [staugustinecommunitychorus.org/event/christmas-joy](http://staugustinecommunitychorus.org/event/christmas-joy).

**EMMA CONCERT SERIES PRESENTS HOLIDAY POPS CONCERT**

**When:** 7:30-9 p.m. Dec. 12  
**Where:** Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine  
**Admission:** \$40

The Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra will present this Holiday

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44 ■

*Sofia Philharmonic*  
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 by The National Orchestra of Bulgaria



Sunday, January 21 at 2:00 p.m.  
 Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College

**Adults: \$30 Student Tickets: \$5**

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■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

Pops Concert. For tickets, go to [emmaconcerts.myboxoffice.us](http://emmaconcerts.myboxoffice.us).

**MEET AND GREET WITH SANTA**

**When:** 6-8 p.m. Dec. 15  
**Where:** Gazebo, Plaza de la Constitucion, 170 Cathedral Place, St. Augustine.  
**Admission:** Free  
 Bring the family to meet with Santa.

**SAINT AUGUSTINE BALLET PRESENTS NUTCRACKER BALLET**

**When:** 7 p.m. Dec. 15, 1:30 and 7 p.m. Dec. 16, and 2 p.m. Dec. 17  
**Where:** Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine  
**Admission:** \$35-\$50  
 Saint Augustine Ballet presents its 15th annual Nutcracker Ballet. This performance features professional ballet dancers and dance students from St. Augustine and surrounding areas. For tickets, go

to [saintaugustineballet.org](http://saintaugustineballet.org).

**NOCHE DE NAVIDAD AND LAS POSADAS**

**When:** 3-9 p.m. Dec. 16  
**Where:** Mission Nombre De Dios, 101 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine  
**Admission:** Free  
 Las Posadas commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The tour begins at 3 p.m. for Las Posadas and the Living Nativity.

**DECK THE HALLS WITH HOLIDAY STORIES**

**When:** 2-4 p.m. Dec. 17  
**Where:** The Waterworks, 184 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine,  
**Admission:** \$10, free to children age 12 and younger.  
 Sing, dance and immerse yourself in these captivating performances. Plus, don't miss the chance to snap a memorable selfie with Mrs. C and indulge in some delicious cookies. For tickets, go to [taletellers.org](http://taletellers.org).

**MESSIAH SING-ALONG**

**When:** 3-4 p.m. Dec. 17  
**Where:** Memorial Lutheran Church, 3375 U.S. 1 South, St. Augustine  
**Admission:** Free. Goodwill donations accepted.

Join St. Augustine Community Chorus for their unique Messiah Sing-Along this Christmas as they celebrate their 75th anniversary season. Sing the Christmas portion of this classic and experience the magic of choral music uniting the community in a shared journey toward a more perfect peace.

**CHRISTMAS FANTASTIQUE 2023**

**When:** 7 p.m. Dec. 20 and 21  
**Where:** Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine.  
**Admission:** \$20, \$25 and \$35.  
 Christmas Fantastique takes the audience along young Clara's Christmas Eve dream as her toys come to life and she travels with a young prince to the Land of Sweets. There she meets the beautiful Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier, and a host of dancers of different genres from ex-

otic lands. Throughout it all, the timeless music of Tchaikovsky's score evokes the holiday spirit. Presented by Zoika's Dance.

**LIGHT UP THE NIGHT! NEW YEAR'S EVE FIREWORKS SHOW**

**When:** 8:30 p.m. Dec. 31  
**Where:** St. Johns County Ocean Pier Park, 350 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine Beach.  
**Admission:** Free

**DUVAL COUNTY**

**"MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET"**

**When:** Various days and times. Now through Dec. 24  
**Where:** Alhambra Theatre & Dining, 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville  
**Admission:** Varies  
 Based on the classic holiday film with book and music by Meredith Willson, follow the story of a single mom who doesn't want her daughter's head filled with fairy tales. When the new depart-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45 ■

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ment store Santa introduces himself as the real Kris Kringle, the two will need to open their minds ... and their hearts. To make a reservation, go to [alhambrajax.com](http://alhambrajax.com).

### DECK THE CHAIRS

**When:** 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. nightly, Nov. 22-Jan. 1

**Where:** Seawalk Pavilion and Latham Plaza Park, 75 1st St. North, Jacksonville Beach

**Admission:** Free

Special events include:

- Opening night, 5-9 p.m. Nov. 22. Highlights: Civic Orchestra of Jacksonville, Unite with Lights Student Exhibit and more

- Moonlight Movie: "The Polar Express," 7-9 p.m. Dec. 1

- Music & Dance Program I, 3-6:30 p.m. Dec. 2. Scheduled: Jacksonville Suzuki Strings, Pine Forest Dance Ensemble, Dansations Ensemble, Synergy Dance Company, Dynamics Dance, Ballet Arts Center.

- Music & Dance Program II, 3-7 p.m. Dec. 3. Scheduled: Twofold, Bravo School of Dance, Fort Caroline Dance Ensemble, Switzerland Dance School, Fletcher Middle School Dance, Parker's Lab Band.

- Music & Dance Program III, 1-6:30 p.m. Dec. 9. Scheduled: Tuba Xmas, Atlantic Coast Dance Studio, First Coast Center for the Arts, Scott Jones School of Dance, Nancy Dance, Level Up Dance, Showtime USA!

- Music & Dance IV, 3-6 p.m. Dec. 16. Scheduled: Navy Band Southeast, Fletcher High School Dance Team, Fascination Rhythm Studio of Dance, World of Dance, BLA Dance Academy, Academy of Dance, SET Studios.

- Christmas Eve Service Presented by Ocean City Church, 5:30-6 p.m. Dec. 24

- Taxslayer Gator Bowl Pep Rally, 5-7 p.m. Dec. 28

### DAZZLING NIGHTS

**When:** 5:30 p.m. (last entry 8:30 p.m.) Nov. 24-Dec. 29

**Where:** Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, 1445 Millcoie Road, Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$22 adult, \$19 child, plus fees. Free to children age 2 and younger.

Have a snowball fight; traverse a candy-cane corridor; see thousands of twinkling lights and snowflakes, illuminated flower

paintings and a forest of lasers; discover a path of 1,000 brilliant fireflies; stop at the giant, shimmering Christmas tree. Of course, there will be a nightly snowfall. Light bites, hot chocolate, beer and wine are available to purchase. To schedule a visit and buy tickets, go to [dazzlingjax.com](http://dazzlingjax.com).

### JACKSONVILLE LIGHT BOAT PARADE

**When:** 6 p.m. Nov. 25

**Where:** St. Johns River, downtown Jacksonville

**Admission:** Free

The boat parade has been a holiday tradition for more than 30 years. Vessels of all shapes and sizes adorn their hulls with festive decorations as they float along the north and south banks of the St. Johns River. Residents and visitors alike gather downtown along the North and Southbank Riverwalks to witness this magical event. Following the parade, the evening concludes with a fireworks show featuring the one-of-a-kind waterfall fireworks on the Main Street and Acosta Bridge.

### "FROSTY: A MUSICAL ADVENTURE"

**When:** 10 a.m. and noon Nov. 27

**Where:** Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St., Suite 300, Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$8.50

An orphan named Billy discovers magic in a stolen hat, and when he places the hat on a snowman's head, that snowman comes to life! Can Frosty help Billy find his real family in time for Christmas? Join them on a thrilling quest through New York City as they discover that the real magic of the Season is Love. For kindergarten through grade four. Go to [floridatheatre.com/events/detail/frosty-a-musical-adventure](http://floridatheatre.com/events/detail/frosty-a-musical-adventure).

### DAVE KOZ AND FRIENDS CHRISTMAS TOUR 2023

**When:** 8-10 p.m. Nov. 28

**Where:** Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St., Suite 300, Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$45-\$87.50

Jazz saxophonist Dave Koz presents Christmas with special friends Jonathan Butler, Rebecca Jade, Marcus Anderson and Justin Lee Schultz. Together, the five remarkable artists will perform fresh renditions of Christmas classics as well as a Chanukah medley



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 46 ■



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and hits from their respective catalogs.

**JACKSONVILLE CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR**

**When:** 2 and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2 and 3 (four shows)

**Where:** Ritz Theatre and Museum, 829 N. Davis St., Jacksonville  
**Admission:** \$75-\$125

The Jacksonville Christmas Spectacular is an evening of holiday entertainment with three unique, magical stories in one show! Created by producer Jason Woods, it features hilarious characters, heartwarming stories and holiday surprises, including a special appearance by the Jacksonville Jaguars Drumline for some festive, percussive fun. More information at [jasonwoodsproductions.com](http://jasonwoodsproductions.com).

Three shows:

- "Alice in a Christmas Wonderland" — The Queen wants to sing a song at her Christmas Party, but the words and music are missing, and heads are going to roll! The

White Rabbit brings Alice back to save his ears and Christmas!

- "The Little Toy Shoppe" — In an abandoned, broken-down toy shoppe, four leftover toys hope to be chosen by children.

- "The Legend of St. Nick" — When a woodsman named Nicholas and his dog rescue a fairy from a cold prank by Jack Frost, they don't realize they've opened up a whole new world, kindling the wrath of the Wicked Winter Witch!

**HOLIDAY POPS — MATINEE**

**When:** 11 a.m. Dec. 8

**Where:** Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St., Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$29-\$44

Jacksonville's most vibrant holiday tradition returns with guest conductor Tim Hankewich, Broadway veteran Ryan Silverman, the Symphony Chorus and dancers from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. Celebrate "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" and rejoice in holiday classics as a stunning indoor snowfall swirls all around Jacoby Symphony Hall

and the stage sparkles under the spotlight to discover true, magical wonder this holiday season. For tickets and information: [specialevents.coj.net/All-Events/Submit-An-Event/Holiday-Pops-Matinee.aspx](http://specialevents.coj.net/All-Events/Submit-An-Event/Holiday-Pops-Matinee.aspx).

**CHRISTMAS WITH C.S. LEWIS**

**When:** 2 and 6 p.m. Dec. 10

**Where:** Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St., Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$77.85

On Christmas Eve, Lewis hosts a group of Americans who are "Christmassing" in England. They are about to experience an unforgettable assortment of Yuletide recollections, which stimulates a whole range of emotions. Above all, they will discover how an encounter with J.R.R. Tolkien forever changed Lewis' Christmas celebrations. Tickets and further information at [fscjartistseries.org/tickets/christmas-with-cs-lewis](http://fscjartistseries.org/tickets/christmas-with-cs-lewis).

**JACKSONVILLE SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS HOLIDAY CONCERT**

**When:** 6 p.m. Dec. 11

**Where:** Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St., Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$10 adult, \$5 child.

Go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/jsyo23-24/3474](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/jsyo23-24/3474).

**"A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS: LIVE ON STAGE"**

**When:** 7-9 p.m. Dec. 12

**Where:** Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St., Suite 300, Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$29.50-\$49.50

Join Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus and the rest of the Peanuts characters in their journey to uncover the true meaning of Christmas. After the final bow, the show crescendos into a celebration of song as the audience is invited to join the Peanuts gang in singing traditional Christmas songs and carols.

Go to [floridatheatre.com/events/detail/a-charlie-brown-christmas-live-on-stage](http://floridatheatre.com/events/detail/a-charlie-brown-christmas-live-on-stage).

**FIRST COAST NUTCRACKER**

**When:** 8 p.m. Dec. 15-17

**Where:** Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St., Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$28-\$64. Go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/first-coast-nutcracker-23](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/first-coast-nutcracker-23).

**HANDEL'S MESSIAH**

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Dec. 16 and 17

**Where:** Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St., Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$32-\$93. Go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/handel-messiah-23](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/handel-messiah-23).

**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**

**When:** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 16

**Where:** Sweet Pete's, 400 N. Hogan St., Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$50 adult, \$35 child. Free to infants 24 months and younger.

The breakfast is hosted on the third floor of the candy mansion. Enjoy a short private visit with Santa where you can take photos, a breakfast buffet and make candy canes.

Cash bar available for sodas and cocktails. For information, call 904-643-4172.

**CIRQUE MUSICA HOLIDAY WONDERLAND**

**When:** 7-9 p.m. Dec. 20

**Where:** Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St., Suite 300, Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$29.50-\$59.50

Featuring the talented cast of Cirque Musica with all-new acts, spectators will be dazzled by the acrobats, aerialists, hilarious hijinks and holiday cheer.

Go to [floridatheatre.com/events/detail/cirque-musica-holiday-wonderland-1](http://floridatheatre.com/events/detail/cirque-musica-holiday-wonderland-1).

**TRANS-SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA: THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS EVE 2023**

**When:** 7-10 p.m. Dec. 21

**Where:** VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, 300 A Philip Randolph Blvd., Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$49-\$109+ Parking: \$20

Go to [vystarveteransarena.com/events/2023/trans-siberian-orchestra-the-ghosts-of-christmas-eve-2023](http://vystarveteransarena.com/events/2023/trans-siberian-orchestra-the-ghosts-of-christmas-eve-2023).

**THE NUTCRACKER JAX CITY BALLET**

**When:** 7 p.m. Dec. 22

**Where:** Betsy Lovett Arts Center at the Bolles School, 2264 Bartram Road, Jacksonville

**Admission:** \$38-\$53. Go to [eventbrite.com/e/the-nutcracker-ballet-tickets-718717472307?aff=oddtcreator](http://eventbrite.com/e/the-nutcracker-ballet-tickets-718717472307?aff=oddtcreator)

A holiday ballet classic tale of little Clara and the enchanted Nutcracker has captivated audiences

Miss Felicia's Dance  
*presents the 28th Annual...*  
**Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet**  
*Saturday, December 9th, 2023 at 6pm*  
UNF Lazzara Performance Hall  
Tickets on Sale NOW!

SCAN ME  
[missfeliciasdance.com](http://missfeliciasdance.com)

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for over a century!

**NUTCRACKER! MAGICAL CHRISTMAS BALLET**

**When:** 3 and 7 p.m. Dec. 27  
**Where:** Florida Theatre, 128 E. Forsyth St., Suite 300, Jacksonville  
**Admission:** \$35.50-\$178.50. Go to [floridatheatre.com/events/detail/nutcracker-magical-christmas-ballet](http://floridatheatre.com/events/detail/nutcracker-magical-christmas-ballet).

Experience the extraordinary international cast and Ukrainian Principal Artists performing at the peak of classical European ballet. Be transported by the magic of jaw-dropping acrobatics, larger-than-life puppets and stunning hand-crafted sets and costumes.

**NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION**

**When:** 10:30-11 p.m. Dec. 31.  
 Fireworks at midnight  
**Where:** Along the St. Johns River, downtown Jacksonville

**Admission:** Free  
 Say goodbye to 2023 and ring in the New Year with a spectacular fireworks display over the St. Johns River. Make your way down to the waterfront with friends or family before midnight to snag a great seat for the festivities. Fireworks will begin exactly at midnight.

**NASSAU COUNTY**

**LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE**

**When:** 6 p.m. Dec. 2  
**Where:** Parade begins in Central Park, Fernandina Beach  
**Admission:** Free

The parade will consist of lighted floats, dancers and more. The parade is organized by America's Youth Inc. If you are interested in participating, please contact John Gilbert at 904-624-5383 or [americasyouthin@comcast.net](mailto:americasyouthin@comcast.net).

**DICKENS ON CENTRE ILLUMINATED PROCESSION**

**When:** 5-7 p.m. Dec. 7

**Where:** Centre Street, Fernandina Beach

**Admission:** Free  
 Take a stroll through Fernandina's historic district for an evening of music, food and aerial drone light show!

**DICKENS ON CENTRE HOLIDAY FESTIVAL**

**When:** 5-9 p.m. Dec. 8, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Dec. 9, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 10

**Where:** Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach

**Admission:** Free  
 Travel back in time during the ninth annual Dickens on Centre festival in historic downtown Fernandina Beach on beautiful Amelia Island. Free to the public, this Victorian holiday festival is sure to enliven your Christmas spirit. Throughout the weekend, feel the spirit of the holiday with Victorian-inspired entertainment on two stages, family fun in Tiny Tim's Kids Zone, including visits with St. Nick, holiday shopping, festive food and drink, costumed characters, holiday movies and plenty of Christmas inspiration.

Special Events Include:

- Portraits with St. Nick — Dec. 8-10 by reservation. St. Nick's Workshop in the Tiny Tim's Kid Zone on North 3rd Street between Centre and Alachua. Price: \$35. Register at [bostonphotographyfl.com/2023-dickens-st-nick-portraits](http://bostonphotographyfl.com/2023-dickens-st-nick-portraits).
- Run Like The Dickens — 8:30 a.m. Dec. 9 at Main Beach, 32 N. Fletcher Ave. Cost: \$25. Fernandina Beach. The course will run a half mile north or south on the beach depending on the conditions of the sand, and back to the

start/finish area. Pre-race warm up courtesy of Run Like the Dickens partner McArthur Family YMCA. This is not a chipped race.

More fun — There will be holiday entertainment, vendors, a Parade of Paws, a Christmas Wish Tree and Letters to St. Nick. Movies to be shown at the Old Vic Theatre in Tiny Tim's Kid Zone are: "The Santa Clause," 6:30 p.m. Dec. 8; "The Muppet Christmas Carol," 10:15 a.m. Dec. 9; "The Man Who Invented Christmas — The Charles Dickens Story," noon Dec. 9; "Polar Express," 2 p.m. Dec. 9; "Elf," 4 p.m. Dec. 9; "The Santa Clause," 6 p.m. Dec. 9; "The Man Who Invented Christmas — The Charles Dickens Story," 10:30 a.m. Dec. 10; "Elf," 12:50 p.m. Dec. 10; "The Muppets Christmas Carol," 3 p.m. Dec. 10.

For information, go to [ameliaisland.com/dickens-on-centre](http://ameliaisland.com/dickens-on-centre).

**NEW YEAR'S EVE SHRIMP DROP**

**When:** 5-8 p.m. Dec. 31  
**Where:** Historic Downtown Fernandina

**Admission:** Free

Light up Amelia with the City of Fernandina and Florida Public Utilities presents the annual New Year's Eve Shrimp Drop and fireworks display. This event features music, a laser show, food and non-food vendors and party favors courtesy of Florida Public Utilities. The shrimp drops at 7 p.m., followed by the fireworks display.

FOR MORE: Go to [https://www.ameliiaisland.com/activities/list/page/3/?hide\\_subsequent\\_reurrences=1](https://www.ameliiaisland.com/activities/list/page/3/?hide_subsequent_reurrences=1)

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan



The Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and Chorus team up with local dancers to present The Nutcracker.

**SYMPHONY**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Arts, and are under the direction of choreographer and artistic director Rhonda Stampalia. Associate Conductor Kevin Fitzgerald conducts the Symphony.

Each year, this presentation of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's iconic ballet also uses all-new sets, adding to the spectacle.

Performances are 8 p.m. Dec. 15, 2 and 8 p.m. Dec. 16, and 2 p.m. Dec. 17.

Ticket prices vary. They can be purchased in advance at [jaxsymphony.org/symphony-holidays](http://jaxsymphony.org/symphony-holidays).



Handel's Messiah performed by the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and Chorus.

**HANDEL'S MESSIAH**

Finally, the triumphant Messiah

by George Frideric Handel will be performed by the Symphony and the full Jacksonville Symphony Chorus, with its more than 100 voices. The work has been popular with audiences since it debuted in 1742. Its iconic Hallelujah Chorus has long been celebrated and performed.

In fact, this is more than a performance; it's an event. Music Director Courtney Lewis will conduct the Symphony.

Handel's Messiah will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 16 and 3 p.m. Dec. 17. Ticket prices vary. They can be purchased in advance at [jaxsymphony.org/symphony-holidays](http://jaxsymphony.org/symphony-holidays).





# Season Calendar



NOV 17

**PAUL TAYLOR**  
RITZ JAZZ JAM SERIES



DEC 9

**SPIRIT OF THE SEASON FT. RITZ VOICES**  
HERITAGE CONCERT SERIES



DEC 15

**THE SEAN MASON TRIO**  
A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS



FEB 24

**TO BE YOUNG GIFTED AND BLACK**  
HERITAGE CONCERT SERIES

FEB 29

**B2WINS**  
LIVE IN CONCERT



APR 12

**GRACE KELLY**  
RITZ JAZZ JAM SERIES



APR 27

**SING PRAISE FT. RITZ VOICES**  
HERITAGE CONCERT SERIES



JUN 8

**SOUL TRACKS**  
HERITAGE CONCERT SERIES

**SCAN TO PURCHASE TICKETS**



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