

# *my* *Arlington* MONTHLY

www.MyArlington.org

Connecting Arlington - Building Community

April, 2015

## *April in Arlington*

### Tree Hill's Butterfly Festival, Arboretum's Plein Air Painting Are Natural Events

#### Spring Spotlights Arlington's Parks & Riverfront

It's April and prime time to get outdoors and reconnect with the natural beauty and offerings of Arlington. Whether attending annual springtime events or reflecting in the solace of a riverfront park, the Arlington area offers opportunities to get back to nature that are unique in Jacksonville.

Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens is once again hosting A Brush with Nature, a juried plein air painting event, where over 30 of the region's finest landscape artists will set up their easels to capture the essence of the Arboretum's beautiful settings. From Thursday, April 16, 2015 through Saturday, April 18, 2015, the artists will paint their favorite scenes from locations throughout the 120-acre site. Visitors can stroll along the trails to watch and interact with artists as they work. There will also be artists' demonstrations, guided nature walks, food, live music and art activities for children.



The following Saturday, April 25th, from 10 a.m to 4 p.m. is Tree Hill's 2015 Joseph A. Strasser Butterfly Festival. There will be vendors selling locally, handcrafted items, education booths, games, music, and more! The highly anticipated butterfly release will begin at 3:30. Tree Hill promotes environmental stewardship to the community through hands-on educational programs and low-cost access to natural spaces.

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*my Arlington* MONTHLY is published monthly by Old Arlington, Inc., 6317 Arlington Road, Jacksonville, FL 32211. OAI is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt, organization, formed in July, 1993, to promote historic preservation and community revitalization in Arlington. Free e-mail subscription is available at <http://mad.ly/signups/115910/>

## *The Conversation is Turning -*

On the heels of last month's *eu Jacksonville* feature spread on Old Arlington, there's a nice article in the *Florida Times-Union's* new community section, *Current*, chronicling the Norman Studio's quest for National Historic Landmark designation. Just a few weeks earlier, all local media outlets were touting announcement of the City's Renew Arlington plans, and last week, the lead story in the *Times-Union's* Saturday Homes section about mid-century modern architecture was pointing out that "Arlington probably has the greatest array [in Jacksonville]". The following day it's the Sunday Business column headline reporting on the prospects of a car museum at Regency Square, and a few days after that, *Current* has a story on the history of Old Arlington and OAI's historian, Cleve Powell.

To quote the Marvin Gaye song, *What's Going On?*

What's going on is the narrative is changing, the conversation is turning. From a despair of the present to a hope for the future. From words and pictures lifted from police blotters to features and panoramas painting Arlington's assets. Words begetting new conversations, creating connections, building community. Hope and reason not only for older residents to stay, but for new residents to come.

It hasn't occurred overnight, and it won't be without the missteps of a crime story here or a business vacancy there. But Arlington's future is being built upon firm, foundational efforts. The Arlington Community Redevelopment Area [CRA] under construction will address many funding and infrastructure issues, providing visible "bricks and mortar" of the area's revitalization. And a coalition of Arlington churches and non-profits is assembling under the Arlington 20/20 moniker to address the social component and human element as well.

And there's more good stuff coming this month. Two of Jacksonville's "best kept secrets" - Tree Hill and the Jacksonville Arboretum - have major springtime community events you are sure to read and hear about. And what JU has planned for the Arlington community as part of its annual Charter Day celebration on April 16th is not only praiseworthy, but unprecedented in Jacksonville as well.

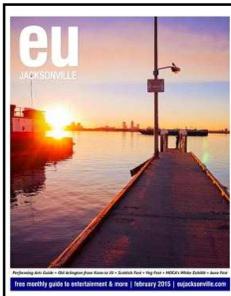
Zig Zigler may best be remembered for his adage about changing your attitude to change your altitude. It has community-wide implications too, for as Arlington's narrative changes, its perception (read reality) is changing as well. And that's good stuff - for a change.

Steve Matchett

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# *Your Turn* Address correspondence to [info@myarlington.org](mailto:info@myarlington.org)

***(Link) In case you missed it . . .***



With an overview from Kona to JU, and special features entitled *History Revealed* and *Old Arlington - The New Place to Be!*, the series of articles is a reflection of the growing awareness to Arlington's assets and charm. Read the entire feature story at [www.eujacksonville.com](http://www.eujacksonville.com), or link directly to their online flip version by clicking <http://en.calameo.com/read/003079928d701791f10fd>.

## **Members of Family Who Moved to Arlington 100 Years Ago Will Reminisce During Tree Hill's Annual Butterfly Festival** by Charlie Patton, April 18, 2014

<http://jacksonville.com/entertainment/arts/2014-04-18/story/members-family-who-moved-arlington-100-years-ago-will-reminisce>



Cleve Powell and family will reprise their roles in this year's festival



## **Norman Studios in Full Swing to Become National Historic Landmark**

<http://jacksonville.com/current/town/2015-03-17/story/norman-studios-full-swing-become-national-historic-landmark>

<http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2015-02-10/story/norman-studios-jacksonvilles-silent-film-era-now-national-register>

## **Mad for Modern in Jacksonville**

<http://jacksonville.com/homes/2015-03-26/story/back-future>

## **Regency Square May Fill Big Space with Auto Museum**

<http://jacksonville.com/business/columnists/2015-03-29/story/sunday-notebook-regency-square-may-fill-big-space-auto-museum>

## **Cleve Powell, Keeper of Arlington's Past**

<http://jacksonville.com/current/southside-beaches/2015-03-31/story/qa-cleve-powell-keeper-arlingtons-past>



# A-Town . . . What's the Buzz



## Arlington Connecting in Social Media

*myArlington* MONTHLY checks in on several social media sites featuring Arlington people, places, and things. The views and comments expressed may not necessarily represent ours - but they could be yours!



[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

*I Grew Up in Arlington* is a Facebook Group boasting almost 6,600 members providing a way for people who have lived in Arlington to reconnect with others.

*The Rich History of Arlington - A Unique Place in Time* is a Facebook Group that provides historical information about the Arlington community. The group celebrated its 1 year anniversary and 1,000th member this month.

*Old Arlington Inc.* is the Facebook page for OAI and this publication.

*Whatever happened to the hot air balloons? I used to see them every weekend as a kid... - Melissa*

*Didn't they launch from the Coca-Cola place on Atlantic, near Arlington Rd.? - Jane*



*Now Famous Amos on Cesery Blvd. I think it was originally a Shakeys but that chain didn't last long. It then went to Pizza Inn, and after being vacant for about a year, was converted into Famous Amos. - Richard*

*I remember going their as a little girl...I loved watching them toss the pizza dough up in the air to make the crusts. - Lisa*

*Shakeys Pizza Birthday Club! Free slice on your bday. Fond memories - Heather*

*The best place after Friday night football! - Margaret*

*Shakey's.....blast from the past! - Kristine*



*Opening on April 20th! YEAH!!!!!!! WOO HOO!!! - David*

*So glad...missed it! - Kathy*

*WOHOO! ! I have it on good authority that the design of the building is called Tuscan Farmhouse and the only one like this built in Florida! - Jackie*

*Welcome back olive garden, you have been missed. - Angela*

*I thought they launched from JU. That sound woke me up every weekend as a kid. I would open the curtains and they were floating by. - Daphne*

*I was working and studying @ JU in the early 1980's and lived a mile or so toward the bridge, on Arco Drive (a good viewing spot) I even went up in one they allowed us scaredies who had to try tethered, first. They definitely were sending up and out regularly on the campus! Made a glorious sight over the river! - Evelyn*

*I loved seeing them drift over the house. When we heard that whoosh, the entire family would race outside. - Valerie*

*They would fly over my house & they were low enough where I could yell "Good Morning" to them and they'd respond back. I want wings and an engine if I'm up there LOL! - Dotty*

Join the Facebook Group [A Rich History of Arlington - A Unique Place in Time](#) on a

## Guided Tour of the Timucuan Preserve

In the last week of January, Rick Covey, a member of the Facebook group “The Rich History of Arlington - A Unique Place In Time”, sparked a discussion about his travels amongst the beautiful assortment of naturally preserved parks in Arlington. His post, “*Went to the Theodore Roosevelt Preserve today...hadn’t been there in many years*”, was accompanied by videos of a pristine marsh with lookout tower vistas of the Intracoastal Waterway. With heightened views looking down upon the surrounding forest treetops he posted, “*No, I wasn’t in the mountains today...I was high up on a bluff east of Ft. Caroline*”.

Within a week, the discussion turned to the history surrounding the mystery of John Nathan Spearing’s headstone and the legendary last resident of the bluff, Willie Brown. This 600 acre parcel of the Timucuan & Ecological Preserve was a gift from Willie who believed that, “People...ought to have a place in the woods they can go to”. Pictures of Willie Brown, his cabin site, and the beauty surrounding the bluff, emerged as members who lived out of state lamented about missing the close proximity of this National Park Service treasure. Then another door opened in the discussion with Ft. Caroline National Park Ranger Craig Morris posting, “*I would like to offer a Ranger Guided walk through the Theodore Roosevelt area...*”.



The quick, positive feedback led to the creation of a tour event for March 21st, which booked in less than an hour of its announcement. A second tour was added for March 28th, which also quickly filled up.

A foggy morning lent additional mystique to the first tour as hikers embarked upon the **Spanish Pond Trail**, quickly dismissing the mileage of the trails reflected on the map and beginning their journey.

The winding trail offers boardwalks across wetlands of the Preserve where over 340 species of birds have been spotted. As the scrub vegetation starts to blend with the looming trees of an old forest, it is hard to imagine that part of the trail is within a few yards of remotely located homes nestled along its’ edge. The “clockwise” route will take the hiker towards the river.

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# Cleve's Corner . . .

*Complementing the Spring Spotlight on Arlington*

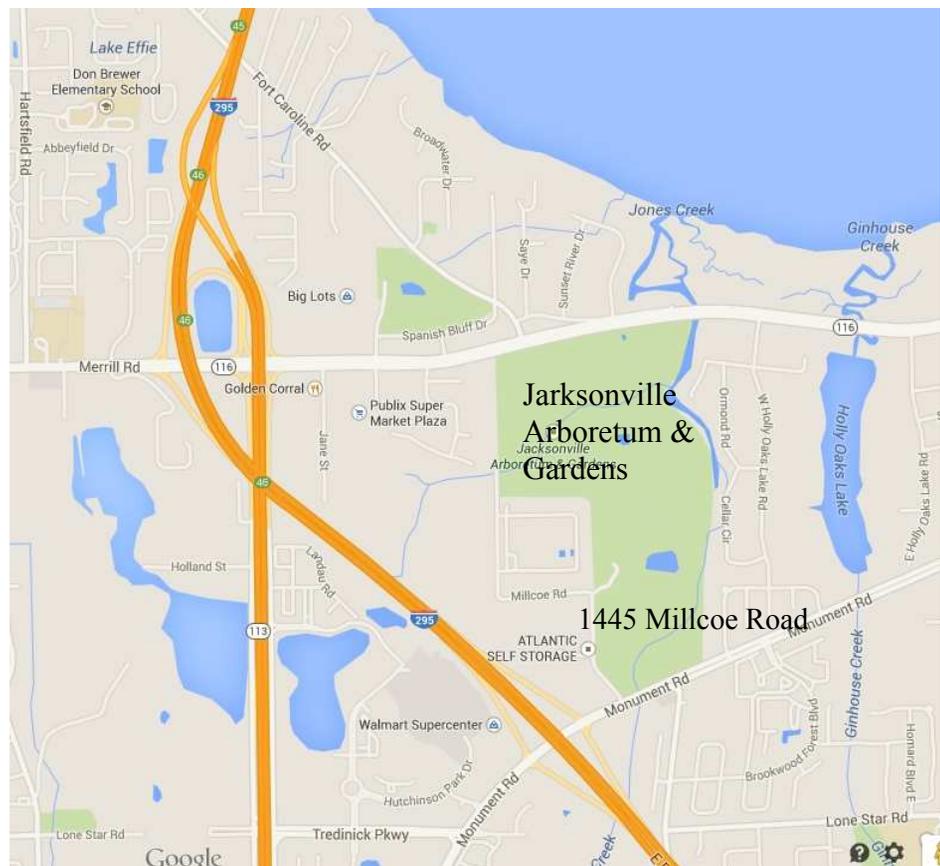
The history of the Jacksonville Arboretum and Gardens begins about 1888 when part of the Jacksonville, Mayport & Pablo Railroad & Navigation Co. traversed the northern part of the property, near what is now Merrill Road carrying freight and passengers from urban areas to what is now Hannah Park and to Mayport. The railroad went bankrupt after several years, but remains of the old railroad berm are still visible on the site.

In 1944, the Arboretum and other lands east of Arlington, were still undeveloped and sparsely inhabited. The country had entered WWII and Humphreys Gold Mining Co. had acquired large tracts of land in North Florida to strip mine for minerals that were used to make titanium for the war effort. While today's mining practices remove and store top soil so the property can be restored when the mining is completed, in the 1940s the top soil was discarded or destroyed and only sand remained. The mining ended in the mid-1950s and for many years afterward, large tracts of land in Duval County looked like desert sand dunes with only a few small patches of vegetation here and there.

In 1968, the City of Jacksonville and Duval County were consolidated to form a single government, and as a result, the City became responsible for waste water treatment systems east of the St. Johns River. Many of these were failing and the EPA was putting pressure on the newly consolidated City to stop dumping untreated sewage in the St. Johns River. To assist the City in expanding its regional treatment system and enable construction of a new regional treatment plant, the EPA provided a \$22 million grant. Communities nearest the proposed site for the plant, particularly Holly Oaks, strongly objected to the plant being built in their neighborhood (sewer odor control was still in the technological dark ages). To mitigate the effects of the regional plant, a condition was added to the EPA grant which obligated the City to acquire a 114 acre parcel for a "passive recreation park" and buffer zone between the plant and neighborhoods to the east. That tract, part of which had been strip mined by Humphreys, is now the site of the Jacksonville Arboretum.

The Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens, Inc., (JAG) was formed in 2004 with a board comprised primarily of land development professionals and community organizers, with Dr. Judy Stevens, a retired professor who had served on the board of an arboretum in Michigan, at its helm. The City wasn't confident that a new organization comprised of ordinary citizens could be successful, but to placate the EPA and the neighborhood, it agreed to lease the property to JAG for \$1.00 a year and to provide a grant of \$250,000 for capital.

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# The History of Old Arlington

*with Some History on the Jacksonville Arboretum and Tree Hill*

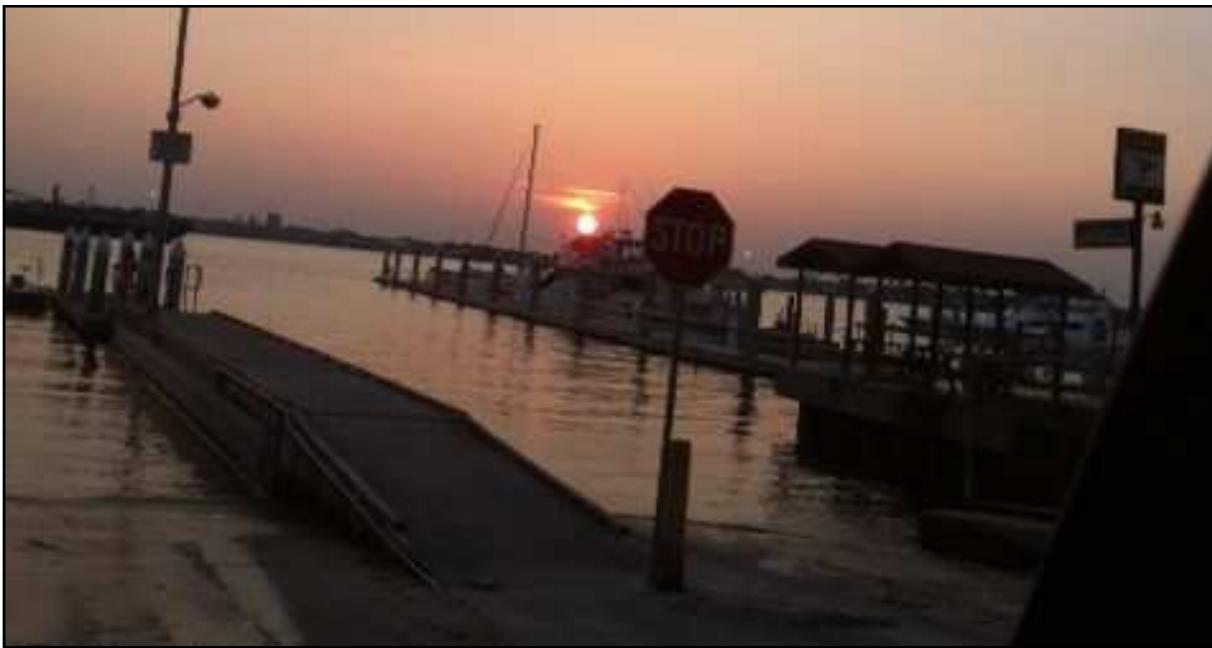
## *Tree Hill's "Past in a Glance"*

- When Spain's Ponce De Leon and crew sailed up the mighty St. Johns, (C-1513)  
 Indians hunted under the "Tree Hill" oak canopy and palm fronds.
- Then the French Huguenots settled just to the east at St. Johns Bluff (C-1562)  
 Until Spain's Pedro Menendez decided they'd been there long enough. (C-1565)
- For another two hundred years both the Indians and Spanish roamed,  
 Until the English took over and Samuel Potts made it his home. (C-1763)
- But the Spanish took the territory back and ruled Florida again, (C-1783)  
 And Francis Richard came to settle the eastern shore with all of his kin. (C-1795)
- Richard named his large Spanish grant plantation "Strawberry Hill", (C-1821)  
 And dammed several creeks to power both a grist and a saw mill.
- This formed a big lake which made "Tree Hill" accessible mostly by boat -  
 A little part of his farm "nature's paradise" with its own private moat.
- After Richard Jr.'s death, the plantation went to John Sammis and wife Mary, (C-1840)  
 He kept the place going until the Civil War's threat made him wary.
- Legend has it due to the war, his wealth was subject to be taken away, (C-1862)  
 So he rowed to "Tree Hill" to bury his gold in a pot until a safer day.
- When the war was over Sammis sold his land, then the dam washed out, (C-1873)  
 The land set idle until Alderman Realty Co.'s development came about. (C-1912)
- Alderman Realty divided the land round "Tree Hill" into eight acre farm lots.  
 The Johnson family rode the ferry from town to see what they had bought.
- They cleared the land and called their new home "Red Bay Ranch & Dairy", (C-1914)  
 Louise ran the farm while Cleveland ran dredge boats next to the ferry.
- Children Bruce, Claris and Mary milked cows, plowed, and cut wood,  
 From the land that they loved, they made a living the best that they could.
- Time passed, Mary took over the farm, Claris opened Lone Star Stables, (C-1943)  
 Taxes forced a sign "For Sale", sell part and keep what they were able. (C-1969)
- Some neighbors saw the sign and thought apartments would be a shame.  
 PATH (Preservation Association of Tree Hill) was their group's name.
- So with public meetings, community spirit, and a lot of well laid plans  
 They got everyone's attention and, thank God, the State bought the land. (C-1972/98)
- Now the land first inhabited by Indians and where early settlers stayed  
 Is saved for families to enjoy nature today as yesterday's memories fade. (2005)

*Cleve Powell*

APRIL IN ARLINGTON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

With miles of riverfront shoreline, Arlington features a number of parks and boat ramps providing public access and enjoyment.



Sunset at the Arlington Rd Boat Ramp located at the western terminus of Arlington Road.



(Right) View of Dames Point Bridge from the Ft. Caroline Community Center, adjacent to the Lonnie Wurn Boat Ramp  
(Below) - Lonnie Wurn Boat Ramp located within Ft. Caroline Club Estates



Clouds gather over Reddie Point Preserve

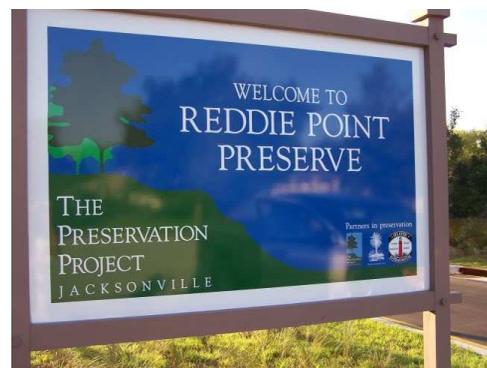


(Above) A long boardwalk connects Blue Cypress with the Arlington Lions Club Park.  
(Below) Sunset at Blue Cypress Park



# Park Point

Blue Cypress Park, Arlington Lions Club Park, & Reddie Point Preserve are virtually contiguous at the north end of University Blvd.



Reddie Point Preserve offers incredible opportunities to fish from the pier or shoreline, hike nature trails, picnic or moor a boat from floating docks to enjoy a day visit. Kayakers are welcome to utilize the natural shoreline for their river access needs.

For more information visit <http://www.coj.net/departments/parks-and-recreation.aspx>

# The Neighborhoods of Arlington

A spotlight on the building blocks of Arlington Community

## LAKE LUCINA

Lake Lucina is a beautiful small lake sitting in the heart of Old Arlington, part of an 80-acre land purchase by Oliver H. P. Champlin in 1882. In 1888, Mr. Champlin recorded the plat in Jacksonville, Florida as Eggleston Heights, which was his wife's maiden name, also naming a street bordering the west side of the lake for her given name, Almira.



Oliver Champlin actually lived on the southwestern corner of the Lake at one time and several family names became names of streets in the area, including Ransom Street named after his son, and Michigan Avenue named after his birthplace. Oliver and Almira rest in the Old Sammis cemetery at the corner of Noble Circle W. and Garrison Avenue in Clifton, now with a marker calling it Clifton Cemetery.



Mr. Champlin's estate sold parts of Eggleston Heights to Roy O. Dickson, who sold part to William R. Cesery. Cesery saw potential in the still rural area, and in 1951 began Arlington's boom with the Lake Lucina subdivision, which was accessed by a road he built and named Cesery Boulevard. Through the 1960s, Cesery built more than 2,000 homes and hundreds of apartments in Arlington. Many of the subdivisions, immediately north and south of Merrill Road between University Blvd. and Townsend Blvd., were developed with Lake Lucina identities.

Lake Lucina itself is a small and shallow lake providing a beautiful setting for homes and wildlife. Waterfowl grace the lake with their presence, along with puddle ducks, mallards, and at certain times of the year, wood ducks. Canadian geese are plentiful, hawks, egrets, and osprey feed daily, and Great blue herons and eagles are often spotted. The anglers catch bass, catfish, bluegills, shell crackers and tilapia. Grass carp control the vegetation and aerators placed at either end of the springs assist in oxygenation of the lake. Some residents swim in the lake regularly and when water levels are high, there is occasional skiing. In the 1950's water lilies, cattails and thick aquatic growth made swimming and boating almost impossible. In 1953, the homeowners around the lake formed an association, which was incorporated ten years later, and further reorganized in 1973, to care for and protect the lake - a geographic and aesthetic centerpiece of Old Arlington.

## JACKSONVILLE ARBORETUM & GARDENS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

The land had been untended since it was mined by Humphreys over 60 years ago, and there were tons of illegally dumped materials on site - car bodies, washers, water heaters, and all manner of discarded building materials. New plants and trees had re-grown in mined areas and nature had done a remarkable job of healing the land. There was a lovely 2 acre lake, several magnificent 120 year old oaks spared during the strip mining process, a 25' ravine, and a beautiful flowing creek that extended all the way to the St. Johns River.

JAG started identifying and mapping the species of trees and plants, and gathering other botanical and historical information on the site to develop a conceptual master plan. Several teams of volunteers collected geographic data within the area of the Arboretum immediately north of the lake. A topographical and tree survey was prepared and plans for the parking area were designed, engineered and permitted. All of the professional services were graciously donated.

While the planning process was ongoing, other volunteers constructed the first three trails (Lake Loop, Jones Creek and Upper Ravines), built stream crossings, removed tons of dumped materials, identified trees, and designed interpretative signage. Most trail work was done using simple hand tools. On November 15, 2008, with only about 50 trees identified with signs, JAG opened the doors of the Arboretum to the community.

Expansion and improvements began almost immediately. Additional parking was added, benches and picnic tables were constructed by churches and Eagle Scout candidates to provide more amenities. Permanent vault restrooms were installed while JAG also upgraded signage, trails, and crossings. The Arboretum experience has also been enhanced with new technology that includes a phone app and QR codes posted along the trails.

As new trails were cut and habitats opened for viewing, protective measures were designed to protect unusual and fragile plants. Guiding all of what JAG does is a detailed Resource Management Plan (RMP) that describes the habitats within the property, soil conditions, the types of trees and plants located within each habitat, and the plan to maintain, restore, or replant those areas depending upon their current condition and ecological function.

Surrounded by businesses, residences, asphalt and bustle, the Arboretum is a place to walk through the woods, learn about and view plants and nature, and enjoy quiet solitude. Wildlife flourishes in the ravine, live oak hammocks, sand scrub forests, rolling dunes, baygall, wetlands, salt marsh, fresh water marsh, and stream environments, all within less than 120 acres.



Download the JAG Trails Map & Visitors Guide at [www.jacksonvillearboretum.org](http://www.jacksonvillearboretum.org)

# A BRUSH WITH *Nature*

A PLEIN AIR PAINTING EVENT  
APRIL 16 – 18, 2015



Randy Pitts "Across Lake Ray" 8 x 10 oil on linen panel, Private Collection



Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens is once again hosting A Brush with Nature, a juried plein air painting event, where over 30 of the region's finest landscape artists will set up their easels to capture the essence of the Arboretum's beautiful settings. From Thursday, April 16, 2015 through Saturday, April 18, 2015, the artists will paint their favorite scenes from locations throughout the 120-acre site. Visitors can stroll along the trails to watch and interact with artists as they work. There will also be artists' demonstrations, guided nature walks, food, live music and art activities for children.



# 2015 Joseph A. Strasser Butterfly Festival

**3:30pm live butterfly release!**

**Animal encounters!**

**Bounce house! Face painting!**

**Local vendors! Garden tours!**

**And more!**



**10:00am to 4:00pm**

**7152 Lone Star Road**

**904-724-4646**

**\$5 adult**

**\$4 senior/military/student**

**\$3 kids 3-17**

**Under 3 and Tree Hill members**

**Saturday, April 25th**



**TREE HILL**  
nature center

# College of Fine Arts

JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

## Performing Arts Series

April, 2015 SEASON 2014 - 2015



### JU Chamber Ensembles

**Terry Concert Hall April 2 at 7:30 PM**

From saxophones to string quartets, enjoy an evening of chamber music performed by JU student groups, including the Honors Chamber Ensembles.

### Student Jazz Combos

**River House April 8 at 7:30 PM**

The student jazz combos are featured in their last concert on campus for the year, held at JU's new campus venue, the River House. Come support and enjoy chamber jazz in the local campus club house!

### Opera Goes Pop\*

**Swisher Theater April 9, 10, 11 at 7:30 PM**

Enjoy the vocalism of the JU singers and choristers in an evening of pop opera including music from composers Giacomo Puccini and Andrew Lloyd Webber as well as the light opera and crossover hits of Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, and George Gershwin.

### JU Wind Ensemble "Song & Dance"

**Terry Concert Hall April 12 at 3 PM**

The Wind Ensemble will feature a concerto soloist and works from the standard and contemporary wind band repertoire.

**Lotus Sounds Black Box Theater (Phillips 19) April 14 at 7:30 PM**

A special electronic music and media art concert featuring works of electronic music with video and instruments.

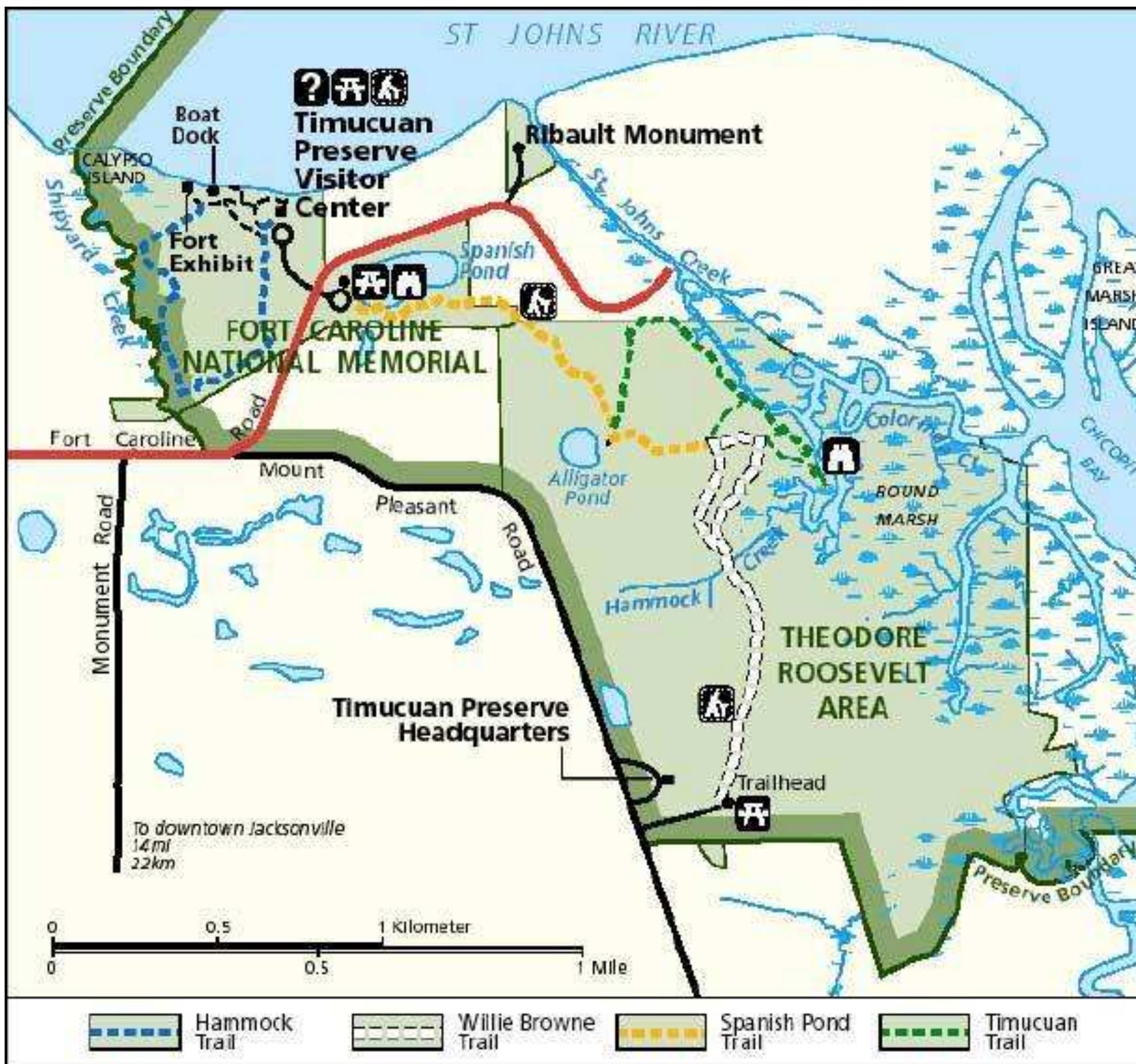
**Orchestra and Choir Concert Terry Concert Hall April 18 at 7:30 PM**

Come enjoy a powerful evening of music as Dr. Marguerite Richardson leads the Jacksonville University Orchestra and Jacksonville University Choirs (Dr. Timothy Snyder, Director) in a musical tour de force.

**Serenade Series Hicks Auditorium, Jacksonville Public Library April 21 at 7 PM**

**Scott Watkins, piano**

Pianist Scott Watkins' solo recital features music from his recordings in a program featuring Beethoven's Sonata in E major, Op. 109, and Liszt's Three Petrarch Sonnets from his 1999 debut disc, and Hanson's Sonata in A minor, Op. 11 from his recently released disc "American Piano Sonatas."



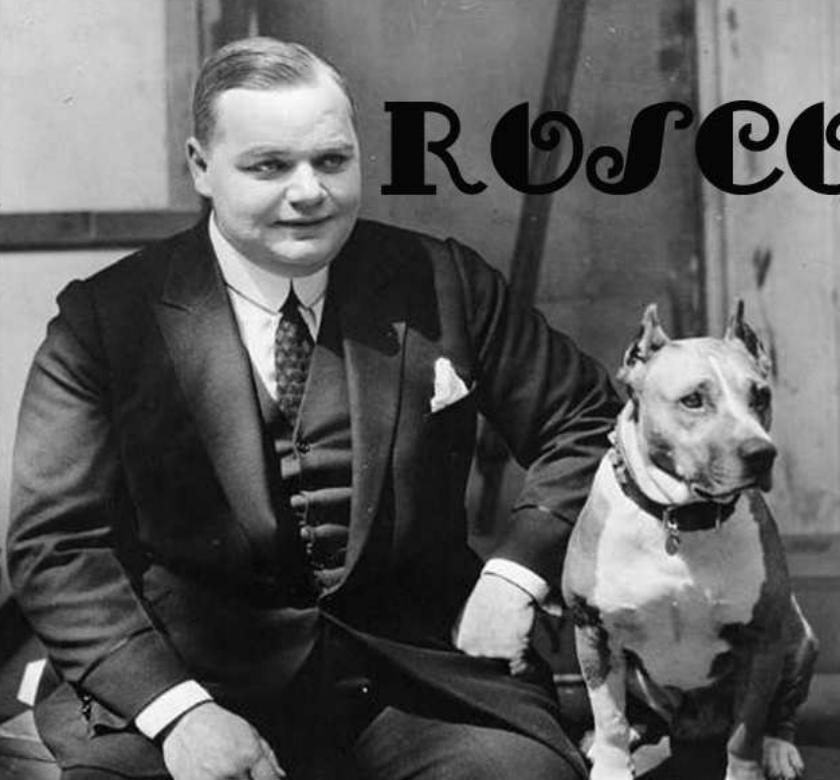
**TIMUCUAN TRAIL** - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

After taking a turn on the **Timucuan Trail** towards the bluff, deer moss, rosemary bushes and scrub oaks begin to dominate the landscape again as this trail winds uphill on the dune. Views to the north and east offer a glimpse of the St. John's River beyond the treetops and an overlook of the large divide created in the bluff where a road leads to Buck Island. Hiking further east to the top, about 90 feet above sea level, the trail turns southward with a steep decline. The trail splits



again where the green square on the guidepost on the trail headed east reflects the continued downward direction of the narrow portion of the Timucuan Trail that winds around a 1,000 year old Indian Burial Mound along the bluff. Or, weariness may lead to the option of taking the black marker shortcut trail back to the wider, and less challenging, **Spanish Pond Trail**.





Norman Studios Presents  
**ROSCOE & LUKE**  
Sunday, April 12  
Fatty's Faithful Fido  
Fatty's Chance Acquaintance  
Fatty's Plucky Pup  
Starring Roscoe Arbuckle & his famous four-legged friend, Luke  
~  
In support of Mad Cowford's  
Comedy for Critters  
Saturday, April 18  
Benefitting Friends of Jacksonville Animals

www.normanstudios.org



# *MyJax* App Now Available

*Your mobile connection to City of Jacksonville services, allows you to:*

- ⇒ Report concerns such as blight, potholes, missed garbage collections, animals and a host of other issues
- ⇒ Pinpoint the issue location using GPS, attach photos and receive automatic status updates from your smart device
- ⇒ Link directly to the City's social pages
- ⇒ One-touch dialing
- ⇒ Access to other City mobile apps
- ⇒ Look up garbage and recycle schedules



For download links, click on  
<http://www.coj.net/mobile-apps.aspx>