

metro

TONY BENNETT
Singer keeps bringing great songs to life **Review, B-4**



quinton white
river life

Shark puzzle might begin right here

There's been a lot of excitement recently around the marine science program at Jacksonville University. On Feb. 9, we announced a cooperative partnership with Ocearch, which is by far the most widely recognized shark tracking organization in the world.

This nonprofit organization has specialized in the "charismatic megafauna" known as the great white shark, and in doing so has created a level of social media awareness never before seen around science. Ocearch has produced critical scientific data related to the tracking of such keystone marine species as great white sharks, tiger sharks and now whale sharks, while also providing educational opportunities and conservation outreach programs on a global scale.

Chris Fischer, the Ocearch founding chairman and expedition leader, is now Explorer in Residence at JU. Ocearch has completed 27 expeditions, with No. 28, the Low Country Expedition, now in progress off the South Carolina and Georgia coasts. Recent expeditions have included Jacksonville (twice), North Carolina, Long Island and Nantucket.

Mary Lee, a shark tagged off the New England coast, first appeared 200 yards off Jacksonville Beach back in January 2013. That shark, named after Chris Fischer's mother, introduced him to Jacksonville, which in turn led Ocearch to conduct its first expedition here in February and March of that year, when they tagged Lydia. They returned to this area in February 2016 for another try.

It turns out that Jacksonville may be the center of what Chris Fischer calls the "North Atlantic Great White Shark Puzzle." What an exciting opportunity for Jacksonville. With Ocearch at Jacksonville University, we can bring tremendous potential benefits to our students, faculty and the entire Jacksonville community. Ocearch will have an academic home at the JU campus in the Marine Science Research Institute, and the M/V Ocearch vessel will be home-ported in Jacksonville.

Ocearch's new permanent home with the St. Johns River at its front door and the Atlantic Ocean at its back door is ideally positioned to study the shark populations of the North Atlantic. We are extremely excited about the reciprocal learning connections that go beyond Marine Science. Students will be offered hands-on experience in other disciplines such as film, marketing, public policy, education, math, engineering, aviation, sustainability, communication and even art, music and literature.

The possibilities are truly endless, and fit into our traditional emphasis on innovation, scientific inquiry, experiential learning and sustainability.

Our intention is to expand the scope and research of Ocearch to include issues like plastics in the ocean, and to use the social media platform created by Ocearch to raise ocean awareness. Fischer's philosophy of open data and sharing results fits perfectly into the synergistic nature of the Marine Science Research Institute at JU.

So, why study sharks at all? Sharks are what are termed keystone species. The entire ocean ecosystem is dependent

RIVERLIFE continues on B-4

JTA looks at deploying driverless vehicles

Board votes to move to development phase of replacement for Skyway

By Sebastian Kitchen
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The Jacksonville Transportation Authority is moving into the development phase of replacing the aging Skyway rail system with autonomous vehicles that could reach Brooklyn, Riverside and the sports complex anchored by EverBank Field. The JTA Board of Direc-

tors voted unanimously Thursday to move into the development phase of what the staff is calling the Ultimate Urban Circulator, which would deploy the driverless vehicles onto the current Skyway route and expand into other neighborhoods and developments.

JTA has arranged with a driverless vehicle manufacturer for a demonstra-

tion March 8 at Intuition Ale Works. JTA executives have been in discussions with multiple vendors and this demonstration will be an opportunity for those in the community to ride and learn more about the vehicles.

Brad Thoburn, JTA vice president of planning, development and innovation, said the staff would now develop a conversion plan, create a pilot program, and develop a station in Brooklyn. He said the staff

SKYWAY continues on B-4



This is a rendering of the proposed system, utilizing autonomous vehicles, that Jacksonville Transportation Authority staff is proposing to replace the aging Skyway system. (Provided by JTA)

Teacher of the Year

Finalists put students first

They find a way to keep pushing for breakthroughs

By Denise Smith Amos
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Michael J. Bostic-Jones tries to give students what he lacked as a child in foster care, says Vincent Hall, principal of William M. Raines High, where Bostic-Jones teaches history.

Bostic-Jones grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., and was placed in foster care because his mother was a drug addict and his father an alcoholic. He bounced around in schools and homes so much he barely remembers some of his foster siblings, Bostic-Jones wrote in a Teacher of the Year essay.

The top teacher will be announced Friday and honored at a gala Friday night.

But he remembers several teachers, including a Mr. Laraby, who taught him how to break through his anger and who reversed his feelings of worthlessness, Bostic-Jones wrote.

Now as a history teacher at Raines, "he has been able to connect with the most challenging students as a means of giving them hope," said Ronnie B. Williams Jr., assistant principal.

His lessons extend beyond classroom walls, Hall wrote. For instance, in the past two years he took Raines students to Costa Rica to volunteer, gain experience in another country and culture, and realize they can do anything they dream of, Hall wrote.

"He is the dream weaver for many of his students," Hall wrote.

In history classes, Bostic-Jones emphasizes reading, vocabulary, comprehension and writing. He pulls out groups of students for targeted learning, which "keeps them on their toes," Bostic-Jones wrote.

TEACHER continues on B-4



Allison Bear of J. Allen Axson Montessori School



Holly Hultgren of Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology



Michael Bostic-Jones of William Raines High School



Caitlyn Stetson of Reynolds Lane Elementary School



Latrece Brown of Andrew A. Robinson Elementary School

Meetings set to discuss police body cameras

Sheriff's Office proposal to be discussed, get some citizen feedback

By Dan Scanlan
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The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office will have six regional town hall meetings in the coming weeks to present information to residents about the planned use of body cameras by its officers, according to a statement on its website.

The meetings, not scheduled yet, will pres-

ent information about the Sheriff's Office's research and proposed body-worn camera program and get citizen feedback and input.

"Face-to-face information sharing is key in planning properly for major changes, such as the implementation of a body-worn camera program for Jacksonville's police," Sheriff Mike Williams said in the statement. "Now that we are far enough along in our research and study of various programs and policies around the country, I am moving forward with meetings and information

exchanges like the ones I had."

The Sheriff's Office began those meetings Feb. 7 with body camera details presented by Williams to the City Council's Public Health and Safety Committee. He also met Wednesday with local members of the NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Jacksonville Urban League about the camera use.

The civil rights organizations issued a joint statement afterward, saying they want the department's body camera policy to be developed "in

public with the input of civil rights advocates and the local community" and specify clear policies for its use. The statement said the Sheriff's Office should enforce strict protocols for all policy violations, make camera footage available to the public and journalists upon request, and prohibit officers from viewing it before filing their reports.

"We are cautiously optimistic that this meeting will strengthen the relationship between the black community and JSO," said the Rev. Levy Wilcox, Southern Christian Lead-

ership Conference president in Jacksonville.

The body camera pilot program is scheduled to roll out this spring or early summer with select officers testing the equipment, software and policy for its effective use, the sheriff said.

Details about the town hall meetings will be released soon. They all will take place before the body camera pilot program begins, Williams said. He is also working with the Fraternal Order of Police on the issue.

Dan Scanlan:(904) 359-4549

Law & Order

Westside man, 24, dies after being shot in car multiple times

The Times-Union

A 24-year-old Westside man died Wednesday evening after he was shot multiple times in the parking lot of his apartment complex in the 2000 block of Jammes Road on the city's Westside, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office said.

Roshaun O'Neil Hayles was shot about 6:20 p.m. as he sat in a car at the Nova Eagle apartments where he lived nearby, according to police.

Police said Hayles was in a car with friends when two unknown men pulled up next to them in a dark gray Toyota 4Runner and began shooting. Officers called to the complex in reference to a shooting found those friends had driven him to a nearby convenience store at Cassat and San Juan avenues seeking help, according to the Sheriff's Office. From there, paramedics took the victim to UF Health Jacksonville where he was pronounced dead, Sgt. Steve Rudlaff said.

The Sheriff's Office confirmed the Toyota 4Runner was found abandoned at 1:40 a.m. Thursday on the city's Westside.

Police said surveillance camera video shows several people may have witnessed the shooting and are asking anyone with information to call the Sheriff's Office at (904) 630-0500, or Crime Stoppers at (866) 845-TIPS.

Garrett Pelican/Dan Scanlan

NASSAU Man held on arson, child neglect charges

A 34-year-old man was arrested Wednesday night on charges of arson and child neglect after someone tried to set a boat with a teenage boy

on board ablaze in the Fernandina Beach City Marina, according to the Fernandina Beach Police Department.

Brandon L. Hooper originally refused to come out of the boat when deputies arrived, then was arrested after saying he was "the devil" and wanted to die, according to his arrest report.

Officers were called to a boat in the South Front Street marina at 6:30 p.m. after calls of a possible domestic disturbance, the report said. A woman told police her boyfriend had tried to set their boat on fire with cigarettes and a lighter following an argument. The woman and teen were on the boat with Hooper at the time, police said.

The woman and teen were told he wanted to "burn the boat down" as he grabbed a lighter, then lit cigarettes and tossed them, even into a closet with clothing inside, police said. The 17-year-old tried to grab and extinguish the cigarettes as they were thrown. But the teen was grabbed, slapped and shoved aside, police said.

Dan Scanlan

2 teenagers killed in Yulee crash on U.S. 17

Two Jacksonville boys ages 15 and 16 were killed in a Wednesday night crash on U.S. 17 in Nassau County, according to the Florida Highway Patrol.

Troopers don't know the reason for the 7 p.m. crash just two miles south of Harts Road as their investigation continues, but roads were wet after a day of heavy rain in the area.

The teens were identi-

fied as Travis Lighthall, 15, and Kay Stanley Dera-way IV, 16, according to the Highway Patrol. Dera-way was a First Coast High School student, while Lighthall went to Oceanway Middle School, according to their Facebook pages.

The wreck happened near the Nassau/Duval county border. The teens' 2002 Nissan Sentra was southbound on U.S. 17 with Dera-way at the wheel when he veered into the right shoulder, over-corrected and came back across the road, the Highway Patrol said. The Sentra's passenger side was hit by a Kia Soul heading north.

The Highway Patrol said the two teens and the driver of the other vehicle were all wearing seat belts.

Dan Scanlan

PUTNAM Officer resigns after drugs found at home

A Putnam County school resource officer has resigned after prescription drugs confiscated during the course of his duties were found at his home, the Sheriff's Office said Thursday.

Raymond Dale Streets, 51, faces charges of grand theft, possession of a controlled substance and failure to perform a duty required by an officer, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Streets came under scrutiny after deputies answered a call of possible child abuse made Feb. 15 by his live-in girlfriend's teenage daughter, the Sheriff's Office said.

Deputies discredited the 17-year-old's claim that her mother burned her with a cigarette after determining she made it up so she could live with her father. But during the investigation, they learned of allegations

that Streets was keeping drugs in the couple's home.

Armed with a warrant, detectives searched the residence and found medications, including narcotic controlled substances, collected by Streets that were supposed to be turned in and destroyed following the 2014 school year, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Garrett Pelican

ST. JOHNS Man arrested in child sex sting

A 25-year-old St. Augustine man was arrested Thursday afternoon following an undercover sting aimed at exposing those who use the internet to sexually exploit children, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Cody Allen Mercer of Pacetti Road was booked into the St. Johns County jail on the following charges:

use of computer to seduce a child; attempted lewd and lascivious behavior; traveling to meet a child after using a computer to lure one; unlawful use of a device to facilitate a felony; and transmitting information harmful to minors. He's also charged with fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer.

At some point, Mercer began talking to an undercover detective posing as a child and then drove Wednesday night to meet the child, but fled when detectives tried to pull him over, the Sheriff's Office said.

Mercer turned himself in Thursday afternoon.

Garrett Pelican



Mercer

TEACHER

Continued from B-1

"The best learning occurs when students are so intrigued that they forget that they're learning," he wrote.

A tennis and swimming coach, Bostic-Jones also sponsors a student leadership club, the Rainesmen, which does community service.

"People continually ask me why I would choose to teach at Raines," he wrote. "Several of my students have been murdered, arrested and found themselves in other tragic situations. These are the students that need me."

He often exhorts students to "Be great!" in halls as they change classes. Some former students say that has become their motto.

Omar Howard, now attending the University of Florida, said "he sees the best in people when we cannot."

HOLLY HULTGREN

Holly Hultgren is lead agriscience teacher at Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology. Her students study biotechnology or veterinary assistance.

In 2015-16, all 10 students in the first graduating class of veterinary assistants earned industry certification. They also get 500 hours working with animals through internships and job shadowing.

She grew the Future Farmers of America chapter at the school from 20 to 140 members in four years; they will represent Florida at the national convention in Indiana.

For project-based learning, her students build birdhouses from blueprints. They watch zookeepers and veterinarians do their jobs, including neutering cats, and they create and label the bone structure of a horse using pasta.

Students also ran an

animal grooming business, some interned with veterinarians and animal shelters, and some built pens for goats, chickens, pegs and ducks.

Hultgren acknowledges she gets "over-excited" about explaining the differences between dirt (what you track into a house from outside) and soil, with its layers of nutrients and organisms.

Students first roll their eyes, but later they can identify the various layers and components of soil, she said.

Most of the last two years of graduates in her program pursued biotechnology, agribusiness or veterinary science, with some studying to teach, she said.

Karalyn Bridgman, now a UF student, said that after her best friend died in a car accident, Hultgren coached her through senior year when she wanted to give up and helped her get into UF.

"She encouraged me to keep pushing through and not give up," Bridgman wrote. "She saw my potential and made sure I saw it as well."

LATRECE BROWN

Latrece N. Brown, at Andrew Robinson Elementary, has taught second through fourth grades, math and science, since joining the district in 2013. She heads the fourth grade team of teachers and single-handedly planned STEM week, Florida Standards Assessment parent night and a pep rally.

"Latrece is a data guru and has passed her expertise to others," wrote Principal Latrece Fann, adding her students regularly reflect on their data and set new performance goals.

She called Brown tough but a great motivator, saying students vie for the chance to help lead a lesson or "debrief" their classmates.

"It's amazing to walk in and see students taking risks, owning their learn-

ing and demonstrating an understanding of the content," Fann said.

Nicola Gibson, who also teaches at Andrew Robinson, said a parent came to her recently, praising Brown's impact on her son.

ALLISON BEAR

Allison Bear is a preschool and kindergarten teacher at J. Allen Axson Montessori School. Montessori education emphasizes students' hands-on learning and learning at their own pace, often in multi-age classrooms.

Bear, a 12-year teaching veteran, has served as an informal reading and writing coach for kindergarten through second grades and as a master teacher mentoring new teachers. For the past several years, she has gone to school over the summer to help new teachers set up their classrooms, Principal Cecilia Robinson-Vanhoy wrote.

She also is teacher liaison to the PTA and led the school's fall festival. Her colleagues wrote about how her 20 or so youngsters excel at learning on their own in her classroom.

"At any given moment, Mrs. Bear is engaged in a lesson with a small group or individual, and the rest of the class is actively engaged in their independent work plans; all while the soft sound of classical music plays in the background," wrote Paula Renfro, a former co-worker, who now is a principal at John E. Ford PreK-8 Montessori.

CAITLYN STETSON

Caitlyn Stetson teaches fifth-grade math and science at Reynolds Lane Elementary. Her colleagues and former students say her ability to know and develop caring relationships with each student is her key to helping them turn around and be successful.

The state of Florida invited her into the High

Impact Teacher Corps, because while working in a high-poverty school she helped her students academic growth reach among the top 5 percent in the state.

But she wasn't always so successful she wrote in her essay. She used to teach math by standing in front of class and assigning students problems. When she left her teaching job in Orlando to come to Reynolds Lane four years ago, she realized she needed to do more to engage students and tailor her lessons to each one.

"I didn't know at the time what true collaboration between students should look like," she wrote. Working with a math coach, she now requires students to talk about math and science with each other about as much as she does. She and groups of students work on math ideas in teams.

She also shares her lessons with other teachers and has taken on school leadership roles.

Carlos, one of her former students, said he struggled with behavior issues in elementary school and middle school, but Stetson wouldn't give up on him. Even two years after having her in fifth grade, he would stop by her classroom before school and talk about his life and issues.

"No matter how many talks she would have with me I would just not change my ways of being, and it would frustrate her," Carlos wrote, "... but that was no excuse for her to give up. That was just an excuse for her to try harder."

He said Stetson "would fight the fight to ... have me understand that I was full of greatness."

Now a ninth-grader, Carlos is an A and B student. His letter nominating her for Teacher of the Year did not include his last name.

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Review

Bennett just keeps bringing great songs to life for the ages



Tony Bennett, pictured in 2011 during a concert in Denmark, performed Wednesday night in Jacksonville. (Mik Eskestad/Associated Press)

By Tom Szaroleta

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It's tempting, when reviewing a show by an older performer, to say he sounded really good "considering his age."

Not so with Tony Bennett. He sounded really good, period. Sure, a bit of gravel has crept into his voice and he could get a little wobbly reaching for the high notes, but he settled all doubts on the final song of his 90-minute set Wednesday night at the Times-Union Center when he set down his microphone and sang "Fly Me to the Moon" unamplified. I'm not sure if they could hear him up in the far reaches of the balcony, but halfway back in the 3,500-seat theater he was clear as a bell.

With Bennett, of course, you have to consider his age. The guy is 90, after all. That doesn't explain his remarkable voice, but it does explain his setlist, which went all the way back to "Boulevard of Broken Dreams," the first song he recorded — 67 years ago. He sings from the Great American Songbook, tunes that nobody outside of Michael Buble is even trying to do today — "Steppin' Out With My Baby," "I Got Rhythm," "Our Love is Here to Stay," "One for My Baby (and One More for the Road)." They're the sort of

songs that make you start snapping your fingers and wishing you had a cigarette and a scotch, even if you don't smoke or drink.

He did his whole show in a suit and tie, singing before a quartet — drums, piano, guitar, stand-up bass — that kept it simple and swinging for two dozen songs. You could call the guy a throwback, except for the fact that he actually lived these songs and has been a star for longer than pretty much anybody in the business. Midway through the show, he ran through a medley of "Because of You," "Cold, Cold Heart," "Rags to Riches," "Who Can I Turn To?" and "Just in Time," singing just a verse or two of each song — each of which had sold a million copies for him in its day. There aren't a lot of singers who could do that.

He drew a few chuckles from the crowd early in the show during "All I Ask," when he sang the opening line: "As I approach the prime of my life ..." and later, during "The Shadow of Your Smile," when he broke into a shuffling dance. He also drew a standing ovation during "How Do You Keep the Music Playing?" by holding the song's closing note for a remarkably long time, "considering his age."

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SKYWAY

Continued from B-1

must also reach out to the business community and other stakeholders to ensure there is community support. The staff, working with state and local leaders, must also develop a funding strategy.

The JTA opted to replace the Skyway because maintaining and expanding the current system is increasingly expensive. It does not have a timeframe or projected cost for moving forward with the revamped system.

Thoburn said JTA must also establish a timeline and determine which of the autonomous vehicles would work in Jacksonville and how many would be needed.

"AV technology is the most flexible, cost effective approach" to modernizing the system in Jacksonville, Thoburn said.

Thoburn and other JTA officials have said the authority has a unique opportunity with the aging Skyway system, the current elevated structure that would allow part of the system to operate above Jacksonville streets, and the rapidly developing autonomous vehicle technology. Thoburn envisions the proposed system operating both on the current elevated Skyway structure and on city streets in expanded service areas.

Two citizens who utilize Jacksonville public transportation spoke during the Thursday meeting and asked the board members to include disabled riders in the conversation as they move forward with the revamped Skyway and the Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center, the future hub for JTA and its transportation system that is under construction.

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ASK RIVER LIFE

Are there ever great white sharks in the St. Johns River?

While some species of sharks do occur in the river, there is no evidence that great whites enter the river with any regularity. But there is good evidence that they occur just off our coast. Both OCEARCH tagging and tracking, and local fishers have documented sightings. Recently, cell phone cameras have contributed to better identification of these animals. It used to be that every big shark sighted was a great white that was always bigger than the boat. Thankfully, that is no longer the case.

RIVERLIFE

Continued from B-1

ecosystem is dependent on these top-level predators. As sharks go, so goes the health of the ocean. Scientific literature is full of examples that show that when a keystone species is eliminated, the ecosystem collapses. Sea otters in California are a well-documented example.

Sharks are being killed by the millions every year, for sport, and commercially for their fins. Shark fin soup is an expensive

delicacy enjoyed in Asia. But sharks have a low birth rate, and it takes years to replace a shark in an ecosystem.

Many people have a somewhat irrational fear of sharks, perpetuated by the movie "Jaws." So the more we understand about these animals, the better we can protect them and our oceans.

Email A. Quinton White, executive director of Jacksonville University's Marine Science Research Institute, with questions about our waterways at qwhite@ju.edu. For more on the MSRI, visit ju.edu/msri.