

TERRY DICKSON  
Rudeness really doesn't  
discriminate **Column, B-3**



mark woods

# Campaigns' finish line is in sight

Candidates make last push before election; early voting ends Sunday

By Nate Monroe  
nate.monroe@jacksonville.com

If there's any solace in the deluge of last-minute activity voters will see from the campaigns for Jacksonville mayor, sheriff and City Council in the coming days, it's this: It's almost over.

Voters head to the polls Tuesday in a final act closing out the most costly election in city history. It has drawn outside interest, operatives and money, in part because the contenders for the top office, Mayor Alvin Brown and Republican Lenny Curry, have ties to 2016 presiden-



Brown



Curry

tial aspirants and other national political figures. Before the city can take a collective sigh of relief, before those outside campaign operatives pack their bags and before voters can stop cramming endless

glossy election mailers into their trash cans, the campaigns are scrambling in the waning days of the race to boost turnout and enthusiasm. So far, early and absentee voting have exceeded the March first election and the 2011 general election. Supervisor of Elections Jerry Holland said he believes turnout could be 40-42 percent, a bump from the 33.6 percent turnout in March.

Democrats are focusing heavily on their traditional strength in early voting, which ends Sunday. That is a critical window for Democratic candidates. "Souls to the Polls" events, often held the Sunday before Election Day, could push members of black churches into voting booths — which traditionally boosts Democratic candidates.

**ELECTION** continues on **B-3**

## There's payoff when inmates teach inmates

We ran a letter on the editorial page the other day advocating for a program in the jails to promote literacy. It was written by Sarah Van Cleve, a retired teacher and literacy volunteer. The latter part of that description was an understatement. For more than 30 years, this has been her calling in life. And for this election, as in past ones, she has been calling on whoever is elected sheriff to pay attention to it, to devote one officer to overseeing a literacy program that involves inmates tutoring inmates. I went to the Community Transition Center, a 300-bed facility a few blocks north of the jail, one morning last week. I'd been telling Van Cleve for a couple of years that I'd at least consider writing about the literacy program. But I wasn't sure there was a column there. After spending some time at the center, I'd echo what Van Cleve has been saying for years. This program costs taxpayers almost nothing. And the potential payoff? Well, let me tell you about four current inmates, two tutors and two students. ■■■

There is a bulletin board on one wall of a women's dorm in the Matrix House, a part of the center for inmates in a four-month drug treatment program. The board has the schedule for each day. It begins at 4:40 a.m. At the bottom of the board there is a quote, attributed to Albert Einstein: "The measure of intelligence is the ability to change." This is especially apropos at 6:30 a.m., when some inmates use one of the few gaps in the schedule to gather. For one hour, some are tutors and some are students. The tutors have spent 12 hours in workshops, led by Literacy Pros of Jacksonville. Clara Batten, 39, is one of the tutors. Laurie Holland, 28, is one of her new students. Batten reminded me of one of my elementary teachers, with her calm demeanor, patience and posture. Holland had short, spiky hair. When I mentioned that it takes courage to do what she's doing — to admit as an adult that she could use some help with her reading and writing — she grinned and pointed at the tattoo on her right forearm: COURAGE. "I've always had low self-esteem," she said. "When I came in here, I almost felt like I didn't deserve to be able to do this. That's how much guilt and shame I carried. But they [the tutors] don't judge." She described what they did that morning. Miss Batten — they refer to each other with this formality — had taken some of Holland's treatment work, picked out some of the misspelled words and worked on them with her. The words themselves are telling. *Miserable, embarrassed, remember.* She recalled when she was in school. She loved her teachers, she said, but she thinks that those teachers passed her through with sub-par

WOODS continues on **B-3**

## Language and Culture Festival features world of colors



Photos by Will Dickey@jacksonville.com

The quick feet of the Black Sea Folk Dancers from Orlando create a blur on the stage of the Times-Union Center's Jacoby Symphony Hall on Saturday. The Istanbul Cultural Center hosted the Language and Culture Festival, highlighting the linguistic and cultural diversity of the United States.



Students from the River City Science Academy perform a Turkish folk dance during Saturday's festival.

**MORE PHOTOS**  
View a gallery and slideshow from the Language and Culture Festival.  
[jacksonville.com/photos](http://jacksonville.com/photos); [jacksonville.com/slideshows](http://jacksonville.com/slideshows)



Enrique Melendez blows a conch shell to begin an Aztec dance.

## Memorial Park will celebrate, renovate

Concert to be followed by \$400,000 project

By Beth Reese Cravey  
beth.cravey@jacksonville.com

Jacksonville's popular but aging Memorial Park, opened in 1924 to honor Florida's 1,220 World War I casualties, is on the verge of a renaissance. The park on Riverside Avenue in Five Points will host a Memorial Day concert next Sunday. Then in the coming months, the first phase of a \$400,000 publicly and privately funded project will begin, including renovation of the park's iconic sculpture and surrounding fountain and replacement of lighting on the riverside esplanade. The results tentatively will be unveiled on Veterans Day in November, followed by drainage and irrigation improvements, said Pattie Houlihan, development director and past president of the Memorial Park Association, the non-profit that maintains and promotes the park. "It is going to make a lot of people very happy," she said. Also, the all-volunteer association recently launched an Adopt the Park business sponsorship program to raise funds for continuing maintenance. About \$21,000 was raised for the program's first year from 14 businesses, said Houlihan, leader of the sponsorship initiative. "I am excited to see enthusiasm ramped up," she said. The 6-acre park was designed by the prominent Olmsted Brothers landscape design firm — who were brought into the project by local philanthropist

**PARK** continues on **B-3**

### MAY 24 CONCERT AT MEMORIAL PARK

The free concert will be 4 to 6 p.m., with the Navy Band Southeast performing patriotic music honoring Americans who died in military service. The Times-Union's Matt Pittman, also known as MattAboutJax, will be master of ceremonies. Guests are encouraged to bring blankets or folding chairs, picnic items and wear red, white and blue. The park is at 1620 Riverside Ave.



Will Dickey@jacksonville.com

Jessica Crease (left) dances with her son Jasper Crease, 2, on the shoulders of friend Brooke Spangler during the 29th annual Dancin' in the Street festival on Saturday.

The event is one of the

## No one needed an excuse for Dancin' in Street

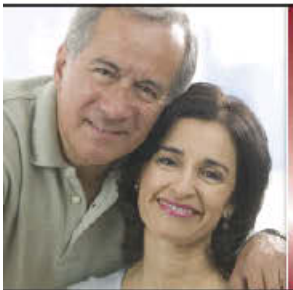
Festival attracts those wanting to have fun or make some money

By Eileen Kelley  
eileen.kelley@jacksonville.com

For five blocks just about anything stationary was fair game. By 3 p.m. Saturday, colorful beach cruisers were tethered to every tree and traffic sign. For the unlucky dozens — or rather the ingenious types ambling in packs down First Street in Neptune Beach — who couldn't find a stationary object to lock their bikes to, they opted to lock multiple bikes together and lay them just off the side of the road. Ingenuity abounded on Saturday as thousands made their way, first on bike and then on foot, to the annual Dancin' in the Street Festival. The event is one of the

biggest draws for this tiny beachside city each year. And because of that, there were plenty of opportunities. "Lemonade, 50 cents," 10-year-old Asher Stalnaker cried out to those making their way to the festival. "Ice pops, 50 cents." Even Asher's grandfather got into the game. "Shots, three dollars," Jerry Stalnaker cried out. The elder Stalnaker didn't appear to charge any of the bikini-clad women he served. Asher said he sets up a stand each year at this time, when he knows the street will be packed with people making their way to the festival. Celeste Wanda also took full advantage of the crowds when she decided Saturday would be a perfect time to have a yard sale. "They'll buy a piece of cork

**FESTIVAL** continues on **B-3**



Have a heart murmur?  
Now there's a simple way to evaluate  
your valve condition.



memorialvalveclinic  
AT THE HEART CENTER  
MEMORIAL HEALTH  
(904) 306-8800  
[www.memorialhospitaljax.com](http://www.memorialhospitaljax.com)