# Celebrating 50 years of the PONTE VEDRA Control of the PO

**December 12, 2019** Volume 51, No. 6 75 cents

PonteVedraRecorder.com

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader





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Serving Ponte Vedra and



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#### **Subscription Rates, Bulk Mail:**

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# Send us your news

We welcome submissions of photos, stories, columns and letters to the editor. Let us know what's happening. Email submissions to pvrecorder@opcfla.com or bring them by our office at 1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach. Submissions may be published in the paper, on our website or on our social media platforms.

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#### **WHAT'S THIS?**



#### Do you know what this is?

**Email answer to** pvrecorder@opcfla.com by Monday at 5 p.m.

All correct entries will be entered into a random drawing to win tickets for two adults and two children to the Jacksonville Zoo. In order to allow as many families as possible to win, participants are only eligible to win a ticket prize pack once every four months.

No readers correctly identified last week's photo, so here's another chance to try again. Good luck!

#### **ADOPT A PET**

#### **CAT OF THE WEEK**

Gem was picked up and brought to the Pet Center as a strav. She is a



6-month-old, spayed, domestic shorthair tabby. She is very shy at first, but then warms right up and cuddles. S is petite, young and playful waiting for her new furrrever family. Come see Gem at the Pet Center today. #52640



### Barney was brought to

the Pet Center an owner release. He is a beautiful hound/ lab mix with blue/brown

eyes, who loves to smile. He would be a great family friend to older kids. He is housetrained, very sweet and good with cats and other dogs. Come see Barney at the Pet Center today. #52944

Any new pet being introduced to a new home will need time to adjust to its new environment. Please reinforce house training and behavioral training, and be mindful of interacting with other pets.

#### St. Johns County Pet Center

Cat adoptions are \$30 for males and \$40 for females. Dog adoptions are \$45 for males and \$60 for females. Adoption fees include microchipping, neutering/spaying, rabies vaccinations and shots. The Pet Center is located at 130 N. Stratton Road in St. Augustine, off U.S. 1 between County Road 210 and International Golf Parkway. Business hours are Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center is closed to the public on Sunday. On Monday, the office is open by appointment only to claim a lost pet. For more information, please call the St. Johns County Pet Center at (904) 209-6190.

#### **PUZZLE SOLUTIONS**



Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles



# Ponte Vedra High School student dies after driving into Intracoastal Waterway

#### By Amber Lake

Ponte Vedra High School student Cole Alexander Kelley, 14, died after driving into the Intracoastal Waterway early Wednesday, Dec. 4.

Kelley was driving an SUV when he went off the embankment of a small San

Pablo Road bridge. According to St. Johns County Sheriff's Office spokesman Chuck Mulligan, Kelley resided at the private property where the crash occurred.

Mulligan reported that Kelley was the only person in the vehicle, which was pulled from the water by St. Johns County rescue workers.



#### **ST. JOHNS COUNTY BRIEFS**

#### District 4 commissioner to hold hours at Ponte Vedra Beach Library

District 4 Commissioner Jeremiah Ray Blocker will host open office hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 20 at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. Community members are invited to schedule an appointment to meet with Commissioner Blocker and discuss any questions, needs or concerns. To schedule an appointment, or for more information, email mlundquist@sjcfl.us or call (904) 209-0563.

#### St. Johns County looking for beach toll attendants

St. Johns County will begin accepting Beach Toll Attendant applications between 9 a.m. and noon on Jan. 6, 8 and 10. Anyone interested in the seasonal position should go in person to the Beach Services Office, 901 Pope Road, St. Augustine, to obtain and complete an application. The season will begin in March and end the last weekend in October, with orientation and training in February. Toll attendants will be responsible for selling vehicle beach access passes and providing customer service for St. Johns County beach visitors. For more information, contact Danielle Fountain at dfountain @sjcfl.us or at (904) 209-0752.





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# COLLECTION



#### BRIDGESTONE \$296,500 - Price Reduced!

Perfect St. Johns County home for a young family! Features 3 bedrooms plus office, 2 baths, cherry hardwood flooring in living areas, galley kitchen with breakfast nook, glassed sunroom with tile, A/C, & large energy efficient windows, a new roof, new water heater, & newer A/C. MLS 1015684

Curtis Carter | 904.386.4651 CurtisCarter@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



#### PORTOFINO @ PV \$393,000

Tuscan-style condo in private community with only 20 units near Mickler's Beach. This first-floor unit, made of steel & concrete block construction, offers granite counters, stainless steel appliances, an attached 2-car garage, & screened lanai overlooking the peaceful preserve. MLS 1001989

Rosemary Jones | 904.501.2482 Rosemary Jones@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



# **SAWGRASS CC \$468,000**

Sawgrass home with 3 bedrooms, office, 3 baths, vaulted ceilings, large living/dining room with built-in bar, master bedroom with updated shower & spa tub, updated kitchen, freshly painted exterior, 2-car garage, & screened porch. Enjoy worldfamous golf, private beach access, & a community pool! MLS 956096

Jim Zeller | 904.772.5592 JimZeller@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



## **WATERS EDGE** \$599,000

Great lakefront home in the heart of Sawgrass Players Club, just down the street from TPC Sawgrass. Features tall ceilings, lots of light, 4 bedrooms, including a big master bedroom plus upstairs bonus room, & 3.5 baths. The screened lanai is the perfect place to enjoy the outdoors! MLS 1027197

Murray & Elise Beard | 904.465.2784 MurrayBeard@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



#### WOODLANDS \$699,000 - Price Reduced!

Charming custom home in Ponte Vedra Beach, nestled in its own private oasis with pond, pool, & gorgeous gardens. Features 4 bedrooms, including master suite with steam shower & soaking tub, 3 baths, gourmet kitchen, spacious great room, brand new roof, newer A/C & appliances, screened lanai, & serene water views. MLS 1012659

Barbara Maple | 904.571.1764 BarbaraMaple@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



Interested in your home's value? Call our Watson Office: 904.285.6300
Like us on Facebook! Facebook.com/WatsonPonteVedra



# Multi-medal Olympic gymnast visits Ponte Vedra Beach to support important cause

#### By Maggie FitzRoy

Shannon Miller is a seven-time Olympic medalist in gymnastics.

Originally from Oklahoma, she now lives in Ortega, is the mother of two young children, and is also a member of the Monique Burr Foundation for Children board of directors.

Miller came to Ponte Vedra Beach Dec. 3 to greet and take pictures with customers at Scout & Molly's boutique in Sawgrass Village to support the Jacksonville-based foundation's cause and spotlight its successful programs.

"Monique Burr really struck me as such a unique program," Miller said at the "Sip and Shop" event. "It's the only evidence-based, comprehensive, abuse-prevention education for children in the United States, and it's right here in Jacksonville." After reading story after story about bullying and abuse of children in our nation, Miller said she realized, "As a mom of two young children, it was one of those moments for me to see what I could do to help."

Emily Rhodin, owner of Scout & Molly's, said she was excited to host Miller at the event. Rhodin and Lynn Layton, president and CEO of the Monique Burr Foundation, are friends. This was the third year Scout & Molly's held a Sip and Shop to benefit the foundation.

"It's a great foundation that does great things for kids," Rhodin said. "I'm a Jacksonville native. I have kids. I like to give back to kids."



Photo by Maggie FitzRoy

Shannon Miller (center) visits Scout & Molly's on Dec. 3 at Sawgrass Village. With her are representatives from the Monique Burr Foundation for Children along with store owner Emily Rhodin (second from left).

The foundation was founded in 1996 by Ed Burr after his wife, Monique, was killed in a car accident. Put together as a legacy to her, Layton said the charity now provides bullying and child abuse prevention education across Florida, 22 states and three countries.

"They have educated over three million children just in Florida," Miller said. "It's a little gem. It's an incredible program. My kids are going through it in school and it also helps parents by including them in the conversation"

MONIQUE BURR continues on Page 7

# North Florida Land Trust adds 3 new members to board of directors

### John Delaney, Matt Rapp and Jennifer Lasserre join the board

North Florida Land Trust recently announced that John Delaney, Matt Rapp and Jennifer Lasserre have joined its board of directors. The three were elected to the positions at the November meeting of the board and each will serve a three-year term.

"Having a strong board of directors is essential to the success of our land conservation efforts and we are privileged to have Mr. Delaney, Mr. Rapp and Ms. Lasserre on our team," said Jim McCarthy, president of NFLT. "Each of these professionals brings something special to the table and we look forward to working with them as we continue to conserve lands throughout North Florida."

Delaney is a shareholder in Rogers Towers' Governmental and Regulatory Law Department and a principal in The Fiorentino Group. He is the former president of the University of North Florida where he served for 15 years and is a former mayor of the City of Jacksonville. During his tenure as mayor, Delaney created the Preservation Project, a massive land conservation program that helped create Jacksonville's park system, which is the largest in the United States. While at UNF, he was the college's



John Delaney



Matt Rapp



Jennifer Lasserre

chief fundraiser and tripled the university's privately funded endowment. He also served as interim chancellor of the State University System of Florida.

Rapp is senior vice president at the PGA TOUR, where he oversees the Championship Management division that runs the 13 owned and operated events at the TOUR level. He has worked with the PGA TOUR since 2005 in a number of roles, including executive director of The PLAYERS Championship where he enhanced the fan experience, increased the event's charitable impact and strengthened its connection with the local community. He has also served in the PGA TOUR's corporate marketing department, where he focused on title sponsorship sales and was responsible for more than \$500 million in sponsorship agreements.

Lasserre is a real estate professional who has worked in

the real estate industry in Nassau County for the last 20 years. She is an agent with Lasserre Real Estate, Inc., a family-owned business that has been serving the Fernandina Beach area for more than 40 years. Lasserre has an outstanding depth of local knowledge of both the real estate climate and current development and investment trends within Nassau County. She serves as a Guardian ad Litem in Nassau County, is a member of the vestry of St. Peters Episcopal Church and was part of the leadership committee for their past capital campaign.

Delaney, Rapp and Lasserre join a diverse group of professionals from throughout North Florida who serve on NFLT's board. There are six members at large, a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer who each serve for a term of three years. The three new board members have replaced two board members who were term-limited and a third who stepped down from the position.

North Florida Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization that seeks to protect the natural resources, historic places and working lands (farms and ranches) throughout north Florida. NFLT is funded largely by private and corporate contributions and works closely with willing landowners and public agencies at all levels of government, not-for-profit partners, and foundations. For more information, visit nflt.org.

# Landrum Middle School students earn prizes at science fair

#### **By Carter Magnano**

Seventh-grade student at Alice B. Landrum Middle School Special to the Recorder

On Friday, Nov. 22, Alice B. Landrum Middle School held its annual science fair. More than 50 Landrum students representing 65 different projects presented their original scientific research spanning a wide range of topic areas.

Categories included Chemistry, Behavioral Science, Physics and Life Science. Prizes were awarded to 25 projects.

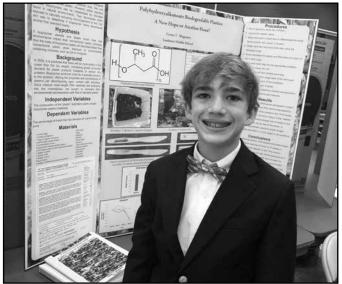
For the Chemistry category, I (Carter Magnano) won first prize for my study entitled "Polyhydroxyalkanonate Biodegradable Plastics: A New Hope or Another Hoax?", Skylar Liu (seventh grade) was awarded second place for his study, "Buffer Capacity of Different Types of Soils" and Emily Glod (eighth grade) won third place for her study, "Which SPF Sunscreen Value Works Best?"

For Behavioral Science, eighth grader Graysen Gaskin's project, "The Influence of Language in Eyewitness Testimony," won first prize. Valerie Reyes and Hannah Hayakawa (eighth-graders) won second place with their project "Are People Unconsciously Biased Towards Gender Roles?" and eighth graders Sofia McIntosh and Ella Holder won third prize with their study "Word Choices Effect on False Memory: the Correlation Between False Memory and Eyewitness Accuracy" in the Behavioral 1 category.

For the Behavioral 2 category, Althea Maya Uy (eighth grade) won first place with her study, "Judging a Book By Its Cover." Second place went to Natalia Engl and Katelyn Burns (eighth-graders) for their project "Do Shapes Have Sounds?" and third place was received by both Carly Thompson and Nina Lueck (eighth-graders) for their project "Smell vs. Taste: Which is More Accurate When Determining Fruit?"

Physics winners included Noah Bartfield (eighth grade), who won first place for his study "Can An EEG Based Toy "Mindflex" Be Used to Turn A Lightbulb On and Off Using Mind Control?" Second place was awarded to Zarah Khan for her study entitled, "Clean Air? No Problem!"

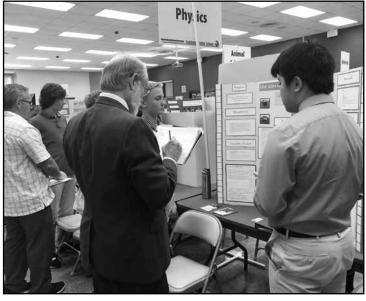




Landrum Middle School seventh-grader Carter Magnano stands in front of his science fair project entitled "Polyhydroxyalkanonate Biodegradable Plastics: A New Hope or Another Hoax?", which won first place in the Chemistry category.

Fluid?" Wilson Wingate (eighth grade) was awarded second place for his study "The Best Type of Flood Barrier For Storms," and eighth-graders Nate Wicker and Jimu Li won third place for their study entitled "The Amount of Electromagnetic Radiation Absorbed by Different Objects."

In the Life Science category, the final



Photos provided by Carter Magnano

Landrum Middle School held its annual science fair Nov. 22, and 25 of the 65 projects received awards.

category, first place was awarded to Samay Patel (seventh grade) for his study entitled "Removing the Seed Coat: Beneficial or Detrimental?" Second place went to Prasiddhi Pawani (eighth grade) for her study "Nutrients vs. Electrical

SCIENCE FAIR continues on Page 11

# CHARACTER COUNTS! calling all runners, walkers and fitness buffs

The St. Johns County CHARACTER COUNTS! Steering Committee is calling all walkers, runners and fitness enthusiasts to participate in the CHARACTER COUNTS! 6K/3K Run/Walk on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020, at 9 a.m. The run/walk will begin and end at Palencia Elementary School located at 355 Palencia Village Drive in St. Augustine.

Walkers and runners will enjoy a course running through the neighborhoods of

Kensington and Las Calinas and can choose to participate in the 6K (3.73 miles) or 3K (1.86 miles) distance.

Third place went to Charlotte Peverley for

her study: "Making More Putts: Flagstick

Eighth graders Garett Davidsen and

Physics II category for their project "Does

Weight Submerges into a Non-Newtonian

Hunter Calamari won first place in the

Height Affect the Distance a Sinker

In or Out?'

Registration fees are as follows:

**6K:** \$25 before Jan. 1; \$30 Jan. 1-Jan. 31; \$35 on race day

**3K:** \$20 before Jan. 1; \$25 Jan. 1-Jan. 31: \$30 on race day

Regisration forms and more information are available online at www.racesmith. com/races/CHARACTERCOUNTS.html.

Race proceeds support CHARACTER COUNTS! initiatives throughout the St. Johns County School District. The run/walk is open to all ages, and the top three winners will be awarded in each of the age categories as well as the overall male and female finishers. A cash donation will be awarded to the top three-to-five schools with the most registrants. Last year, these schools were Ocean Palms Elementary, Alice B. Landrum Middle, Otis Mason

Elementary, Palm Valley Academy and Palencia Elementary. All race registrants will receive a T-shirt and other goodies. At the finish line, each race participant will receive a commemorative dog tag which is the sixth design in its series.

The event will be produced by the CHARACTER COUNTS! Steering Committee and presented by Beaver Toyota with support from businesses and community groups.

As assistant director at Mission House in Jacksonville Beach, Michaele Bradford oversees programs

that help area homeless people find jobs, housing and assistance with turning their lives around.

As told to Maggie FitzRoy

#### Your name is very unusual for a woman and pronounced "Michael." How did you come to have that name?

My mom liked the name Michael and wanted to put an "e" on the end, so people didn't think I was a boy. The irony is that if I had been a boy, I would have been named Matthew, but she never told me why.

#### How long have you worked at Mission House?

Two years. I have a master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan and an undergraduate from the University of Florida.

#### What is your career background?

After graduating from Florida, I did AmeriCorps in Alaska, where I met my boyfriend, who was from Michigan. I lived in Michigan for three years and did another AmeriCorps VISTA term at a homeless service provider in Metro Detroit. I got hired by that agency, so I was a full-time employee for eight months before going for my masters.

#### What is AmeriCorps?

It's domestic Peace Corps. It's a national service program where you volunteer at nonprofits and get paid a stipend. In Alaska, I got about \$1,000 a month.

#### How did you live on that?

In Alaska, I qualified for food stamps and also got a free bus pass, so had transportation. My rent was \$540 a month so I had a little left over. When you are living on that little money, you are able to experience what it's like to be under the poverty line. But it wasn't totally the same because I had the privilege of being able to volunteer for it.

#### What is VISTA?

Volunteers in Service to America. It started with President Johnson's War on Poverty and is now part of AmeriCorps. In VISTA I developed programs: contacted landlords, developed guidelines, program eligibility forms. It was on-the-job training.

#### How did you come back to Florida?

I was born and raised in Florida, so my boyfriend and I moved back. When we did, I saw the Mission House job listing for a social services manager. Prior to that, I had just been a case manager for children and youth in Missouri. I thought it was kind of a stretch, but I applied.

#### What do you do in your present position at **Mission House?**

I oversee all of the day-to-day programs: our operations team, case management team, clinic team. To ensure all the programs are operating efficiently and serving our clients as well as we can.

#### Q: What does Mission House provide for clients?

Meals, showers, case management. Meeting basic needs, providing vital services, including a free medical clinic for uninsured Duval County residents under a certain income

#### How many clients does Mission House serve a year?

We did about 600 intakes between January and November in 2019, so that was 600 people coming in and meeting with a case manager.



Photo by Maggie FitzRoy

#### What do you like best about your job?

I love being able to help people. I like being able to shape policies and make sure they are working for clients.

#### Do you have a recent favorite success story?

We have a "Rapid Re-housing" program where we assist people into getting into a place quickly and then follow up with ongoing case management to sustain

that housing by working with them to increase their income. Recently an individual moved into a place and was able to start their own small business at the Beaches and is doing pretty well. A lot of times job loss is how people become homeless. A lot of people live paycheck to paycheck. It is easy to get evicted. We are all on the cusp of this. One giant catastrophe in your life, and it could be you.

# Monique Burr

Continued from 4

A brochure given out at the Sip and Shop highlighted and explained some of the foundation's programs. In age appropriate ways, children learn safety rules and strategies to help them prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to bullying, cyberbullying, four types of child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect) as well as exploitation and digital dangers. Five safety rules they learn are: know what's up; spot red flags; make a move; talk it up and no blame, no shame.

"Ninety-five percent of child abuse can be prevented through education," Miller said. "This needs to be talked about, so we

# More nonprofit news in the Season of Giving,

Pages 22-26

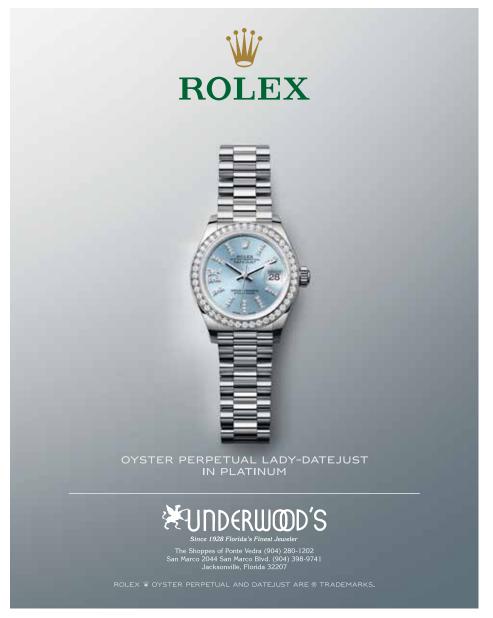
are talking about it."

Layton added that it is especially important to draw attention to it during the holidays, a time when people not normally in a child's home may be visiting. If anything happens that makes a child uncomfortable, "they need to be able to speak up."

The foundation's programs teach kids how to identify safe adults, Layton said. "It's important for them to be able to have that."



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Stunning Riverfront Estate

Riverfront/ San Marco

Instantly makes you feel you've been swept away to a chateau in France. Exquisitely designed with extensive custom finishes, this 10,204-sq.-ft. Tudor-style home is a masterpiece in design and built for entertaining.

5 bedroom, 6 full bath, 5 half bath \$6,900,000



A Sophisticated and Luxurious Retreat on Ponte Vedra Blvd
Ponte Vedra Beach/ Oceanfront

This impressive oceanfront home reflects that magical merging of beach living and architecture. Situated on 220ft of Oceanfront this estate is a masterpiece of design and allows owners the ultimate beach living experience.

4 bedrooms, 5 and 3 1/2 bathrooms \$7,750,000



Intracoastal Waterfront Condo

Marina San Pablo 2nd story condo featuring open floor plan, luxury amenities, and private balcony with water views. Conveniently located near shops and restaurants, this effortlessly maintained condo is the ideal retreat from the modern world.

2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths \$475,000



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Most Desired Oceanfront Location in NE Florida

Las Mirandas / Oceanfront Condo

This first-floor fully furnished unit was totally renovated with the finest finishes & craftsmanship. Includes an office, staurnia floors, mahogany doors & built-in custom cabinetry.

2 bedrooms & 2 bathrooms + powder room \$1,650,000



Panoramic Guana to Ocean Views

With the Guana River to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, this oceanfront home offers stunning panoramic views. Built with top engineering designs, this home thoughtfully merges comfort with sustainability.

7 bedrooms, 7.5 baths \$2,950,000

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#### Thursday, Dec. 12

#### Friday, Dec. 13

#### Sunday, Dec. 15

#### Torah & Tea

Join with fellow Jewish women for camaraderie, hot tea and refreshments, as they meet for "Torah & Tea," Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. Led by Leah Kurinsky, this weekly study group finds timely and relevant messages from the ideas and issues discussed in the Weekly Torah portion. Reservations can be made by emailing Leah Kurinsky at Ikurinsky@gmail.com or by calling (904) 543-9301. Torah and Tea meets at Chabad at the Beaches, located at 521 A1A N., in Ponte Vedra Beach.

#### Roy's Beaches holiday luncheon

Join the Beaches Division for the end of the year holiday celebration from noon to 1:30p.m., Dec. 12, at Roy's Restaurant. Enjoy lunch as the Beaches Division announces the "2020 Beaches" Small Business Leader of the Year" and the "2019 Walter Murr recipient". Wear holiday attire or an ugly holiday sweater as a prize will be awarded for the most creative look. There will also be a "Holiday Bake-Off Contest," so bring a homemade treat for a chance to win a prize. Cost is \$25, with advance online registration, or \$30 at the door. Visit the even't Facebook page, ' Beaches Holiday Luncheon at Roy's Restaurant." to purchase tickets online. For more information, call Roy's Restaurant at (904) 241-7697. Roy's Restaurant is located at 2400 S. Third St., in Jacksonville Beach.

#### Daily's & Daily's Dash open interviews

Daily's and Daily's Dash in Ponte Cedra are looking for kind, hard-working people to fill a variety of roles across multiple Daily's locations. Hiring managers will be on-site to speak with all attendees. Full-time, part-time, and flexible schedules are available for management and associate positions. For more information, call Daily's at (904) 819-6967. Daily's and Daily's Dash are located at 40 Settlement Dr., in Ponte Vedra Beach.

#### Thirsty Thursdays at Al's Pizza

What's a better combination than pizza and beer? Every Thursday, from open to close, Al's Pizza serves \$1.50 Yuengling Lager and house wines. Al's Pizza is located at 635 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach

#### **First Coast Nutcracker**

Presented by VyStar Credit Union, the First Coast Nutcracker has been an ongoing tradition in Northeast Florida for over 40 years. Experience Tchaikovsky's timeless ballet with a live, full-symphony orchestra at Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts' Jacoby Symphony Hall. With extravagant costumes, professional and local dancers and a magical, growing Christmas tree, it's a family event no one will want to miss. The First Coast Nutcracker will open at 8 p.m., Dec. 13; at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Dec. 14; and 2 p.m., Dec. 15. For tickets, visit www.JaxSymphony.org. Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts is located at 300 Water St., #200, in Jacksonville.

#### **Christmas at the Cabin**

The community is invited to experience the warmth of the holidays from 5 to 8 p.m., Dec. 13, at the Beaches Museum's 1873 Oesterreicher-McCormick Homestead. Enjoy an evening under the lights and cheer as the sound of Christmas carols echoes through the courtyard. Musical and dance performances will be featured in the historic Chapel. For more information, call (904) 241-5657. The Beaches Museum is located at 381 Beach Blvd., in Jacksonville Beach.

#### Ponte Vedra Professional Networking Group meeting

The Ponte Vedra Professional Networking Group schedules weekly meetings inside Fidelity Bank, where members network with each other and guests. Each member/guest will introduce themselves and one member will present about the businesses he/she represents. The next meeting is Dec. 13 at 8:45 a.m. Fidelity Bank is located at 110 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach.

#### Family Night D&D with Ron Vellucci

Curious about Dungeons and Dragons? Visit the Butterfield Garage Art Gallery from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Dec. 13, for a special family night, featuring short one-off games to introduce D&D while engaging with professional artist Ron Vellucci. For more information, visit www.Eventbrite.com and search for "Family Night Dungeons & Dragons with Artist Ron Vellucci." Tickets are \$10. Butterfield Garage is located at 137 King St. in St. Augustine.

#### **Kids Christmas tree workshop**

Join Rockaway, Inc. in Jax Beach for a children's workshop from 10 to 11 a.m.,, Dec. 14. Decorate a custom Charlie Brown Christmas tree to celebrate the holidays! Tickets to participate are \$9.99 and all materials are included. For tickets and more information, call Rockaway at (904) 853-6572. Rockaway, Inc. is located at 510 Shetter Ave., in Jacksonville Beach.

Saturday, Dec. 14

#### **Bad Pirate Christmas caroling**

It's time for the annual Ancient City Privateers' Bad Pirate Christmas Caroling of 2019, from 8 to 10 p.m., Dec. 14. Meet at Ann O'Malley's and meander down Saint George Street for some holiday, pirate fun. All are welcome to join and sheet music will be provided. Garb up, bring a lantern and get those vocal chords ready. Can't sing? Don't worry, that's why it's called a "Bad" Pirate Christmas Caroling. This event is free and open to the public. Ann O'Malley's Deli and Pub is located at 23 Orange St., in St. Augustine.

#### **Christmas for Kids**

Join Victory Lutheran Church for a Christmas celebration from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec. 14. Attendees can enjoy crafts, snacks, singing and other activities for children ages 4 through 10 years old. Cost is \$5 per child or \$20 for a family of 4 or more. To register or for more information, visit www.victorylutheran.org. Victory Lutheran Church is located at 4651 Kernan Blvd. S., in Jacksonville.

#### Santa at Don's Barber Shop

Santa Claus will be visiting Don's Barber Shop from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dec. 14. Photos are free! Just bring a camera. For more information, call Don's at (904) 285-3111. Don's Barber Shop is located at 226 Solana Road, #7, in Ponte Vedra Beach.

#### **Puppy pictures with Santa**

Bring those pups to Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming in Nocatee for holiday photos with Santa! St. Nick will be at Woof Gang from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec. 14. For more information, call Woof Gang at (904) 679-4114. Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming is located at 152 Capital Green Dr., in Nocatee.

#### **Z00Lights 2019**

At the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, the holidays are a time for magic under the ZOOlights. Presented by Community First Credit Union of Florida, ZOOlights, hosted now until Dec. 29, will transform the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens into a luminous winter wonderland, filled with moving sculptures, forests of lighted trees and animal silhouettes. Guests can enjoy nightly visits from Santa until Christmas Eve, local artists, kids activities, an illuminated Zoo Express, marshmellow roasts, cookie decorating, a carousel and 4-D theater and more. Tickets start at \$8 for members and \$10 for nonmembers. For more information. visit www.zoolights.jacksonvillezoo.org. The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is located at 370 Zoo Pkwy., in Jacksonville.

#### **Downtown Dazzle display**

The Jacksonville Children's Chorus is hosting its fourth annual downtown holiday celebration at 5:30 p.m. by illuminating its downtown office with festive lights, synchronized to recorded songs of the season performed by JCC. Downtown Dazzle continues through New Year's Eve, with presentations each night, from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. For more information, call JCC at (904) 353-1636. JCC is located at 225 E. Duval St., in Jacksonville.

#### 'Eb Scrooge: A Southern Fried Carol'

Leave that stale fruit cake at home and enter a world of grits and gravy, red velvet cake, and the occasional glass of sweet tea. This modern spin on a timeless classic captures the sights and sounds of contemporary life in Northeast Florida, while maintaining the spirit of Dickens' beloved tale of greed and redemption. Tickets are \$15 and can be found at www.Eventbrite.com. "A Southern Fried Carol" will play at 2 p.m., Dec. 15, at APEX Theater Studio, located at 5150 Palm Valley Road, #205, in Ponte Vedra Beach.

#### **Sundays at Surfer the Bar**

Join Big Fish Power Yoga on Sundays for a free "music & flow" class at Surfer the Bar. The class is held upstairs and runs from 10 to 11 a.m. Bring friends and family and enjoy brunch and mimosas after class. Register under classes at www.bigfishpoweryoga.com. Surfer the Bar is located at 200 First St., in Jacksonville Beach.

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PV2-LV45852

#### Monday, Dec. 16

#### 'Frozen II' at the IMAX Theater

The IMAX Theater at World Golf Hall of Fame is showing "Frozen 2" at 1:30 p.m., Dec. 16, and through the holiday season. Flsa, the Snow Queen, and her sister, Anna, embark on another adventure far away from the kingdom of Arendelle, joined by friends, Kristoff, Olaf and Sven. For more showtimes and information, visit www.worldgolfimax.com. The IMAX Theater is located at 1 World Golf Pl., in St. Augustine.

#### **Monday trivia at Mellow Mushroom**

Join Mellow Mushroom every Monday night at 7 p.m. for trivia with Trivia Nation. This event is free to play and there are prizes for the winners. Mellow Mushroom is located at 1018-2 Third St. N in Jacksonville Beach

#### **Run Club at Southern Swells**

Join Jax Beach Runners Monday nights at Southern Swells Brewing Co. for an evening run at 7 p.m. It is a 4.2-mile route, but runners can run as much or as little as they'd like. After the run, hang out and enjoy \$1 Southern Swells beers for all who ran. For more information about Jax Beach Runners and their events, visit their meetup page at www.meetup.com/ Jax-Beach-Runners/. Southern Swells Brewing Co. is located at 1312 Beach Blvd. in Jacksonville Beach

#### Holiday ornament calligraphy class

Hopelyn Calligraphy is partnering with Creative Grain Studio from 6:30 to 8 p.m., Dec. 16, for a special calligraphy class with a holiday twist. Attendees will be taught the basics of modern lettering and then will be guided through making a personal, custom-made holiday ornament using those new sets of skills. Class cost is \$60 and includes 1.5 hours of hands-on instruction, a glass of wine and all materials, including the ornament. Visit www.hopelyncalligraphy.com to register or for more information. Creative Grain Studio is located at 1814 Hendricks Ave., in Jacksonville.

#### Tuesday, Dec. 17

#### Florida Blue free Tuesday at The Cummer

On Tuesday evenings from 4 to 9 p.m., enjoy free admission to the Cummer Museum and its historic gardens, thanks to the generous support of Florida Blue. Guests can enjoy free admission to the galleries and the Cummer Café, which is also open for Tapas Tuesday. This event is sponsored by VyStar Credit Union. The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is located at 829 Riverside Ave. in Jacksonville.

#### Historic Springfield's annual holiday bike ride

Historic Springfield's holiday tradition, the Holiday Bicycle Ride, is a free and open event for residents and visitors alike. It's a leisurely evening bike ride through the Historic District to enjoy the lights and spectacle of the holidays. Kids are encouraged, as are bike decorations. Meet at Sesquicentennial Park at 6 p.m., Dec. 17. The route will cover the majority of the neighborhood and allow riders to experience all of Historic Springfield's holiday displays from the perfect vantage point. Meet back at the park for some post-ride refreshments. Riders are encouraged to have a bike light, helmet and safety gear. Sesquicentennial Park is located at 1527 North Main St., in Jacksonville.

#### **Last-minute Christmas Shopping &** holiday party

Shoppers can mix, mingle and find last-minute holiday gifts at 6 p.m., Dec. 17, at Sneakers Sports Grille in Jax Beach. Local vendors will have their products and services showcased for all to see to find the perfect gift. There will be snacks, games and drink specials. The event is free to attend. Just bring a toy or cash donation to help those in the Bahamas celebrate the holidays. Vendor tables cost \$20, plus a door prize. For more information or if vendors would like to participate, call Sneakers at (904) 482-1000. Sneakers Sports Grille is located at 111 Beach Blvd., in Jacksonville Beach.

#### Wednesday, Dec. 18

#### Nights of Lights boat cruise

The Nights of Lights boat cruises are back, now through Feb. 2, 2020, for a tour of the lights along the water in downtown St. Augustine. Boats will launch out of Beaches of Vilano and run between two to three trips per night, every day of the week. For more information, call Night of Lights Cruise at (904) 248-4424. Beaches of Vilano is located at 254 Vilano Road, in St. Augustine.

#### **Wednesday Pier Farmers Market**

On Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to noon, the Pier Farmers Market at the St. Johns County Pier offers fresh produce, bread and local crafts, ranging from 60 to 80 different vendors. After browsing, visitors can take a stroll along scenic St. Augustine Beach. The market helps the local economy by allowing local merchants to sustain their business and also offer fresh, local foods to the community. For more information, call (904) 315-0952. The St. Johns County Pier Park at the St. Johns County Ocean Pier is located at 350 A1A Beach Blvd. in St. Augustine Beach.

#### \$1 slives at Trasca & Co. Eatery

From Monday to Friday, 2 to 5 p.m., Trasca & Co. Eatery will be serving \$1 pizza slices for dine-in guests. Choose from cheese or pepperoni pizza. For more specials and information, call Trasca & Co. Eatery at (904) 395-3983. Trasca & Co. Eatery are located at 155 Tourside Drive, #1500 in Ponte Vedra Beach.

#### **Newcomers of the Beaches luncheon**

The Newcomers of the Beaches Club invites new members to attend a holiday luncheon at 11 a.m., Dec. 18, at the Marsh Landing Country Club. This social club consists of a diverse group of women who have recently moved to the beaches and/or have gone through a major life event. For more information on how to join or to make a reservation for the luncheon. visit www.newcomersofthebeaches.com. The Marsh Landing Country Club is located at 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., in Ponte Vedra Beach.

# Thursday, Dec. 19

**Adult Coloring Club** 

Are the holidays causing extra stress? Many adults are finding that coloring clubs for adults are a great way to clear one's mind and meet new people. Create new art and feel proud of unleashing some creativity while relaxing and reducing stress. Supplies will be provided, so just pick out a design and start coloring. The club starts at 10 a.m., Dec. 19, at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, located at 101 Library Blvd., in Ponte Vedra Beach.

#### **A Very 'Die Hard' Christmas**

After popular demand from the internet, "Die Hard" is officially a Christmas movie and holiday favorite. Join Keg & Coin at 8 p.m., Dec. 19, for a special showing of the movie projected on Keg & Coin's "big screen." Guests can also play the "Die Hard Trilogy" game on a PlayStation provided by Video Game Rescue. The bar will be tapping exclusive Aardwolf beers, Nakatomi Tower Sour, Barefoot on Glass IPA and Lil Hans Gruber Lager, through the evening, and will be hosting plenty of giveaway prizes. For more information, call Keg & Coin at (904) 388-0033. Keg & Coin is located at 1271 King St., in Jacksonville.

#### **Venardos Circus**

The Venardos Circus is returning to Saint Augustine for the holiday season. The show will take place in its classic and custom circus tent at the corner of St. Augustine Amphitheater, at 7 p.m., Dec. 19. Created by former Ringling Bros. Ringmaster Kevin Venardos, this animal-free circus features a cast of aerialists, acrobats, comedians, jugglers, contortionists and daredevils hailing from around the world. For tickets and more information, visit www.tickettailor.com/events/ staugustinefl. The St. Augustine Amphitheater is located at 1340C A1A S., in St. Augustine.

Free calendar listings for community groups and nonprofit organizations are published at our discretion on a space-available basis. Send your event at least 10 days before publication. Submit events to Daniela@opcfla.com or call (904) 686-3939.

Compiled by Daniela Toporek

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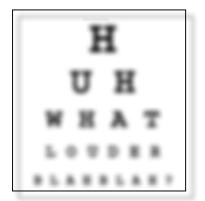


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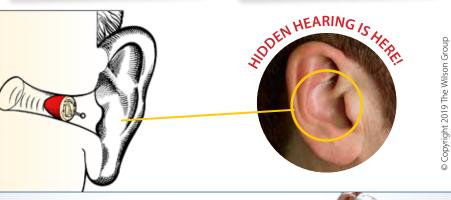


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### **OBITUARIES**

#### William G. Dresser

William G. Dresser (Bill), a father figure for many, a mentor to countless and a kind man to all, passed away peacefully at his home in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, on December 6, 2019, after a courageous battle with Multiple System Atrophy. He

Born July 31, 1937 in Greenfield, Massachusetts, to Lawrence and Mary (Berry)



William G. Dresser

Dresser, Bill had a bigger-than-life personality from the day he was born. Despite difficult circumstances, he worked hard to overcome and succeed in everything he did. From starting off as a paperboy at age 10,

to retiring as Vice President of Marketing for Bell South and CEO and President over WJCT, he never let anything hold him back. If there was a mountain to climb, he would waste no time in climbing it.

Educated at the Naval Academy Preparatory School, Jacksonville University, Syracuse University, and the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry, he was wise beyond his education, and people of all ages and stations in life sought his advice and benefited from his counsel and mentorship. He loved people unconditionally and was never afraid to push people a little to help them reach their full potential. Bill was also a community leader and served either as a member or as Chairman on many community boards including the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, Goodwill, the Chamber of Commerce, Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center, Hands On Jacksonville, Junior Achievement, Leadership Florida, North Florida Land Trust, United Way, Rotary (Paul Harris Fellow), and was governor appointed to the Prison Rehabilitative Industries (PRIDE) board.

As a devout member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Bill shared his talents in various church callings that shaped and defined him. He never faltered in his faith in Jesus Christ and his belief that families can be together forever.

Lovingly called Wild Bill by many who knew him, he will be remembered for being hard working, persistent, adventurous, kind, generous, humble, non-judgmental, a sailor and lover of camping and the great outdoors, communicative, spiritual, a leader, a question man, an avid ice cream eater, an incredible example of service, and a committed husband and father.

His memory will be cherished and kept alive by his wife of 42 years, Claudia (King) Dresser; children, Kelly Tesiero (Don), Robin Owen, Jill Jenkins (William) and Ciara Lizárraga (Christian); his many grandchildren; and his sister, Sheila Forsythe.

Friends are invited to celebrate Bill's life on Saturday, December 14, 2019 at 11 a.m., in the church building on 440 Penman Road, Neptune Beach, Florida, 32266. Interment will follow on December 16, 2019 at 2:30 p.m., in the Jacksonville National Cemetery.

Please visit the online Tribute at www. quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home.



A Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre 3600 Third Street South

#### **Duke Cameron Horner**

Duke Cameron Horner, 95, passed away peacefully on December 5, 2019. He was born March 16, 1924, in Birmingham, Alabama, and grew up there.

Duke enrolled at Auburn University in



**Duke Cameron** 

1941, but duty to our country called and he was commissioned as a Weather Officer in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, serving in China onboard B-25 aircraft. Upon his departure from the mili-

tary in 1946, Duke returned to Auburn and received a Mechanical Engineering degree in 1947. In 1949, duty called once again and Duke was recommissioned in the U.S. Air Force to serve during the Korean Conflict. During this time, he Captained B-29s

**OBITUARIES** continues on Page 12



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#### KIDS SAY

In this new feature of the Ponte Vedra Recorder, "Kids Say," area children offer their answers for some pressing questions. This week, students at PVPV RAWLINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL were asked ...

# What is your favorite thing about the holiday season?



"Every year we go to Cocoa Beach and we eat ice cream. Not every day, but every other day."

Jake



"My favorite thing about the holidays is I get to spend time with my family. On Christmas, I get presents but it's not just that, I get a break from school."

Abel



"My favorite thing about the holidays is I get to spend time with my family. Just on the couch and hanging out."

Jolie



"My favorite thing to do on the holidays is spend time with my family. I like to have dinner and eat together."

Paige



"I like giving to others. In the past I've done a toy drive. I also like decorating."

Mina

Sponsorship opportunities for this special feature are available. Call Susan Griffin at (904) 285-8831, ext. 3938 or email susan@opcfla.com for more information.

## Science Fair

Continued from 5

Conductance on Plant Growth: A Correlative Analysis," and third place was awarded to Lila Kirkley (eighth grade) for her project "Dogs: Left or Right Pawed?"

Category winners and other selected high-scoring projects will advance to the Regional Science Fair that will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2020, at The First Coast Technical College in St. Augustine. Winners from this competition could earn the opportunity to compete in the 65th State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida on March 24-26 at the Lakeland Center in Lakeland.





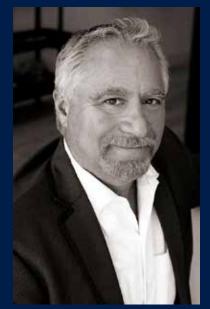




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### **Obituaries**

based in Japan. Duke exited active duty in 1953 and moved to Jacksonville, Florida. He spent the next 66 years as a Jacksonville and Ponte Vedra Beach resident.

Duke was installed as President and CEO of Duval Federal Savings & Loan upon its creation in 1954 and served as its leader for decades, ultimately growing the institution into one of the Florida's largest Savings & Loans. Upon leaving Duval Federal in 1984, he became President of Community Savings Bank. After that, he launched First South Savings Bank in Tarpon Springs, Florida, where he flew his own airplane from Jacksonville to work each week.

Duke was active in the community serving with a variety of social and service organizations, including Meninak, Ye Mystic Revelers and the Ponte Vedra Community Association as its president. He was a charter member of Selva Marina Country Club and member of the downtown Seminole Club, University Club and River Club. Duke was a longtime member of the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, where he enjoyed tennis as a member of the B team, "Rinky Dinks," for years. One of his proudest accomplishments was establishing the Jacksonville Area Auburn Club to help foster the Auburn spirit amongst fans and alumni living in the area. This spirit lives on today with the Sherry and Duke

Horner Scholarship for worthy students from the area attending Auburn. His love of community was exemplified by his recent contribution to Ponte Vedra High School to enable the marching band to acquire new uniforms.

Duke is survived by his dedicated and loving wife of 57 years, Shelby ("Sherry") Horner; sons, Richard (Peri) and Steven (Shay); grandchildren, Ariel (Matt) Tye, Rhianna, Cameron and Auburn Horner. He was predeceased by son, Cameron, and grandson, Robert.

A Memorial Service with military honors will be held at 1:30 p.m., on Friday, February 7, 2020, at the Jacksonville National Cemetery, 4083 Lannie Road, Jacksonville, Florida, 32218. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association or Jacksonville Community Hospice.

Please visit our online Tribute at www. quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home.



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#### **Catherine Marie Meehan**

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Catherine Marie Meehan, 90, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Dec. 3, 2019. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinnshalz.com. (904) 249-1100

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#### **Ben Barton**

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# ift Guide

With Christmas just around the corner, the Recorder has compiled the following gift guide to help you find the perfect holiday presents for your loved ones right here in Ponte Vedra.



#### **DON'S BARBER SHOP**

226 Solana Road, #7 Ponte Vedra Beach Don's Barber Shop Treat the man in your life to a haircut or hot shave at Don's Barber Shop. With over 25 years in men's grooming expertise, Don's will feel like both a treat for your spouse and yourself. Gift cards are available in store for purchase.



#### **UNDERWOOD JEWELERS**

330 A1A North, Suite 204 Ponte Vedra Beach

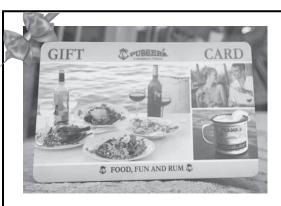
Make your loved one's heart sparkle when they open a beautiful pair of diamond earrings this Christmas morning. Underwood Jewelers offers a variety of studs and sizes so you can be sure to find the perfect pair. Also, if earrings aren't her thing, Underwood's offers an eclectic collection of necklaces, bracelets, rings and more.



#### **ALHAMBRA THEATRE**

12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville

Alhambra Theatre tickets make great holiday gifts. Purchase tickets for dinner and a show or give a gift card and let your loved one decide what they want to see. Additionally, for a limited time, you can receive two tickets for the first show of the 2020 Season, "Love Letters," for just \$89. Call the Box Office at (904) 641-1212 or purchase online at alhambrajax.com.



#### **PUSSER'S BAR & GRILLE**

816 Highway, A1A N Ponte Vedra Beach

Sometimes a gift of experience is greater than a something pre-packaged. With a Pusser's Bar & Grille gift card, you can give the gift of great food, dancing and lake-view drinks. Boasting "Best Happy Hour," many years in a row, a Pusser's gift card is also great bang for your buck. This season, the restaurant is offering a \$25 Pusser's Caribbean Grille gift card with a \$5 coupon to be used later — so you can give a little gift to yourself. Visit pusserspvb.com to purchase a gift card online.



#### **CLEAN OCEAN SURFBOARDS**

340 Front St., Suite 740, Ponte Vedra Beach.

A Clean Ocean Surfboard is a gift that will keep on giving every time the east coast gets waves. For the surfer in your life, sporting a brand-new hand-shaped board will take their game to the next level and is sure to look spectacular under the tree. From long boards to short boards, the shapers at Clean Ocean Surfboards will ensure your surfer gets the right board for the perfect swell. Visit cleanoceansurfboards.com for more information.



#### **COASTAL WINE MARKET**

641 Crosswater Parkway Suite B Ponte Vedra

Looking for a gift for someone with fine taste? Get them a membership to one of Coastal Wine Market's wine clubs! You can choose from three options, The Tasters Club, The Decanters Club or The Cellars Club. The clubs include 2-3 bottles every month of hand-selected wines for any level of aficionado. Additionally, the Coastal Wine Market has available wine baskets and gift cards for the holiday season. This way, your favorite wine enthusiast can spend less time reading labels and more time discovering new wines to love. Call (904) 395-3520 or visit coastalwinemarket.com.

# Sawgrass Marriott showcases gift ideas

#### By Maggie FitzRoy

The Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa showcased gift ideas at an open house Dec. 5.

"Every year in December we do this for our locals and members, for them to come in and enjoy," Blanca Albor, spa director said. "It's a pre-holiday party."

Attendees sampled sweet-treat goodies, wines and cheeses while checking out cute gift ideas available in the spa shop, including toiletries packages; hats, gloves and earrings; glasses, mugs and dishtowels and jars of local honey, obtained from the hotel's own beehives.



Felicia Cox, Lori Adams and Lynn Ford



Honey from the Sawgrass Marriott's beehives



Louise Budd and Blanca Albor



Photos by Susan Griffin Janet Collins and Bo Cure



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December 1: "Nightmare Before Christmas" Brunch,

11:00 AM

December 4: Kobrand Italian Dinner, 6:00 PM

December 5: Holiday Spa Event, 5:30 PM

December 6: ELEMIS BIOTEC Class, 10:00 AM

December 8: "Elf" Brunch, 11:00 AM

December 10: Bacardi Coquito Tasting, 5:00 PM December 13: "The Polar Express" Viewing, 6:00 PM

December 15: "The Grinch Brunch", 11:00 AM

December 18: Gingerbread Cookie Decorating, 4:30 PM

December 19: Holiday Destress Spa Special December 22: Brunch with Santa, 11:00 AM

CALL 904.285.7777 FOR RESERVATIONS, OR VISIT SAWGRASSMARRIOTT.COM

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# Gift Guide



#### **CARLA'S SHOES & ACCESSORIES**

310 Front St., #830 Ponte Vedra Beach

Put a little cowgirl in someone's step with this Studio Caleidoscope calf hair tote and wristlet. The animal print and calf hair texture are great when looking to kick an outfit up a notch! Both items can be found at Carla's Shoes & Accessories, where you might even find a great pair of boots to match.

#### PEDEGO ELECTRIC BIKES

340 Front St., Suite 750 Ponte Vedra Beach

Know someone who loves traveling the great outdoors? Gift a Pedego electric bike for cruising around the neighborhood and beyond. Select from over 15 styles of bikes to find the perfect fit for the perfect adventure, allowing users to go further and faster than ever before. For more information, visit www.pedegoelectricbikes.com





#### ST. AUGUSTINE LOVE LIONS

Keep it local and with love by gifting one of these adorably historic hand-crafted lions, replicated from St. Augustine's Bridge of Lions. Crafted by local artisans, these lions are the perfect ornament for those faithful to the Old City. Each lion is made from Carrara marble and is available either at the St. Augustine Visitor's Center or can be hand delivered. Visit staugustinelovelions.com or call (904) 471-1913 for more information.



#### **LEMON TWIST** 340 Front St., Suite 730 Ponte Vedra Beach

A perfect gift for the stylista in your life, your loved one can now strut fashion-first into the new year. Try a brightly colored Lilly Pulitzer puffer vest or iridescent Hayes phone crossbody bag for a look that is both trendy, sporty and ready to go. Top it off with a Tori Richard from Honolulu Blair hat for a tropical twist during cooler months.

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**ABOVE: Grant** gets his holiday 'war paint" on with a fresh snowman in a winter wonderland.

**RIGHT: Auction** items lined up outside the stores to add a little holiday fun for both kids and adults.





Holiday carriages trotted down Sawgrass Village for guests and shoppers.



Santa Claus relaxes while he waits for his next visitor.



Dylan and Ben Popovich pose with their free holiday cookies on hand.

# 'Oh, What Fun!' brings holiday cheer to Sawgrass Village

Megan Stinchcomb, member of the Ponte Vedra Women's Club, mentioned that monev from the silent auction will go toward multiple charities and organizations.

> Photos by Daniela Toporek



#### **By Daniela Toporek**

The Ponte Vedra Women's Club and Sawgrass Village Shopping Center hosted "Oh, What Fun!" Dec. 7, a holiday celebration for family and friends in the community.

Sawgrass shoppers could hear the resurrecting sounds of Mariah Carey's holiday hit while driving along Village Main and Front Street. Arts and crafts, snacks and cocoa stands greeted guests outside each shop while they walked the village, shopping and deciding where to go next.

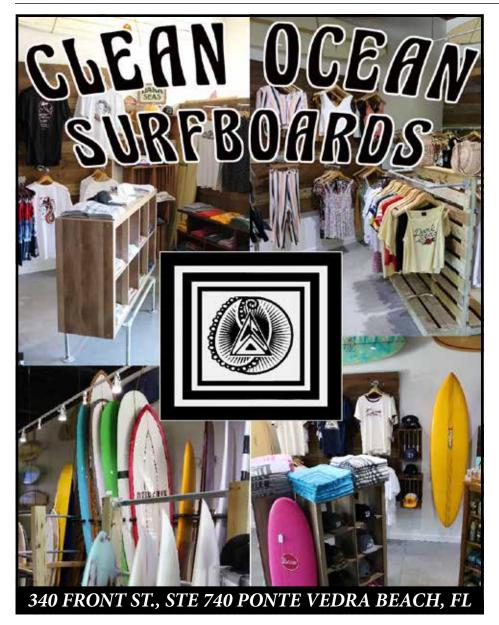
"We just arrived," said Sarah Popovich, who stopped for a holiday snack with her young sons, Dylan and Ben. "We're really excited for the balloons today."

Across the street, children's faces were being painted into winter wonderlands and

"holiday trivia" amped up those who knew how to say "Merry Christmas" in Spanish. Santa Claus was there too, enjoying the notso-chilly weather in Village Green.

"It's really nice to see people coming together for a good time and a good cause," said Megan Stinchcomb, from the PVWC. "We have a live auction with items donated by stores in Sawgrass Village and we're also doing a stocking stuffer, visits with Santa and sleigh rides."

Proceeds from the auction will go to Mission House, funding first month's rent for the homeless; Hugs Across the County, empowering middle school girls in poverty in St. Johns County; the Betty Griffin Center, funding months of its Rape Crisis Unit and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, to fund its annual Safety Day.





A parade participant turns what was once a boat into a Christmas sleigh ride.

# Couple celebrating 10 years in U.S. host Palm Valley Boat Parade party

#### **By Daniela Toporek**

It was the night of the Palm Valley Boat Parade, Dec. 8, at the Wyeth residence on Roscoe Boulevard. Meaning it was time for the Wyeths to host their annual holiday party for family and friends.

Children played hide-and-seek, prancing like reindeer, in and out of the home, while guests mingled, watching college football indoors or socializing outside by the pool or by the bonfire near the dock.

"We have this every year," party host Clare Dibley-Wyeth said warmly, offering food and drinks to guests and grabbing a glass, herself, to celebrate. "This also marks our 10-year anniversary coming to the States," she added, watching her son, Max, play in the game room located in the patio. The floor had green carpet and a small hole in the center of the room for indoor golf practice.

**BOAT PARADE** continues on **Page 19** 



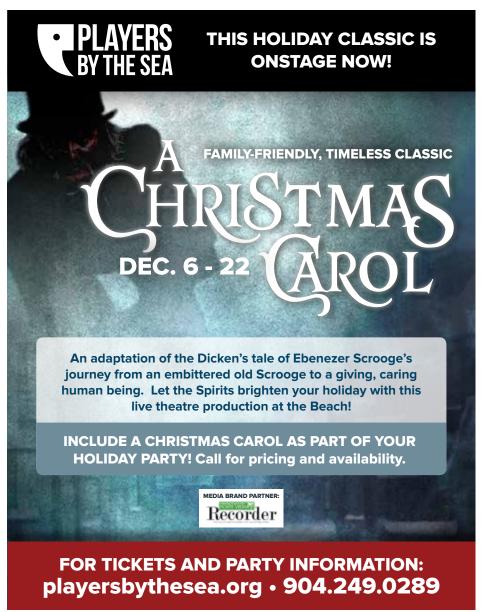
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### **Boat Parade**

"He taught himself," Clare Dibley-Wyeth said. "He basically has since he was little."

Clare's husband, Martin Wyeth, is CFO of the United Kingdom's s automated ball teeing system, Power Tee. Invented by Martin Wyeth, Power Tee expanded to the U.S. when the couple moved to Ponte Vedra Beach in 2009. Little did they know, they moved during the recession when about 3,000 golf courses closed in the U.S. The Wyeths pushed through and in 2015 champion golfer Jim Furyk agreed to endorse Power Tee, which is now available in more than 20 locations around the country. After a decade of hard work and patience, the evening of the Palm Valley Boat parade meant celebration.

"We didn't know each other until we got here," said party guest Karen Alderson, fellow Brit and friend of the Wyeths, who is a first-hand witness to how small the world can be. "We're both from the same place in Britain," she said. "I found out they lived right around the corner from me."

Alderson socialized with another guest as others moved to the dock to watch the coming festivities.

A honk in the distance and cheers from the glowing dock next door gave it away. The Palm Valley Boat Parade had finally arrived, fashionably late, to the Power Tee power couple's soiree, with elaborate displays, holiday music and a nautical seasons' greetings to all.



Photos by Daniela Toporek

Clare and Martin Wyeth pose on the back patio during their annual Palm Valley Boat Parade party.



A simple, but sweet turtle-decorated boat floats by in the parade.



The Wyeths' son, Max, plays on their homeinstalled Power Tee with friends.



A little girl points out at the next decorated boat at the Palm Valley Boat Parade.



The Wyeths weren't the only neighbors in the holiday spirit. Those on the dock next door cheered as boats floated by.



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# St. Augustine celebrates holidays with annual parade

Santa visited St. Augustine Saturday, Dec. 7 for the Oldest City's annual parade, delighting children and adults alike.



Eager children of all ages greeted Santa Claus with enthusiasm during the St. Augustine Christmas Parade on Dec. 7.





**ABOVE: Cindy** Scott (left) was in town from High **Springs with** granddaughters **Emma and Addy** Thomas for a girls' weekend.

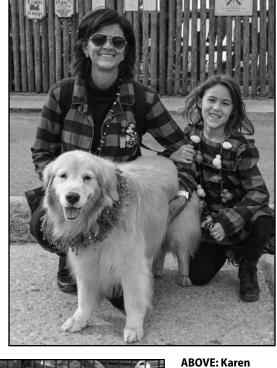
**LEFT: St. Augus**tine natives Lucia and Brody Hyde wore their favorite Santa hats to the parade.



Some of the children played instead of watching the parade ... at least until Santa rode by atop a fire engine. Echols Hansbarger V (from left), Koda Castellano and Cade Thornton invent their own game during the Christmas parade.



St. Augustine's Royal Family, and the Grinch, ride a ship float in the 2019 St. Augustine Christmas Parade.



Santa Claus waves to residents and visitors alike along the Bavfront in St. Augustine.

Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh





Park, walked in the parade with her 7-year-old daughter Reese and their dog Scout. Scout is in the Wolfson Children's pet therapy program and brings joy to children of all ages.

**LEFT: The Apel** family, Brittani (from left), Nathan, Zacharay and Mark, had not visited Santa yet this year.





# Players by the Sea perform 'A Christmas Carol'

### Community theatre brings holiday classic to life on stage

The holiday classic about spiritual redemption opened Dec. 6 at Players by the Sea Theatre in Jacksonville Beach." A Christmas Carol," by Charles Dickens and adapted by Romulus Linney, tells the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and his journey from an embittered, ungenerous creature into a giving, caring human being at the hands of three spirits, who, one Christmas Eve, show him the true meaning of life. The richly textured play brings the full spirit of the book, as well as those of Christmases Past, Present and Yet to Come, to life on the stage.

Kenggy Bravo, who plays Mrs. Fezziwig in the show said, "I think people should buy tickets to see "A Christmas Carol" because it's going to appeal to everyone. It's such a warm show to watch during the holidays, and what better way to get into the spirit than to remember what Christmas truly means?"

General admission tickets are \$28. Students, seniors and military tickets are \$25. They are available online at playersbythesea.org/christmas-carol or by calling the Box Office at (904)249-0289. Until December 22, shows will run each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening at 8 p.m. and Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. A special Saturday matinee performance is also slated to take place at 2 p.m. Dec.14.

Thursday nights are Student Nights, so any student who brings a valid student ID can purchase a half price ticket for \$14.





Photos provided by Players by the Sea

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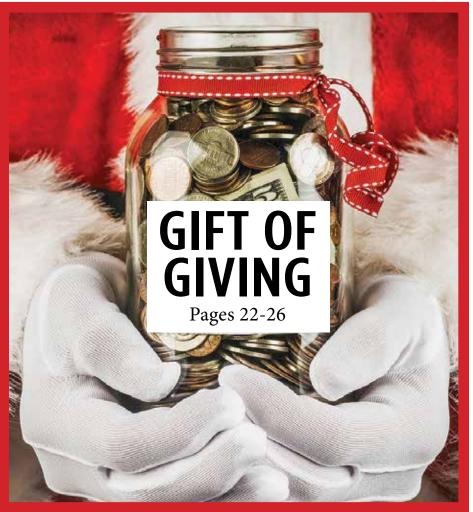
- · supply counseling for an abused or emotionally troubled child
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Storytellers of TPC Sawgrass meet Dec. 5 for their annual luncheon, at which they gave their collected gratuities away to charities.



Representatives of four area charities accept donations from Storyteller representatives during the luncheon. From left to right: Lisa Ward, Blessings in a Backpack; Russ Girolamo, Storyteller; Lisa Wargo, S.A.F.E.; Dee Quaranta, Northeast Florida Women Veterans; Lori Anderson, Mission House; Kimberly Ward, Blessings in a Backpack; Michaele Bradford, Mission House; Jerry Brannon, Storyteller.

# Volunteer Storytellers of TPC Sawgrass donate gratuities to charities at annual luncheon

#### By Maggie FitzRoy

Volunteer storytellers give tours of the TPC Sawgrass Clubhouse and golf course every day. The educational tours, which can last up to an hour each and include golf cart rides out to holes, 16, 17 and 18,

Guests come from around the country and the world. And most are so impressed they leave their tour guide a tip. Which the tour guide promptly puts into a charity fund.

Every December, the 50 Storytellers of TPC Sawgrass get together for an annual luncheon, where they present the total amount of funds raised to area charities.

"This is the highlight of our year," Storyteller Captain Jim Kleck announced during an introductory speech at the event, held at the clubhouse Dec. 5. "We get gratuities and then we get to give them away."

A committee of seven Storytellers met this year to decide which of 40 potential nonprofits would be selected for this year's donation. They usually select three or four, and this year chose four: Saving Animals from Euthanasia (S.A.F.E.); Blessings in a Backpack; Mission House and Northeast Florida Women Veterans.

Representatives from each nonprofit attended the luncheon as guests, and after being presented with their checks, gave brief speeches of appreciation.

"The holiday season is a tough one," Lisa Wargo, a volunteer with S.A.F.E., said with tears in her eyes as she went up to accept her St. Augustine-based charity's check for \$5,000. "We appreciate this, and the animals do as well."

Blessings in a Backpack, which provides meals for thousands of food-insecure schoolchildren in Duval and St. Johns Counties, also received \$5,000.

Mission House, a Jacksonville Beach facility that provides meals, showers, counseling and housing assistance for people who are homeless, received \$7,500.

Northeast Florida Women Veterans, a Jacksonville-based nonprofit that serves female military veterans returning to civilian life, also received \$7,500.

"You are the gatekeepers of the history of this place," Dee Quaranta, founder and president of Women Veterans said during her speech. "Thank you for telling your stories about this wonderful place, and for helping people like us."

The Storytellers normally donate between \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year, Kleck said. Between November 2018 and November 2019, a total of 5,800 guests toured the facility. In giving, the storytellers follow the lead of the PGA TOUR, which donates to many charities, including proceeds raised during THE PLAYERS Championship, held at the Ponte Vedra Beach TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course.

"Since 2007, when Storytellers were founded, we've given \$200,000 of gratuities," Kleck said. "We've given tours to people from Iceland, South Africa, China and Japan. So, we covered the globe last year with 35 foreign countries and all 50 states.'

Storytellers are required to work three 4-hour shifts a month. Most are retired professionals, with 40% women and 60% men. More are always needed however volunteers must go through an application process and only a certain percentage are accepted because more people want to be volunteers than there are shifts available. Those selected must go through training



Jim Roberts, one of the original Storytellers from when the organization was founded, gives the Pledge of Allegiance at the luncheon.



Storyteller Captain Jim Kleck gives an introductory speech at the luncheon.

with Kleck, then shadow experienced Storvtellers.

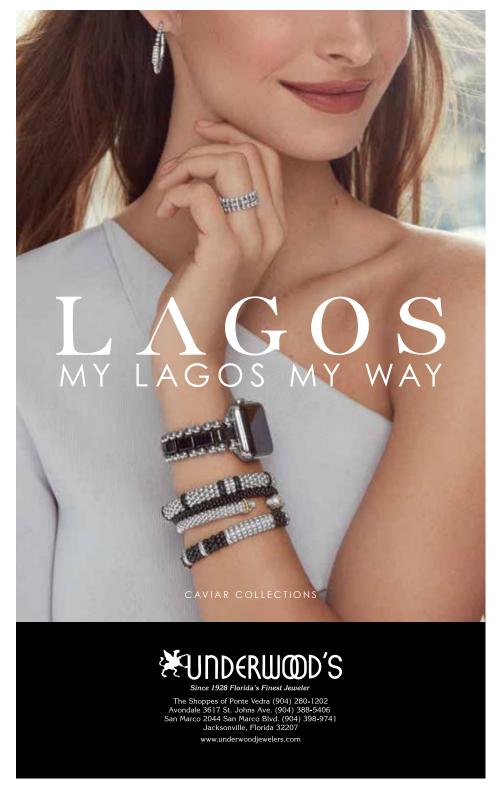
Tours can range from one person to six or seven, the maximum number that can fit in the special touring golf carts, which the Storytellers drive. Gratuities can range from a one-dollar bill to a \$100-dollar bill.



S.A.F.E. volunteer Lisa Wargo gives an appreciation speech at the luncheon.

Russ Girolamo, who has been volunteering for 10 years, said he likes the camaraderie that has built up among the

We get to meet people from around the world and interact with them," he said. "It's a fun volunteer job."







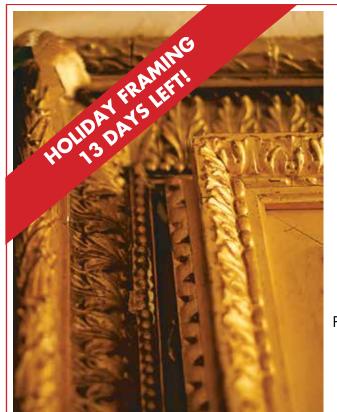
# Clays for a Cause raises \$158,000 for 3 Northeast Florida charities

The 7th annual Clays for a Cause sporting clay shoot, presented by St. Johns home builder MasterCraft Builder Group, was held on Dec. 5 at Saltwaters Shooting Club in St. Augustine. It was the largest to

date, with over 340 registered participants raising \$158,000 for St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS), Seamark Ranch, and American Legion Post 194.

"This year's event exceeded all of our expectations and then some," said MasterCraft Builder Group CEO and Founder, Chris Shee. "Not only were we able to increase the amount raised for SAYS and Seamark Ranch, two organizations that change the lives of orphaned children and give them hope for the future, but this year, we were able to raise \$25,000 for the American Legion's Alton Green Memorial Park, which will provide a safe play space for dozens of kids in their Kids Safe Zone program."

Over the past seven years, Clays for a Cause has raised more than \$400,000 for local charities benefiting children and families. St. Augustine Youth Services is a local, nonprofit that helps shape the future of Florida's at-risk youth by providing coaching, counseling and care in family-style therapeutic group homes and outpatient community services. Seamark Ranch is a faith-based home for children of broken families located in Green Cove Springs and has served over 100 children with its homes, on-campus school, and childcare programs. American Legion



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# S.A.F.E. HOLDING HOLIDAY ADOPTION EVENT DEC. 14



Photo by Paris Moulden

S.A.F.E. Pet Rescue will hold a holiday pet adoption event on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of Pet Supermarket at 880 A1A North in Ponte Vedra Beach. The event will feature live music, a bake sale, pet adoptions and the opportunity to have your pet's photo taken with Santa. All proceeds benefit S.A.F.E., a nonprofit dedicated to saving animals from euthanasia. S,A.F.E. Pet Rescue, based in St. Augustine, was founded 10 years ago, and has rescued more than 14,000 dogs and cats. S.A.F.E. is a no-kill shelter with four locations in the greater St. Augustine and Palatka areas, and also maintains a thrift store at its head-quarters shelter at 1250 County Road A1A in St. Augustine. For more information on S.A.F.E. and its events, go to www.safe-pet-rescue-fl.com.



# Join us for lunch, brunch, dinner or drinks in the heart of Ponte Vedra. We are open during Oak Bridge construction. And as good as ever!





While you are here, get your holiday shopping done with our holiday special on gift cards: Purchase \$100 in gift cards and receive \$20 FREE. To keep or give! 3 Palms Grille is open to the public and easily accessible by either Sawgrass gate at A1A or Solana Road. Just say you are going to 3 Palms Grille.

# **K9s For Warriors receives** MarCom Awards in 4 categories

### The awards program recognizes excellence in design and content

K9s For Warriors was recently recognized for excellence in marketing and communications with four MarCom Awards in categories including print and digital media.

The MarCom Awards, an international competition, is one of the oldest, largest and most prestigious creative competitions in the world, drawing entries this year from 6,500 professionals in communications, marketing, design and production.

According to a MarCom news release, "Judges are industry professionals who look for companies and individuals whose talent exceeds a high standard of excellence and whose work serves as a benchmark for the industry."

K9s For Warriors received the following

Platinum Award — UNLEASH: A Capital Campaign (Print Media-Brochure-Nonprofit)

Gold Award — RED Friday T-Shirt, (Print Media-Design-T-Shirt)

Honorable Mention — Puppy Raiser's Reference Manual (Print Media-Employee Publication-Manual Training)

Honorable Mention — Shed Your Birthday Light on the Darkness of Suicide (Digital Media-Web Element-Blog Single

"K9s For Warriors strives to bring valuable content to the public through our print and digital media to convey our mission of rescuing dogs and training them to be lifesaving service dogs for disabled American veterans," K9s For Warriors Chief Market-



Photo provided by K9s for Warriors

ing Officer Tahoma Guiry said. "We are honored to receive these awards and recognition amongst such an impressive group of design and communications industry professionals."

K9s For Warriors, a Ponte Vedra Beach-

based nonprofit, is the nation's largest provider of service dogs to military veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury and/or Military Sexual Trauma as a result of military service post-9/11.

# Gavarrette, Rich and Werle join Betty Griffin Center board

Jose Gavarrette, Benjamin Rich and Bill Werle have been elected to the Betty Griffin Center Board of Directors.

Gavarrette is the Vice President of a Global Technology unit at Citibank, where he is responsible for Resource and Capacity as well as Third Party Management to ensure the delivery of key initiatives. His responsibilities include managing resource decisions and locations for the organization, third party relationships risk and vendor consolidation strategy.

Previously, Gavarrette served as a business technology partner with BBVA Compass Bank in Birmingham, Alabama for three years, and also served as the director of workforce operations for FloridaWorks, a state- and federally-funded workforce project, from 2007 to 2011.

He received a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering and Systems from Florida International

Rich currently serves as the Assistant State Attorney in the seventh judicial circuit and manages the State Attorney's office in St. Johns County, which consists of nine assistant state attorneys, four state attorney investigators and 16 support staff members. Rich was appointed to the position in 2010 and his responsibilities include investigating and prosecuting criminal cases (misdemeanor, juvenile, and felony) from inception to final disposition, conducting criminal trials, both jury and nonjury and investigating and prosecuting multiple governor-assigned felony and misdemeanor cases in various Florida jurisdic-

Rich, who has been a member of the Florida Bar since 2005, received his Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the Florida Coastal School of Law, and received a Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies from the University of Central Florida.

Werle is currently the Commander of the Support Services Bureau of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, where he oversees the 911 Communications Center, the Emergency Preparedness Unit, Special Operations and Bailiffs. Werle has been employed with the Sheriff's Office for over 21 years. He started as a patrol deputy, but also has been a field training officer, SWAT team member, Robbery/Homicide detective and rose through the patrol and detective ranks. He also served as the Special Victim's Unit sergeant for over three years where he worked closely with the Betty Griffin Center. He said he is excited to continue strengthening the partnership and working relationship between law enforcement and the nonprofit organization.

The Betty Griffin Center was founded in 1990 by concerned citizens and incorpo-

the agency's ongoing operations.

rated as the Safety Shelter of St. Johns County to develop plans to provide shelter for local victims of domestic violence and their children. In 1992, the nonprofit agency contracted with a local motel for space and started a 24-hour crisis line and court advocacy program. By 1994, the agency purchased and opened Betty Griffin House as permanent shelter. The shelter expanded in 1998 to meet local demand, and a sexual assault program was added the same year. Today, Betty Griffin Center shelters more than 420 victims of domestic and sexual abuse annually, operates a 24-hour help line, provides professional counseling for victims of domestic and sexual abuse, provides age-appropriate violence prevention training and operates two thrift stores to assist in funding



**Jose Gavarrette** 



**Benjamin Rich** 



# Hugs Across the County announces \$10,000 matching gift challenge

Hugs Across the County announced the Persbacker-Wyman Family Foundation has established a generous \$10,000 Matching Gift Challenge in support of the charity's long-standing Clothing Care Package Program, which provides clothing, shoes, undies, socks and toiletries to hundreds of St. Johns County children-in-need every year.

Since August, Hugs has already provided Clothing Care Packages to more than 300 local children in crisis situations, many who arrive at school wearing the only clothing that they own.

Throughout the month of December, donations will be matched up to \$10,000 thanks to the matching gift challenge. Since Hugs is an all-volunteer nonprofit, donations will go directly to the purchase of new shoes, new undies, new clothing and Clothing Closet expenses.

Donations may be made online at http://www.stjohnshugs.org/give/ or by mail to the organization's UPS box at: 101 Marketside Ave., #404-254, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081.

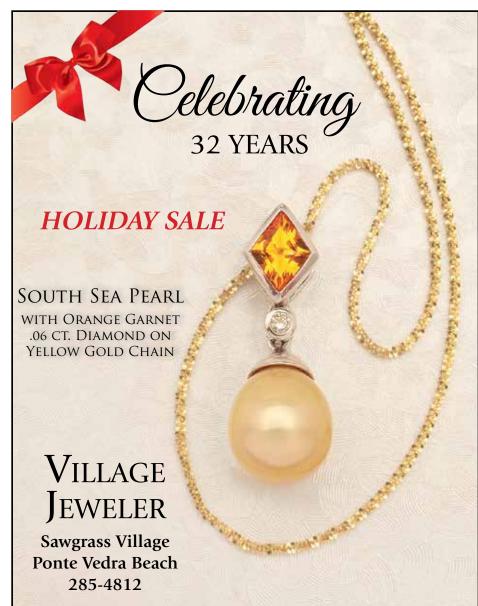
# Clays

Post 194 runs Kids Safe Zone, a program where veterans volunteer their time to help underprivileged and at-risk kids in the community.

"St. Augustine Youth Services relies on the funds raised at each year's Clays for a Cause for a variety of services that we offer," said Schuyler Siefker, Executive Director of SAYS. "This year, we are earmarking the money raised to help build an Independent Living Village, transitional housing for youth that 'age out' of our program." Fred Meiners, Executive Director of Seamark Ranch, mirrored the sentiments. "Clays for a Cause helps us house and educate our children," he said, "which we wouldn't be able to do without the support of people like Chris and businesses like MasterCraft.'

onte Vedra Inn & Club







# Santa's mailbox to accept letters at Sawgrass Village and Recorder office

### Letters mailed to Saint Nick will receive responses

Area children seeking to send their Christmas wishes to Santa Claus may drop them off at Santa's mailbox located in front of Publix in Sawgrass Village and at the Ponte Vedra Recorder office.

Letters "mailed" through Dec. 15 will receive a response from Santa thanks to a special arrangement the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce has made with the North Pole.

Letters will be collected from the special mailbox; Santa asks children to use the special stationery

stocked by all Sawgrass Village businesses. These special letters have a place for addresses so that Santa may mail a response letter. Please make sure you provide your return address!

Things at the North Pole get busy towards Christmas, so the last day to deposit letters will be Dec. 15. The Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce also serves as the Ponte Vedra Beach Visitor Center. Call (904) 285-2004 or visit 200 Solana Road if you have any questions about Santa's mailbox or the area.



Photo provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce PVB Division Children deposit letters into Santa's mailbox in 2018.

### THROWBACK THURSDAY





### Regatta of Lights sailed on despite rain







Come do your Christmas shopping... GIFTS GALORE!

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The Ponte Vedra Recorder will run "Throwback Thursday" items throughout the year to celebrate the Recorder's 50th anniversary. This week, a look at some holiday content, including a Dec. 13, 1996 cover, a holiday add for to Sawgrass Resort, a 2013 story on the Regatta of Lights and a 1981 ad for the Ponte Vedra Club Inn and Surf Shop. If you have any old clippings of articles, stories or ads that you would like to share from the past 50 years of the Recorder, send them to pvrecorder@opcfla.com.

# Hey Kids ... Send your letters to Santa

Santa has asked the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber to put special mailboxes in Ponte Vedra Beach so he receives letters from all the children.

1	Dear Santa,	<b>E</b>
		3 2
		200 - 200
		Mailboxes in
-		place Nov. 15
		until Dec. 15 After that, Sant
- <u> </u>		will be busy!
_		
	Sincerely,	
	NAME:	AGE:



BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR RETURN ADDRESS SO SANTA CAN WRITE YOU BACK:

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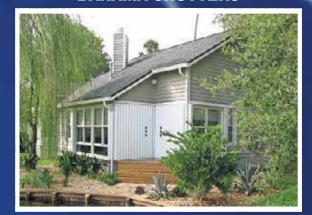
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# Beaches Museum takes trip to North Pole via historic express

#### By Amber Lake

The Beaches Museum recently held its Beaches North Pole Express holiday event, highlighting one of the museum's favorite exhibitions, the 1911 Train Engine. The two-day event took place Friday, Dec. 7, from 2 to 6 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 8, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The 25-ton steam locomotive was built back in 1911 and operated near Lacoochee, Florida. In 1981 it was donated to the Beaches Museum and is now displayed near the original location of the Jacksonville and Atlantic Railroad tracks, which became the Florida East Coast Railway.

During the North Pole Express event, residents and children were able to board the historic locomotive and learn firsthand its inner operations and history from a volunteer Conductor.

Additionally, patrons were invited to write and mail their letters to Santa, enjoy hot coca and cookies and watch the movie "The Polar Express" in the Dickinson Gallery. Crafts and train rides were also available at the History Park.



The Beaches North Pole Express took place Friday, Dec. 7 and Saturday, Dec. 8.









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# Nocatee-A-Glow brightens up the holidays

#### **By Amber Lake**

Nocatee's Splash Waterpark was transformed into a winter wonderland Friday and Saturday, Dec. 6-7. Residents from the community exercised their holiday spirit by touring everything the event offered. From live music to carriage rides, Christmas movie screenings and, of course, photo-ops with Santa and Mrs. Claus, Nocatee-A-Glow was like being at the North Pole.

The highlight of the event, however, wasn't any of the various activities that spanned all the way from the parking lot to the waterpark. It was the annual lighting of the tree that took

Crowds began to pack in as the count down to the tree lighting commenced at 7 p.m. Friday. The tree, which towers at 25 feet, and is made entirely of lights, played a collection of Christmas-themed music in blinking synchronicity as the show carried on through the night.

According to David Ray, community manager at Nocatee, the event consists of over 1.2 million lights and staff begins planning as early as January. Everything from coordinating characters, like this year's new addition, Olaf of the movie "Frozen," are decided upon and booked almost a year in advance. Additionally, Ray said this year's A-Glow featured upgraded surround sound equipment for the tree lighting cer-

Outside of the light show, residents and guests of residents were able to treat themselves to s'mores and hot chocolate, view a nativity scene and petting zoo or take a train ride around the park.



Wall-to-wall crowds piled into the center stage where the annual tree lighting ceremony was counting down.

16 40 66 68 69 70

**NOCATEE-A-GLOW** continues on Page 34







C StatePoint Media

## THEME: HAPPY HOLIDAYS

**ACROSS** 1. Taken where? 6. Vegas bandit's body

9. Titian's Venus or Col-

lier's Godiva 13. Indian metropolis

14. Flapper's neckwear

15. E-cigarette output 16. Galsworthy's "The

Forsyte \_\_\_\_," pl. 17. Bovine hangout

18. UV light absorber 19. \*Scrooge's late partner

21. \*December 26th, aka Day 23. Ideas worth spread-

ing, acr. 24. Great deal 25. \*Like Santa's suit

\_ Las Vegas," Presley song

30. 1/100th of a ruble 35. Pupil's place

37. \*Sleigh bell sound 39. Fairytale dustsprinkler

40. German Mrs. 41. Chose between

competitors 43. Type of ballistic missile, acr.

44. Not a gregarious

46. Castaway's home 47. Fungal spore sacs

48. Pencil end, often

-a-Sketch 52. Summer color

53. Cuckoo the ramparts... 57. \*Santa's call

60. \*Welcoming holiday

63. Bird of prey's hunting tool 64. 16th birthday gift?

66. Engages the services

68 Skirt shape 69. Beehive State native

70. Bikini, e.a. 71. Bibliophile's con-

cern, sing. 72. D.C. bigwig 73. Australian Aboriginal's war club

#### **DOWN**

1. \*Do holiday ones start earlier every year?

2. Show pleasure 3. Aquarium organism

5. \*Hanukkah month 6. Competently 7. Wade's 1973 op-

4. Navigational aid

8. Not yes, nor no 9. Like Hitler's Germany 10. Second word in fairvtale

11. \*Ding follower in "Wonderful Christmastime'

12. \*"But I heard him exclaim, \_\_\_ \_ he drove out of sight..." 15. Public opinion, in

Great Britain 20. Changes to a manu-

22. Sturdy tree

24. Telephone part 25. \*Ralphie's wish

26 Trial's partner

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through :

27. Late Princess of Wales

31. Type of cotton fiber 32. Exit plus s

33. Around

34. \*Macaulay's famous character

36. Takes to court

38. \*Hanukkah gift

42. "Magnolia" ware 45. Not in its original

49. Pep rally syllable 51. TV variety show classic

54. Concentrate

56. Yogurt-based dip

57. \*Manger's glow 58. Dish of stewed meat

59." \_\_\_ if you...," on a

bumper sticker

60. Small songbird

61. Trampled

62. In custody

63. Coca Cola's first diet drink

65. \*What Whos did to roast beast?

67. Silvester Stallone's nickname

# PVPV/Rawlings students send good tidings to USS Lincoln



Photos by Amber Lake

PVPV/Rawlings fifth grade student council



ABOVE: Jackson Bohsali, Grace Porter, Vai Miller and Assistant Principal Rebecca Whaley

RIGHT: Hundreds of holiday cards were mailed off to the naval aircraft carrier, the USS Lincoln, thanks to the organization and hard work from the PVPV/Rawlings Elementary Student Council.



Students pack boxes ready to be shipped off to the USS Lincoln.





Grace Porter, Vai Miller, Kate Mase, Oliva Shinners, Layanne Issa and Bella Sharpe

#### By Amber Lake

"It was good of you to sacrifice your life to save millions," wrote fifth grade PVPV/Rawlings Elementary student, Layann Issa. "I also wish you have a happy holiday. You spend time away from your family and friends, that's what a hero like you would do."

This year, more than 100 holiday cards were mailed to the Naval aircraft carrier, the USS Lincoln, thanks to the organization and hard work of the PVPV/Rawlings Elementary Student Council. Through the card-writing project, the school's fifth graders expressed their thanks to the many service men and women aboard the ship during the holidays.

Student council member Via Miller and Gracie Porter came up with the idea to organize a holiday card greeting to the sailors after talking about Porter's father, Commander Ian Porter. Learning that many military personnel must spend their holidays away from family made them realize some of the sacrifices made by people like Porter's dad.

"I could definitely not be in the military with all that time away from family and friends, it's really hard,"

On Friday, Dec. 4, the Student Council spent their lunchtime packing and organizing boxes upon boxes of letters to be sent overseas. Each box included some holiday candy and a personalized card for each service member.

"We hope they feel joy, that they feel welcomed and that they feel remembered," said Jackson Bohsali, student council president. "I hope they feel acknowledged. Thanking veterans is important because they help make the country what it is today."

In addition to the heartfelt cards from all the fifth-grade classes, the student council also spearheaded their very own class flag to be sent along with the greetings.

The flag features a hand drawn sea turtle with the school motto "Be kind, work hard and be awesome." Additionally, under the design, the word "Florida" is spelled out in nautical symbols.

The packages and flag will be delivered to the USS Lincoln in the coming weeks, slated to arrive before Christmas. Currently, student council members and fifth-grade students are waiting to hear back and are hoping to get news that their flag is being flown on the ship.

Recently, the students also learned that the USS Lincoln was just filmed for the new "Top Gun: Maverick" movie, starring Tom Cruise, which is set to be released in June of 2020.





The 25-foot tree is made entirely of lights that blink in synchronicity to holiday music every half hour.

### Nocatee-A-Glow

The Christmas tree shows will continue through December. Shows are open to the public and run 6 to 10 p.m. at the Splash

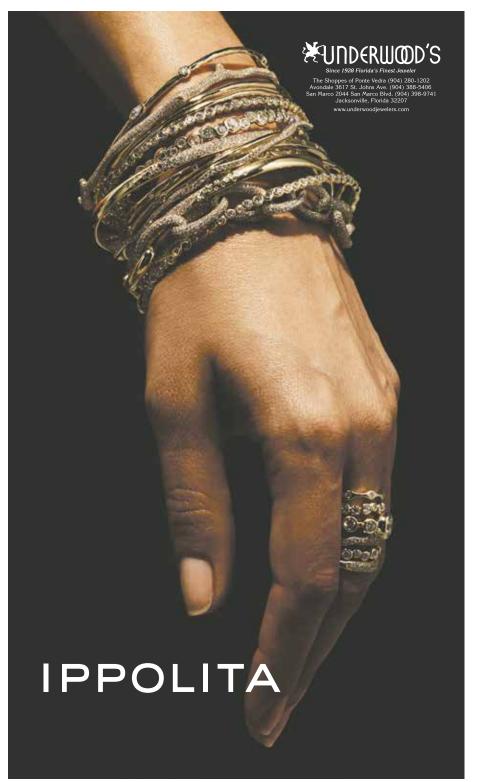


Photos by Amber Lake

About 1.2 million lights were used for the event.

Waterpark, with new shows beginning every half hour. The shows include a traditional Christmas music show, a contemporary Christmas music show and a "Variety Spectacular" show.

Visit www.nocatee.com for more information.





Mel and Felicia Cox



Kathleen Wildblood and Art Wildblood



**Cyndi Stevenson and Isabelle Renault** 



Isabelle Renault, Kathleen Floryan and Greg Voss



Mark and Joan Refosco

# Stunning home hosts Chamber holiday party

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce PVB Division celebrated the holidays Wednesday, Dec. 4, with a Mingle Jingle Party.

The evening event was held at the EvenTide Model Home at 181 Sea Glass Way in Ponte Vedra Beach. The stunning Arthur Rutenberg home, located north of Mickler's Landing, provided the perfect setting for festivities that included great door prizes, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, delicious desserts provided by Ruth's Chris Steak House and live music by Samuel Sanders.



Photos by Susan Griffin

**Samuel Sanders** 

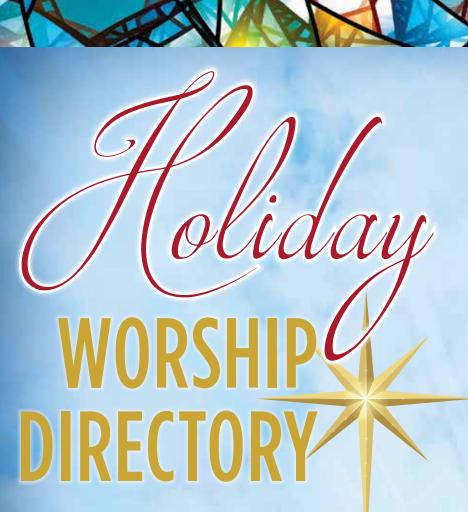


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2:00 p.m. Traditional Main Sanctuary

2:00 p.m. Contemporary with Christmas pageant Contemporary Worship Center

2:00 p.m. Serenata Informal with music South Ponte Vedra Civic Association

4:00 p.m. Traditional Main Sanctuary

4:00 p.m. Contemporary with music Contemporary Worship Center

5:00 p.m. Vicars Landing Chapel

8:00 p.m. Traditional Main Sanctuary

10:00 p.m. Traditional Main Sanctuary

#### Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Traditional Main Sanctuary

7:00 p.m. Servicio de Navidad Main Sanctuary

#### December 26

11:00 a.m. Cypress Village Chapel



## The Hidden Risks of **Hearing Loss** from Johns Hopkins Medicine

#### **RESEARCH SHOWS**

Many Causes, Early Symptoms

Not hearing well isn't just frustrating, it "Wearing hearing aids means I's can bring surprising health risks. The old, and I'm not ready for that." consequences of an untreated hearing loss are real. Here's what you need to know.

Everything from genes and noise exposure to medications, head injuries and infections can play a role in hearing loss. Trouble detecting soft or high-pitched sounds is often the first sign that stereocilia— the delicate hair cells that convert sound waves into electrical signals within can help your brain stay younger and keep the ear—have been damaged. Soft sounds include phone conversations or background noise in settings such as restaurants. High-pitched sounds may include children's voices. Ringing in the ears, called tinnitus, is another early signal of possible hearing loss.

Hearing loss is frustrating for those who have it and for their loved ones. But recent research from Johns Hopkins reveals that it also is linked with walking are wearing them proudly. problems, falls and even dementia.

In a study that tracked 639 adults for nearly 12 years, Johns Hopkins expert Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D., and his colleagues found that mild hearing loss doubled dementia risk, moderate loss tripled dementia risk, and people with a severe hearing impairment were five times more likely to develop dementia.

#### THE LINKS BETWEEN HEARING AND HEALTH

"Brain scans show us that hearing loss may contribute to a faster rate of atrophy in the brain," Lin says. Hearing loss also contributes to social isolation. You may not want to be with people as much, and when you are you may not engage in conversation as much. These factors may then contribute to dementia."

As you walk, your ears pick up subtle cues that help with balance. Hearing loss mutes these important signals, Lin notes. "It also makes your brain work harder just to process sound. This subconscious multitasking may interfere with some of the mental processing needed to walk safely."

#### HEARING AID MYTHS THAT **HOLD YOU BACK**

"Hearing aids help most people who try SOLUTION them," Lin says. "And in those people, they can make all the difference in the world allowing people to reengage with friends and family and to be more involved again." Although nearly 27 million Americans age 50 and older have hearing loss, only one in seven uses a hearing aid. If you think your hearing has diminished, it's worth making 373-5803. an appointment with a hearing specialist or audiologist for a hearing check, Lin says. If you have hearing loss, don't let the following myths keep you from getting help ing/healthy\_body/ the-hidden-risks-of-hearing-

#### "My hearing's not that bad."

Hearing aid users wait, on average, 10 years before getting help for hearing loss. But during that time, communication with loved ones becomes more difficult, and isolation and health risks increase. "Our findings emphasized just how important it

is to be proactive in addressing any hearing declines over time," says Lin.

#### "Wearing hearing aids means I'm

It's normal to feel worried that hearing loss means you're aging-and to want to hide it. Plenty of people with a hearing impairment sit silently rather than joining in conversations and activities, because they fear that hearing problems will make them seem helpless or less than competent. The truth: Connecting with others vou involved with life.

#### "I don't like the way hearing aids look. Everyone will notice them."

Forget the old days of big, whistling earpieces. Today's hearing aids and cochlear implants are smaller (and less conspicuous) than ever before. Even celebrities (like former president Bill Clinton, Former NFL Coach Sam Wyche, and Football Hall of Famer Mike Singletary)

#### "I heard that hearing aids are difficult to use."

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- Do others seem to mumble?
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- ☐ Do you ever avoid situations because you can't hear well enough to enjoy them?

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Source: The Hidden Risks of Hearing Loss. (n.d.). Retrieved August 23, 2019, from http:// www.hopkinsmedicine.org/ health/healthy\_ag-

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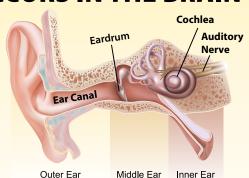
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#### STOP IGNORING THE WARNING SIGNS!

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  - Do people seem to mumble?
  - Do you ask others to repeat themselves?

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# Busines, West Y

New luxury living apartment community holds ribbon cutting

Page 40

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## 'Economy seems to have strong momentum'

#### By Christine Rodenbaugh

Economist Mark Vitner said those who were nervous about the November jobs report, anticipating a jobs gain of about 180,000, were pleasantly surprised Friday morning. In a Dec. 6 news release, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 266,000 in November, and the unemployment rate was little changed at 3.5%. Notable job gains occurred in health care and in professional and technical services. Employment rose in manufacturing, reflecting the return of workers from a

Vitner, managing director and senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities was the keynote speaker at the Dec. 6 Economic Development Council Quarterly Breakfast at the Renaissance, St. Augustine Resort in World Golf Village. The strong jobs report was the starting point for Vitner's topic, "Economics, A Look

"There are a lot of positive things going on in our economy right now," he told the



Mark Vitner, managing director and senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities, speaks during an Economic Development Council Quarterly Breakfast Dec. 6 at the Renaissance, St. Augustine Resort in World Golf Village.

filled meeting room.

The national unemployment rate in October was 3.6% nationwide and 3.2% in Florida. The St. Johns County unemployment rate in September was lower than both at 2.5%. Vitner said employment growth remains very strong.

He said recession fears topped out in

August. It's been more than 10 years since the last recession — the longest span ever in the U.S. He said in the last recession everything was tied to housing. Consumers went from too optimistic to too cautious and, in 2007, the Fed raised interest rates higher than people expected. There were other factors related to real estate that contributed to the last recession, as

"It's kind of hard for me to see a recession... even kind of far out there," he said. "Barring unforeseen events like a war."

He said the Fed has set a very high bar to raise interest rates, and we may see one more rate cut in March. Vitner anticipates interest rates will remain relatively low.

"Our (U.S.) economy is the strongest advanced economy in the world," he said.

He also reported households are in strong economic shape today, and that includes gaining strength in the bottom 40% of the earning spectrum.

'That's important because those folks spend more of their paycheck," Vitner

**ECONOMY** continues on Page 39



Kathy Deagan (foreground) led a tour of the oldest foundation of a stone church in America dating back to 1678 after the Tourism and Hospitality Council meeting held at Our Lady of La Leche National Shrine.

RIGHT: Sallie O'Hara, executive director of Vilano Beach Main Street, and Vivian Browning, president of Vilano Beach Main Street, presented information about multi-use trails at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Tourism and Hospitality Council meeting.



## Tourism and Hospitality Council meets at Mission Nombre de Dios

#### By Christine Rodenbaugh

About 30 people attended the Dec. 4 meeting of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Tourism and Hospitality Council meeting at Our Lady of La Leche National Shrine at Mission Nombre de Dios to learn more about Vilano Beach Town Center being designated as a Florida Trail Town.

Sallie O'Hara, executive director of the Vilano Beach Main Street organization, and Vivian Browning, president, talked about plans to implement a 10-foot wide multi-use trail along Florida A1A from Vilano to Ponte Vedra Beach. A \$150,000 grant has been secured to conduct a feasibility study in June for the stretch of A1A. The trail is intended to provide access for cycling, paddling, equestrian and hiking activities and augment accessibility to the town center to anchor Vilano Beach as a destination trail town.

trails, but also want to be sure the stretch from Ponte Vedra Beach to Vilano Beach is included in the bigger picture. The East Coast Greenway is a walking and biking route stretching 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida, connecting the nation's most populated corridor. The trail is designed to transform the 15 states and 450 communities it connects through active and healthy lifestyles, sustainable transportation, community engagement, climate resilience, tourism and positive economic impact.

Locally, the River to Sea Loop would be an optional route that takes travelers inland and links five counties — St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler, Volusia and Brevard, The loop is 260 miles of non-motorized trails. The portion of the trail from East Palatka along State Road 207 to the trail head at Vermont Heights is complete. Another segment on Anastasia Island is also complete from Pope Road

Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh O'Hara and Browning are focused on local TOURISM continues on Page 39

#### Tourism

south along Mickler Boulevard to B Street. The segment that will connect those two trails is partially funded for preconstruction, and will follow along the railway east to King Street, over the Bridge of Lions then south on Anastasia Island to Pope Road.

O'Hara and Browning are working with St. Johns County and the City of St. Augustine to ensure Vilano connects to the trails through the new "peanut" intersection at May Street, or by water taxi between the Vilano Pier and the City Docks. Both women have experience working with federal, state and local entities to achieve goals.

"The way to get things done is through consensus, compromise and keep moving forward," Browning said.

When the meeting concluded, attendees were invited to tour an active archaeological dig on the Mission grounds. Kathy Deagan, professor of archaeology at the University of Florida, retired, led the tour of the oldest foundation of a stone church in America dating back to 1678. The eightweek dig produced artifacts from Native Americans and European settlers, revealing where the monks stored their wine.

For more information, visit www. vilanobeachfl.com, www.eastcoastgreenway.com or the Chamber of Commerce website at www.sjcchamber.com.

## **Economy**

said. "I think the holidays will really surprise people on the upside," indicating consumer confidence is strong.

Local dignitaries seated at the president's table included State Representative Cyndi Stevenson, District 2 Commissioner Jeb Smith, District 5 Commissioner Henry Dean, Police Chief Barry Fox, Airport Authority Board Member Suzanne Green and Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer. St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Isabelle Renault made opening remarks and announcements. EDC Chairman Mike Koppenhafer served as emcee. Adam Gregory delivered the in-

vocation and Todd Neville led the Pledge of Allegiance. Victor Raymos presented sponsor remarks and introduced keynote speaker, Mark Vitner.

For more information, visit sjeechamber.com, call (904) 829-5681 or email info@sjcchamber.com email. To opt-in for SMS text messages regarding events and important Chamber information, text SJCC to 313131.



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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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### RIBBON CUTTING HELD AT NEW LUXURY LIVING APARTMENTS







The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce and Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting Dec. 3 for the new Sentosa Beachwalk Luxury Apartment Living community. The apartments feature one, two and three bedroom floor plans, and the community features a resort-inspired pool with cabanas, fire pit with outdoor lounge, 24/7 fitness center, on-site car wash and vacuum, card room and billiards table, resident lounge with kitchen, basketball and pickleball courts, dog park, beach volleyball court, access to the Beachwalk Crystal Lagoon and more, including two children's playgrounds and controlled access to the gated community.



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ST. AUGUSTINE Julie Brown



Photos by Susan Griffin

PONTE VEDRA BEACH 5/4/1 • \$2 985 000 Suzie and Rory Connolly



OCEAN GRANDE 3/3 • \$495 000 Mary Faulds



JACKSONVILLE BEACH Homesite • \$850,000 Natalie Bryant



JACKSONVILLE BEACH 4/2 · \$779,000 Natalie Bryant



JACKSONVILLE BEACH 4/4/1 • \$2,900,000 Pam Henry



OCEANFRONT /2 • \$825,000 Susan Fort or Tyler Ackland



PONTE VEDRA BEACH Patti Armstrong



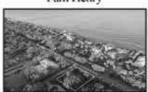
PONTE VEDRA EAST 4/3 • \$1,150,000 Sally Sergeant



**OCEANFRONT** Suzie and Rory Connolly



PONTE VEDRA BEACH Laura Torrey



PONTE VEDRA BEACH Bill Struck



MARSH LANDING 6/6/3 • \$4,550,000 Suzie and Rory Connolly

ONTE VEDRA BEACH



PONTE VEDRA BEACH •\$1,249,900 Suzie and Rory Connolly



SAWGRASS ISLAND 6/6/1 • \$3,119,000 Suzanne Schinsing



JACKSONVILLE BEACH 4/3 • \$939,000 Susan Fort or Tyler Ackland



PONTE VEDRA BEACH Suzie and Rory Connolly



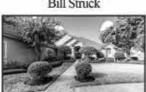
THE PLANTATION AT PV Susan Fort or Tyler Ackland



OCEANFRONT 4/4 • \$1,395,000 Suzie and Rory Connolly



ATLANTIC BEACH 3/2 • \$259,000 Patti Armstrong



THE PLANTATION 4/3/1 • \$995,000 Jo Mitchell



PONTE VEDRA BEACH 5/1 • \$2,845,000 Mary Faulds

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## Local artist makes great impression



Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh

Michael Burleson (right) and Nada Burleson (center) met local artist Matthew Cutter about three years ago and began collecting his work. They attended the Dec. 6 artist's reception at Cutter & Cutter Fine Art in St. Augustine.

#### RIGHT: Matthew Cutter does a demonstration painting.



Photo provided by Cutter & Cutter Fine Art

"Seasoned" by Matthew Cutter won Best of Show in the National Oil & Acrylic Painters' Society's 2019 Best of America National Juried Exhibition.



#### By Christine Rodenbaugh

When artist Matthew Cutter looks at a weathered, whitewashed frame structure, he sees more than an old house. In his mind's eye, he sees the "temperature" of every shade of white — the light, the shadow, the contrast. Then he finds the composition in a part of the scene that will draw the viewer in and evoke emotion. Further, Cutter has the ability to translate his vision onto canvas in oil or acrylic.

Cutter & Cutter Fine Art in St. Augustine hosted an artist's reception Dec. 6 to reveal some of Cutter's new works, including "Seasoned," a 15×20 acrylic on crescent board that won Best of Show in the National Oil & Acrylic Painters' Society's 2019 Best of America National Juried Exhibition. He noticed the building on a family trip to Tennessee and knew he had to paint it. His goal was to capture a site that was once a vibrant part of the community, but now sat abandoned and in disrepair.

"I was quite happy with the end result, juxtaposing warms and cools, darks against lights, and hopefully pulling out an emotional connection for the viewer," Cutter remarked on the NOAPS website.

Maryanne Jenner attended the reception to view Cutter's most recent works. She has three of his paintings hanging in her St. Augustine home.

"His work is peaceful and serene," she said. "It draws you in and makes you feel good. I need that in my life."

While Cutter paints mostly landscapes and seascapes, his style, technique and medium changes depending on the situation. He stretches from realism to impressionism, then further to abstract.

"I'm not trying to make it look like a photo," Cutter said. "I try to put how I feel into it."

Michael and Nada Burleson began collecting Cutter's work about three years ago, describing his early work as "very vivid." One of their pieces is of an approaching storm. "I liked the way the sky and ocean contrast with each other," Michael Burleson said.

**CUTTER** continues on **Page 42** 

## Go Art to present Family Night D&D with artist Ron Vellucci

On Friday, Dec. 13, Go Art will offer an evening of short, one-off Dungeons & Dragons games to introduce D&D to the curious while engaging with professional artist Ron Vellucci. The event will take place from 7 to 8 p.m. at Butterfield Garage Art Gallery, 137 King St., St. Augustine. The cost is \$10.

Ron Vellucci is a sculptor of elegant, playful mixed media sculpture. When he

won Best in Show at a Florida Artist's Group annual exhibition, judge Stephen Knudsen, of Savannah College of Art and Design said, "Clearly the piece is a signifier of a stainless-steel portal. If the door opened its moving panels would be as complicated as gears in a clock. A bit of Zoomorphic looking slice of wood and found ammonite seemed to me to be signifiers of the natural world in relation-

ship with the polished, the artificial, and the future."

The Dec. 13 event will be family-friendly, encouraging families to enjoy the art gallery through an evening of games inspired by Vellucci's art. His works will invite people of all ages to share what they see in their imaginations after looking at the art and creating storylines inspired by it. At the same time,

adults will appreciate the quality and depth of content present in his sculptures. Go Art will partner with Emerald Dragon Games of Fleming Island to bring the unique family night of art and games to Butterfield Garage Art Gallery.

For more information, visit www. eventbrite.com/e/family-night-dungeons-dragons-with-artist-ron-vellucci-tickets-82051701849?aff=ebdssbdestsearch.

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#### Cutter

Continued from 4

On Saturday, Dec. 7, Cutter was in the gallery for a live painting demonstration. "It's pretty fun to paint in front of people," Cutter said. "In some ways, I think you concentrate more."

View Matthew Cutter's exhibition in St. Augustine through Dec. 31. His work can be seen at both locations throughout the year.



Photo provided by Cutter & Cutter Fine Art

"Moonrise on the Marsh" by Matthew Cutter. Oil on linen, 48x60.

Cutter & Cutter Fine Art galleries are located at 25 King St. in St. Augustine and Sawgrass Village Shopping Center, 333 Village Main St. in Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, visit cutterandcutter.com.









## Episcopal School of Jacksonville and Beaches Episcopal School will merge on July 1, 2020.

For 2020-2021 admissions information for PreK-6, please contact Ashley Davis at *adavis@beachesepiscopalschool.org*.

Open House dates: November 14 and January 23

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Open House dates: November 5 and January 14.

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### Concert pianist Daniela Liebman to hold free concert at St. Paul's by-the-Sea

Beaches Fine Arts Series will present 17-year-old Daniela Liebman, Mexican concert pianist, in a free concert 7:30 p.m. Dec. 13 at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church.

The doors of the church at 1150 N. 5th St., Jacksonville Beach will open at 6:45 p.m., with seating first come, first served. A reception will follow the concert, with a beautiful art exhibit by Michele D. Lee. This concert is sponsored by Publix Super Market Charities.

Liebman has rapidly established herself as an artist of eloquence, poise, and nuance, since her debut at age 8 with the Aguascalientes Symphony. Liebman has performed with more than 25 orchestras on four continents. In 2016 and 2017, she was named one of the "40 Most Creative Mexicans in the World" by Forbes Mexico. In 2018, she was again named one of Forbes Mexico's "100 Most Creative and Powerful Women," and was invited to Forbes' reveal of its 2018 edition of Creativos Mexicanos, celebrating extraordinary Mexican leaders in the arts. She has been interviewed by Amy Poehler's "Smart Girls," is featured in GQ Mexico and Vanity Fair, and is the recipient of Mexico's 2014 Nacional Premio de Juventud.

Committed to sharing her love of music with others, Daniela frequently participates

in talkbacks with piano students of all ages and backgrounds, and will conduct several classes during her time in residence with BFAS. Her dedication to celebrating her heritage through creative programming reflects in her musical and cultural ambassadorship, notably at Harvard University's 2018 Mexico Conference.



Photo provided by Beaches Fine Arts Series

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## The family that plays together stays together

Saying rings true for Ponte Vedra resident when it comes to golf

#### **By Paris Moulden**

For Ponte Vedra Beach resident Myra Baglos, golf is more than a passion, it's a symbol of an unbreakable bond.

So, when she finally accomplished one of her biggest golf goals, making a hole in one, it's no surprise her biggest supporters were there to witness it — one physically and one spiritually.

Balgos aced the No. 14, par-3 hole with a 7-iron at the Windy Harbor Golf Club in Mayport on Nov. 23, which happened to be her parents' anniversary. Her mom, also an avid golfer, was with her on that special day. Her dad, who loved the game as well, had passed away in 2007, but Myra knew he was with her as well.

"Golf has been a way of bringing the family together," Balgos said.

Balgos' passion for golf began in earnest in 2000. Her family owns a time share in New Smyrna Beach where Balgos and her three sisters, including a twin, decided it might be fun to try out the local links.

"We were just swinging, not knowing how to hit," Balgos said. "I got excited because my ball shanked, but I hit a shed."

Balgos said she felt bad for the unhappy group playing behind them because of their slow play, but the passion for the sport was awakened. One of her sisters had connections to Deercreek Golf Club, so they took a course on the fundamentals of golf and spent more and more time at the range.

But as time passed, the foursome began



Photo provided by Myra Balgos

Myra Balgos (from left), with twin sister Myrna Sharma, mom Purisima Balgos, older sister Marina Kasper and younger sister Rebecca Canzian.

to split up, as two of Balgos' sisters married and moved away, and her other sister didn't get to play often. So, Balgos decided it was time to get the parents involved.

As Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts, she bought her parents golf attire and took them to the Palm Valley golf course to teach them what she knew.

And the passion for the game spread.

"My dad is such a perfectionist, he ended up taking lessons for a whole year before actually playing on a real course," Balgos said.

But that training paid off. The first time Balgos played a round with her dad, he shot an 88.

Since then, whenever her sisters would come to town, there would be family gatherings for golf outings. The husbands and boyfriends of the sisters would play with Myra's dad, while the sisters would play with their mom, and afterwards, they would all have dinner together.

"I can just remember my dad saying how much he appreciated the family bonding, and how we all got together because of golf," Balgos said.

But as much as Balgos' enjoyed the family golf outings, she was ready to take her game to another level. She became involved in what was then the Executive Women's Golf Association, which put on monthly events and gave her the chance to playing more regularly, and competitively.

"That was a big impact on my game," Balgos said. "You don't feel intimidated. They invite all women golfers of all levels."

The group eventually was taken over by the LPGA, becoming part of the LPGA Amateur Golf Association, and Balgos improved her competitive play, so much so she accomplished one of her other biggest goals: playing a tournament in California.

Balgos advanced through the local and regional qualifying tournaments of the LPGA Amateur Golf Association Championships and, in October, she ended up playing in the finals at the famed Mission Hills Resort in Rancho Mirage, California.

"That was one of my goals" she said. "I'd never played in California and wanted to play in California."

The first round of the tournament started off rocky, with Balgos shooting a 95, but she said because of that, she was able to relax and feel less pressured on Day 2.

"I like to compete, it's just fighting the nerves that I need to get better at," Balgos said.

**BALGOS** continues on **Page 46** 

## Tennessee, Indiana to face off in Gator Bowl Nov. 2

Rich Thompson, Chairman of the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl, recently announced Indiana will play Tennessee in the Jan. 2 TaxSlayer Gator Bowl, the 75th playing of the game. The last meeting between these two teams in postseason play was in 1988 at the Peach Bowl.

"We are very excited to welcome Indiana and Tennessee to Jacksonville for the 75th annual TaxSlayer Gator Bowl,," Thompson said. "It will be a tremendous matchup and we are excited to host these two top-notch teams and their players, coaches and fans in our city for a great week of activities celebrating both programs' successful seasons."

The Tennessee Volunteers finished this season with a 7-5 record and will serve as the Southeastern Conference representative. They will be making their seventh appearance in the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl. The Vols' last appearance was in the 2015 Gator Bowl game against Iowa.

The Indiana Hoosiers, the Big Ten Conference representative, finished their regular season with an overall record of 8-4. This will be the Hoosiers' first appearance in Jacksonville for the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl.

"Playing in the historic TaxSlayer Gator Bowl is a great opportunity for our team," Indiana Athletic Direc-

tor Fred Glass said. "Earning an invitation to our first ever Florida bowl game is a reflection of the hard work of our players and staff, and yet another remarkable achievement, in a season of remarkable achievements. We greatly look forward to bringing Hoosier Nation to Jacksonville, competing against a high quality opponent in the Tennessee Volunteers, and having the opportunity to be TaxSlayer Gator Bowl champions."

The 75th Annual TaxSlayer Bowl will be played at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 2, at TIAA Bank Field and will be nationally televised on ESPN. Tickets and bowl information are available at www.taxslayergatorbowl.com.

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**ABOVE: Myra Balgos** in action on the golf course. Balgos competed in the LPGA Amateur Golf Association Championships finals at Mission Hills in October.

RIGHT: Myra Balgos' parents Purisima and Nelson Balgos. Myra's dad passed away in 2007, but his love of golfing with the family inspires Myra's performance on the course.

> Photos provided by Myra Balgos



## Balgos Continued from 44

She seemed to conquer those nerves on the second day. Balgos ended up finishing second in her flight for low net and finished tied for third for her flight in low

"I was very, very surprised, and my mom was with me and she was so excited and proud," she said.

She thought of her dad, too, who wasn't there to see it physically, but Balgos knew he was there.

"I always think, 'thank you Dad,' because I believe he had something to do with it, too," she said.

And less than a month later, on that beautiful, breezy day in late November, Balgos was about to add perhaps her biggest golf accomplishment to date. As she lined up at the 14th hole, 188 yards away from her goal, she could see that dreadful water hazard that has doomed many a golf

"Anytime I have one of those shots. I usually don't use one of my good balls expecting it to go in the water, so I used a ball I'd found on another hole," Balgos

She felt good about her swing, watched as her ball escaped a watery grave and disappeared from view beyond a mound near the right bunker. She waited for her mom to make her shot, which ended up in the water, too close to an alligator to try and rescue, and eventually the twosome approached the hole, leaving Balgos disappointed. She saw a ball sitting next to the flag, and figured it wasn't meant to be. But when she went up to the ball, she was excited to find it wasn't hers. But the one in the cup was.

"I got my hole in one, so I can check that off my bucket list," she said.

Balgos still has other goals for the sport. She wants to be able to drive it long, 200-plus yards maybe, and she would love to be able to play Augusta. But no matter what, she knows her family will be rooting her on and sharing her accomplishments, in some way or another.

"Every time I go out and play golf, I think of my dad and how he's there with us," Balgos said. "Especially if there's a nice breeze, I just feel like his spirit is out here enjoying watching us play."



Myra Balgos holds her trophy for finishing second in low net for her flight at the LPGA Amataur Golf Association Championships.



Balgos' mom Purisima celebrates her 80th birthday on Dec. 8 with a round of golf at The Golf Club of Amelia Island, which surprised her with a birthday cake.

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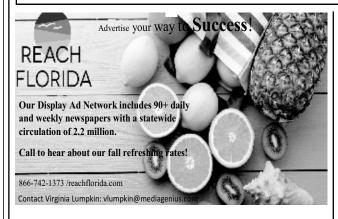
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We can still be reached at (904) 705-1382 and www.lisasellspontevedra.com





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#### THE LISA BARTON TEAM

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