



December 19, 2019Volume 51, No. 7
75 cents

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Subscription Rates, Bulk Mail:

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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 as the sign at the entrance for the Villages of Solano (right), so we're going try a new one this week. Send us an email if you know what the above photo is. 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



THE WEEK Barney was brought to the Pet Center an owner release. He is a beautiful hound/

DOG OF

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





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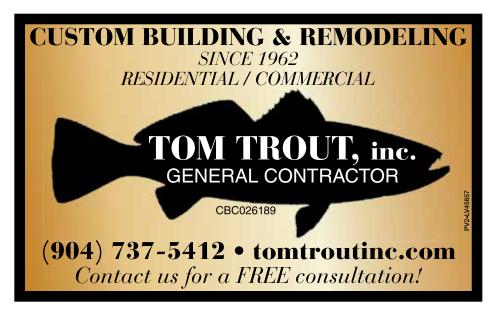
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COLLECTION



MONTREUX \$124,500

Ground floor condo overlooking the lake in lovely gated community. Features 1 bed, 1 bath, laminate floors, a screened patio, & laundry room with washer & dryer. Amenities include multiple pools, a clubhouse, basketball court, tennis court, & media room. MLS 1028247

Jeannie Towgood | 904.584.0016 JTowgood@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



BEACH CLUB VILLAS CONDO \$247,500

Second floor villa located steps from the Sawgrass pool & ocean with beach access. Features renovated kitchen with newer cabinets & granite countertops, bathroom with 2 sinks & granite countertops, breezy balcony, & newer A/C. Perfect for a beach retreat or investor! Current tenant has lease until Feb 2020. MLS 992423

Karen DeLoach | 904.333.3954 KarenDeLoach@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



L'ATRIUM \$297,000

Great beach home located in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach! Features 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2-car garage, spacious great room with fireplace & cathedral ceilings, kitchen with breakfast area, newer roof, A/C, & water heater, private backyard, & large screened porch. MLS 1028606

Barbara Maple | 904.280.2829 BarbaraMaple@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



TREASURE BEACH \$619,900

Custom ranch-style home located on a canal navigable to the Intracoastal & ocean. This move-in ready home features 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, wood-look tile flooring, a gourmet kitchen with cherry cabinets & granite countertops, pavered lanai with summer kitchen, & new custom dock with covered boat lift. MLS 987069

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Merry Christmas & Happy Hanukkah!





Board of County Commission welcomes Hunter S. Conrad as interim administrator

Recent termination of Michael Wanchick called for special board meeting to address employment agreement for Conrad

By Amber Lake

A special Board of County Commission meeting called on Dec. 9 introduced Hunter S. Conrad as interim county administrator. Prior to accepting the position, Conrad served as St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, which he will resign from during his term as administrator.

During the meeting, Conrad addressed the Board, saying, "As I stand before you now, I want each of you and the people of St. Johns County to know this, I am devoted to helping you through this transition and giving 110% to helping in leading us in the right direction."

The special board meeting to draft an employment agreement for Conrad came after the Board voted unanimously to end County Administrator Michael Wanchick's contract on Nov. 19, which was effective immediately. The decision surprised many St. Johns County residents.

Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker of District 4 introduced the motion to terminate Wanchick's contract. In a Facebook post, Blocker cited his decision as dissatisfaction with Wanchick and staff's inability to follow commission direction, notably, in the recent controversy of Mickler Beach's closure.

"As I stated in my remarks, I have lost confidence in Mr. Wanchick's leadership and in his ability to lead our employees," said Blocker in a subsequent Facebook



Photo by Amber Lake

The Aug. 7 public forum included County Attorney Patrick McCormack, Commander Scott Beaver, County Administrator Michael Wanchick and District 4 County Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker.

post. "The county administrator's job is to ensure that the decisions made by this Board are implemented and followed. That has not happened, and the responsibility lies with Mr. Wanchick. In the last several months, I have observed and become aware of a number of systemic leadership problems that are concerning and have led to my loss of confidence in our administration. What I have observed is profoundly disappointing and has led me to this decision today."

Recently, Mickler's Beach was closed due to a private project to build geo-tubes along the beach in an effort to offset sealevel rise and erosion. The project was funded by the 13 beachfront homeowners who live near the public beach access.

The commission recently criticized Wanchick for his handling of Mickler Beach's closure, which caused many residents to accuse the board of improperly closing the public access for private purposes. During a meeting following the closure, Blocker stated that he would have never signed an agreement for the project had he known the construction would cause the access to be completely closed. The county has since adjusted the site to offset the access' closure.

"I will not be undermined by our employees, either passively or actively, when they fail to follow our direction as a board," Blocker stated on Facebook.
"And I will not tolerate this Board being undermined. No true leader should or would tolerate insubordination."

While the Mickler's Beach issue may have given rise to the decision to terminate Wanchick's contract, the board gave indication that they were unsatisfied with his work prior to that.

In May, the board initially voted not to renew Wanchick's contract, then later approved a one-year extension to Jan. 1, 2021

While the commission has noted disaffection recently in Wanchick's ability to keep the Board informed on certain issues, in the past Wanchick has been given credit with leading the county through the recession, which he took on shortly after being hired in 2007.

District 5 Commissioner Henry Dean said although he believes the commission made the right decision, Wanchick has "done a wonderful job over the years-including leading the County out of the Great Recession. He has served admirably as our county administrator."

Wanchick's last contract, which went into effect in January of 2017, listed his base salary at \$213,973. Because Wanchick's termination wasn't due to misconduct, his contract calls for a severance pay of current pay rate, payment for accrued and unused vacation and sick leave and continuing insurance coverage for him and his family for 20 weeks.



Photo by Christine Rodenbaugh

Josephine Spearman (from left), education coordinator, GTM Research Reserve; Ellen Leroy-Reed, executive director, Friends of the GTM Reserve; Mike Sirley, manager, GTM Research Reserve; Elise Summa, lead clinician, UF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities; Katrina Ressa, clician, CARD; and Mark Ryan, president of the board of directors, Friends of the GTM Reserve. The Friends of the GTM Reserve held its annual membership meeting Dec. 11 at the Reserve's visitor center.

GTM Research Reserve implements sensory inclusive initiative

By Christine Rodenbaugh

For nearly 20 years, the Friends of the GTM Reserve has supported the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve through private citizens who volunteer time, talent and treasure to help the Reserve achieve its mission. And the momentum continues to increase.

Several "wins" were reported at the Dec. 11 annual meeting of the Friends of the GTM Reserve. They set a new record for annual volunteer service hours — 11,000. They exceeded the Oceanwise 2019 fundraising goal with \$47,000 raised, and increased active Friends mem-

bers by 15%. But numbers tell only a part of the story.

Ellen Leroy Reed, Friends executive director, introduced a sensory inclusive program, which is part of the "GTM for All" initiative to provide accessibility and promote inclusivity at the Reserve.

Sensory inclusion means the Reserve and its staff are trained to interact with visitors dealing with conditions such as autism, PTSD, Parkinson's disease and early onset dementia. Sensory bags, equipped with noise canceling headphones, fidget tools, verbal cue cards and

GTM RESERVE continues on Page 5

St. Johns County Commissioner Jeb Smith (center) gets ready to cut the ribbon with other invited dignitaries.



ABOVE: Some attendees take a tour of the new Players Club Water Reclamation Facility after the ribbon cutting.

RIGHT: Facility
Operator
Matt Schloss
explains what
happens in the
various tanks.

Photos by Maggie FitzRoy



Ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrates new water reclamation facility

By Maggie FitzRoy

St. Johns County commissioners, utility department employees and other government and business dignitaries celebrated the completion of the Players Club Water Reclamation Facility with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday, Dec. 12.

The \$32 million project, finished five months ahead of schedule, consolidates wastewater flows from the Players Club, Innlet Beach and Sawgrass wastewater treatment plants in Ponte Vedra Beach into one advanced wastewater treatment facility. It will improve the effluent quality of treated wastewater and is the largest capital project ever undertaken by the Utilities Department.

The celebration ceremony began with a round of speeches, followed by the ribbon cutting, then lunch and tours of the facility off Dyes Valley Road.

"This represents our ongoing commitment to Ponte Vedra and the environment," St. Johns County Utilities Director Bill Young said in his opening remarks. "We know what we are doing, and we do things right."

The new facility will allow for a 60% reduction in nutrients. "That's a huge reduction," General Doug Burnett, St. Johns River Water Management District chairman, said, praising everyone involved for finishing months ahead of schedule. "This is how we've got to do business if we want to be successful in the future. I know golfers," he added, "have got to love this. Golf courses use 5% of ground water in our state."

Wastewater is water that is flushed down toilets and water that runs down the drain from sinks and showers. In Ponte Vedra Beach, it is residential and commercial because there is no industrial waste in the area, Chief Engineer Scott Trigg said. The wastewater comes out as reclaimed water that is used for golf courses and irrigation. It does not involve drinking water, which is treated separately in different plants.



Bill Young, St. Johns County utilities director, gives opening remarks at the Dec. 12 ribbon-cutting celebration.

In his closing-remarks speech, St. Johns County Commissioner Jeb Smith said the vision for the new water reclamation facility began many years ago.

"We are setting the pace in new innovation, we are minimizing impacts on the environment, which is absolutely crucial," he said. "This will provide sustainable services for many generations to come."

Attendees who chose to take a tour were able to see firsthand how the system works. The facility consists of huge tanks, through which the wastewater flows, going from dirty to clean and clear. Operator Matt Schloss pointed out that from the first tank, where the water is brown, it flows into the next tank, filled with bubbling sludge that is actually millions of organisms — microbes — that feed on the biosolids, removing all contaminants. The final tank contains clear water, which passes through ultraviolet lights, which completely sterilize any remaining organisms that could have gotten through.

The facility is currently processing up to a million gallons a day, Schloss said.

It has the potential, at peak capacity, to process 6.5 million gallons a day.

GTM Reserve

Continued from

weighted lap pads will be available at the Visitor Center front desk for anyone feeling overwhelmed. Those requiring a quieter, more secure environment will have access to a dedicated quiet room designed with guidance from medical professionals.

When Reed realized students with autism and their families did not visit the Reserve because of sensory and safety concerns, she turned to volunteers for input. Friends member Janet Koehler reached out to Elise Summa, lead clinician at the UF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, to ask how to make Reserve programs accessible to students with autism. That was Dec. 19, 2018.

Summa said while organizations may have big ideas, it often takes a lot of time to get things rolling. "One thing that impressed me is the Reserve just kept the ball rolling," she said. "So much has been accomplished in a year."

Summa presented a timeline of progress after the initial phone conversation with Koehler. After a site visit, Summa designed training for staff and volunteers, who were eager to participate. An introductory video was produced so students would know what to expect. In April, the Reserve was ready to seek certification as sensory inclusive from Kulture City.

In August, Teachers on the Estuary participated in the sensory inclusive program. In September, virtual reality headsets allowed severely autistic students who are unable to visit the reserve in person, to experience the estuary. In October, Summa watched an autistic child engage with wildlife at the Reserve.

"He reached out and touched the turtle, and that was a moment," Summa said.

"This was a kid who couldn't care less about what was going on around him."

With the Kulture City certification, the GTM Research Reserve is better prepared to assist guests with sensory sensitivities in order to facilitate the most comfortable and accommodating experience possible. Reed hopes other reserves will implement similar programs. While much progress has been made, continuous improvements are expected. The quiet room is still being designed and community outreach materials are being developed.

"This initiative is integrated into the fiber of the Reserve," Reed said.

Derek Prince is owner of Bogey Grille in Ponte Vedra Beach. The popular sports bar and restaurant recently celebrated its 16th anniversary.



Photo by Maggie FitzRoy

As told to Maggie FitzRoy

When did Bogey Grille open?

Bogey Grille actually opened in August 2003 under that name. My business partner and I bought it in November 2003. The original building was built around 1997. It used to be called Glory Days.

Where did the name Bogey Grille come from?

It had to do with where we are located. And the guy who opened it was from Columbus, Ohio, where I believe there was a similar business with that name. But being next to TPC, it just made sense.

When did you celebrate its 16th birthday?

We celebrated the anniversary of me buying it, Nov. 16. We did drink specials, smoked wings outside on the smoker. We had a lot of giveaway prizes, decorated all up, sold T-shirts that said, "Sweet 16."

What did you do before you bought Bogey Grille 16 years ago?

I was an Outback Steakhouse partner in Springfield, Missouri, for a little over four years.

How did you get into the restaurant business?

I went in the Air Force after high school and then attended the University of South Carolina and studied hospitality and tourism. Then I ended up joining Steak and Ale, they recruited me out of college. After about four years, I joined Longhorn Steakhouse, which moved me to St. Louis, and I opened up that market. Then Outback recruited me to be a partner in Springfield.

Where did you grow up, and where do you live now?

I grew up in Boca Raton, Florida. I live in Walden Chase.

How, when and why did you come to the First Coast?

My Bogey Grille partner was living in Ponte Vedra Beach and he told me there was a restaurant for sale here and would I be interested in taking a look at it? I was. I was looking forward to coming back to Florida and after visiting Ponte Vedra Beach, fell in love with it and thought it would be a great place to raise my two boys. I also thought it was a great opportunity to be on my own, free of the corporate world and taking on the challenge of operating my own restaurant.

Tell us about your family.

My wife, Sharon, is a nurse practitioner at Ponte Vedra Plastic Surgery. One of my boys graduated from Nease, one from Ponte Vedra High. Both attend the University of North Florida.

Did you make changes to the original Bogey Grille?

Immediately. I started working on the menu, trying to get the look and feel of a locally run sports bar. I also got involved with all the school and youth athletics and local charities and national charities, becoming a fabric of the community.

Where do you get your heavily local wall décor?

With the wall decorations, everything at Bogey has bee decorated by local families and local sports teams. They take pictures and bring them in and want me to put them up. The walls are heavily decorated: school banners,

sports pennants and lots of pictures of teams, champions. We do at times change things out. Sometimes an old one comes down and a new one goes up.

What about your staff?

My general manager has been with me for 16 years. Many of our employees have been with us for 10 years or more. Some who go away to college come back and work college breaks.

You are also a Realtor. How do you have time to do that?

I have good people that can run Bogey. I always had a passion for real estate, so got into it about three years ago. I joined a RE/MAX team.

Bogey Grille has a lot of regulars. Is it a place where everybody knows your name?

I hear it called the Cheers of Ponte Vedra all the time. Tons of regulars. It's usually the spot that everybody chooses to come to after a school sporting event, after youth sporting events, to celebrate.

And to watch national and regional sports. How many TVs do you have in the place?

About 30 TVs, including four outside. People love to come to watch their favorite college or NFL team as well as many other sports.

What type of food is on the menu?

Sports bar, American fare, with some seafood, salads. It's a pretty extensive menu. And we were recently voted as having the best wings in town.

24th annual Christ Church Nutcracker performance maintains magical quality

By Paris Moulden

"The Nutcracker" is certainly a holiday staple, but one production manages to up the magic year after year.

The 24th annual Christ Church Nutcracker and Miss Felicia's Dance Program held its performance of the holiday classic on Saturday, Dec. 14, at the University of North Florida's Lazzara Performance Hall. And while the Christ Church show has all the energy, amazing set design, fantastic costuming and standout performances one might expect from a major production, what makes this version of "The Nutcracker" so special are the performers, across all age groups. Felicia Rhoden, who leads the dance ministry at Christ Episcopal Church and produces and directs "The Nutcracker," incorporates all the students from its dance ministry across all age rages and skill levels.

"We use everybody who wants to be on that stage," Rhoden said.

NUTCRACKER continues on **Page 11**





Photos by Paris Moulder

Students of Miss Felicia Rhoden's Dance Ministry at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach present the 24th production of "The Nutcracker" on Dec. 14 at the University of North Florida's Lazzara Performance Hall.



Clara prepares to lay down next to her nutcracker doll in "The Nutcracker."





Palm Valley Academy's principal is St. Johns County's principal of year

By Amber Lake

Palm Valley Academy Principal Jessica Richardson was recently selected as the 2019 St. Johns County Principal of the Year. The county is one of 67 that will go to state for selection of the state teacher's award.

Richardson, who has been working in the St. Johns County school district for 20 years, was also the county's top pick for Assistant Principal in 2013. She said she believes this year's recognition to be due, in part, for her work starting the new school, which has been open for only two years and is already over capacity.

"I think opening a new school is a once in a lifetime opportunity," Richardson said. "The uniqueness of that and the uniqueness of being a part of the largest and fastest growing school district in Florida (may have played a part)."

Recently, Nocatee was named the fifth fastest growing community in the nation. Because of its tremendous



Photo by Amber Lake

Jessica Richardson

growth, the county has already instated plans for another school to be built in a little over a year.

Managing a school growing as fast as Palm Valley Academy might be a challenge, but it's one Richardson is up for. As a principal, she said her

PRINCIPAL continues on Page 11





PRESCHOOL STUDENTS GET READY FOR SANTA

Pre-K students on the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus are getting excited for a visit from Santa Claus. In the meantime, they recently embraced a craft project that involved putting some pretty special touches on some pretty adorable likenesses of him.

Photos provided by Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach

Nease NJROTC shines during annual Navy inspection



ABOVE: Nease NJROTC's Battalion staff lead the Nease NJROTC cadets during the Pass in Review parade during the unit's Annual Military Inspection.

RIGHT: Several NJROTC cadets report front and center to receive Exemplary Personal Appearance awards during Nease's Annual Military Inspection.



The U.S. Navy recently conducted an in-depth formal inspection of the Nease High School NJROTC program, an annual requirement to validate the program's performance across the board.



Photos provided by Nease NJROTC

Capt. Glen Leverette conducts formal personnel inspection on Nease cadets during the NJROTC unit's annual military inspection.

Navy chief inspector Capt. Glen Leverette, the commanding officer of the Jacksonville University NROTC program, along with his staff, led the formal inspection. They reviewed all major components of the NJROTC program, including administration, operations and logistics. And they conducted a thorough personnel inspection of Nease's 254 cadets, presided over a formal Pass in Review parade and later received an indepth presentation and briefing by the senior cadet staff.

Nease received evaluations of "Outstanding" across the board.

"Nease NJROTC's color guard

was on par with my JU NROTC college midshipmen," Leverette said. "And the drill team performance was the best I've seen this year."

Nease has been recognized as the Most Outstanding Unit in Area-12 (60 programs encompassing Northeast Florida and the State of Georgia) for seven of the past eight years. In 2015, Nease was named the Most Outstanding Unit in the nation.

The Navy JROTC program consists of 584 programs across the country, with more than 89,000 cadets participating. Every program undergoes an annual military inspection to evaluate the unit's preparedness and ability to carry out the missions of the program, which include promoting patriotism, developing informed and responsible citizens, developing a high degree of honor and discipline and building leaders for tomorrow.

KIDS SAY_

In this new feature of the Ponte Vedra Recorder, "Kids Say," area children offer their answers for some pressing questions. This week, first-graders at **OCEAN PALMS ELEMENTARY** were asked ...

If you could get any gift for christmas, what would it be?



"I'd like a dog!"

Caleb



"I want a kitten!" **Lucy**



"I want Harry Potter stuff!" **Kinsley**



"I want Elsa stuff from 'Frozen!" Ana



"I really want some football gloves!" **Toby**

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.

Local library wants to 'Color Your World'

By Christine Rodenbaugh

Remember the box of Crayola crayons with a sharpener? You just flipped open the lid to see 64 different colors with names like spring green, violet red and indigo — unless you happened to be 1 in 12 men or 1 in 200 women who have color vision deficiency. For the colorblind, the colorful box is viewed through a sepia filter resulting in shades of dull brown, tan and yellow.

An estimated 11,000 St. Johns County residents have color vision deficiency in varying degrees. Thanks to a generous \$13,000 "Color Your World" grant award from the St. Augustine based nonprofit Barbara A. Kay Foundation, through the Friends of the Main Library St. Augustine, the St. Johns County Public Library System is able to offer a new way to see the world with EnChroma receptor glasses available for checkout to library patrons. The unique glasses use a patented lens technology to show the colorblind brilliant color for the first time.

To launch the program, library staff invited seven residents to try the glasses, which are available in sunglasses for outdoors and lighter lenses for indoors. Drew Howell, a sophomore at Allen D. Nease



Photo by Christine Rodenbaugh

Mike McNabb (right) watches his son Jeff compare colors outside with and without EnChroma receptor sunglasses.

High School, had a pair of the sunglasses but lost them. Instead of replacing the sunglasses, Drew asked his mother to wait until the newer indoor version was released. He tried them for the first time at the library.

"They seem pretty similar to the sunglasses," he said. "They make everything more vivid. I think the most different is my phone."

He said being colorblind can make it more difficult to take tests that link a picture to an answer. It's also difficult to work on group projects because colored folders are often used to assign tasks or organize information.

"Everything is kind of muted grays

and pinks," he said. "I can't differentiate between colors."

Mike McNabb is 70 years old and had never tried EnChroma glasses. He took a colorblind test on the computer and scored less than 20%. "I didn't know I couldn't see that much," he said. "I'm hoping the glasses can help me distinguish things like these balloons, so they don't all blend together," he said, pointing to a cluster of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple helium-filled balloons.

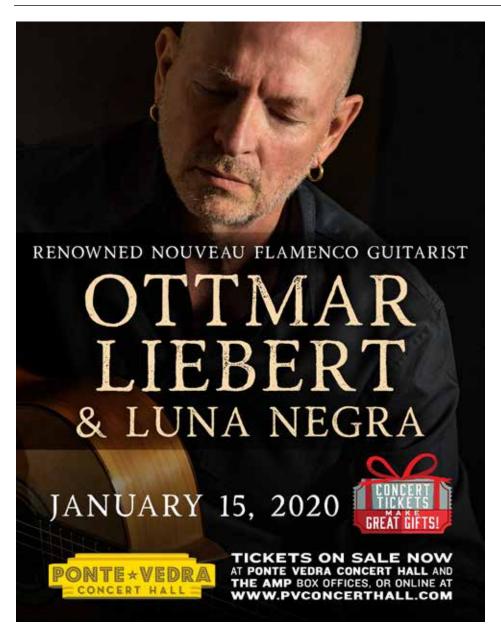
The first thing he noticed when he put on the inside glasses were the shades of green in the caterpillar design on the carpet in the children's room of the library. His experience outside with sunglasses was similar. First he remarked that "the third car in, the red one, is a completely different color."

Then he remarked how many shades of green were in the trees. Like the green caterpillar inside, the shades of green all blended together for him without the glasses. McNabb looks forward to going to the next car show with the glasses. "I like classic cars. A lot of them have really good paint jobs," he said.

His son, Jeff McNabb, is a 31-year-old web designer who graduated from Flagler College. "I use a lot of muted background color," he said. "I have one or two people I show the designs to before they go to the client." He had never tried EnChroma glasses before. When he put them on inside, he said, "First, it's kind of jarring, I think." Later, when the group moved outside to try the sunglasses, Jeff's gaze followed the flagpole from the ground up. "Who knew the flag is really red, white and blue," he told his father standing next to him. "The stop sign is easier to read, too!"

While the glasses improved color vision for all seven residents who tried them at the library, EnChroma cautions that some may see little or no improvement. The glasses work for 4 out of 5 people with color vision deficiency. County residents with a library card can check out a pair of EnChroma glasses for 14 days without charge.

There are five pairs available: two adult outdoor, one adult indoor, one for children ages 5-10 outdoor and one for children ages 10 and older outdoor.





Choir tours new building

After singing at the 11:15 a.m. service, members of the Christ Episcopal Church Chancel Choir donned hard hats Sunday, Dec. 8 to tour the new Formation and Arts Building under construction on the Ponte Vedra Beach campus. They posed for a photo in what will soon be their new choir room, and along with other parishioners, signed the walls of the new building to leave time-capsule-style messages before the walls are completed.

Slated to open in February 2020, the 19,800-sq. ft. two-story building, on the campus at 400 San Juan Drive will also include meeting rooms and hospitality features to be offered for use by community groups as well as by the church's active parish.

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.

Little cherubs, with show director and producer Felicia Roden, perform on stage during "The Nutcracker."



Daughters kiss their dads on the cheek following a dance routine during "The Nutcracker." The performance used actual father and daughters for the scene.



and the cast and crew. Photos by Paris Moulden The China Doll character is introduced to Clara.



The Nutcracker prince pulls Clara through the snow in a magic carriage ride.



Little elves draw laughs with their routine.

Principal

goal is to make each individual child feel welcome.

"There is one of me and there is almost 1,900 of them," Richardson said. "I'm not going to be able to build personal relationships with everybody. My goal is to

remove any barriers that might stand in the way of building those relationships that are going to make an impactful difference in (student's) lives."

Richardson said that a principal's most important job is to empower the school's staff, which includes about 145 teachers.

"All of our teachers are leaders. All of our school staff are leaders. From part of our maintenance team to our staff in the

kitchen. Every day everyone is building relationships," she said.

Currently, Richardson is working with staff to implement a program she calls, "Capturing Kid's Hearts." The program aims at recognizing a child's emotional needs and ensuring those are met along with their academic goals.

"One of the big pieces of that is making sure that we are greeting people with

handshakes and eye contact every day," Richardson said. "We do positive affirmations every day. We try really hard to build those individual relationships and make kids feel like they are in a safe place. Part of the program is (knowing) you have to capture their hearts before you capture their minds. Nobody is going to feel safe to learn if they don't feel like they can trust you and that you love them."

Nutcracker

"The Nutcracker" tells the story of young Clara, played this year by Audrey Geric, and her journey after receiving a magical nutcracker doll during her family Christmas party. After receiving her gift, Clara falls asleep and, after being saved from the Rat King by the Nutcracker prince, is taken on an enchanting journey highlighted through dance. In the Christ Church performance, the traditional tale is told beautifully, but includes much more than expected. There are, of course, the Snow Queen, the Nutcracker Prince, the Sugar Plum Fairy, the China Doll, the Mouse King and his mice, the Arabian dancers, the Spanish dancers and all the rest, but Rhoden's show also features hip-hop dancing, breakdancing, a drumline, tap dance and a lot of acrobatics. There were also plenty of laughs courtesy of the youngest cast members, including a young group of elves following the lead of their not-so-coordinated and hilarious guide. As usual, the little "cherubs" drew "oohs" and "aahs" from the audience with their adorable performance.

Despite all the time and energy and preparation that goes into putting on such an elaborate show, Rhoden said it's the makeup and character of the cast that sets it apart.

"They're just happy," she said. "There's not a lot of stress or pressure, and I think that just shows through in the performance."

While the show undoubtedly provides entertainment to those in the audience, what it provides beyond that is even a bigger deal. Each year, the profits from Christ Church's Nutcracker go to sponsor children through Dreams Come True Foundation and are also donated to the Community PEDS Care hospice and Amistad Orphanage in Bolivia.

And that's what really matters to Rhoden

"Even the littlest, from the youngest to the oldest, know they are performing to give back to the community," Rhoden said.



Graham Cole and his 2-year-old daughter, Adelaide, get ready to participate in the parade with other family members.

¥UND€RW@D'S PPOLITA

Nocatee Holiday Golf Cart Parade lights the night

By Maggie FitzRoy

Brightly lit golf carts, some playing holiday songs, brought seasonal cheer to Nocatee Friday, Dec. 13 during the community's second annual Holiday Golf Cart

Streaming in from every direction, they lined up in front of the stage at Nocatee

Station Field, ready to go at 6 p.m. sharp. Parades are becoming a popular Nocatee tradition, said Hannah Davis, Nocatee events manager, as she directed the carts, most filled with people of all ages, rolling across the field. "Last year, we had 250 for Christmas and 487 for Fourth of July."

PARADE continues on Page 16





ABOVE: Decorated and brightly lit golf carts line up Dec. 13 for the second annual **Nocatee Holiday Golf Cart Parade.**

LEFT: John Bellissimo rode in the parade fully dressed as Santa. He said he participated last year, too.

Photos by Maggie FitzRoy

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WINE TASTING A HIT IN NOCATEE

Steve Lourie (from left), **Andrew Tow, Cheryl** Montero and Dr. Daniel Montero pose during a wine tasting Dec. 11 at Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room, which welcomed Tow, founder of The Withers Winery in California. The tasting included their exclusive wines, featured on the wine lists of nationally known restaurants, including The French Laundry.



Photo by Susan Griffin

- Cranes
- Aerial Lifts
- Debris Removal





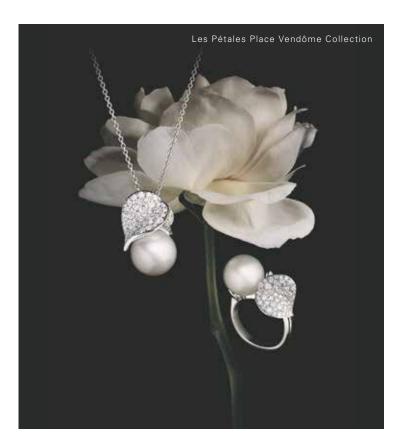
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Everything you've ever wanted to know about wild turkeys and more

By Maggie FitzRoy

Wild turkeys are extremely different from the plastic-sealed birds that people buy in the supermarket.

Unlike domestic turkeys, which are raised to grow up fast and fat and have very short lifespans, the average wild turkey lives about two and a half years and weighs about 17 pounds.

The wild birds roost on trees. They can run as fast as 25 miles per hour. And they can fly, fast, up to 55 miles an hour.

Wild turkeys also don't normally look like the iconic image we see in pictures: males strutting around with their tail and wing feathers fanned out, framing their bodies, like they are in a parade.

"They don't actually walk around like that," St. Johns County Parks Naturalist Kelly Ussia said during a Dec. 10 talk at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. The only time they strut around like that "all puffed up" is during mating season, she said. "Then they're just trying to show off."

A naturalist with the county Parks and Recreation department, Ussia recently began giving hour-long talks at the library once a month. She said she chose the subject of wild turkeys for December because turkey is on many people's minds during the holidays when it comes to planning the traditional family dinner.

Ussia plans to talk about snakes and alligators in January, estuaries in February and Florida's endangered species in March.

She began her conversational-style, power-point presentation about wild turkeys by saying that she knows a lot about turkeys, "but I'm not a turkey expert." She added, "I'm not afraid to say I don't know," and that when someone does ask a question that she doesn't know the answer to, she puts it on her list to find out.

"We do have lots of turkeys around here," in St. Johns County, she said, because she sees them running around the administrative office building in St. Augustine, where her office is based.



St. Johns County Parks Naturalist Kelly Ussia at the podium at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

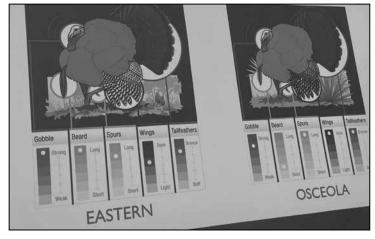
Ussia began her talk with basic facts about turkeys, that they are warm-blooded vertebrates with four-chambered hearts, like humans. Then she told her audience of adults and a few children everything they could want to know about wild turkeys and more.

Florida has one species of wild turkey, which is divided into two subspecies: Eastern and Osceola, which is the subspecies that lives in St. Johns County.

Before Europeans came to North America, the wild turkey population was huge. They declined in number from hunting and habitat takeover by humans after Europeans arrived, but in 1860 there were still more turkeys in Florida than people. During the early 1900s there was a huge decline in Florida, but by 1975 wild turkeys were being managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and now turkeys can be found in all of Florida's counties, as well as in every state in the United States except Alaska and Hawaii.

Ussia said that wild turkeys are hunted in the Guana River Wildlife Management Area as well as farther south in the county, in Matanzas State Forest. Hunters must apply for a license to be able to hunt them,





ABOVE: St. Johns County Parks Naturalist Kelly Ussia uses a map to illustrate a point during her powerpoint presentation.

LEFT: A slide describes the difference between two different subspecies of wild turkey in Florida

Photos by Maggie FitzRoy

with restrictions

The Osceola subspecies thrives in pine flatwoods, oak and palmetto hammocks, wooded swamps and prairies with adjacent roosting trees, she said. "They actually do well in wooded swamps."

Using photos and videos during her presentation, Ussia described the appearance of wild turkeys. Males, called "gobblers," are the ones with elaborate tail feathers used during mating. They also have spurs on their strong feet, beards, and "snoods" that hang over their beaks.

Females do not have tails that are as elaborate, most have no beards, they do not have snoods and they are smaller and duller in color.

An adolescent male is called a "jake." Adult females are called "hens," and an adolescent female is called a "jenny." A baby turkey of either gender is called a "poult."

Wild turkeys eat a diverse diet of acorns, seeds, grasses, fruit and insects.

Ussia played recordings of various turkey calls, which distinctively communicate different messages, including "assembly calls," "excited yelps," 'purrs," and "gobbles." Only the males gobble, which

they do during mating, and which can be heard up to a mile away.

A female turkey typically lays nine to 11 eggs in a nest on the ground and then after two weeks the chicks can fly up to trees to roost to get away from predators, which include coyotes, racoons, owls, snakes, bobcats, eagles, foxes and hawks.

Turkeys have excellent eyesight, including the ability to see color.

They can also be aggressive toward humans, so never feed or approach them, said Ussia, who ended her talk with the myth-busting fact that Benjamin Franklin never suggested the turkey should be the national bird.

"He'd heard that eagles have bad moral character and are too lazy to fish for themselves. He said the turkey is a more respectable bird."

There were few questions during Ussia's talk that she couldn't answer.

But Lee Hunter, who came with his two young grandchildren, had one at the end.

"So, where did the expression 'you're such a turkey' come from?" he asked.

Ussia laughed. "I don't know," she said. "I'll add that to my list."

OBITUARIES

Thomas Ellison

Thomas Ellison, 71, died Dec. 7, 2019. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Mary Jacqueline Fetherston

Mary Jacqueline Fetherston, 76, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Dec. 10, 2019. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.

quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Katherine Gulden

Katherine Gulden, 88, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 30, 2019. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www. pontevedravalley.com

Sara January Phillips

Sara January Phillips, 83, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Dec. 13, 2019. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre.

 $www.quinn-shalz.com.\ 904-249-1100$

James Russell Shaw

James Russell Shaw, 77, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died Dec. 10, 2019. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Jamie Lynn Wiltse

Jamie Lynn Wiltse, 42, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died Dec. 9, 2019. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100





FAR LEFT: Seven St. Johns County residents Chelsea Johnson (from left), Drew Howell, Reece McKay, Jeff McNabb, Steven Apte, Mike McNabb and Bill Smith have one thing in common — they're colorblind. Through the public library's "Color Your World" program, residents will be able to check out EnChroma receptor glasses for 14 days to see the world in color.

LEFT: Drew Howell, a sophomore at Allen D. Nease High School, tries on glasses that allow him to see color indoors for the first time.

Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh

Glasses

Like any other library item, patrons can place a hold if a type they want is checked out at their branch or on the bookmobile, and a courier will deliver the glasses to the appropriate branch when available.

In addition to the new EnChroma glasses, the library's Color Your World program will also offer free oil pastel classes for library patrons system-wide. For details on the classes, contact a branch library nearby for dates and times.

"Whether patrons see brilliant color for the first time or learn to see the world from an artist's perspective, we are thankful for the Barbara A. Kay Foundation and their support of this exciting initiative," Library Director Debra Rhodes Gibson

To take a color blind test online, visit bit.ly/colortestSJC.



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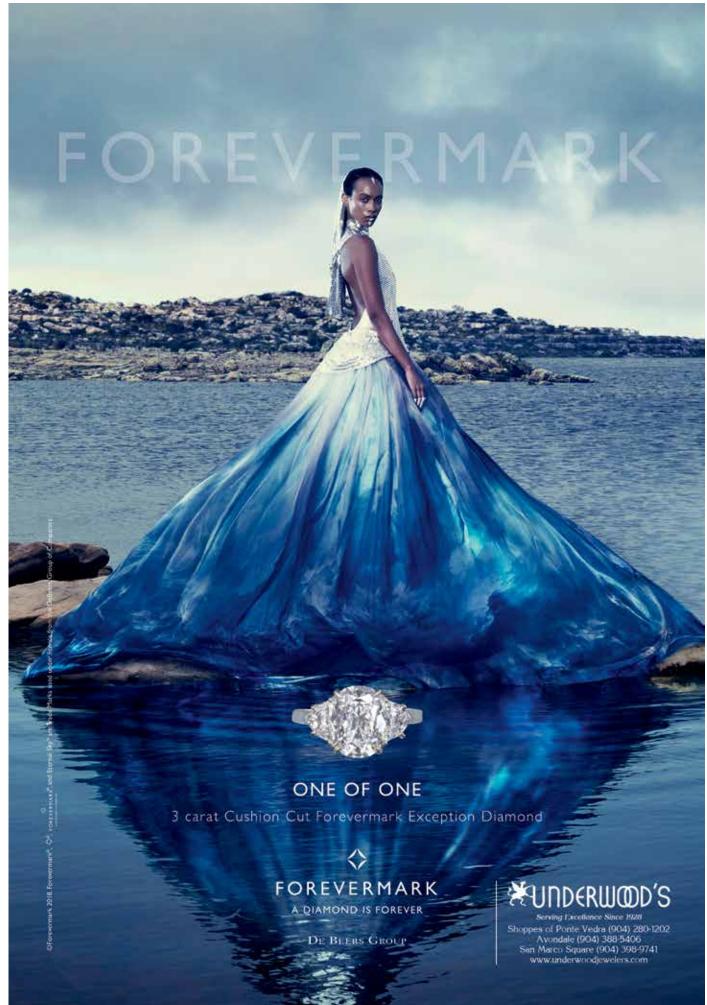
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Beacon Lake hosts successful food drive

Residents of Beacon Lake, a lakefront lifestyle community in northern St. Johns County, recently collected and donated 575 pounds of non-perishable food items for Feeding Northeast Florida.

The collection took place at the community's Fall Festival, an event designed for neighbors and friends to get together and have fun while supporting a worthy cause. The donation will help provide more than 479 meals to hungry children, families, seniors and veterans in Northeast Florida who live with the hardships of food insecurity.





The Feeding Northeast Florida Team collects food donations at Beacon Lake.

"As our residents demonstrated with their generosity and spirit of compassion, Beacon Lake is truly a community with heart," said Bruce J. Parker, managing director for BBX Capital Real Estate, Beacon Lake's master developer. "Through the food drive, we are able to help those in need and make their holidays a little brighter."

More than 150 Beacon Lake residents

and friends attended the Fall Festival, where they enjoyed bounces houses and other inflatables, games for all ages, food trucks and more. Residents also enjoyed coming together to give back in a way that embodies Beacon Lake's heart and caring for others.

"We are very proud to give back and help others combat hunger by partnering with Feeding Northeast Florida," said



Residents Diane and Thomas Cascini love the community spirit at Beacon Lake.



Andrew Charlson of Dream Finders Homes and Aaron Lyman of BBX Capital Real Estate enjoyed attending the Fall Festival.

Beacon Lake resident Thomas Cascini. "Beacon Lake is a special place to call home, and events like this are one of the many reasons my wife, Diane, and I love living here."





Photo by Maggie FitzRoy

The line of golf carts grows and gets ready to start the second annual Nocatee Holiday Golf Cart Parade on Dec. 13.

Parade

Continued from 12

It had been a drizzly day, but the rain had ceased by sunset. "We were wondering if the weather would turn people away, but we're hoping a lot will show up," said operations manager Lee Hovis.

The carts kept coming as the night got darker. And the atmosphere was joyous as participants got ready for the start. After leaving the park, they would pass Splash Waterpark, then head down Crosswater Parkway through Town Center and then loop back, where they would be treated to the holiday-classic move "Elf" at the stage.

"It's really for fun, for the neighborhoods to get together and celebrate the holidays," Davis said. Lining up in order of arrival, she said, "Some go all out."

Graham Cole and his 2-year-old daughter, Adelaide, came in a cart with other family members. "We did it last year, and it was a lot of fun," Cole said.

St. Johns County hosts annual tree-cycling program

Christmas trees will be recycled and used as mulch in parks

St. Johns County is hosting its annual Christmas "Tree-cycling" program for residents who wish to recycle Christmas trees after the holiday. They can bring Christmas trees Monday, Dec. 30 to Sunday, Jan. 5 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to the following locations:

- Ron Parker Park 607 Old Beach Road, St. Augustine Beach
- Cornerstone Park 1046 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach
- Al Wilke Park 6140 South Main St., Hastings
- Mills Field 1805 Racetrack Road, St. Johns
- First Tee 4401 Cypress Links Blvd., Elkton



Photo provided by St. Johns County

Volunteers with Hugs Across the County pack holiday bags

Local all-volunteer nonprofit Hugs Across the County recently packed No Hungry Holidays bags for 1,200 St. Johns County students, referred by counselors from 38 schools.

In Ponte Vedra Beach, nearly 100 children were referred to this program, which provides about 10 days of breakfast and lunch items to fight food insecurity over the long winter break. At Ponte Vedra High School, students, staff and volunteers packed 500 of the bags, and Legacy Trust sponsored bags for children at Ocean Palms and PVPV/ Rawlings Elementary schools.

■ Davis Park – 210 Davis Park Road, Ponte Vedra Beach

Artificial trees will not be accepted, as only natural trees can be recycled. Trees should be free of decorations and debris. Designated areas and signage will direct participants where to drop off their trees. For more information, please contact Nathan Otter at notter@sjcfl.us or (904) 209-0323

St. Augustine Humane Society nears completion of facility expansion

The St. Augustine Humane Society is nearing completion of the non-profit's building expansion at 1665 Old Moultrie Road in St. Augustine.

Executive Director Carolyn Smith said approximately \$300,000 in renovations are underway to help ensure the facility can continue its mission to keep pets out of shelters and in forever homes with responsible pet ownership. The project includes construction of a new surgery wing for low or no-cost spay and neuter services, charity pet clinic renovations, x-ray equipment, a radiography room, along with dog and cat recovery areas, waiting rooms and an outdoor pet pavilion. Completion is slated for February 2020.

"Since 2013, the Humane Society has provided an extensive list of pet services and programs for the area's underserved in just 2,000-square-feet of space. We are now open for business six days a week," Smith said. "Founded in 1946, we have come a long way. However, the response for care from the community is now overwhelming. We must maintain and grow our capabilities and standards of excellence with new equipment, staff and physical space. Approximately 1,400-square-feet of additional area is currently under construction as we're now operating at



Photo provided by St. Augustine Humane Society

capacity in our existing facility."

Smith added the non-profit's pet clinic is currently serving the community three days a week which will be enhanced to five days per week with an increase in veterinary services. Annually, the Humane Society provides 2,010 wellness visits; 5,600 vaccinations; 540 microchips; 2200 spay-neuter surgeries; 275 special surgeries; 120 dental procedures and gives away 22,000 pounds of pet food. With the additional funding for expansion and services, Smith estimates the increase in veterinary care will more than triple the number of procedures and pets served throughout St. Johns County.

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Christmas Eve

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

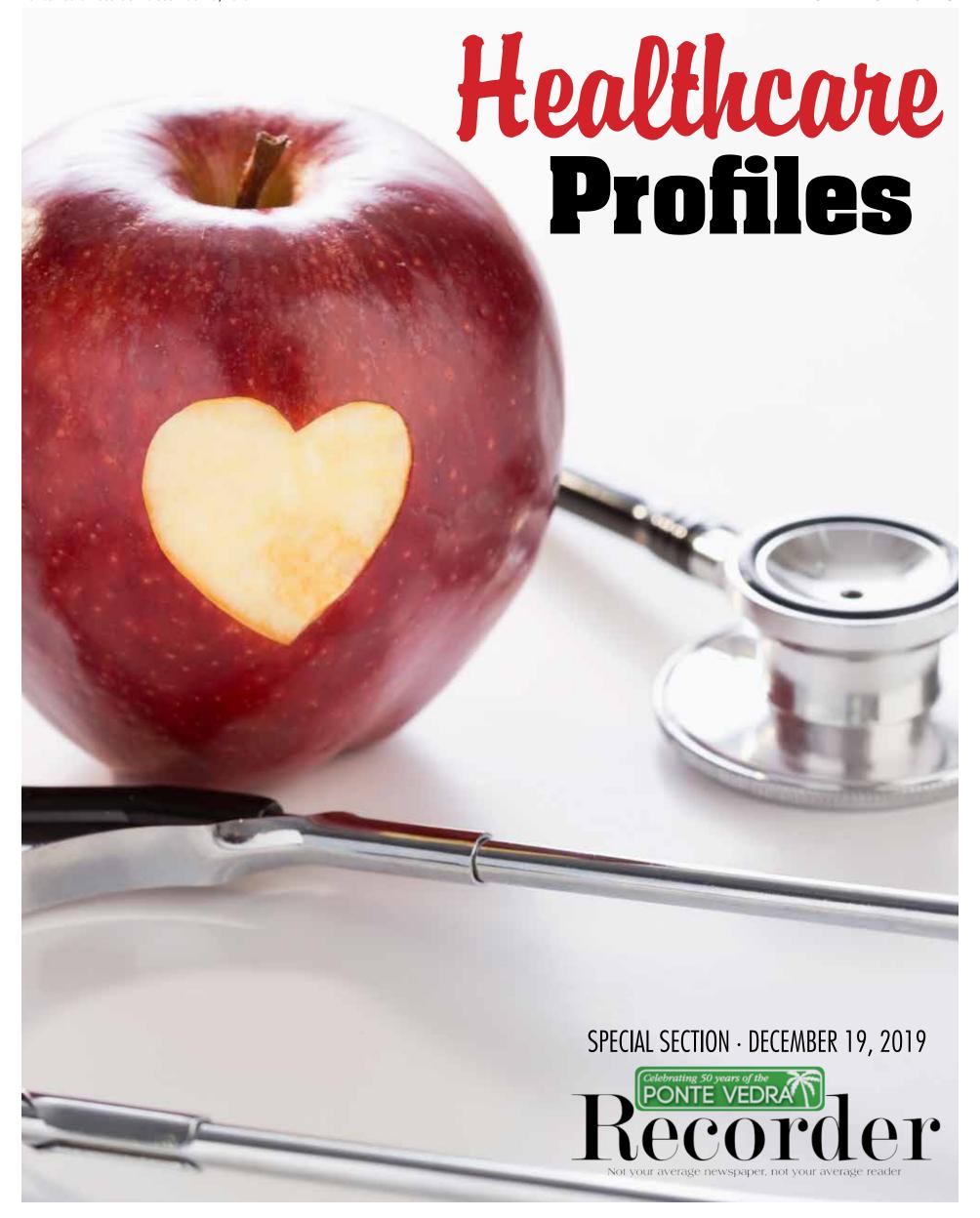
10:00 a.m. Traditional Main Sanctuary

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

December 26

11:00 a.m. Cypress Village Chapel





New app from Baptist Health, Wolfson Children's Hospital guides families through pregnancy and after

Parenthood begins long before a baby is born, which is why it's important for moms-to-be to take care of themselves and their new addition throughout the whirlwind nine months of pregnancy.

To help answer the many questions that come with the journey, Baptist Health and Wolfson Children's Hospital – in collaboration with Wildflower Health, a leading mobile health software company – has developed the MyFamily mobile app to help moms and dads from early pregnancy until long after baby is born.

App features engage and inform users throughout their experience, and include:

- A"Find a Provider" tool with Baptist Health's directory of more than 1,200 OB, pediatric and primary care physicians
 - Reminders for maternity tours and

childbirth classes

- Storage of all of your self-entered doctor's appointments and questions in a feature called the "Q-List"
- Daily pregnancy tips, weekly pregnancy videos and to-dos by trimester
- Feeding, diaper and growth trackers for newborns to toddlers
- Tips for new parents on sleep, swaddling and traveling, including postpartum depression articles with connections to support groups and a 24/7
- Profiles for every family member from ages 0 to 99, along with vaccination and weight trackers
- Personalized daily newsfeed specific to users' interests and needs

"Baptist Health and Wolfson Children's Hospital want to help families be as

healthy as possible throughout their lives," said Brett McClung, president and CEO of Baptist Health. "The MyFamily app is an extension of our expertise and care, helping us to fit into the daily lives of parents as they take care of themselves and their children at every stage."

CC Brooks, vice president of Patient Care Services for Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital, said, "We are so proud to offer the MyFamily app so we can continue to provide support long after childbirth. As a mom and a former labor and delivery nurse, I know how important it is for parents to have access to the reliable information they need as their families grow and needs change. This new app helps by offering health trackers for kids as they mature and the ability to include a health profile for every family member."

The MyFamily app can be downloaded in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store by following the links, searching "MyFamily Baptist" in your app store or texting HEALTH to 904.441.5204.

"It's clear that consumers and health systems like Baptist Health understand the growing urgency for effective digital health solutions that focus on family needs, which include pregnancy, parenting and general wellness,' Wildflower Health CEO & Founder Leah Sparks said. "We're proud to partner with Baptist Health and Wolfson Children's Hospital on the MyFamily app in order to take the complexity out of healthcare by connecting users to local health resources they need, at the time they need them."

8 Christmas presents caregivers can give themselves

By Peter Rosenberger

Aauthor of "Hope for the Caregiver"

People who are caring for loved ones need to also think about themselves during the holiday season.

Here are eight great tips for ways that people who give so much to others can also take care of themselves.

- 1. Commit to seeing a doctor. More than 70% of caregivers don't see a
- 2. Commit to doing something that brings joy to your heart. It doesn't have to be exotic: a good movie, watch a standup comedian, read a good book, paint, play the piano ... something that speaks beauty and joy to you in the middle of your stuff.
- 3. Make a list of people you resent and forgive them and then burn the list. Lose the grudges but keep bound-
- 4. Make one small change in your diet. For instance, substitute water for a sugary drink. Grab a piece of fruit instead of a candy bar. Substitute a salad for a burger ... olive oil for butter.

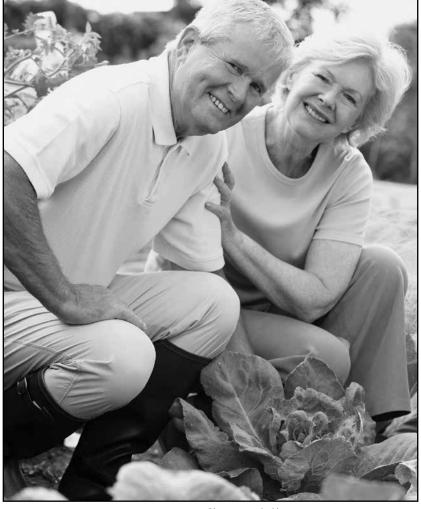


Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.

- 5. Send a Christmas card to yourself. Pick out a card your loved one would send if he/she were healthy emotionally and physically. And put a \$10 bill in it.
- 6. Do something physical. Walk to the back of the house and back. Alan Alda walks around to the music of John Phillips Sousa to help with his Parkinson's. He's not a doctor but he played one on TV, and it's pretty good advice. He lifts up his knees. Some-
- thing that simple can really benefit caregivers. Weight gain is common in caregivers.
- 7. Isolation is crippling. Go to church or other places of worship. Slip in and listen to the music of the season.
- 8. Call a trusted friend and tell them you're struggling. Take a leap of faith that they will listen. Don't ask for

Daily's inaugural charity concert raises over \$500K

Beneficiaries include Nemours Children's Health System, St. Vincent's Mobile Health Outreach Ministry and K9s for Warriors

The Daily's Foundation recently announced that their Inaugural Charity Concert raised over half a million dollars. The concert, featuring Brantley Gilbert, Michael Ray and Lindsay Ell, was held at Daily's Place on Friday, September 27 with over 4,200 local fans in attendance.

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation for the support we have received from our community. The people of Jacksonville are incredibly generous, and I am so proud to announce that, together, we were able to raise \$502,347," said Aubrey Edge, President and CEO of Daily's. "We thank you for your support of these local charities and how you have embraced Daily's. We look forward to an even bigger charity concert at Daily's Place in 2020."

The concert launched Daily's Foundation's philanthropic mission in Jacksonville as all net proceeds from the concert directly benefited local Northeast Florida charities, including Nemours Children's Health System, St. Vincent's Mobile Health Outreach Ministry and K9's for Warriors.

Maggie Hightower, Chief Philanthropy Officer for Nemours Children's Health System, reflected on the impact the funds will have not only on the hospital, but on their patients. "The money that the Daily's Foundation raised from their Inaugural Charity Concert will have a tremendous impact

Medical research shows promise in treating neurological disease

The University of Florida recently announced that new preclinical research shows promise for a potential treatment pathway aimed at slowing the disease process and extending survival in patients with ALS, often called Lou Gehrig's disease, an insidious neurological condition.

The research by University of Florida neurogeneticists Laura Ranum, Ph.D., and Lien Nguyen, Ph.D.; Neurimmune; Biogen; and collaborators at Johns Hopkins University shows that targeting a specific mutant protein in the brain with a human-derived antibody can lower neuroinflammation, slow neurodegeneration and lengthen survival in the most common genetic form of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, and frontotemporal dementia, or FTD.

The mouse-model study, published online today in the journal Neuron, offers the first evidence that a novel type of immunotherapy could be a viable treatment approach for a genetic type of ALS and FTD involving repetitive DNA that produces "repeat associated non-ATG (RAN) proteins." The study demonstrates that antibodies delivered by injection can cross the blood-brain barrier, enter cells and target the RAN proteins that build up in the brain.

The study, carried out by the UF College of Medicine's Center for NeuroGe-



Photo provided by the University of Florida

netics team in collaboration with investigators at biopharmaceutical companies Neurimmune and Biogen as well as Johns Hopkins University, opens a prospective new path to treating the diseases by targeting a particular pathological protein produced by a mutant gene.

'These proteins, which are unexpectedly produced without the normal signals for protein production, accumulate in the

brains of affected individuals," said Ranum, director of the Center for NeuroGenetics and the Kitzman Family Professor of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology. "We have tested the idea that we can use human antibodies derived from healthy elderly people to target a protein that is made from the genetic mutation. We found that by targeting one mutant protein, there is a collateral beneficial

effect that results in the reduction of multiple related mutant proteins. In other words, the treatment antibody leads to the activation of a garbage disposal-like system in cells that gets rid of multiple types of proteins produced by the disease mutation.'

The study offers evidence that RAN proteins trigger motor neuron loss and other characteristics of ALS and FTD. and shows how antibodies enter cells, bind to these proteins and then haul the bad proteins away to other parts of the cell that can process and get rid of them.

"We have identified an important protein that can be targeted in the disease and found a way to attack that mutant protein to slow down and lessen the impact of disease," Nguyen said. "This can be developed further to create a drug candidate for human clinical trials. A similar antibody-based approach may be applicable to other neurologic diseases."

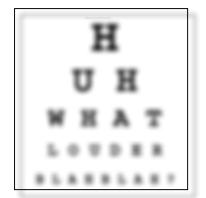
Jan Grimm, managing director and chief scientific officer of Neurimmune, said: "We are excited about the rapid progress of this collaborative project to develop human antibodies addressing the most common genetic cause of ALS and FTD. The discovery of antibodies with therapeutic potential in preclinical models is an important milestone in our quest to develop urgently needed novel therapies for these devastating diseases."



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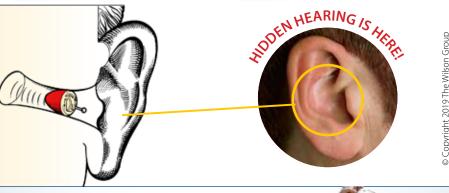


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Nemiah Rutledge. Lee Giat and Arun Gulani

The Gulani Vision Institute offers vision of perfect future, free suits



Scott A. Grant Guest Columnist

Perfect vision. What does it mean to you? Is there even such a thing as perfection in this imperfect world? When I think of perfect vision. I think of baseball legend, Ted Williams, Williams had 20-10 eyesight. The ability to see

the ball like no one before or since helped make him the greatest hitter who ever lived. Williams protected his eyes. He refused to go to the movies, read books or watch TV for fear it would damage his

Baseball teams coveted that vision. So did Uncle Sam. Baseball wanted him to swing a bat. The Government wanted him to fly fighter planes. It is part of the legend of the man that he was twice called upon to serve his country in the air as a Marine Corps Naval Aviator in World War II and

then again in Korea, where he served as future Astronaut John Glenn's wingman.

Sometimes vision is not about how you see, but what you see.

Such is the case with world-renowned local eye surgeon, Arun Gulani. Blessed with perfect vision himself, Gulani has a vision of the future where we will all see as well as he. The surgeon also has a passion for fashion and a vision where we are all as well dressed as he. In order to achieve that goal, "Ponte Vedra's Best-Dressed Man" Gulani will be giving away 30 of his own custom designed suits to 30 deserving individuals.

As part of the suit giveaway, there will be a fashion show 4 p.m. Friday Dec. 20 at the Gulani Vision Institute at 8075 Gate Pkwy W Suite 102, Jacksonville, FL

Gulani invites you to join him for this important event and learn more about his vision of a perfect future.

Come early and you may even walk away with a free suit.

on so many Pediatric cancer patients and their families," she said. "We are so grateful for Daily's vision and generosity to work hand in hand with Nemours to

support the children in need."

In the past decade, Daily's has contributed more than \$4,500,000 in support of organizations such as the St. Vincent's Mobile Health Outreach Ministry, The Jay Fund, Riverside Presbyterian Day School, Birdies for the Brave, Jacksonville School for Autism, as well as more than 20 area schools and numerous community organizations.

Ponte Vedra Beach physician hosts Dinner with an Artist event

By Maggie FitzRoy

Ponte Vedra Beach resident, Dr. Arun Gulani, and his wife, Suparna, hosted "Dinner with Susanne Schuenke" the evening of Friday, Dec. 13 at their Ponte Vedra Boulevard home.

The Gulani family held the special dinner on behalf of the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, which hosts quarterly Dinner with an Artist events.

Schuenke is a German-American artist and a Ponte Vedra Beach resident, and the Arun Gulani is an avid collector of her work, Angela de Gregory, Cultural Center community connections assistant, said.

Schuenke's art work was on display at the event, where she spoke about her style, techniques and sources of inspiration.



Art supporters, cultural center board members and community members attend the dinner.

The dinner was attended by members of the Cultural Center board, members of the community and supporters of the arts.



Dr. Arun Gulani stands between works of Susanne Scheunke in his home.





Photos provided by the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach

Artist Susanne Schuenke (center), with Dr. Suparna Gulani (from left), Dr. Arun Gulani, Dr. Naum Itkin and Jennifer Jordan, community connections director at the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach. Schuenke is holding a copy of a book she just co-authored with Itkin, titled, "Echo of the Unconscious in Painting." Schuenke and Itkin presented it to the Gulani family as a gift.

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New Ponte Vedra practice combines conventional and alternative medicine

By Daniela Toporek

Thomas Schneider, M.D., a Pulmonologist and Intensive Care Specialist at Baptist Medical Center Beaches, recently opened the Healing Breath Institute, a healing center that advances the care of patients through individualized alternative medicine therapy. The new Ponte Vedra Beach practice blends the technology of modern medicine with "ancient healing."

Schneider is triple-board certified in Internal Medicine, Critical Care and Pulmonary Medicine, yet offers nonmedicinal services like energy healing, ozone therapy, breathwork, and EWOT (Exercise With Oxygen Therapy). Working in the medical field for over 20 years, Schneider said he saw patients with lung diseases for which there was no therapy to help them with.

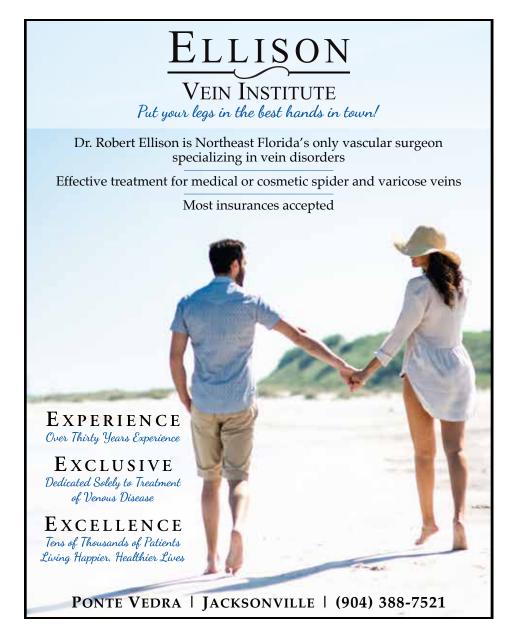
"The only therapy was giving oxygen, so patients would just progressively worsen and die," he said. "I started thinking outside the box and taking a couple courses on alternative medicine. I was



Photo by Daniela Toporek

HEALING continues on **Page 25**

Jason Wildermuth, Adriana Posada and Thomas Schneider and Linda Krepp



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Raul A. Monzon, M.D. Anesthesiologist





Healing **Breath** Institute is located at 230 Canal Blvd., #4, in Ponte Vedra Beach.

RIGHT: The practice also offers deep tissue massage and acupuncture.

> Photos by Daniela Toporek



Healing

shocked when I found a number of these things really helped people."

Schenider first started with energy healing, which according to Science-Direct.com, is an alternative medicine method that transmits healing energy to a patient's body through the practitioner's hands to restore or balance the body's energy field for better health.

"I saw a lady with no prior health problems who's been coughing for about five weeks," he recounted. "She went on antibiotics and steroids and was still coughing. I did an energy healing on her and after about 25 minutes, she felt much better. She let me know the next day that her cough was gone. That's just a small example."

Although Schneider fully advocates for alternative medicine, he still emphasizes the importance of conventional medicine and hopes his practice will combine both for optimal health.

"I still do the conventional part in a hospital," he said. "Anytime you're living with a fast-moving, severe disease, you really need conventional medicine. But many illnesses like chronic pain and fatigue, all these long-time pains that aren't as severe, they don't have effective therapy in conventional medicine. That's where alternative medicine needs to be added, because we really



The Healing Institute offers an alterna tive technique called cupping by Licensed Acupuncture Physician Adriana Posada, D.O.M. AP.

need both types of healing."

Schneider also believes in individualizing therapy, meaning treating each case different from the next and offering different remedies for each patient.

His practice includes Adriana Posada, D.O.M, AP, a Board Certified and Licensed Acupuncture Physician offering acupuncture, cupping, gua sha, and herbal therapy, as well as Jason Wildermuth, L.M.T., a massage therapist specializing in therapeutic, deep tissue massage and more.

For more information on the Healing Breath Institute, visit www.healingbreathinstitute.com or call (904) 588-2884. The Healing Breath Institute is located at 230 Canal Blvd., #4, in Ponte Vedra

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Dr. Erica Hamer

wisdom in the saying "vou are what vou eat," but food today is not the food of vesterday. We need to actually work at getting the amount of nutrients that will help keep us healthy and well.

Our genetic heritage was not designed for an urban environment. Our digestive systems, for example, were not optimized for high-starch diets, fast food and canned fruits and vegetables. The energy requirements of our cells were designed to be based on glucose metabolism. But glucose was originally obtained from readily available fresh produce and whole grains, in the form of complex carbohydrates. When our tissues were originally designed there were no such things as processed flour or sweeteners.

At the dawn of man, protein sources were derived from the local fauna —the local birds and beasts. These animals were not fed antibiotics and were not raised on pesticide-treated grasses. They were not caged and forced to grow up in close proximity to dozens and hundreds of fellow creatures. They roamed freely and randomly, ranging over wide stretches of open territory. As a result, their value as food sources was very high.

Today, unless we make a special effort, our food sources are significantly compromised. Until recently, those living in cities were only able to purchase produce that had traveled long distances over many

days to reach their stores. The nutritional value of these fruits and vegetables was necessarily substantially degraded. The nutritional content of protein sourcesmeat, fowl, fish, dairy, and eggs-were likewise degraded by chemical additives, antibiotics and draconian living condi-

New food-producing methods, available for the last 30 years but much more so recently, have enabled consumers to put high-quality food on their tables. The slogan "eat locally" has become a possibility for even the most entrenched urban areas such as New York City. Farmer's markets spring up weekly and monthly in most cities, suburbs, and the surrounding countryside. Organically grown food -produce, fish, meat, fowl, and dairy— is widely available, even in supermarket chains.

We now have more healthy food options than were available at any time within the last 50 years. It is possible to reverse the diabetes and obesity epidemics that have spread across countries like the United States. If you need help understanding what the best food options are for your good health, consult your health care professional. They can suggest resources, classes or experts in this field who would be able to give you the answers you need. Also, check out the farmer's markets in your area, as they are a great place to find a variety of locally and organically produced food.

Contributed by Dr. Erica Hamer, DC, DIBCN,

DIBE, Board Certified Chiropractic Neurologist and owner of Ponte Vedra Wellness Center with offices in Ponte Vedra Beach



hoto provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

solutions, just an ear and a tender heart.

A 30-plus year caregiver for his wife, Gracie, who lives with severe disabilities, Peter Rosenberger understands the caregiver's journey. Broadcasting on Sirius XM's Family Talk Channel (131) and an additional 180 stations through American Family Radio, Rosenberger hosts the nation's #1 show for family caregivers. From autism to Alzheimer's to addiction, he addresses the needs of those caring for loved ones with chronic impairments.



Katie Smolko, Dr. Erika Hamer, Ashley Barrington and Lori Adams



Ponte Vedra Wellness holds pop-up event

Ponte Vedra Wellness Center in Nocatee held a pop-up Sip & Shop on Thursday, Dec. 12.

Attendees shopped the pop-up shops for last-minute holiday gifts, while sipping festive beverages and nibbling holiday treats.





Photos by Susan Griffin

Nocatee Location Opening January 2020!



Thursday, Dec. 19

Friday, Dec. 20

Saturday, Dec. 21 Sunday, Dec. 22

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.

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 Reach

'Home for the Holidays: Songs & Stories'

The APEX Theatre Studio is hosting an evening of songs and holiday stories featuring studio alumnae, teaching artists and current students and faculty. The event features a mixture of holiday classics and contemporary seasonal hits. There will be time for folks to reconnect with families and friends, focusing on the true meaning of the holidays. Proceeds benefit the Bard Bus, APEX's annual summer touring Shakespeare production. The show starts at 7:30 p.m.Tickets cost \$20 and can be found on www.apextheatrejax.com. APEX Theatre Studio is located at 5150 Palm Valley Road, #205, in Ponte Vedra 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. 20 at 8:45 a.m. Fidelity Bank is located at 110 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach.

'Horton's Holiday Hayride'

The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall will feature "Horton's Holiday Hayride," Dec. 20, featuring The Reverend Horton Heat and guests, The 5.6.7.8'S, Voodoo Glow Skulls and a special appearance from Dave Alvin. Tickets cost \$35. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.pvconcerthall.com. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is located at 1050 A1A N., in Ponte Vedra Beach.

'Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer: The **Musical' at the Florida Theatre**

Based on the original TV special, this Broadway musical brings Santa, Mrs. Claus, Hermey the Elf, Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster and of course, Rudolph to life. This is a family-friendly musical and For ticket prices and more information, visit www.floridatheatre.com. The Florida Theatre is located at 128 E. Forsyth Street, in Jacksonville

Jacksonville Icemen vs. South Carolina **Stingrays at Vystar Veterans Memorial** Arena

Jacksonville's minor league hockey team, the Jacksonville Icemen, are going up against the South Carolina Stingrays at 7 p.m., Dec. 21, at the Veterans Memorial Arena. Tickets can be found at www.Ticketmaster.com The Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena is located at 300 A Philip Randolph Blvd., in Jacksonville.

Farmers Market at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Shop fresh foods, artisan goods and local art as shoppers enjoy local music and flavorful eats, Saturdays, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre. Pets are not allowed in the market. For more information, visit www. facebook.com/staugampmarket. The St. Augustine Amphitheatre is located at 1340C A1A S., in St. Augustine.

Beach exploration at the GTM Reserve

Join GTM Research Reserve volunteers, the third Saturday of the month, for a beach walk from 9 to 11 a.m., where guests will learn about animals that call the beach their home, along with seashells and other fun beach facts. This "Beaches 101" experience will begin at the GTM Visitor Center, where first, participants will learn about the different habitats among the seashore. The group will then walk across the street to the beach for this salty adventure! The event is free, but with a \$3 parking donation that will be accepted at the front desk of the Visitor Center. The GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center is located at 505 Guana River Road, in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Santa at Don's Barber Shop

Santa Claus will be visiting Don's Barber Shop from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dec. 21. 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

The Isley Brothers at the Times Union **Center for Performing Arts**

The Islev Brothers, formed in the early 1950s, is the guintessential American soul and R&B group hailing from Cincinnati. Join them at the Times Union Center at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 22, for an unforgettable experience celebrating the 60th anniversary tour For tickets and more information, visit www.timesunioncenter.com. The Times Union Center for the Performing Arts is located at 300 Water Street, in Jacksonville.

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 informa $tion, visit\ www.zoolights.jacksonvillezoo.org. The$ 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.

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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Monday, Dec. 23

Nights of Lights at the Lightner

Visit the Lightner Museum on selected evenings during the Nights of Lights and explore the entire museum's premier collections of fine and decorative 19th-century and early 20th-century art. The five floors display furnishings, paintings, Victorian art glass, cut and blown glass and natural history specimens. A beer and wine bar will be available for donations. The next evening is at 5 p.m., Dec. 23. Tickets cost \$15 and are available online and at the front desk. For more information, visit www.LightnerMuseum.org. The Lightner Museum is located at 75 King Street, in

'Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker' at the IMAX Theater

The IMAX Theater at World Golf Hall of Fame is showing "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker," with showtimes at 12:30, 3:45, 7 and 10:15 p.m., Dec. 23, and through the holiday season. The surviving Resistance faces the First Order once more as Rey, Finn and Poe Dameron's journey continues. With the power and knowledge of generations behind them, the final battle commences. 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

Tuesday, Dec. 24

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.

Christmas services at Christ Episcopal

Christ Episcopal Church will offer a wide-variety of service times and styles. Children are welcome at all services, with nursery care available during most. Details at www.christepiscopalchurch.org. Christ Episcopal Church is located at 400 San Juan Dr., in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Christmas Eve candlelight service

Join Victory Lutheran Church for a special Christmas Eve candlelight service at 7 p.m., Dec. 24 Cookies and hot chocolate will be served. after the service. For questions or more information, call Victory Lutheran Church at (904) 642-8900. Victory Lutheran Church is located at 4651 Kernan Blvd. S., in Jacksonville.

WinterFEST at Adventure Landing

Winterfest at Adventure Landing is still in full swing this Christmas Eve. Visit from 2 to 8 p.m. and see how Adventure Landing transformed Shipwreck Island into a cozy Alpine experience, complete with ice skating, Blizzard Bluff Village, Crystal Creek Lodge and the Mistletoe Marketplace. Visitors can also wind through the snowy village and enjoy window displays and lights galore. For more information, call Adventure Landing at (904) 246-4386 or visit www.jacksonville-beach.adventurelanding. com/winterfest. Adventure Landing is located at 1944 Beach Blvd., in Jacksonville Beach.

Wednesday, Dec. 25

Christmas at Roy's

Celebrate Christmas with an exclusive threecourse holiday menu featuring slow-roasted chateaubriand with wild mushroom Port wine pan sauce. Craving Roy's signature dishes? The chef has created a three-course classics menu with Roy's popular entrees. Cost is \$62.95 per adult and \$12.95 per child. For reservations or more information, call (904) 241-7697 or visit www.roysrestaurant.com. Roy's is located at 2400 S. Third St., in Jacksonville Beach.

Caregiver support group

A caregiver support group will meet at the Opis Riverwood Center from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Dec. 25. The group encourages caregivers to maintain their own personal, physical and emotional health while they care for the person with dementia. In addition, the group may provide a much-needed break from caregiving responsibilities. Registration is required and space is limited. Call (800) 272-3900 or email infocnfl@ alz.org to register or for more information. The Opis Riverwood Center is located at 2802 Parental Home Road, in Jacksonville.

\$1 slices 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 Dr. #1500 in Ponte Vedra Beach.

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.

Canine Field Days

It's an off-leash outdoor adventure at Congaree and Penn's back field and oak hammocks. Humans, can enjoy a pop-up bar while canines indulge in the field.Register online and check in at the quonset hut taproom, where attendees will receive a map to the back field and oak hammocks, where guests will take a 10 to 15 minute (on-leash) walk to the back field. One attendees arrive to the back field, pups are free to run free. Field day starts at 3 p.m. For more information, visit www.congareeandpenn.com. Congaree and Penn is located at 11830 Old Kings Road, in Jacksonville.

Thursday, Dec. 26

Gingerbread Extravaganza

Experience over fifty handmade gingerbread creations at the Gingerbread Extravaganza from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Dec. 26, at Old St. Andrews. Attendees can test their skills in a scavenger hunt. vote for the Peoples' Choice Awards, sip apple cider, explore the gift shop and enjoy tours of the Historic Merrill House. Adult cost is \$10, ages 4 to 18 cost \$5 and children under 3 years of age are free. Proceeds from all this fun and creativity benefit the educational programs and archives of the Jacksonville Historical Society. Old St. Andrews is located at 317 A. Philip Randolph Blvd., in Jacksonville.

Torah & Tea

Join with fellow Jewish women for camaraderie and refreshments as they meet for "Torah & Tea," Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. This weekly study group finds relevant messages from issues discussed in the Weekly Torah portion. Reservations can be made by emailing Leah Kurinsky at lkurinsky@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

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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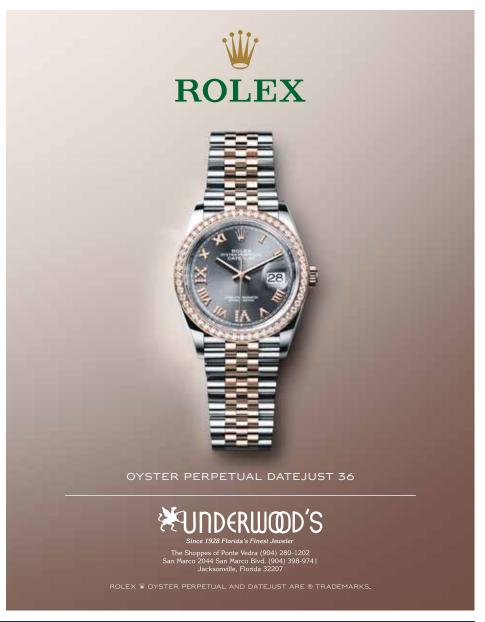
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Busin **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2019**

Column: The best investments are in those you care about

Page 33

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Famous Atlantic Beach dune house for sale

The listing at 1941 Beach Ave. has been posted by real estate agent Jan Shields of Watson Realty. The unique architectural dwelling was designed and built in 1975 by local, high-profile modernist architect, William Morgan. And, as one of Atlantic Beach's most interesting homes, has been featured in many magazines, news sites and on TV.

Resembling something from "Lord of the Rings" films, the subterranean duplex-style townhome takes the natural shape of oceanfront sand dunes with grassed roof lines. Curved wood and glass doors open to a two-story living room with coiled staircase and glass doors leading to oceanfront patios and rooftop decks. It has recently been updated with modern touches and fully

The duplexes were built by Morgan, who lived next door, to use as vacation rentals. Architecturally, he did not want the dwelling to block his view of the ocean, so his solution was to bury the house in an existing sand dune.



"I built it like a seashell," Morgan told Roadtrippers.com. "It's a little like being in a submarine."

The mass of sand over the two homes moderates inside temperatures yearround, and the home itself is constructed out of gunite, a material used for swimming pools, so very little heating or cooling is needed to stay comfortable.

The home last sold for \$1.2 million to a South Florida couple who were fans of William's design work. They have left the home relatively unaltered since their purchase, aside from modern upgrades.

Some tips for smart spending



Ric Schilling Guest Columnist

My late parents had a simple plan for avoiding debt - they didn't buy anything they couldn't pay for in full at the time of purchase. People who grew up during the depression learned that lesson the hard way, having lost most of their funds in the wake of the stock

market crash and finding themselves penniless for years thereafter.

Many years ago, financial responsibility was encouraged with what was known as Christmas Club accounts advertised by local banks. People would put funds into these accounts every payday during the year so they had a nest egg saved by December to buy all of their presents. In addition to avoiding debt, this process also placed a self-imposed limit on their spending, which today is often

Along came my generation (the Boomers) who wanted everything under the sun and didn't want to wait to get it. The solution we developed was the credit card, issued by a bank to make purchasing easier and more convenient. And, as long as the balance on the card was paid in full by the due date, the cardholder incurred no interest cost. So, the cardholder effectively received a no-interest 30-day loan from the bank. However, if the balance was not paid in full, then interest was charged on the outstanding balance at an extremely high rate.

In order to avoid high interest charges, banks created balance transfer programs where one could transfer an outstanding balance from one card to another for a modest fee (typically 3-4%) and not have any payments for a year. That's great, right? Not quite. First, if you didn't retire the balance by the end of the year, then the ridiculous interest rates kicked in or you transferred the balance to yet another card. For many folks, the situation snowballs out of control, and

Now, enter the latest tool in the too-muchdebt world, the personal loan. Banks will provide a line of credit or personal loan backed by the equity in your house, pledging Ponte Vedra Recorder · December 19, 2019

BUSINESS WEEKLY 33

Financial Focus: Invest in your family and community



Karsten Jacobson
Guest Columnist

Why do you invest? For many people, here's the answer: "I invest because I want to enjoy a comfortable retirement." And that's certainly a great reason, because all of us should regularly put money away

for when we're retired. But you can also benefit by investing in your family and your community.

Let's start with your family members, particularly the younger ones. How can you invest in their future? One of the best ways is to help send them to college. A college degree is still a pretty good investment: The average lifetime earnings of a college graduate are nearly \$1 million higher than those of someone with a high school degree, according to a study by the U.S. Census Bureau.

To help your children or grandchildren pay for any college, university, vocational school or other postsecondary education, you may want to open a 529 savings plan. With this account, withdrawals are federally tax free, as long as the money is used for qualified higher education expenses, including those from trade and vocational schools. (However, if you withdraw some of the earnings on your account, and you don't use the money for qualified expenses, it will be taxable and can also incur a 10% federal tax penalty.) Plus, you retain control of the funds until it's time for them to be used for school, so if your original beneficiary chooses not to pursue some type of higher education, you can name a different eligible beneficiary.

Another way to invest in your family is to help your adult children avoid feeling obligated to provide financial assistance to you. For example, if you ever required some type of long-term care, such as an extended stay in a nursing home, could you afford it? The average cost for a private room in a nursing home is more than \$100,000 per year, according to a study by Genworth, an insurance company. And Medicare typically pays very few of these expenses. So, to avoid burdening your adult children – while also preserving your own financial independence – you may want to consider some type of long-term care insurance. A financial advisor can help you determine what coverage may be appropriate.

Moving beyond your family, you may want to invest in the social fabric of your community by contributing to local charitable, civic, educational or cultural groups. Of course, now that we're in the holiday season, it's the perfect time for such gifts. Furthermore, your gift will be more appreciated than in years past because one of the chief incentives for charitable giving – a tax deduction was lost for many people due to tax law changes, which raised the standard deduction so significantly that far fewer people chose to itemize deductions. However, you might still be able to gain some tax benefits from your charitable gifts. To name one possibility, you could donate financial assets, such as stocks that have risen in value, freeing you of potential capital gains taxes. In any case, contact your tax advisor if you're considering sizable charitable gifts.

Saving for your retirement will always be important. But don't forget about investing in your family and your community – because these investments can provide satisfying returns.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones financial advisor. Karsten L.Jacobson, CFP, is a financial advisor for Edward Jones at 2208 Sawgrass Village Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach 904 285 9898.



Photo provided by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty announces Seaside Vista in South Ponte Vedra Beach. The community has 28 home sites designed for building a dream home just steps from the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway.

New community, Seaside Vista in South Ponte Vedra Beach, to feature ocean, Intracoastal Waterway views

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty recently announced the launch of Seaside Vista, a new oceanside community located on Florida A1A in South Ponte Vedra Beach.

"Seaside Vista offers an opportunity to build your dream home in an incredible St. Johns County location just steps from the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty President and CEO Christy Budnick. "We are thrilled to be affiliated with this exceptional coastal property."

Located south of Guana River State Park and north of Vilano Beach, Seaside Vista will be a community of 28 homesites, including five marsh front and three ocean view homesites. Developed by RCBF Properties, LLC, a local company led by Roger Costiloe and Blair Fonda, the Seaside Vista neighborhood will have a private community boardwalk offering direct walk-over access to the beach and Atlantic Ocean.

"There has not been a new development within the immediate area offering walk-over beach access since the mid to late '90's," said Berkshire Hathaway Home-Services Florida Network Realty Broker/Realtor Charlie Hillyer, who is leading the sales effort for Seaside Vista.

Homesite buyers are welcome to work with their own builder or may choose to work with one of Seaside Vista's preferred builders. Investment buyers are also welcomed. The average homesite at Seaside Vista is 75' by 110'. Homesites are priced from the \$190,000s.

Seaside Vista is minutes from the Vilano Town Center, within walking distance of the Serenata Beach Club and near shopping, dining and entertainment. Seaside Vista is currently zoned for toprated St. Johns County public schools.

For more information visit seaside-vista. com, call (904) 509-3130 or email Charlie. Hillyer@FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

Schilling

Continued from 32

of investment and savings accounts or, in some cases, little collateral if any at all. The interest rates on these loans are not as egregious as the credit card companies charge, but they are well above the rates the banks can earn holding government debt (current yield on a 1-year Treasury bill is hovering around 1.6%). So, the banks are willing to take a chance of higher defaults in return for a 3+% interest rate differential. Americans are utilizing this latest borrowing opportunity in record numbers without, in many cases, any hesitation about the ever-increasing debt they are incurring.

What happens when the next downturn occurs? You guessed it – this house of cards will collapse and crush many individuals and institutions when it does. It is far too easy to overspend and our Black Friday mentality is so pervasive that overspending has become the norm. Please don't let this happen to you, particularly if assets you'll need in retirement are securing your debt. Experience tells us that it takes six to nine years to recover from a downturn, so a loss five years before retiring might require your delaying retirement for years. If you lose your employment in the downturn as well as your savings, you'll be in an even worse shape.

So, my advice is to a) never buy things you cannot pay for within 90 days of purchasing them (house and car excluded), b) make paying off consumer debt a priority and c) once debt free, try the old Christmas Club approach to spending, i.e., save the money before you buy rather than paying for things months or even years after you buy.

I'm not trying to be a Scrooge here, of course we want to buy gifts for loved ones this time of year. I'm just advocating that people do not go into credit card debt and end up paying high interest rates to do so. Everyone dreads January when all the Christmas bills are received. Changing your spending habits now will make future Januarys far less stressful. Less stressful Januarys can surely only be a positive for our mental, physical & financial health.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

Frederic "Ric" Schilling is a Florida native, born in Jacksonville, Fl. Ric is President of Senior Guardians of America, a local North Florida firm specializing in tax reduction, long term illness planning, asset protection, probate avoidance and life income planning. Ric is a National Speaker and Advocate on Senior Issues and has been featured by the Florida Times Union and WJXT, TV-4 in Jacksonville as an authority on Estate Planning and Retirement Issues. Senior Guardians has an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau and is a member in excellent standing with the National Ethics Association, Contact Frederic: 904-371-3302 or 888-891-3381 Please visit: www. seniorquardian.com

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Photos by Maggie FitzRoy

Teens, young children, teachers and parents fill bags with groceries Dec. 11 at the Hope for the Holidays event in a parking lot by the TPC Sawgrass Clubhouse.

It's all about kids helping kids

By Maggie FitzRoy

Thousands of excited children, filled with the holiday spirit, were ready to go. At 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 11, they

At 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 11, they began—grabbing bags and filling them with goodies as fast as they could.

They weren't grabbing gifts for themselves, however.

They were packing bags full of grocer-

ies for children in the free and reduced lunch programs in St. Johns and Duval Counties schools. As volunteers for the eighth annual Furyk Foundation "Hope for the Holidays" program, the kids and teens who packed bags under a lighted tent at the TPC Sawgrass Clubhouse parking lot—in organized, cheerful, assembly-line-fashion—came from around Ponte Vedra and the Beaches, as individuals and with school and sports groups.

After each volunteer filled their bag with 16 items of food, including canned

HELPING continues on **Page 35**



Quinn Luther, 9, of Nocatee cheerfully fills her first bag.



Deck the Chairs celebrates with Jacksonville Jaguars

By Daniela Toporek

Deck the Chairs, a popular holiday exhibit at Latham Plaza in Jacksonville Beach, holds light shows and family-friendly events on the weekends, and the Jacksonville Jaguars recently got involved in the holiday spirit.

As part of DTC exhibit, the Jacksonville Jaguars decorated a chair with a giant "DUUUVAL" display, with a teal Santa hat to top it off

Jaxson de Ville and the Jaguars drumline even paid a visit to the Chairs, Dec. 8, for a pop-up pep rally, where they dropped some beats for the crowd and took photos with fans and children.

Jacksonville Beach's Deck the Chairs is free and open to the public, and the display is lit from 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. until Jan. 1, 2020. It is located at Latham Plaza at 11 Ocean Front N., Jacksonville Beach.





Photos by Daniela Toporek

Benton House hosts Festival of Trees

To celebrate the holiday season, Benton House of St. Johns hosted its first Festival of Trees to benefit the Alzheimer's Association at 5 p.m. Dec. 12. Eight businesses sponsored a decorated tree for the networking and social event, which were sent home with winning bidders in the silent auction. At the end of the evening, \$260 was raised for the Alzheimer's Association.

About 40 guests enjoyed light refreshments as they viewed the holiday trees and listen to seasonal music.



Oasis Senior Advisors sponsored a tree decorated with tassels and pom-poms for the Benton House Festival of Trees.



Photos provided by Benton House **erkshire Hathaway Realty**

Berkshire Hathaway Realty sponsored a snowmanthemed tree.



Photos by Maggie FitzRoy

Dressed for the occasion in a Santa hat, Shelly Lenhart, a teacher at the Bolles Ponte Vedra campus, fills a bag. The school's fifth grade classes and 16 teachers came to volunteer, Lenhart said.

Helping

Continued from 34

ham and boxed and packaged goods, they carried it to a line of tractor trailer trucks, where other volunteers loaded the bags for delivery to 32 different area schools.

Then they went back to the beginning of the line and grabbed another bag.

"It's amazing how fast it goes," said champion golfer Jim Furyk, who founded the foundation 10 years ago with his wife, Tabitha. "This teaches kids about giving back and helping other folks."

"It's very exciting to be able to feed so many families," Tabitha Furyk said. "This year we are going to feed 4,000." In addition, she expected they would have enough food left over to donate to other area charities helping children. "We have volunteers from everywhere. Including lacrosse teams, basketball teams, cheerleaders," she said. "It's about kids helping kids."

Tabitha Furyk said the idea came from when her children were little, and she and her husband wanted to teach them in a hands-on way how good it felt to help others. "Rather than just donate a \$5 bill, I wanted them to do the work."

Nine-year old Quinn Luther of Nocatee came with her mother and older sister, who came with her basketball team. Quinn was all smiles as she packed her first bag.

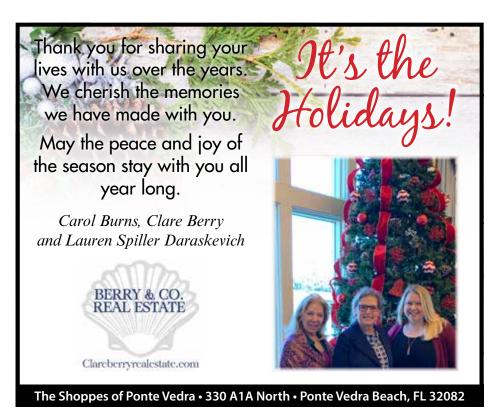
"It was really cute," her mother, Eva Luther, said. Quinn didn't have to come, but she wanted to.

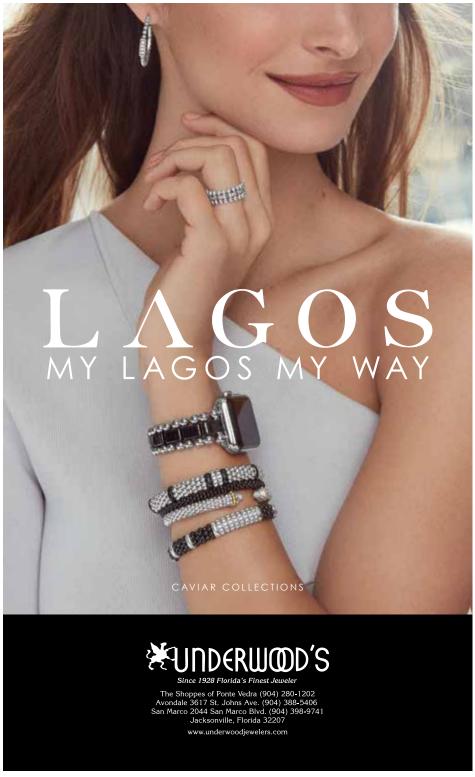
"I said, 'let's just let the older girls do this,'" Eva Luther said. But Quinn insisted on participating, saying, "I really want to do this."

So, as soon as Quinn finished filling her first bag, she hustled back to the beginning of the line. And got to work filling her second.



The Creekside Cheerleaders volunteered for Hope for Holidays as a group and posed for a photo when they arrived and got ready to fill bags.









ABOVE: The Monique Denise Band performs at the holiday party at Beachwalk on Dec. 6.

LEFT: Patrick Coomer, Jesse Whidden, **Carly Lozo and David Eisner** Photos by Kristin

Flanagan-King



Paula Giller, Terri Cox, Phil Markijohn and



mond Butrus



Nikki Holm and Jen **Pauley**

Holiday party for Realtors showcases Beachwalk property

By Maggie FitzRoy

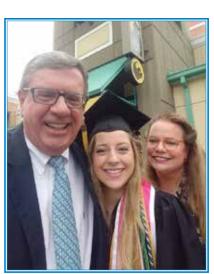
The Jacksonville Real Producers publication hosted a holiday party Dec. 6 at Beachwalk, a new community going up on St. Johns County Road 210.

The event was held to showcase the opening of many of the amenities available at Beachwalk, David Eisner, sales manager for Atlantica Isles at Beachwalk, said.

At the party, "Santa made an appearance with a couple of elves," Eisner said. "We had a lot of fun."



Standfast Asset Management wishes you and your family a safe and happy New Year!







St. Augustine Bed and Breakfast Holiday Tour a sell-out success

the city's top restaurants and purveyors of

Some of the proceeds from this year's

event will benefit INK, Investing in Kids

in St. Johns County, and the St. Augustine

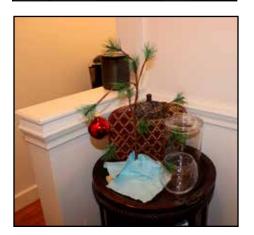
fine food and wines.

Art Association.

The St. Augustine Historic Inns 26th annual Bed and Breakfast Holiday Tour was a sell-out success Dec. 14, 15 and 16. Each day showcased cultural partners, historic bed and breakfasts and cultural properties, each interpreting this year's theme, "Movies of Christmas" in their own unique ways.

As part of the three-day walking tour, which varied each day, guests sampled savory dishes, sweet treats and festive beverages, served by culinary partners,











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Ponte Vedra teen wins Santa Suits on the Loose race

By Christine Rodenbaugh

A record-setting 725 runners, walkers and joggers finished the eighth annual Santa Suits on the Loose 5K Saturday, Dec. 14 at the St. Johns County Pier in St. Augustine Beach. Severe weather at about 4 a.m. may have been a factor keeping some of the 886 registrants from showing up. The first 100 entries received a Santa suit, but many more donned their own version of Santa or elf attire. Every entrant received a tee shirt and all finishers earned a medal.

The fundraiser is 3.1-mile flat course through scenic St. Augustine Beach neighborhoods to benefit St. Augustine Youth Services. SAYS seeks to 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. SAYS has provided mental health services for thousands of children in St. Johns and surrounding counties.

"Every year the race exceeds our expectations, especially when we face obstacles such as severe weather," Chelsea Reppin, SAYS Director of Development said. "Our goal for registrants this year was 800 and



Vince "Skinny Vinny" Carle of St. Augustine Youth Services rode in the lead car.

it became clear months ago that we would far exceed that number."

Aiden West, a member of the 2019 Ponte Vedra High School District Champion Cross Country team, was first to cross

RACE continues on Page 39





ABOVE: A record 725 entrants participated in the eighth annual Santa Suits on the Loose 5K on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the St. Johns County Pier in St. Augustine Beach.

LEFT: Ponte Vedra High School student Aiden West, 16, finished first overall with a time of 17:49.

Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh

THROWBACK THURSDAY

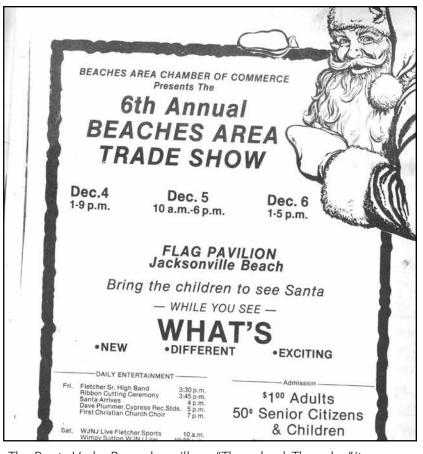


The Classical Ballet Workshop will present selections from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Ballet on Sunday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Christ Church Parish Hall.

Students of Mrs. Tibi Thorne appearing will include (above, from left to right) Marcey Barbour, Maryanne Tiller, Eva Reinhardt, Julie Wilbur, Felicia D'Zamko.

(back row) Karen Jacobson, Ginger Sheridan and Cathy Bostwick.

Also performing will be Charlotte and Kelly Clarkson, Debbie Cooper, Nicole Hixon, Renee Eiland, Elizabeth Spencer, Peyton and Leyton Stockton, Mellisa Southern, Kellie Sutherlin, Paula Tobi, and Amber and Heidi Wilson.



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 story on the Christ Church Nutcracker from 1975, and a 1981 ad for theBecahes Area Trade Show.. 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.



ABOVE: Susan Rake, 4-year-old Bristol and Melissa Farris donned festive holiday garb for the Santa Suits on the Loose 5K.

RIGHT: Natalie (left) and Brian Schoonover (right) participated with their three girls, Darcy, 4, Natalie, 6, and Mary Clare, 2.

Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh



Race

Continued from 38

the finish line with a time of 17:49. His pace average was 5:44.

There were 21 entries from Ponte Vedra Beach. Rahn Huffstutler, 40, was first in his division and 17th overall with a time of 21:57. Dave Hoock, 63, took first place in his division with a time of 22:17. Kay Jones, 78, placed first in her division with a time of 35:20.

"Community support continues to propel the race forward, growing consistently each year in every way," Reppin said. "We are so grateful to the sponsors, volunteers, and registrants who so passionately support the race and in turn, SAYS programs."

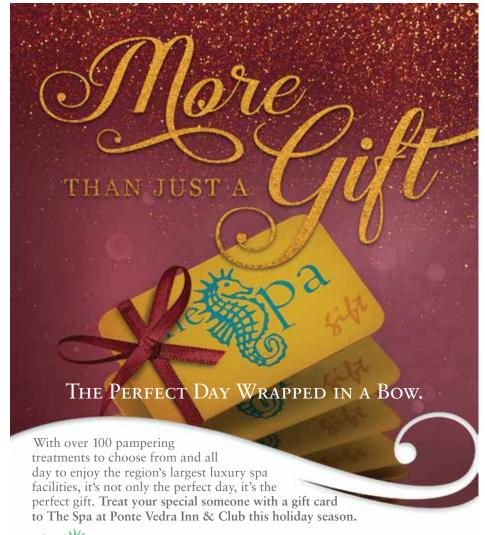
For complete race results, visit bit. ly/2019SantaSuits.

To learn more about SAYS, visit www.sayskids.org.



Ponte Vedra Beach resident Rahn Huffstutler, 40, was first in his division and 17th overall with a time of 21:57.







Don't wait, wrap up your holiday shopping today. Call us at 904.273.7700, visit pvspa.com, or come see us at the St. Johns Town Center.

MM14



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Vernon's Restaurant hosted its Sunday Brunch, Grinch-style, Dec. 15, featuring festive treats, holiday activities for kids and a special visit from the Grinch.

Vernon's Brunch celebrates the holidays, Grinch-style

By Daniela Toporek

Vernon's Restaurant in Sawgrass Marriott Resort hosted its weekly Sunday brunch, Dec. 15, in Ponte Vedra Beach, where the staff wowed guests with an elaborate holiday event featuring a special guest, the Grinch.

Live holiday music by the Chris Thomas Band welcomed guests to the host stand, where a fun and lopsided Christmas tree set the Dr. Seuss-theme.

Dozens of snowflakes, all made by the Vernon's staff, hung above the kid's area, where they decorated arts and crafts and binged on holiday movies while families grabbed plates and selected their Vernon's signature favorites.

"Have you tried Chef Roy's chimichurri?," Chef Tanya White, creator of the Sunday brunches, asked.

Moments later, a full and flavorful ramekin of fresh chimichurri arrived at the table, where it was soon used to drench the tender slices of prime rib that were quickly devoured.

Leaving room for dessert was the next, difficult, task, but according to guests, the white chocolate mousse had to at least be sampled, along with the festive Mini Bar Donuts.

The cherry on top of the bountiful



Vernon's partners with multiple local businesses like Mini Bar Donuts, who created some festive treats for the Grinch brunch.



Chimichurri, made by Chef Roy Bryant, covers the tender slices of prime rib — a match made in heaven and recommended by brunch founder, Chef Tanya White.

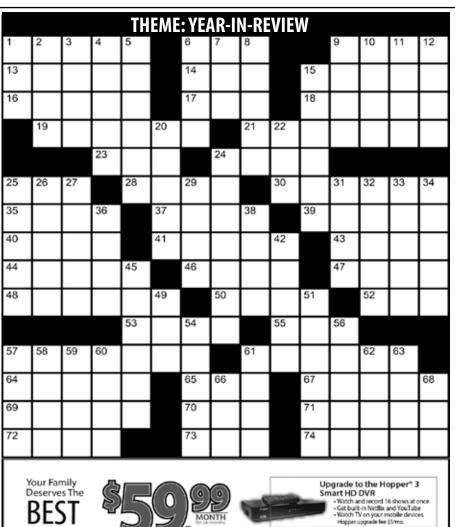


A flavorful and unique take on grits, Vernon's Restaurant uses Congaree and Penn grits for a make-vour-own grits stationed, cooked right in front of guests by the Vernon's staff.

brunch was Dr. Seuss's the Grinch, stopping by to offer Christmas cheer. He's normally grouchy, but not at Vernon's.



The white chocolate mousse had guests going for seconds and even thirds.



dish 🗚

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ACROSS 1. Pin location

6. BBQ sauce alternative 9. *Volodymyr Zelen-

sky's capital 13.0103 food poison 14. Between sea and shining sea, abbr.

15. Native of American Great Plains

16. Famous fabulist 17. Band performance 18. Prefix with national

and pol 19. *The Mueller _ 21. *European country

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43. Pot contribution 44 Make corrections

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46. Days in Havana 47. Nomad's round house

48. Caesar derivative 50. "Fifteen Miles on the Canal"

52. Mad Hatter's drink 53. Hofbräuhaus of-

fering 55. Bard's before

57. *He got life plus 30 61. *Eurosceptics vs.

pro-Europeanists point of debate 64. Sweeney Todd's

weapon 65 Seek damages

67. *Archie was one before he was born 69. *Bran, Lord of the Six Kingdoms, e.g. 70." Now or

71. *What Jeffrey Epstein had in store 72. Seaside bird

73. Volleyball divider 74. Set in motion

DOWN

1. Grazing ground 2. Maple tree or laptop brand

3. Downward dog, e.g. 4. Skip the big wedding

5. Benign fatty tumor 6. Pipe problem

7. *Europe voted to ban singleplastics

8. Take a tubby 9. *Best Actress in Supporting Role Oscarwinner

10. Tiny bit

11. Pitcher

12. Subject to change 15. To some extent, two

words 20. Not urban

22. Final, abbr.

24. More gossamer 25. *Actor in Leading Role Oscar-winner 26. Wafting pleasant-

27. One born to Japa-

nese immigrants 29. Footnote acronym

31. Performance with 32. Holey confection

33. Grossly unconventional

34. *Swedish environmentalist

36. Eye contact 38. Nicholas II was the

42. Willow twig

45. Go ashore 49. Tombstone acro-

51. Builds

54. Fluorescent red dve

56. Make an effort 57. Formerly, formerly

58. Better than never

59. #38 Down, alt. sp. 60. Some blow their

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ner of _ 62. Hip bones

63. Salty drop

66. Shoshonean

68. Summer sandwich?

63. CPO in auto industry

64. Computer-generat-

ed imagery, acr. 66. Garden cultivator

World-known Mexican pianist performs in Jacksonville Beach

By Daniela Toporek

When one thinks about skillful pianists, normally the classics like Beethoven or Debussy come to mind; or the modern like Elton John or Alicia Keys, but probably not 17-year-old Mexican girl who's won first-place in multiple international competitions and played around the world.

Probably not the girl who's been named one of the "40 Most Creative Mexicans in the World" by Forbes Mexico or was interviewed by Amy Poehler's "Smart Girls."

They probably weren't thinking about Daniela Liebman.

On Dec. 13, the Beaches Fine Arts Series welcomed Liebman to Jacksonville Beach to perform at St Paul's By the Sea Episcopal Church for a free concert to the public.

The Beaches Fine Arts Series offers free world-class musical and dance performances to the people on the First Coast, so although most attending guests never heard of Liebman before, they were curious for who the organization would feature next. By the time the show was ready to start that foggy Friday evening, St. Paul's parking lot was full.

Liebman's program was a four-part concert that featured beloved music from Sergei Prokofiev, Franz Schubert, Claude Debussy and Frederic Chopin. At the beginning, she introduced herself and explained her program, nervously laughing while she sparkled in a silver, mermaid-esque dress.

"It's a little bit colder in a sense that you use your imagination more, instead of showing raw human passion," Liebman said, comparing the upcoming Debussy section to her last piece from Schubert. "Debussy is all about imagery and color. 'Reflets dans l'eau,' or 'Reflections in the water,' it's about how he beautifully weaves so many colors together within the water, like fish moving, etc."

Her performance received a standing ovation, following a reception that featured visual art from Michele D. Lee, whose work, much like the music, featured imaginative impressions of the movement of water, some inspired by scenes around Ponte Vedra Beach.

Paintings that were titled "Black, abstract mixed media" hung at the reception, portraying what may be a couple sailors dredging the "dark and dirty" marina during a hurricane.

"The way you could hear the movement in the music and how the water flowed was amazing," Lee said in awe about the young pianist, reminding her of her own work. "And did you look at her face while she played? She was feeling it, too."

But the only thing Liebman remembers feeling were the nerves, and regardless of how big the audience, she doesn't think she'll ever stop feeling them.

"Every time I perform in public, I feel an obligation to the music," she said. "I have an obligation to the public, to the music and to the composer, to do the best job possible, you know? That's where all the nerves come from."

But all her passion comes from playing piano since she was a little girl, when she'd go straight to piano practice after school.

PIANIST continues on Page 42





ABOVE: Seventeenyear-old pianist, Daniela Liebman, wows attendees at the Beaches Fine Arts Series' December concert at St. Paul's By the Sea Episcopal Church, Dec. 13.

LEFT: After the concert, guests were welcomed to a reception with food, drinks and visual art by artist Michele D. Lee.

Photos by Daniela Toporek

Art grant applications now accepted

Applications are now open for individual artists in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns Counties who would like to apply for an Art Ventures grant from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. Individual Artist Grants are designed to help Northeast Florida artists emerge to the next level of their artistic careers.

Since 1990, Art Ventures has made more than 200 grants to individual artists through this program.

The maximum grant request is \$3,500. The deadline is March 12, 2020

For more information and to apply, go to www.jaxcf.org/receive/individual-artists.

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Players by the Sea announces cast of upcoming musical farce

Upcoming musical farce 'A Funny Thing Happened on The Way to The Forum' will take stage Jan. 24

Players by the Sea is already planning its first musical of the year. A show that has been called Broadway's greatest musical comedy, "A Funny Thing Happened

on the Way to the Forum," is set to run on the Main Stage at the Jacksonville Beach community theater from Jan. 24 through Feb. 15. The cast has been in rehearsals for more a month. Directed by Michael Lipp, the actors must use great skill to portray the farce that Forum requires, Lipp said. "As the saying goes, 'Dying is easy. Comedy is hard.' Forum is one of the only musical farces - breakneck-paced and hilarious. Farce is an exciting challenge for both the

director and actor, and it requires painstaking specificity and a strong sense of comic split-second timing."

The cast includes:

PSEUDOLUS – Al Emerick

HERO - Billy Speed

PHILIA – Julie Harrington

HYSTERIUM – Paepaeala Pimienta

 $SENEX-Allen\ LaMontagne$

DOMINA – Amy Allen Farmer

MARCUS LYCUS – Christopher Humphries

MILES GLORIOSUS – Jimmy Alexander

ERRONIUS – Jim Warren

GYMNASIA – Chelsea Black

THE GEMINAE – Shauna Clark and Anna Fleece

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Chinua Richardson, and Kris Stam

The story takes place in ancient Rome, where Pseudolus, a devious slave, makes a deal to win his freedom by playing matchmaker for his lovesick master, Hero. Other characters include pompous generals, domineering parents and wily courtesans.

General admission tickets are \$28 and student/senior/military tickets are \$25. Group rates are available for parties larger than 15 people.

Visit players by these a.org or call the box office at (904) 249.0289 for more information.



Photo by Daniela Toporek

Concert attendees gave Liebman a standing ovation after her four-part piano concert.

Pianist

Continued from 41

"Piano's been a part of my life before I even knew this is what I wanted to do with my life," she said. "Little by little, I fell in love, more and more. I realized it gave me such a deep joy that I haven't felt with any other thing in my life. I don't think I could find another thing like this."

For more information on Daniela Liebman or Michele D. Lee, visit their official websites, www.danielaliebman.com and www.micheledleeart.com.

For more information on the Beaches Fine Arts Series, visit www.beaches-finearts.org.



S.A.F.E. CELEBRATES HOLIDAYS WITH PET ADOPTION EVENT



Volunteers came out to the Pet Supermarket on Florida A1A in Ponte Vedra Beach to try and help find homes for the holidays, and beyond, for some animals living at S.A.F.E. Pet Rescue shelters. The event,

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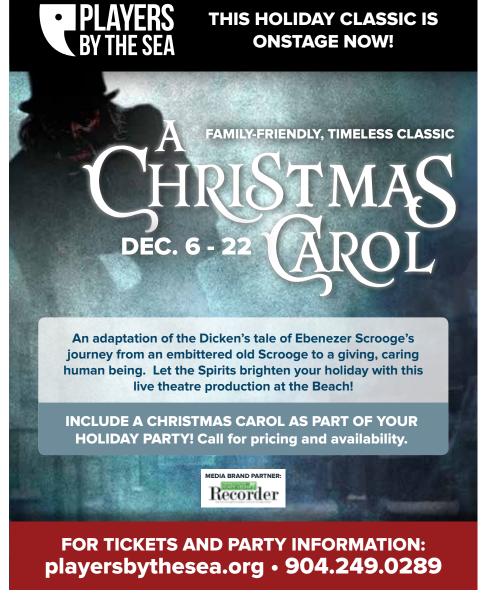
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Improving Sharks win 2-of-3 games at Fortegra Invite

By Jim Moyes

Following a disappointing start to the 2019-20 season for the Ponte Vedra High Sharks basketball team, first-year head coach Kevin Whirty called up a trio of players from the undefeated junior varsity and the move paid immediate dividends for Whirity and his Sharks.

After a 59-34 pasting at the hands of Providence, the area's second-rated team on Dec. 10, coach Whirity was due to face an even bigger obstacle just two days later in the opening game of the Fortegra Invitational. Paxon High, the top-rated team in the area, was the Sharks' opponent in the Thursday opening-round game and,

by calling up a pair of sophomores and a freshman from the JVs, Whirity was hoping for better results.

And those youngsters delivered. The heavily favored Paxon five bolted out to a seemingly insurmountable 44-15 lead at halftime as it appeared the Sharks were headed for another decisive loss. However, with the addition of JV call-ups Luke Pirris, JT Kelly and freshman Nathan Bunkosky, the Sharks mounted a massive comeback that narrowed the deficit down to but six points with 4 minutes remaining in the game.

The comeback forced Paxon to go into a stall where it held off the Sharks to earn a harder-than expected 53-46 victory.

The momentum from the effort against Paxon carried over to the next day's contest in the Fortegra Invitational when the JV trio scored 40 of the team's 50 points as it nipped neighboring Fletcher 50-49. Bunkosky led all scorers with 18 points, the most points scored in a Sharks varsity game that easily broke the previous record set by current European pro Beau Beech of 10 points in 2009.

Sophomore Luke Pirris had a monster game with 15 points and five steals, while Kelly chipped in with seven points. The trio, who played the last 13 minutes of the game, committed one turnover for the entire contest.

Saturday saw the Sharks face off against

a much bigger First Coast team that looked like an NFL team in sneakers. In a game played on a pace that resembled the 1940s, the Sharks showed great patience as both teams played a deliberate tempo of basketball. The very young Sharks, with underclassmen contributing to all the scoring for the entire tournament, had to come from behind to earn the victory.

Trailing by seven points with 6:40 left in the game, the Sharks then went on an 11-0 run the rest of the game while holding First Coast scoreless until a meaningless tip in just before the buzzer. The end result was a 39-36 victory that gave the Sharks a two game winning streak heading into this week's very busy schedule.

The Plantation croquet team wins National USCA 2019 Golf Croquet Club Team Tournament

Eight members of The Planation Croquet Program went to the National Croquet Center in West Palm Beach on Dec. 6-8 to compete as a team in the National Club Team Doubles Tournament against other players from across the U.S.

Clint Dawkins and Victor Fransen competed in the championship flight. They played against some of the top players in the country, beating two teams seeded sixth and seventh above them and qualified for the quarterfinals. They played Sherif Abdelwahab (No. 1 golf croquet player in the U.S.) and his partner Hal Denton. Dawkins and Fransen narrowly lost that game 5-6, which was a super performance.

Sue and Phil Edmond, Debbie Davidoff and Earl Mauldin, and Dot and Bill Simmons made the quarter finals in first flight. In the first flight playoff Phil and Sue Edmond played an undefeated club team, losing 7-10 and tying for fourth place.

Davidoff and Mauldin advanced to the semi-final. In a close match, they led all the way, winning 8-7 to advance to the final

Dot and Bill Simmons defeated their opposing club 7-1 and advanced to the semi-final to play another club team, defeating them 6-5 in a close match to move on to the final.

By that point, The Plantation team had won the tournament advancing two doubles teams to the final.

All that was left was to determine bragging rights as The Plantation's Debbie Davidoff and Earle Mauldin squared off against Dot and Bill Simmons in the final. The Simmons took an early 2-point lead that they held most of the 90-minute match, but Davidoff and Mauldin rallied in the last 10 minutes to win 7-6 and first place in the tournament.



Photo provided by Bill Simmon

The 2019 Plantation Doubles Team Bill Simmons, Dot Simmons, Victor Fransen, Debbie Davidoff, Phil Emond, Sue Emond, Earle Mauldin, and Clint Dawkins.

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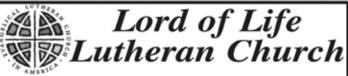
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Croquet

Continued from 44

The Plantation is an owner equity community in Ponte Vedra Beach, providing amenities such as croquet, golf, tennis, dining and a beach club to its members. The Plantation built its croquet lawn in January 2016. In only three years it has moved from no-croquet to being a significant force in the southeast. The club's players have placed in tournaments in Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia and California. The Plantation's lawn is competitive with the best croquet lawns in the US. Croquet is a fast growing, low impact sport in Florida.





Bill and Dot
Simmons, Debbie Davidoff
and Earle
Mauldin accept
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Photos provided by Bill Simmons



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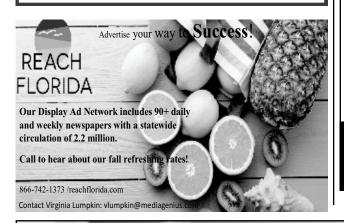
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