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# Recorder

March 4, 2021

Volume 51, No. 70

75 cents

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## 'A STAR IS BORN'

Volunteers load up vehicles with gifts for moms-to-be whose spouses are serving in the military during THE PLAYERS Championship's Operation Shower on Sunday, Feb. 28, at TPC Sawgrass. This year's event, themed "A Star is Born," was done in drive-in style to ensure a safe experience. Moms-to-be were celebrated with gifts, fun prizes and games and film presentations. For more on THE PLAYERS' commitment to the military, go to page 4.

Photo by Paris Moulden

Photo provided by the PGA TOUR

What's Available NOW On **hulu**

904-370-1300

**INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!**  
The Recorder's Entertainment EXTRA featuring TV listings, streaming information, puzzles and more!

**Recorder's INSIDER'S** Tournament Guide

**RORY STILL REIGNS**  
Molloy remains defending champ after 2020 cancellation

**LOOKING BACK**  
20 Years ago Tiger Woods made an astonishing putt on the No. 17 in an effort to tie the lead, and other memories

A NEW

Insider's Tournament Guide  
**INSIDE**

Business Weekly featuring Women in Business  
**Pages 14-19**

**LOTUS INCENTIVES PROGRAM**

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# INSIDE

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## Send us your news

We welcome submissions of photos, stories, columns and letters to the editor. Let us know what's happening. Email submissions to [pvrecorder@opcfla.com](mailto: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.

Visit our website at [www.pontevedrarecorder.com](http://www.pontevedrarecorder.com)



Find the Recorder on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder](https://www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder)



Find us on Twitter @PonteVedraNews and on Instagram @pvrecorder



Also, check out the Ponte Vedra Recorder channel on YouTube.

## NOTE TO READERS

**Weekly newsletter:** The Recorder offers a weekly newsletter every Monday that outlines some of the top stories of the week, as well as providing access to our E-Edition and Entertainment EXTRA! To get the newsletter emailed for free, email [don@opcfla.com](mailto:don@opcfla.com). We'll add you to the list.

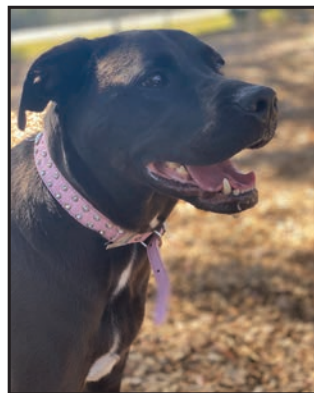
## ADOPT A PET

### CAT OF THE WEEK

Hello, my name is Nova. I am a 2-year-old female domestic shorthair. I am shy at first, but I do love to be hugged and cuddled. I am looking for a family that can show me attention and love me just as much as I will love them. Come in to the Pet Center for a meet-and-greet with me. You will see why I'd be a great fit! #57495



### DOG OF THE WEEK



Hi there. My name is Sasha and I am a 5-year-old female, spayed, lab/terrier mix. I like long walks and curling up next to you as you read a good book. Older children are great — as long as they have their own

books. A quiet home is what I need, where I can be queen of my castle with no other pets to compete with. Come on in to the Pet Center and see just how compatible we can be. #57460

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.**

## BRIEFS

### COVID-19 vaccination appointments open to additional populations

Issued on March 1, State of Florida Executive Order 21-47 made the COVID-19 vaccine available to K-12 school employees who are 50 years of age and older, sworn law enforcement officers who are 50 years of age and older and firefighters who are 50 years of age and older.

Individuals within those professions who are interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine may preregister for an appointment

by going to <https://sjcvaccineappointment.sjcf.us>. Those who preregister will receive an automated phone call from (904) 295-3711 with an assigned appointment date and time. Individuals who choose to decline the appointment will remain preregistered, and will receive a subsequent phone call with an alternative appointment.

Upon arrival at the vaccination site, appointment holders will be required to provide date of birth, proof of Florida residency and, if under 65 year of age, proof of employment as a K-12

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

I	S	M	S		T	A	U		A	P	E			
S	H	A	H		T	A	L	C		O	G	L	E	R
M	I	L	E		R	I	L	L		N	O	T	E	R
		V	I	R	G	I	N	I	A		A	N	O	N
			P	A	S	T	S		W	I	Z			
D	R	E	A	M	T		M	A	R	A	C	A	S	
H	E	X		M	E	C	C	A	S		G	U	N	K
O	S	T	I	A		A	U	G		S	A	I	G	A
W	O	R	N		A	D	R	I	A	N		N	E	T
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	B	E	A	U		D	I	V	I	S	I	O	N	
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T	R	I	A	D		L	I	R	E		D	I	V	E
A	N	D				E	S	T			S	T	A	G

9	8	1	7	6	3	4	2	5
2	6	5	9	1	4	8	7	3
3	4	7	8	2	5	9	1	6
7	5	8	2	4	6	1	3	9
4	3	2	5	9	1	7	6	8
6	1	9	3	7	8	2	5	4
8	2	6	4	5	7	3	9	1
5	7	4	1	3	9	6	8	2
1	9	3	6	8	2	5	4	7

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

## CALLING ALL EXPLORERS

Spring Zoo Camp registration now open!



Register today at [jacksonvillezoo.org](http://jacksonvillezoo.org)



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# Briefs

Continued from 2

school employee, sworn law enforcement officer, firefighter or health care provider with direct patient contact. The appointment preregistration system is only for individuals who are receiving their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Call (904) 295-3711 for additional information or to request assistance with preregistration.

## St. Johns County Beach toll booths now open

Toll booths are now open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at all St. Johns County on-beach driving access ramps. Daily passes cost \$10 for county residents and non-residents, and \$5 for disabled and active military beach visitors. Annual on-beach driving passes are also available for purchase at \$50 for county residents, \$100 for non-residents and \$40 for disabled visitors. Disabled veterans with identification may obtain annual passes at no cost. In addition, all 2020 annual on-beach driving passes have been extended through the 2021 beach season. If you purchased a 2020 on-beach driving pass, retain your sticker as they cannot be replaced. Loss of a 2020 on-beach driving pass will require purchase a new sticker. Lifeguards will begin limited patrols in March, with full lifeguard coverage beginning Memorial Day weekend. For the most up-to-date

information on beach access and driving conditions, follow @SJCBeaches on Facebook and Twitter or download St. Johns County's Reach the Beach app. For more information, call (904) 209-0331.

## Pope Road parking lot and pedestrian beach access temporarily closed

The Pope Road parking lot and pedestrian beach access will be closed from 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. on March 4 and 5, to be used as a staging area for a construction project at the Embassy Suites. Beach visitors may find alternative parking and beach access at the St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier, 350 A1A Beach Blvd. For more information, call Manolo Escasena, project manager of Floridian Builders II, LLC, at (305) 998-8346.

### Mattress Sale



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For more information, contact Murray & Elise Beard: 904.465.2784

# Operation Shower honors moms-to-be with drive-in celebration

Annual event is part of THE PLAYERS' show of support for military

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Operation Shower, hosted by THE PLAYERS Championship, had a different look and feel.

Military moms-to-be were still celebrated and showered with gifts at the event Sunday, Feb. 28, at TPC Sawgrass, but with social distancing and other safety protocols in mind. Operation Shower provides gifts and necessary baby items for 40 moms-to-be whose spouses are in the military and deployed or soon-to-be deployed.

This year's Operation Shower, themed "A Star is Born," was done in drive-in style, where guests remained in their cars as they were treated to videos on a large screen and as volunteers loaded their trunks and backseats with goodies for their new arrivals.

Jim and Tabitha Furyk, who are big supporters of Operation Shower

through the Jim and Tabitha Furyk Foundation, were unable to attend the event personally but sent video messages of support to the moms-to-be. There were also games, raffles and film presentations that guests were able to enjoy from the safety of their vehicles.

And, of course, there were loads of gifts. Operation Shower's signature "Showers in a Box" was a back, as well as the custom onesie. Companies including Chicco, the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation, Wubbanub, OptumServe, Optum Store and UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation provided gifts for the event. Supporting sponsors of the event included the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation, Chicco, OptumServe and Birdies for the Brave, and lunch was provided by Firehouse Subs.

Established in 2007, Operation Shower is a nonprofit organization dedicated to celebrating and honoring military families by providing baby showers for military moms-to-be to ease the stress of deployment. For more information, go to [www.operation-shower.org](http://www.operation-shower.org).



Photos by Paris Moulden

Moms-to-be are celebrated at the Operation Shower drive-in event Sunday, Feb. 28, at TPC Sawgrass.



Photo provided by the PGA TOUR

ABOVE: Moms-to-be received custom "Born to Serve" onesies and bibs courtesy of OptumServe.

LEFT: A special video message from Jim Furyk was played for guests in attendance at Operation Shower.

# THE PLAYERS Championship to kick off annual Military Appreciation Day with #Match4Military

Demonstrating its commitment to annually celebrating the area's military, THE PLAYERS Championship announced Tuesday that it will kick off the 2021 tournament with a day-long, community-wide campaign to drive awareness and support for military organizations in Northeast Florida.

Statistics have revealed COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the lives of military members and their families, with record suicide rates resulting from the isolation and challenges of the pandemic. THE PLAYERS is seeking to encourage the entire community to join forces and serve as champions for the military. The tournament's campaign, #Match4Military, will go live on Tuesday, March 9, and THE PLAYERS has committed to match, dollar for dollar, all donations up to \$250,000.

"We created #Match4Military to continue our longstanding commitment to supporting and honoring our community's service members, veterans and their families," said Jared Rice, executive director of THE PLAYERS. "Even though on-site military appreciation activities will look different this year, we wanted to demonstrate our continued support for our military heroes. With one in four area residents connected

to the military, this entire community has a unique opportunity to contribute and share in the success of this initiative. Thanks to support from our Proud Partners and local media partners, and participation from our entire community, we look forward to raising a significant amount of funds for military organizations in Northeast Florida."

#Match4Military will generate support and awareness for Northeast Florida military organizations like K9s for Warriors, The Fire Watch, Greater Jacksonville Area USO, Wounded Warrior Project, Operation New Uniform and more.

Fans interested in donating can do so by going to [www.theplayers.com/match4military](http://www.theplayers.com/match4military), powered by GoFundMe.

In addition, THE PLAYERS has chosen Northeast Florida-based nonprofit The Fire Watch as its Charity of the Day on Tuesday, March 9. (Read more about this nonprofit on page 10.)

Additional military appreciation initiatives during THE PLAYERS 2021:

■ In support of heightened military restrictions limiting large gatherings and adherence to comprehensive health and safety protocols, THE PLAYERS will not include a Military Appreciation ceremony, concert, or hospitality venue (Patriots Outpost) that

traditionally hosts thousands of military members and their families. However, THE PLAYERS is collaborating with other community partners to demonstrate support in other ways via the following initiatives:

■ **Military Job Fair presented by United Rentals – Saturday, March 6:** THE PLAYERS, in partnership with the Jacksonville Military Veterans Coalition, will host its 10th annual Military Job Fair presented by United Rentals. New in 2021, the job fair will be located outdoors in The Grove, just steps away from THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience. The Military Job Fair is free and open to military personnel, veterans and military spouses.

■ **Flyover Tradition Continues – Tuesday, March 9:** The annual tradition of a flyover on Military Appreciation Day will continue in 2021 on Tuesday, March 9, and will feature the 125th Fighter Wing/FLANG. Preceded by a fixed wing jet flyover at Mayport Base, the pilots will fly over THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass around noon, proceed to NAS Jax and conclude in downtown Jacksonville. The exact route and timing will be shared on THE PLAYERS social channels in the near future.

■ **United Rentals to host military**

members and veterans in 17th hole hospitality suite – **Thursday, March 11 through Sunday, March 14:** United Rentals, Official Equipment Rental Supplier of the PGA TOUR and presenting sponsor of Operation Shower at THE PLAYERS, will be hosting military members and veterans from the following Northeast Florida military organizations in its hospitality suite overlooking the 17th hole.

**Thursday, March 11:** K9s for Warriors  
**Friday, March 12:** The Fire Watch  
**Saturday, March 13:** Operation New Uniform

**Sunday, March 14:** Wounded Warrior Project

■ **Dining Discounts for Military and Veterans:** During the week of THE PLAYERS, several restaurants in Northeast Florida will be providing military members, veterans and/or their families with a dining discount. Valid identification is required in order to receive the discount. Select locations of participating restaurants will display THE PLAYERS Military Appreciation logo in their windows: Participating restaurants include Bono's Pit Bar-B-Q, Woody's Bar-B-Q, Applebee's,

MILITARY continues on Page 10

# Rotary, Recorder seek nominations for 29th annual Local Heroes Awards

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach and the Ponte Vedra Recorder are seeking nominations for the 29th annual Local Heroes Awards.

Presented each year, the Local Heroes Awards recognize individuals who give back to the community and reflect the spirit of the Rotary Club's motto, "Service Above Self." From

volunteering with local charities to giving back through the arts, education, environmental protection activities and more, the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach and Recorder seek to recognize the "unsung heroes" who make Ponte Vedra such a special place to live, work and raise a family.

Residents who know of an individual

they believe is deserving of recognition as a Local Hero are encouraged to complete the nomination form on this page and email it to Rotarian Steve Crosby at [stevecrosby101@gmail.com](mailto:stevecrosby101@gmail.com).

Nomination forms may also be mailed to: Local Heroes Awards Committee, Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach, PO Box 70, Ponte Vedra Beach,

FL 32004. To submit a nomination online, go to [pvbrotary.org](http://pvbrotary.org) and click on the "Nominate a Local Hero" link on the home page.

The deadline for submission of nominations is March 31.

For more information, contact Rotarian Steve Crosby at [stevecrosby101@gmail.com](mailto:stevecrosby101@gmail.com).



## The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach

in cooperation with **The Ponte Vedra Recorder**

### 2021 Local Heroes Awards *Nomination Form*

**Nominate your friend, neighbor or colleague for the Local Heroes Awards recognizing individuals who give back to the community!**

**Complete and return this form, or submit your nomination online at: [pvbrotary.org](http://pvbrotary.org)**

**Nominee Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee's contributions to the community (attach additional pages as needed):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Nomination Submitted By:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nomination Deadline: March 31, 2021**  
**Email entries to:** [stevecrosby101@gmail.com](mailto:stevecrosby101@gmail.com)  
**or mail to:** Local Heroes Awards, Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach  
P.O. Box 70, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32004

***Thank you for  
your nomination!***

*Marc Hassan is the vice chair for volunteer services at this year's THE PLAYERS Championship.*

*A Jacksonville native through and through, he graduated from Bishop Kenny High School and earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Jacksonville University. Today, he owns Spectrum Realty Services LLC.*

## Marc Hassan

As told to Shaun Ryan

### Tell us about your responsibilities as vice chairman for THE PLAYERS Championship.

As the rookie, my responsibilities are basically volunteer services — so all the committees that support our volunteers. That's everything from shuttles to feeding the volunteers. Getting them to and from their locations within the course, making sure they have the supplies they need, you name it.

The way it works is, each vice chair has a number of committees that they work with. Mine include apparel, credentials, the world famous Darlene's Diner, office personnel, photography, Players Pride, supply, volunteer information, volunteer offsite shuttle — which, actually, this year we're not using because volunteers will be parking onsite.

### How do you manage it all?

Great volunteers, basically. Every committee has a chair and, depending on the size of the committee, there could be one assistant chair or multiple assistant chairs. There's a group of leaders within each committee that really run the show, and we're just here to support them.

### How did you first become involved with THE PLAYERS' volunteer leadership?

Probably the same way most people do, having a friend or a family member who was involved and talking about it, how much fun it was, how rewarding it was. And so, I said, "Hey, I'd like to try my hand at that."

My contact was Damon Olinto, who was a red coat. He was a past chairman, and he is my wife's uncle. He started me out in general parking. I served there for a couple of years and then moved around to different committees within the tournament and was fortunate to be selected as the newest vice chair.

### What are some of the positions you've held with the various committees?

I did two years in general parking. From there, I was moved to tournament support. They're kind of the go-to committee to step in and help out where needed and kind of supplement some of the other committees. So, I did a year in tournament support and then moved to the chair position for admissions.

I did that for two years and then moved to an assistant chair position in the Patriots' Outpost and then did Patriots' Outpost again as the chair last year.

### How did this experience prepare you for your role as vice chairman?

Being able to move around and see how things work from what I'll call outside the tournament and then also being involved within the tournament. It really helps to get a good feel for how everything works together, how the different committees work together.

So, there is volunteer services, which is what I'm doing. Next year, I'll do the facilities division, which is basically the committee that really helps build the course during the year.

They supply food, so you have commissary that supplies food and drinks and handles all that. You've got communications that provides radios to the chairs and assistant chairs. You've got construction, course prep,



Photo provided by Marc Hassan

which is I what I was talking about as far as building. You've got general parking, disabled guest services, sign design, VIP parking, golf carts. So, all the things that from a physical standpoint you need to make the tournament work.

From there, it goes to spectator services, which are like the hospitality venues, admissions, Will Call, things like that. Then, players services, which is self-explanatory. It helps get the players what they need.

And then, you go to the first vice chair position. That's things like evac, tournament support, ShotLink, gallery management — so it's kind of the last position before you're the chair of the tournament.

### What is the most rewarding part of being involved with THE PLAYERS Championship?

It's seeing the benefit that goes to our local community. I was born and raised in Jacksonville. And something that the red coats and the blue coats do is ride-alongs, presenting the donations and checks and things like that to different organizations within the community.

Being able to see how many different organizations THE PLAYERS gives back to is amazing. There's no better way that I know of to be involved with so many different nonprofit charity organizations.

Second to that, I would say, is the camaraderie. It's like a family reunion once a year. Especially working in different committees, you really get to know and meet a lot of people. And you're catching up on how their kids are doing and their grandkids are doing and what they've done over the past year.

### Tell us a little about your work with Spectrum Realty Services.

I'm the owner and broker of Spectrum Realty Services. I got my real estate license basically because we were doing real estate development projects in the family business, and it just made sense to get a real estate license.

And that, naturally, grew into a brokerage and property management firm. We manage a little over 600 residential units in Jacksonville. Anything from single family to smaller multifamily buildings. Probably about 80,000 square feet of commercial space, and another 400-plus association units — so, like condo and homeowner associations, business offices, parks, things like that.

We have some holdings of our own and we manage for other people. And then, I'm also a member of Highlands Ranch Mitigation Bank, which is a wetland mitigation bank.

# Your Real Estate Experts from the Beaches and Beyond



**CICI ANDERSON**  
904.537.0457  
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**TRICIA BOWERS**  
904.254.0446  
trishbowers1@gmail.com

**Presented by Tricia Bowers**

**Pending**

**14423 MARINA SAN PABLO PL. S.**  
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**New Listing**

**14427 MARINA SAN PABLO PL. S.**  
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**Presented by Tricia Bowers**

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ossirealtor@gmail.com

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# TPC Sawgrass chef readies for THE PLAYERS

Event is about much more than golf for local food banks, other nonprofits

By Holly Tishfield

Chef Azhar Mohammad, senior executive chef at TPC Sawgrass, and his team are already in high gear as they prepare the kitchens for another busy TPC season.

Mohammad was born and raised in India, where he received a degree in hotel management from the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology.

After spending more than 20 years travelling the globe to serve in the hospitality industry/culinary operations for restaurants, lounges and banquet facilities, he was offered a position with TPC Sawgrass nearly four years ago.

Mohammad expressed his newfound love of the golf resort industry, noting the moment he toured the facility and met the staff, he knew he was in the right place.

“The company is phenomenal,” Mohammad said. “Their philosophy is great, and they always do the right thing.”

During last year’s PLAYERS Championship, Mohammad and his team were unprepared when the COVID-19 pandemic went into full effect, canceling the



Photo provided by the PGA TOUR

**TPC Sawgrass Senior Executive Chef Azhar Mohammad (from left), TPC Sawgrass Banquet Chef Michael Cowan, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville Chef Vernetta Stewart and TPC Sawgrass Food and Beverage Director Tyler Hagin prepare meals to serve to residents at the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville. TPC Sawgrass chefs prepared special meals for Ronald McDonald House families in demonstration of THE PLAYERS’ commitment to donate food from the 2021 championship.**

tournament halfway through. The entire week’s worth of food/catering was already laid out, and Mohammad’s team did not know what to do with enough food to feed almost 10,000 people, but a solution was quickly discovered.

“The leadership team wanted to put it [the food] to good use,” Mohammad said. “We could not store it. It needed to be used in a way that was beneficial.”

The solution came in the form of a massive donation to a local nonprofit food bank and hunger relief network located in the Jacksonville area, Feeding Northeast Florida.

Susan King, CEO of Feeding Northeast Florida, said THE PLAYERS delivered a “fire brigade” with three-and-a-half tractor-trailers and 22 tons of food.

From FNEFL, the food was then pro-

portioned into serving sizes and delivered to a large agency partner, the Sulzbacher Center, a homeless shelter with four locations in Jacksonville.

“That food donation was a lifesaver to us, from a timing perspective,” said Cindy Funkhouser, president and CEO of the Sulzbacher Center. “That really helped us get through the initial hurdle.”

Mohammad and other TPC staff/volunteers personally visited the Sulzbacher Center on March 14 to distribute the food to those in need.

“It was great to see the food going to the right people,” he said. “It is just a phenomenal feeling.”

This year, Chef Mohammad and the TPC team volunteered their time by visiting the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville to join their head chef, Vernetta Stewart, in preparing freshly cooked meals for families staying in the facility.

Along with this donation, Mohammad said the TPC leadership team again plans to work with Feeding Northeast Florida by donating all leftover food to their organization once THE PLAYERS is finished.

“You could see the happiness on their faces,” he said, speaking of the Ronald McDonald House guests. “That is what

CHEF continues on Page 10

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# Nease NJROTC victorious at Mandarin Drill Championship

Nease Navy JROTC's varsity drill team marched to victory at the Mandarin High School sanctioned academic, athletic and drill championship Feb. 20 in Jacksonville. It marked the eighth consecutive year the team took home top honors at Mandarin.

Nease beat out 10 other NJROTC units from northern Florida and Georgia.

Nease next competes Sunday, March 7, at the northern Florida and state of Georgia Academic, Athletic and Drill Championship in Lee County, Georgia, where they seek to successfully defend their title as six-time defending area 12 champions.

In addition to claiming the overall trophy, Nease picked up nine of 11 first-place trophies for overall drill, unarmed exhibition, armed exhibition, color guard, overall athletics, pushups, sit-ups, academics and personnel inspection.

"We've got to double down on our effort if we hope to win the state championship," said Cadet Juan Castillo, commander of personnel inspection. "I expect the next two weeks of practice to be intense and focused."

Several cadets took home individual medals for exceptional performance.

Emmelie Neff, Isabella Rivera, Danielle Camacho and Kaitlyn Boggs finished first, second, fourth and fifth in female sit-ups.

Amber Vidler, Rivera, Sarah Fry, Lauren Villareal, Boggs and Hailey Pitches swept



**ABOVE:** Nease NJROTC members celebrate winning the team's eighth consecutive Mandarin drill meet championship on Feb. 20.

**LEFT:** Nease NJROTC's unarmed exhibition team members, from left, Kaitlyn Boggs, Gabrielle Espedido and Emmelie Neff, compete at the Mandarin drill meet.

Photos provided by Nease NJROTC



Nease color guard members Dylan Dosio, Isabella Rivera, Kaitlyn Boggs and Brandon Donovan execute "eyes left" while en route to their first-place finish at the Mandarin drill meet.

"I believe our best is yet to come," said color guard commander Isabella Rivera. "Individually and collectively we all can improve and get better before the state championship."

Other top schools in the competition were Fleming Island (second), Ridgeview (third), Valdosta (fourth) and Coffee County (fifth).

all medals in female pushups.

Caden Byas, Nicholas Gallego, Braden Holmes and Brodie Mongon finished first, second, fourth and fifth in male sit-ups, while Daniel Mahoney, Nate Fagen and

Mongon placed second, fourth and fifth in male pushups.

In academics, Ben Prohofsky and Anthony Servello tied for first, and Juan Castillo and Khush Gandhi finished fourth and fifth.



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Lightly lived-in and beautifully maintained, this house looks and feels like a model home with tall ceilings, a neutral palette, and an open floor plan ideal for everyday life. Featuring water to woods views along with smart home features and premium upgrades.

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# THE PLAYERS to help nonprofit fight veteran suicide

By Shaun Ryan

A regional effort to fight veteran suicide will get some high-profile assistance Tuesday, March 9, when THE PLAYERS Championship features it as the charity of the day on its platform.

The Fire Watch is a program designed to get at-risk veterans the support they need while there's still time. It was created as part of an interlocal agreement between Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties.

Fire Watch Executive Director Nick Howland said he was thrilled by THE PLAYERS' support.

"THE PLAYERS will allow us to increase awareness of our programming, which is all about veteran suicide preven-

tion," he said. "Our marquee program is our Watch Stander program, which is an early intervention, gate-keeper training program that involves mobilizing the community to understand the risk signs of veterans in crisis and how to get veterans the help they need. By increasing awareness of our program, particularly our Watch Stander program, THE PLAYERS and PGA TOUR will help us to drive increased numbers of Watch Standers, and therefore have more people around the community ready to be vigilant to the concerns of veterans."

As part of its support of The Fire Watch, the tournament will use its platform to encourage community members to sign up and become Watch Standers.

In addition, the tournament will feature interviews with Fire Watch board members

as well as Dan Bean, who was a watch stander before there was a program, and a veteran he has mentored. Also, to help increase awareness of the issue, the tournament will highlight the story of the daughter of a veteran who took his own life.

Howland said the interviews would probably be covered throughout the day on "PGA TOUR LIVE."

Also, the PGA TOUR is working to become one of the inaugural businesses of another Fire Watch program: Veterans Safe Place.

That program was launched in February. Businesses, organizations, nonprofits and churches can be designated veteran safe places if 50 — or 50% if that's smaller — of the employees become Watch Standers. They receive a window decal or an

e-badge to put on their website.

"What that means is that there are employees in that facility that know how to identify a veteran that might be at risk and, if there's a veteran in need, to get the veteran the help they need," Howland said.

Becoming a Watch Stander is easy.

Just go to thefirewatch.org, click on Watch Standers and enroll. The process takes about 45 minutes, and those completing it will receive a wristband, car sticker and a wallet card that tells where to go for help.

To date, the program has about 450 enrollees. The goal is 10,000.

In this charitable effort, THE PLAYERS works closely with each of its Proud Partners (Grant Thornton, Optum and Morgan Stanley) who select a Charity of the Day.

## Nemours continues strong partnership with THE PLAYERS

By Holly Tishfield

Nemours Children's Health System of Jacksonville, one of the nation's largest integrated pediatric health systems, has partnered with THE PLAYERS Championship once again to be its official charity of the day for Wednesday, March 10.

The partnership with TPC began in 2018 when THE PLAYERS donated half a million dollars to renovate and remodel Nemours' downtown Jacksonville lobby, which had not been updated since its creation in 1991.

"They [THE PLAYERS] really share

our vision for improving the health and wellness of families in our community," said Maggie Hightower, director of fund development for Nemours Children's Health System in Jacksonville. "They have been an outstanding partner with us."

In 2018 and 2019, THE PLAYERS worked with Nemours to sponsor them as charity of the day, but in 2020 the partnership changed from strictly philanthropic to the tournament side, as well. TPC approached the Nemours team and gave it the opportunity to sponsor a Kids Zone at the tournament.

The Kids Zone in 2020 was a big hit

with families, giving parents a chance to charge up their devices at power stations while kids played in the putting zone or the coloring wall. Unfortunately, when TPC was canceled halfway through the tournament last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Nemours had to shut down the Kids Zone with it.

But for the return in the 2021 tournament, Nemours is hosting a virtual Kids Zone with fun activities for families such as coloring sheets and other print-out tasks. Nemours is excited for its new scavenger hunt game, happening on March 10, around the TPC course where kids can

find 12 cutouts with tasks to complete.

On March 9 and 10, Nemours is also sponsoring "Health Days," which means children can enter the tournament for free with a ticketed adult.

"It is really allowing Nemours to help the community, and THE PLAYERS, by giving parents and kids the opportunity to come to the tournament," Hightower said.

Despite new restrictions and limitations on the tournament this year, the team at Nemours is looking forward to a fun, safe and successful tournament season, along with a continued partnership with THE PLAYERS.

## OBITUARIES

Jim Brunson

Jim Brunson was born August 5, 1926 and passed in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida on February 1, 2020. He passed from non-COVID related natural causes.



Jim Brunson

Raised on a farm in Greenville, AL, he graduated high school from Marion Military Institute, then attended the US Naval Academy (Class of 1948 B). His 34-year Navy career was a captivating adventure. He became an active participant in some of the most significant events in our nation's history: World War II, Korean War, The Cold War, 1958 Lebanon Crisis, Vietnam, the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

His first assignment out of the Academy, as an Ensign, was pushing Plebes and teaching Physics. It is therefore fitting that his last tour of duty, as a Captain, was back where he started — at the Academy. He returned to head two academic divisions: Director Command and Management Division, Director US and International Studies Division.

During his career he received the Legion of Merit, Navy Commendation Medal, American Defense Service Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Medal (Europe), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Korean Service Medal (3 Stars), United Nations Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Lebanon).

Married to the "love of his life", Jim and Julie retired July 1978 to Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Jim leveraged his teaching and School Administration skills becoming the Director of the Jacksonville Job Corps Center.

Predeceased by only 39 days by his wife, Julie, Jim is survived by his sons, James McDuffie Brunson of Virginia and Ronald Burke Brunson of North Carolina, eight grandchildren, and six great grandsons.

COVID has played havoc with 2020 and has delayed this obituary. Jim and Julie will be interred in the Columbarium at Palms Presbyterian Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. A virtual memorial service for both Jim and Julie will be scheduled. The family requests that consideration be given to donations to Palms Presbyterian Church, Hospice, or a charity of your choice. Please visit the online Tribute at [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com). Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre,



Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre  
3600 Third Street South, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250  
Phone: 904.249.1100 Fax: 904.241.7554

**Bryce C. Bennie**

Bryce C. Bennie, 47, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Feb. 25, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, (904) 249-1100, [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com)

**Joseph W. Mitchell**

Joseph W. Mitchell, 88, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 22, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home, (904) 249-1100, [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com)

**Jane Tentinger Schmidt**

Jane Tentinger Schmidt, 69, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 24, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, (904) 249-1100, [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com).

**Alice Haney Wilbur**

Alice Haney Wilbur, 88, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 23, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, (904) 249-1100, [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com).

## Military

Continued from 4

Bonefish Grill, Tropical Smoothie, Cousins Maine Lobster and 4 Rivers Smokehouse.

■ **PGA TOUR Fan Shop discounts at THE PLAYERS:** On Tuesday, March 9, active duty, reserve and retired military members can receive a 20% discount in the PGA TOUR Fan Shop at THE PLAYERS (must have valid military ID).

## Chef

Continued from 8

we do, what we work for."

With THE PLAYERS just next week, Mohammad has a clear plan following new CDC guidelines and restrictions.

"Our main focus this year is to make sure that everybody is safe," he said. "We do not want to dilute what THE PLAYERS and THE PLAYERS Championship is about — the experience. We execute it to the same level even with these guidelines."

# Kids springin' for fun guide

PAGES 11-13

## Bolles team studying para-athletic experience

A rookie team of fourth-grade robotics students from the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus is looking at ways kids with physical differences can better play with able-bodied athletes as part of this year's FIRST Lego League project theme, "Replay."

The league's theme and project goal of "creating ways for everyone to get active and play" provides the framework for individual team competitors in FIRST Lego League to define their project goal for the year.

The grade four team is called Future Bolles Innovators, also known as the FBI. As part of their team training, they have been researching the Paralympic Games, a periodic series of international multisport events involving athletes with a range of disabilities.

Teammates learned there are many sports available for students of varying abilities. However, "very few schools include these sports in their activities," said team coach and science teacher Carolyn Houston.

To further their knowledge and experi-



**A team of fourth-grade students is studying para-athletics to design a plan for athletes of all abilities to play sports together.**

ence of adaptive sports, Houston invited son Timothy Houston and Dan Caldwell from the Brooks Rehabilitation Adaptive Sports Program to campus to offer the team a hands-on demonstration.

They brought six youth sports chairs for the team to try during a game of basket-

ball in George Hall. The guests led a game of wheelchair basketball and wheelchair flag football. Students said the game was amazing and fun, but admitted it is hard to play, move and shoot in a wheelchair.

The FBI team will move forward with their creative problem-solving, designing



Photos provided by The Bolles School

**Bolles fourth-graders play basketball from wheelchairs as part of a project to design a plan for athletes of all abilities to play sports together.**

a plan for athletes of all abilities to play sports together. Students will continue this work through the school year as they compete in FIRST Lego League tournaments.



Photo provided by Episcopal School of Jacksonville

**Second-graders at Episcopal School of Jacksonville Beaches Campus are dressed as the subjects of biographies that they have written.**

## 2nd grade biography projects presented to community

The second graders at Episcopal School of Jacksonville's Beaches Campus have been exploring different styles of writing this year. They have read, studied and written their own narratives, expository texts and research projects.

In February, they explored the genre of biography. Students researched,

organized and presented their findings to an attentive audience of classmates, parents and fellow students.

To add to the authenticity of the project, the students dressed up as their chosen subjects. Frank Lloyd Wright, Amelia Earhart and George Washington led a parade of notable and celebrated icons through campus.

## Cultural Center planning kids' programs and more

By Shaun Ryan

The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach continues to be the place for children and youth to keep active in the arts, though it's now got a new address.

In January, the center moved into its new facility at 3972 Third St. South in Jacksonville Beach, where it is expanding its reach into Duval County. And the staff is already making plans for a number of events in spring and summer.

"Success is imminent!" said Executive Director Donna Guzzo.

Among those events is Bark 4 Art!, a unique mixture of art and pets that will support art education programs in both counties, and the Second Annual Beaches Celebration of the Arts, set for May.

For children and youth, there are a couple of spring break art camps scheduled for this month. Here's a look:

■ **Spring Par-tee!** – This will be held during the week of spring break for Duval County Schools, March 8-12. There will be a morning session for children ages 4-7 and an afternoon session for those ages 8-13. Young artists will complete art projects to take home with them. Because the camp runs concurrently with THE PLAYERS Champi-

onship, the PGA TOUR donated golf balls to be used in kids' crafts. Cost is \$50 per day, \$225 per week, with discounts for members.

■ **Kids ShamROCK!** – This will be held during the week of spring break for St. Johns County Schools, March 17-19. There will be a morning session for children ages 4-7 and an afternoon session for those ages 8-13. Young artists will complete art projects to take home with them. Cost is \$45 per day, \$135 for three full days, with discounts for members.

Pre-registration is required for both programs and can be made at ccpvb.org.

Among the events currently in the planning stages are: a Faberge egg workshop to be held around Easter, some Kids Night Out programs to give parents some time to themselves and summer camps to be held in various locations.

The center's new programs and membership manager Megan Reid said she was very enthusiastic about the center's plans and cited the role art plays the developing lives of children.

"I really think creativity is the key to our children and our future," she said. "Working in art, working with your hands really builds a solid foundation for craftsmanship, problem solving, creative thinking."



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## OPE AMBASSADORS HELP SHOW GRATITUDE TO FIRST RESPONDERS



Photo provided by Ocean Palms Elementary PTO

Ocean Palms Elementary School students, past and present, as well as organizations throughout the community collaborated on a special project to thank area first responders. Seventy-five special "thank you" gifts were sent to four fire stations and sheriff offices in the area. From reusable water bottles, to snacks to create a to-go snack bar, to reusable bags and gift cards to local eateries, these heroes were recognized for their dedication to the community. In addition to the current fifth-grade student ambassadors, two Ponte Vedra High School students, both former ambassadors, also helped the cause. Belle Benson inspired the cheerleading squad at the high school to donate snacks, and Grayson Rigby helped assemble the gifts and deliver them.

## Planning ahead: All you need to know about kindergarten

If you have a little one starting kindergarten next year, it's never too soon to start planning and helping your school plan, too.

With kindergarten registration having started on March 1, here are a few tips and reminders to help both first-time parents

with kindergartners, as well as those who have done this a time or two.

**The Early Bird Gets the Worm!** Sign up as soon as possible. Your assigned school can only plan classrooms and

**KINDERGARTEN** continues on **Page 13**



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## Ponte Vedra residents among Episcopal students named National Merit finalists

Five students from Episcopal School of Jacksonville have been named National Merit finalists: Sally Barksdale, Paul Fouts, Jameson Gatewood, Don Kohla and Braden Witkovich.

Fouts and Gatewood are residents of Ponte Vedra.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships. High school students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) and by meeting published program entry and participation requirements.



Paul Fouts



Jameson Gatewood

Approximately 15,000 semifinalists are notified that they have advanced to finalist standing. School administrators are also notified and provided with a Certificate of Merit to present to each finalist.

## Kindergarten

Continued from 12

teachers based on the number of students registered. As you can imagine, this planning takes time, so the earlier students are registered, the better prepared schools can be for the new school year.

**Who, What, Where?** This year registration is online, so simply visit your child's assigned school website to register. Be prepared with your child's birth certificate, two documents that prove residence and your child's immunization records.

**Stuck in a Moving Pattern?** Are you waiting to close on your house, or perhaps, building a new house and haven't closed? Simply complete the preregistration, also online on your assigned school's website, to get the process started while you wait for final documentation.

**Pack Up!** Don't forget to check with your school to request a supply list or ask if school supply packs are offered for purchase at the school.

**Get in the Know.** Reach out to your new school's Parent Teacher Organization. It's never too early to get involved or to simply get informed.

MARCH 8-12 & MARCH 17-19

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# Business Weekly

PAGE 14 THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

Women in Business:  
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brand releases retail line

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## County update subject of Ponte Vedra Chamber meeting

By Shaun Ryan

In an update on the state of the county Wednesday, Feb. 24, St. Johns County Deputy Administrator Joy Andrews gave members of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the Chamber of Commerce a rundown on several issues of interest to local residents.

Many of the items she discussed related to growth.

“People are moving from all over the country to St. Johns County,” she said.

Since 2010, the population has increased 40% to 265,000 people, making St. Johns the 10th fastest growing county in the nation.

At the same time, businesses are

inquiring about relocation here. Andrews called that “great news for our residents.”

“As long as you want to work, there’s pretty much a job for you,” she said, citing the county’s unemployment rate of 3.6% in December.

CHAMBER continues on Page 19



Photo provided by Marie Merritt

**Marie Merritt and Klodi Muskaj are business partners in Momentum Wellness.**

## Mom-daughter duo brings unique style to Beaches shop

By Holly Tishfield

When Michele and Whitney Toomer, a mother-daughter duo from Atlantic Beach, first opened their beachy/boho inspired shop in 2016, they did not expect it to be anything more than an online operating system.

Sailors Siren, as the shop was affectionately named, began by appearing at pop-up shops in the region, everywhere from Atlantic Beach to Tallahassee, where Whit and Michele promoted their online business.

After the success of their online shop, the pair decided to open their first brick-and-mortar store in the Neptune Beaches Town Center, a little shop on the second floor of a small building on First Street.

While in Neptune Beach Sailors Siren established itself within the community, but Whit and Michele felt that their business needed more room (both literally and philosophically) to grow, so in 2020 they made the move from Neptune Beach to Jax Beach by opening a storefront on 3rd Street.

In a previous life, Whit ran the digital division of an ad agency, and now she runs the sourcing/operations side of things with Sailors Siren. Her mother, Michele, is more of the main shop-



Photos provided by Michele and Whitney Toomer

**Sailors Siren, owned by Whitney (left) and Michele Toomer, offers home and gift essentials that “celebrate the salty, Southern life.”**

per, she said. Michele works “quality control” of products, ensuring their durability and uniqueness.

“That is always our goal,” said Whitney Toomer, “finding unique and local Southern American-made items.”

Sailors Siren sets itself apart from other beach boutiques by offering one-of-a-kind, handmade items carefully selected from other local business owners, such as candles, jewelry and home décor.

“We have met some fantastic people,” said Whitney, speaking about the move to Jax Beach and joining the community of tight-knit and supportive business owners.



**Whitney and Michele Toomer opened their Sailors South location in Jacksonville Beach last year at 415 3rd St. South.**

SHOP continues on Page 15

## Momentum Wellness adds popular trainer as business partner

Owner Marie Merritt started successful business in 2005

By Shaun Ryan

After 16 years of helping local residents get and stay fit, Momentum Wellness owner Marie Merritt is looking to build on her business.

Toward that end, she has made a popular and successful personal trainer her business partner.

Klodi Muskaj has been with Momentum since May 2016, though he’s known Merritt for a lot longer, since both were pursuing degrees in exercise science at the University of North Florida. He is certified by the National Strength and Conditioning Association and holds a master’s degree in exercise physiology from the University of South Alabama.

Muskaj actually started off as an intern for Merritt before going on to graduate school.

“Whenever he was finished with grad school, I basically cornered him and was like, ‘Dude, you’ve got to come back,’” she said.

Bringing him on as a business partner was, in Merritt’s words, “the right thing to do; it was the next step for the business.”

“I’ve been a sole operator for so long that choosing to give him a portion of the business was a big deal,” Merritt said. “But his

MOMENTUM continues on Page 18

# Shop

Continued from 14

As a female-run company, Whit explained that being a business owner with her mother has been a wonderful experience.

“It is about the balance of everything. As women we are the mom, the doer, the wife – we manage so many facets of life, but to take on a business is to really take

on an entire other portion of your life,” she said. “You have to love it, and you have to love the people you are doing it with.”

With the pandemic hitting last year not too long after they opened their new storefront, Sailors Siren is excited to welcome customers back with open arms. To shop with Whit and Michele and support local businesses, visit [sailorssiren.com](http://sailorssiren.com), or pop into their shop at 415 3rd South, Jacksonville Beach.

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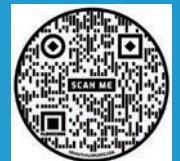
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The Womens Food Alliance Advisory Council 2021

**For Information and Membership:**  
**Leigh Cort, Founder**  
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 www.WomensFoodAlliance.com



Photo provided by Leigh Cort

From left: Liz Earnest, Mezza Luna Ristorante Chef Shelli McInnis, Mary Jane Culhane and Women's Food Alliance founder Leigh Cort.

## Women's Food Alliance spotlights Mezza Luna Ristorante

The Women's Food Alliance has resumed its monthly events showcasing members' venues. Its dinner on Feb. 23 was held at Mezza Luna Ristorante in Neptune Beach, featuring General Manager Beth Ann Encinosa and Executive Chef Nadine Ladson.

The Women's Food Alliance continues to cultivate and advance networking, edu-

cation and collaboration for all women in the hospitality, food, beverage and event industries.

The diversity of businesses continues to expand through the members' creativity, dedicated hard work and passion for having an entrepreneurial spirit.

Go to [www.WomensFoodAlliance.com](http://www.WomensFoodAlliance.com) for more information.

## Janet E. Johnson, P.A.

## Criminal Defense Attorney



Janet Johnson is committed to aggressively defending people accused in all criminal matters in state and federal court. In practice since 1994, she is a member of the Florida Bar, The Federal Bar, Colorado Bar, as well as the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She has been on the faculty of FACDL "Blood, Breath & Tears" annual DUI seminar. Ms. Johnson has been awarded the AV preeminent rating™ from Martindale-Hubbell® and was named a fellow to the prestigious Litigation Counsel of America™, as well as one of the ten best criminal defense attorneys nationally for client satisfaction by the American Institute of Criminal Law Attorneys. She also appears as a legal commentator on CNN and HLN.

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The Recorder's garden columnist Kathy Esfahani, of Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, shares her tips for growing gorgeous gardens in Northeast Florida.

## KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

"The earth laughs in flowers." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

### SPRING IS GETTING CLOSE TO ARRIVING IN PONTE VEDRA BEACH!



Kathy Esfahani  
Columnist

According to Weather-spark.com — and based on growing degree days alone — the first spring blooms in Ponte Vedra Beach should have appeared around Jan. 13, earlier this year!

That said, now is the time to plant!

Start by adding lots of color and variety to your landscaping with new bright, colorful annuals. Have perennials in your garden that survived the cooler days ... and lots of rain? No problem! Once you have cleaned and thinned out your flower beds for planting, scatter your new selections throughout, mixing both annuals and perennials for both pomp and circumstance!

Annuals are temporary season-to-season. They exert their energy unconditionally, with consistent vibrant colors until the season ends ... and they do not grow back year after year; hence, annual to the season.

Perennials however return year after year! They last indefinitely, and most of them will bloom in and out of color, but do not give the constant vibrant color annuals

Flower  
of the Week  
Geranium



provide. Most perennials will die down in the winter and tend to look dead, but they're not. During early spring they just need a quick pruning and voila, instant life in a very short time. Be sure to remove any dead stems, then wait patiently for them to reappear for the new season.

### FLOWERS TO PLANT NOW

**Annuals:** supertunias, delphiniums, dianthus, dusty miller, bacopia, marigold, calabrochia, verbena, New Guinea impatiens

**Perennials:** canna lily, shrimp plant, blue daze, penta, gazania, hibiscus, mandevillea, lantana, geranium

Email Kathy at [kathys.creative.gardens@gmail.com](mailto:kathys.creative.gardens@gmail.com) for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future.

Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery is located at 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach. (904) 655-7373

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*Pictured (from left to right): Lynn Salvatore, Carolyn Zisser, Katherine "Katie" Johnson*



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# ORCA Golf Bags releases 1st retail bag line

Five years ago, when Deborah and Erica Bennett started to design and build customized golf bags for large corporate tournaments, charities and individuals, they were comfortable in their niche and thrilled with the response they received about their unique products.

During those years they were often asked by golfers and passersby if they could buy ORCA golf bags at retail.

Now, ORCA Golf Bags can answer yes, as the company has launched its first line of golf bags available for individual purchase. The new line includes six styles, each with ORCA Golf Bags' unique styling to separate it from the crowd of mass-produced bags.

To further underscore the point of ORCA bags being unique, the name of each bag is related to the ORCA nar-

ative. For the Bennetts, the ORCA is symbolic of strength, power and uniqueness, especially in an ocean of so many types of animal.

The line is anchored by what chief design officer Erica Bennett calls their signature bag, The Apex, a hybrid cart bag with a "hidden" stand made for the golfer who most often rides, but when practicing likes to occasionally walk and to move about the practice area to work on different parts of his or her game. The concept is new and unique to the ORCA line, thus not offered anywhere else in the United States for individual purchase.

In addition to The Apex, ORCA is introducing the following bags to its 2021 line:

■ ORCA Biggs Tour Staff bag is a full-sized premium bag modeled after

the traditional PGA TOUR and LPGA staff bag and starting at \$595.

■ ORCA Mini-Tour Cart bag is a premium bag designed for the golfer who chooses to ride and still wants a full-service bag. Retail for \$455.

■ ORCA Dorsal 1 Stand bag is built for functionality, durability and an overall efficiency and is their lightest daily-use carry bag, weighing in at only 4.6 pounds. Retail at \$355.

■ ORCA Dorsal 2 weighs in at only 6.5 pounds and has a little more room than the Dorsal 1 with an extra pocket for golfers' necessities. Retail at \$355.

■ ORCA Calf is a good weekend or after-work golf bag, small enough for Par 3 courses, walking a quick nine, for use at the practice tees or when you



Photo provided by ORCA Golf Bags

**GOLF BAGS** continues on Page 19 **ORCA Golf Bags has released its first retail bag line.**

## Momentum

Continued from 14

service to the people that he works with is phenomenal."

She said Muskaj makes training fun and that he gets people very good results.

Merritt launched her business in 2005

with a dream of delivering very high-quality, exceptional service as a personal trainer. It was a big step, and she took it.

"I guess I was kind of young and brave enough to believe in myself enough that I could do it all on my own," she said.

Over the years, she's had ups and downs. Throughout, she's worked hard to make Momentum the success it is today.

Still, she said, "I'm very thankful for the community that we're in. The people are incredible."

She said Momentum is about more than getting a workout. It's also about teaching clients how they can live healthier lifestyles.

"We use exercise and fitness as our tool to help people kind of start their journey," she said. "But we do a lot of lifestyle coaching within it."

She differentiated Momentum from businesses that she said offer "cookie-cutter fitness."

"No two people that I have ever worked with have ever been the same," she said, adding that Momentum is "lifestyle-focused." Its program is tailored specifically to the person.

"It's literally personal training," she said.

Her programs are all backed by science and are progressive, which means clients

continue to see results rather than hit a plateau.

Momentum's clientele range in age from eight to their 80s, and the individualized approach is what has helped make the business successful.

"I think if you meet people where they are, and you provide them with good service and you get them good results, then it supports the business," Merritt said. "It's the quality of it."

Muskaj said what he likes best about what he does is educating clients.

"The more they know and understand why we're doing a certain thing, the better off they are doing the movement, the better off they are understanding and actually doing it themselves whenever they're not able to come in and see me," he said.

Momentum is located at 5150 Palm Valley Road, No. 103, Ponte Vedra Beach.

For further information, go to GetMomentumFit.com or call (904) 395-3266.






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# Chamber

Continued from 14

In fact, she said the county seemed to be at a “crossroads of growth” where it can be selective in what kinds of business it wants. She emphasized the need for a strong job market for the next generation.

“What kind of jobs do we want to create right here at home for them?” she asked rhetorically.

She listed several projects underway that will create or help retain jobs. Among these was the link, a 22,000-square-foot coworking space and innovation incubator being built in Nocatee; the newly complete PGA TOUR global headquarters, which has the capacity for 1,100 employees; the Ascension St. Vincent’s hospital, which recently broke ground and will create about 450 new jobs; the Baptist HealthPlace at Nocatee; and Flagler Health+ villages at Durbin Park, Murabella and Nocatee.

The medical facilities are expected to promote the creation of related businesses in their vicinity.

Also on the horizon are five new hotels

in St. Augustine and a proposed Baptist Medical Center hospital at State Road 207 and Interstate 95.

Andrews offered some reasons so many people want to live here.

For the ninth consecutive year, St. Johns has been named the healthiest county in the state. The school district has been named the one in Florida where students are most likely to succeed. Nocatee was recently ranked among the top-selling master-planned communities in the nation. St. Augustine was named one of the 11 Best Small Towns in America. And St. Augustine Beach was ranked number 8 on the list of the 25 Best Beaches in America.

Andrews also listed a number of projects in the works for the Ponte Vedra area.

These include installation of a new water main along Ponte Vedra Boulevard, installation of protective sand on berms along the coast, sidewalk improvements at L’Atrium Circle and sidewalk construction along Palm Valley Road, and intersection improvements at Solana Road and State Road A1A, Roscoe Boulevard and Palm Valley Bridge, Mickler Road and S.R. A1A, and several other places.

in green grass locations. Custom bags for events, corporate outings, clubs and individual personalization can be crafted by going to [www.orca-golf.com](http://www.orca-golf.com).

ORCA Golf Bags is the title sponsor of The Orca Golf Bags Women’s Match Play Championship presented by PXG.

# Golf bags

Continued from 18

only need a few clubs. Retail at \$119.

This new line of ORCA Golf Bags is currently available online and soon to be

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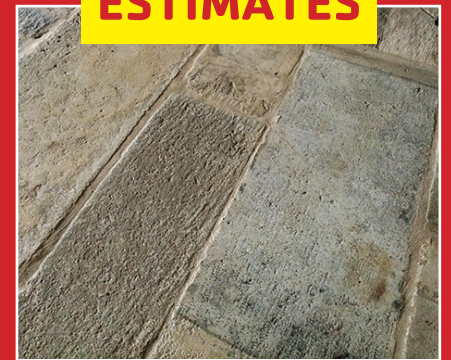
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The Florida Chamber Music Project will perform music by Johannes Brahms on March 21 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

Photo provided by the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall



# Florida Chamber Music Project to perform Brahms on March 21 at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

The Florida Chamber Music Project will perform music by Johannes Brahms for a limited-capacity performance with distanced seating at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 21, at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

Enhanced safety measures and protocols are in place, including contactless digital ticketing and face-covering requirements.

Currently in its eighth season, the Florida Chamber Music Project will perform Brahms' Klavierstucke, Opus 118 and Piano Quartet No.1 in G minor, Op.25, featuring Hyunsoon Whang on piano.

Whang and Florida Chamber Music Project artistic director Susan Pardue met when they both studied at the North Carolina School of the Arts. Whang's live videos have been airing on PBS television stations throughout the Midwest. She serves on the Touring Artists Roster of the Oklahoma Arts Council and has received

The Oklahoma Governor's Arts in Education Award. This performance marks her third appearance with the Florida Chamber Music Project.

"We are pleased to be able to perform again at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall," said Pardue. "These difficult times make music even more important."

Tickets are \$25, \$12.50 for students. Tickets are sold in pre-configured groupings ranging from two to six seats per pod. Pods are at least six feet apart and all seats within the pod must be purchased together. All tickets are digital.

Tickets are on sale at Ticketmaster.com or at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office, which is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. Only debit or credit cards will be accepted. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall box office remains closed at this time.

# Apex Theatre Studio to present 'Lion King Jr.' on March 21 at The Amp

Apex Theatre Studio will present a performance of Disney's "The Lion King Jr." at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 16, at the Backyard Stage at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre for a limited-capacity performance with distanced seating.

Enhanced safety measures and protocols are in place, including contactless digital ticketing, face-covering requirements and mobile ordering for concessions.

Tickets for "The Lion King Jr." are available now at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office and Ticketmaster.com. The Backyard Stage at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre is presented by Intuition Ale Works.

Based on the animated film, "The Lion King Jr." follows young Simba on his coming-of-age journey from frisky cub to leader of the Pridelands. This 80-minute, family-friendly musical features hits including "Circle of Life," "Hakuna Matada" and "Can You Feel The Love Tonight."

"This group of young artists excels at comedy and storytelling," said director Ian Mairs. "We knew this piece would allow us to highlight their gifts as performers. Our version of this tale is rendered with

a great amount of imagination and joy. There is less of a focus on pageantry and more on the human tale which exists at the heart of the story."

Apex Theatre Studio is a nonprofit performing arts training center celebrating its fourth year. Apex fosters young artists with a passion and curiosity for acting, singing, dancing and stagecraft through a series of master classes, intensives, readings and theatrical presentation.

Tickets are \$17 each. Reserved seating tickets for Apex Theatre Studio's "The Lion King Jr." tickets are sold in pre-configured groupings ranging from two to six seats per pod. Pods are at least six feet apart and all seats within the pod must be purchased together. All tickets are digital.

The St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. Only debit or credit cards will be accepted for payment.

Apex will offer summer classes at its studio at Town Center at World Golf Village, 425 West Town Place, Unit 112, to support young actors in Northeast Florida. Summer classes, intensives and workshop schedules are available at [www.apextheatrejax.com](http://www.apextheatrejax.com).

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### ACROSS

1. \*A or O, to blood
5. Catch a wink
8. "Don't know what to say" sound
11. Eon, alt. sp.
12. Severe blow
13. \*Blood \_\_\_\_, type of blood test
15. Eastern \_\_\_\_, 1947-1991
16. \*Respiratory rattling
17. Enormous ones
18. \*Annual exam
20. Largest city of Norway
21. Like a romantic movie?
22. \*Anatomical pouch
23. Work over with fists (2 words)
26. Levee next to water mill
30. Not cooked

31. What a terrorist wants to spread
34. Continental currency
35. Wide open
37. Charged particle
38. Colorado resort
39. Hipbones
40. Recede, as in tide (2 words)
42. Laos resident
43. Stinging shrub, pl.
45. Handrail's main supports
47. Caribou kin
48. Relating to a lobe
50. Saint's topper
52. \*L in ACL
55. Bad-tempered
56. Affirm with confidence
57. Stain on Santa
59. Work the dough
60. Tiger Woods' pegs
61. Ruptured
62. "\_\_\_\_ my party, and I'll cry if I want too..."
63. Store posting, abbr.
64. \*Largest organ
8. 2016 western "\_\_\_\_ or High Water"
9. Type of shark
10. Not Miss or Ms
12. Influenza
13. Sandbar
14. \*Cardiac, smooth or skeletal ones
19. Quickly fry
22. Knightly title
23. \*Cerebellum location
24. Two under on one hole
25. Look forward to
26. \*Kissing disease?
27. Having two parts
28. Beetles: "He's \_\_\_\_ nowhere man" (2 words)
29. Plural of #26 Down
32. \*12 pairs of these
33. Rip off
36. \*a.k.a. kneecap
38. Mr. T's team
40. Comic book cry
41. Unlocks the gate
44. Andrew Webber's middle name
46. Forcefully grabs
48. \*Blood filter
49. S-shaped moldings
50. "The \_\_\_\_ for Red October"
51. Greek god of war
52. Strip of wood
53. Breakfast spot?
54. Spelling or Kelly
55. Biathlon equipment
58. One less than jack

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# Sports

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## PVHS girls soccer heads to state final

Victory over Land O'Lakes sets up rematch against defending state champs

By Paris Moulden

In a completely unfamiliar season, the Ponte Vedra girls soccer team will face a familiar foe in its second consecutive state championship title game.

The Lady Sharks defeated host Land O'Lakes 1-0 in the Class 5A state semifinals Friday, Feb. 26, setting up a showdown in the state final with Archbishop McCarthy, which defeated PVHS 2-0 in the state championship game last season.

Ponte Vedra coach Dave Silverberg said while the two teams have been in this position not so long ago, a lot has changed since that showdown.

"When you get to the final, you're just excited to be there," Silverberg said. "Teams change year-to-year. They're different, we're different, so it's not going to be the same matchup."

While sports teams across the country have had the added obstacle of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the silver lining for the Lady Sharks may have been the ability to face new competition and



Photo provided by Colleen Mabe

**The Ponte Vedra girls soccer team celebrates after winning the Class 5A state semifinal against Land O'Lakes on Friday, Feb. 26. The Lady Sharks will play Archbishop McCarthy in the state championship game on Friday, March 5.**

rotate more players throughout the season.

"I think this year, we have a little more depth," Silverberg said. "COVID kind of forced us into different playing situations. The pool of players we can feel confident about is larger than previously."

The pandemic may have also given the team the opportunity to better learn how

to persevere during tough times.

"There is nothing good about it [COVID], but it teaches them that there is adversity, and you have to deal with it, and these kids have," Silverberg said.

The Lady Sharks' defense has been stellar in the postseason, giving up just one goal during the playoffs — in a 9-1

victory over Gainesville in the regional quarterfinals — and following with three consecutive shutouts against Seabreeze, Gulf Breeze and Land O'Lakes en route to the state title game. Goalkeeper Audrey Johnson has helped the Sharks earn six shutouts in their last seven games.

"We take pride in the defense, but the offensive attackers are very strong, as well," Silverberg said.

Offensively, PVHS is led by Maggie Mace with 11 goals and nine assists and Tamlyn Parkes and Ella Shapiro with nine goals and seven assists apiece.

While the state championship may seem like a lot of added stress, Silverberg said he's happy where the team mentality is heading into the game. During the postseason, the players were aware if they lose, the season is over, he said, but heading into Friday's game, the season ends regardless, so that actually alleviates some of the pressure.

"It's the last game, no matter what," Silverberg said. "There's only us and them, and someone's going to win. We've just tried to put ourselves in the best position for it to be us."

Ponte Vedra (13-3-5) and Archbishop McCarthy (18-4-1) face off in the Class 5A state final at 4 p.m. Friday in DeLand.

## 18th annual JAGA Scholarship Golf Classic raises \$20,500

The Jacksonville Area Golf Association recently hosted its 18th annual JAGA Scholarship Golf Classic at Ponte Vedra Inn and Club and raised \$20,500.

The event's success was assured by the early commitment of title sponsors Nader's Pest Raiders and the Karl G. Estes Foundation, with a number of other companies and individuals providing critical support through various levels of sponsorship. A few sponsors committed on the eve of the tournament to push the donation total over \$20,000.

The Classic returned to its longtime home the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club after the Inn closed for almost one year to make significant renovations to the Classic's host Ocean Course, where 116 golfers participated in the four-man scramble on Feb. 22. Prizes were awarded to teams based on both gross and net scores.

The money raised will support JAGA's 2021-2022 Charitable Trust program, which provides annual scholarship support to up to 28 students. The current recipients represent 16 JAGA-member clubs and attend 16 different colleges in and outside Florida. Since the



Photo provided by JAGA

**Former JAGA president and Ponte Vedra Inn & Club member Adair Roberts (left) presents JAGA Charitable Trust vice chairman Michael McKenny with a check after raising \$20,500 in the 18th annual JAGA Scholarship Golf Classic.**

trust was formed in 1974, JAGA has awarded approximately \$1.8 million to more than 375 area students who aspire to earn college degrees.

Former JAGA president Adair Roberts (2014-15), a Ponte Vedra Inn & Club member, once again chaired the event. Roberts was joined in the check presentation ceremony after play by JAGA Charitable Trust vice chairman Michael McKenny, who sat in for chairman Wayne St. Clair. The event was launched in 2003 by another former JAGA president, the late Bill Black (1993-94) and carries on in his memory today.

## Dustin Johnson commits to THE PLAYERS Championship

Justin Thomas, Collin Morikawa, Patrick Cantlay set to join world No. 1-ranked player in field

THE PLAYERS Championship announced Tuesday that 2020 FedExCup Champion and current world No. 1-ranked player Dustin Johnson has committed to the 2021 event, which returns to TPC Sawgrass March 9-14.

The 24-time PGA TOUR winner will be joined by fellow U.S. players Justin Thomas, Collin Morikawa and Patrick Cantlay, with all four in search of their first PLAYERS title.

Johnson's last win on the PGA TOUR came at the 2020 Masters Tournament. The 36-year-old has at least one win in each of his 14 seasons on TOUR — tying Tiger Woods for the third-longest streak to begin a career in TOUR history.

Thomas, who has just one top-10 in five starts at the event, would become the fourth player to win THE PLAYERS, the FedExCup, a major championship and a World Golf Championships event (Woods, Henrik Stenson, Rory McIlroy) should he come out on top next week.

Morikawa, 24, will enter THE PLAYERS as one of the game's hottest golfers following a victory at the WGC-Workday Championship at The Concession.

Cantlay, the current leader in the 2020-21 FedExCup, will enter THE PLAYERS in search of his first career top-10 in three prior starts at the event.

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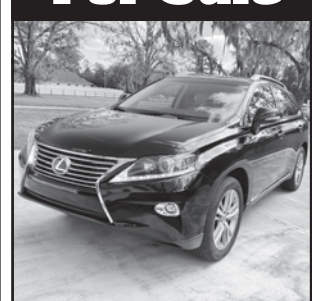
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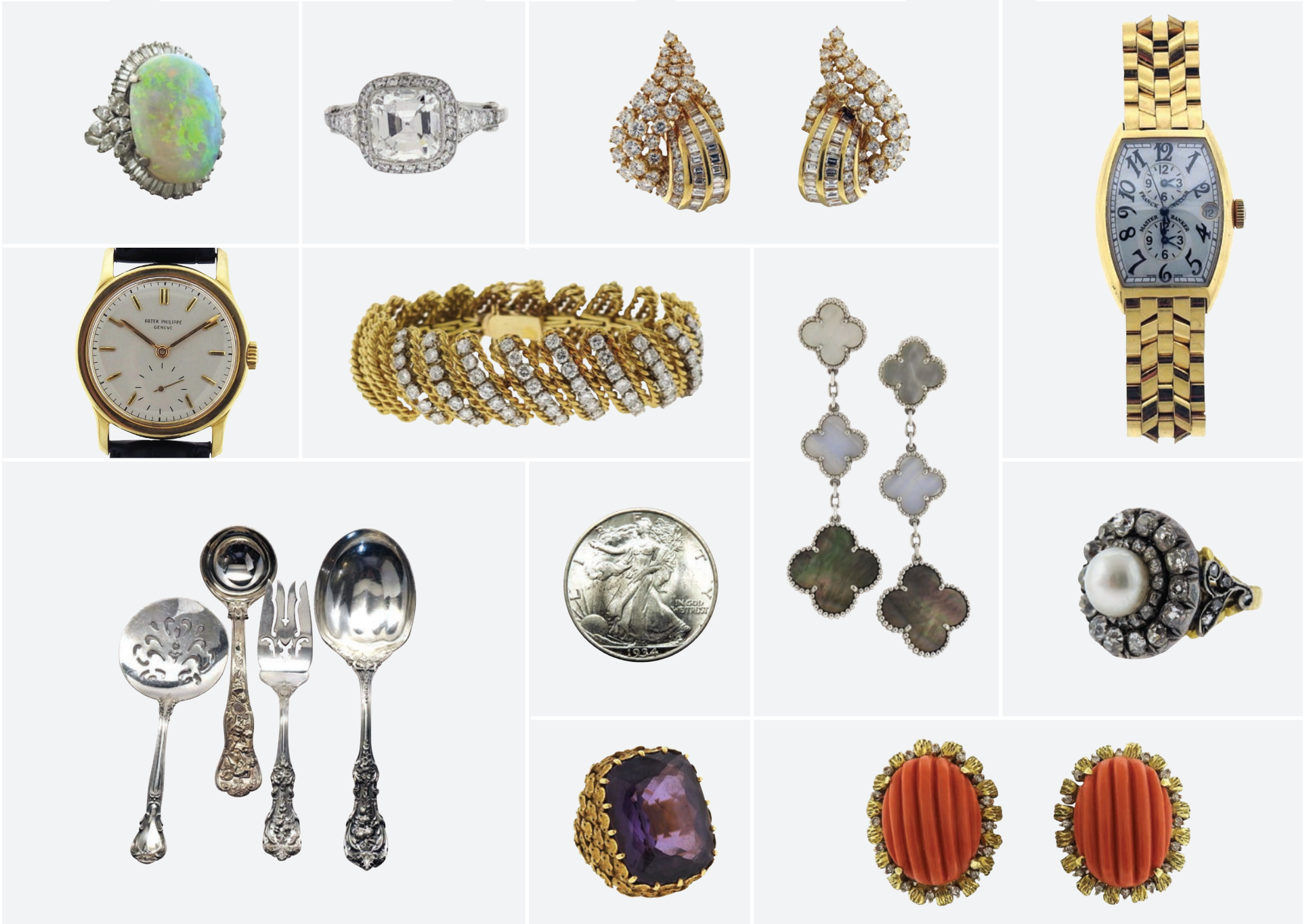
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